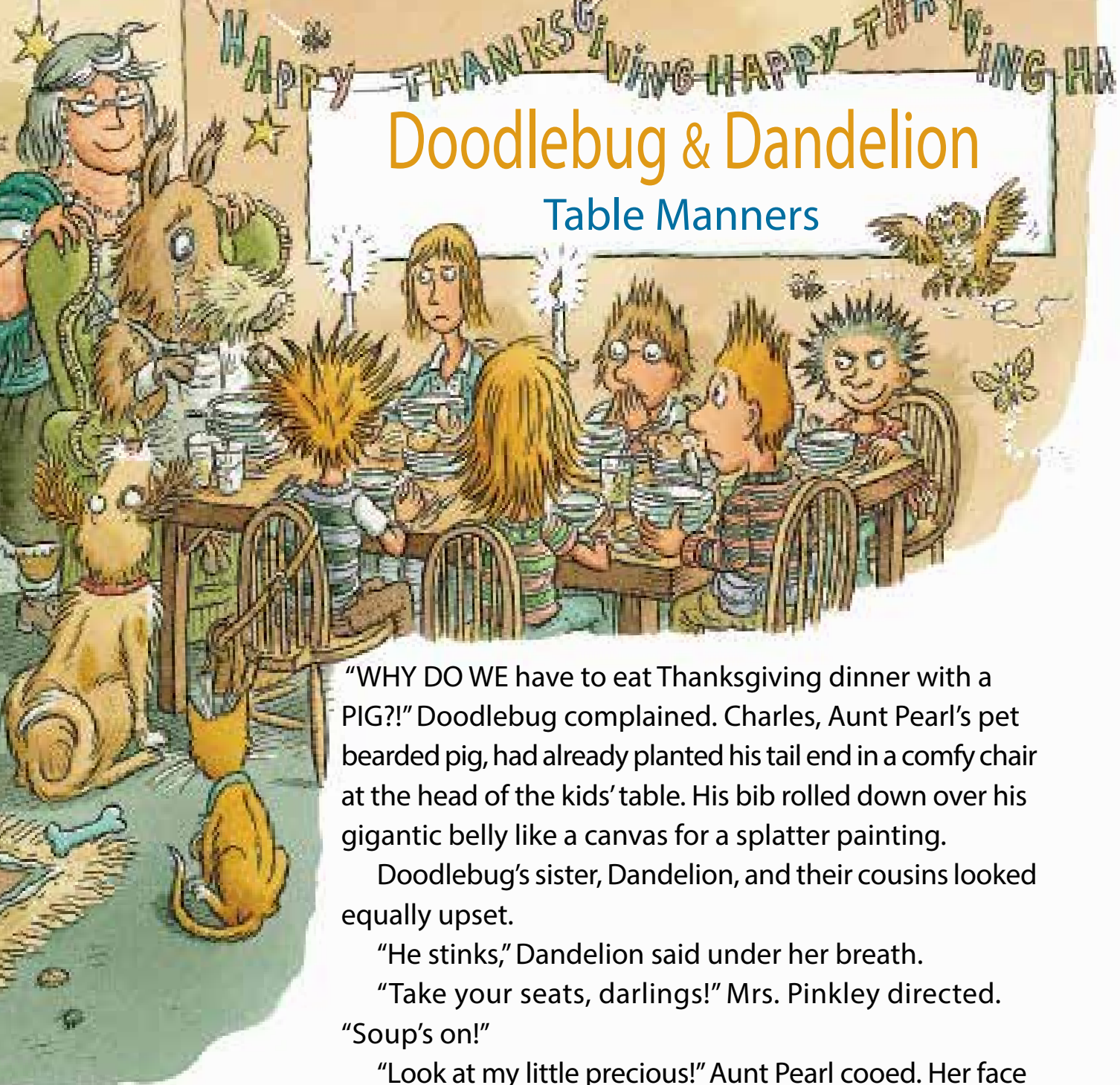


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Doodlebug & Dandelion

Table Manners



“WHY DO WE have to eat Thanksgiving dinner with a PIG?!” Doodlebug complained. Charles, Aunt Pearl’s pet bearded pig, had already planted his tail end in a comfy chair at the head of the kids’ table. His bib rolled down over his gigantic belly like a canvas for a splatter painting.

Doodlebug’s sister, Dandelion, and their cousins looked equally upset.

“He stinks,” Dandelion said under her breath.

“Take your seats, darlings!” Mrs. Pinkley directed.

“Soup’s on!”

“Look at my little precious!” Aunt Pearl cooed. Her face glowed with pride. “I sent him to Porcine Pedigrees School of Pet Manners just before we left Borneo. I assure you, Charles is the best behaved animal in this fine old house!”

Spider, stop snorting you sound porcine, of or relating to pigs.



Snort!

by Pamela Dell

Art by Dom Mansell

Charles seemed to nod in agreement. But the Pinkleys' beloved pets, Don't, Choo-Choo, and Kazoo, closed in on him as if expecting plenty of table droppings.

"He's my porcine pride and joy. Why, he's even taken a course in table manners!" Aunt Pearl bragged. "Charles could dine with a king!"

"Ugh, he's drooling," Cousin Rudyard observed quietly.

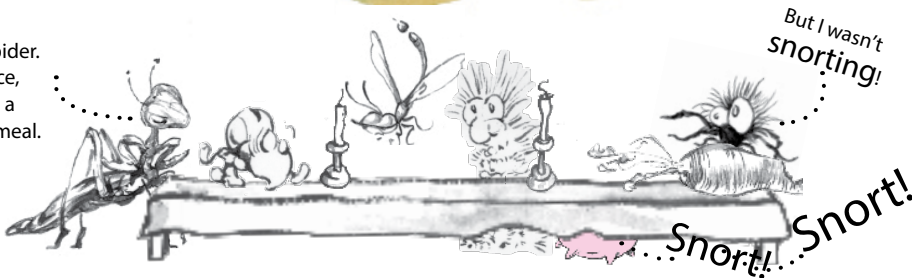
As Aunt Pearl and Mrs. Pinkley

headed to the adults' table in the next room, the children unhappily took their seats. Mr. Pinkley appeared from the kitchen, serving the first course in large bowls. Instantly, Charles had his snout down on the soup's surface, sniffing and blowing. He began slurping softly.

"Hey, look!" Cousin Punky, who had been amazingly well behaved so far, lowered his chin into his own soup bowl. "I'm Charles!"



Really, Spider.
For once,
I'd like a
civilized meal.



Pinky slurped his soup so loudly it drowned out everything else. Droplets splattered all over his cheeks. Everyone but Dandelion burst out laughing. Charles froze, looking disdainfully at Punky. He snorted and delicately pushed his bowl aside with one big trotter. His head swayed back and forth as if trying to locate the next course.

“Hey, Don’t!” Doodlebug called to his family’s dog, tapping the tabletop. “Show us your manners!”

On command, Don’t put his front paws on the table, cocked his head back, and opened wide. Doodlebug popped a lump of turkey gizzard dumpling into the dog’s mouth. After gulping it down, Don’t yipped his thanks.

“Go, Don’t!” shouted Cousin Mo. Then she let out a long, tuneful burp just the way Punky had taught her.

“Mo-reen!” Dandelion exclaimed disapprovingly. “Excuse yourself!”

“For what?” Mo’s twin brother, Bo, challenged. He immediately



began yodeling with his mouth full.

“It’s so rude to—” But before Dandelion could finish, the others were yodeling, too. She frowned.

At the other end of the table, Charles’s small, serious piggy eyes





widened. He smeared the end of his snout against his now food-streaked bib. Then he patted his overly large tummy with one trotter and dove gently for the salad.

Charles's mouselike chomping

got Choo-Choo's attention. In a single bound the little cat leaped atop the pig's head, slid headfirst down his snout, and dove right into Charles' salad. She shoved his huge tongue out of her way and began to nibble on the tasty greens.

Even Dandelion couldn't help giggling. Then she shrieked, as Kazoo the owl splashed down into a giant water glass, flapping joyfully.

"Birdbath!" Doodlebug hooted, flinging water from his own glass at his cousins.

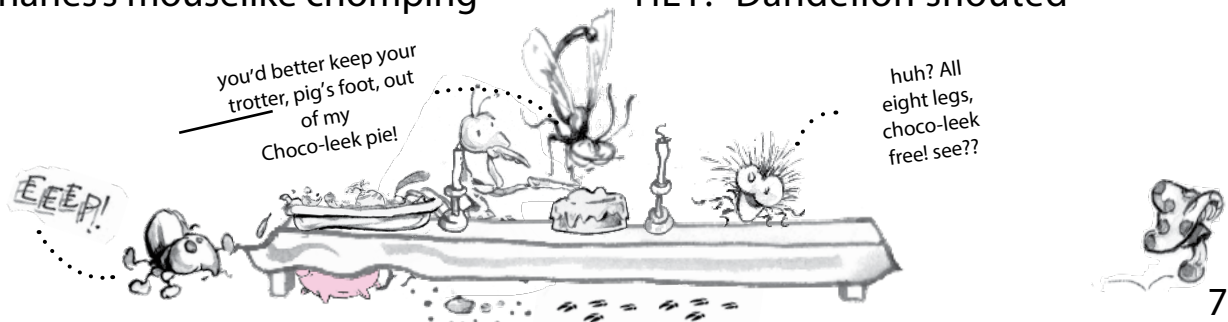
Hit by a spray of droplets, Charles squealed in shock.

"Take this, piglets!" Punky cried, hurling bits of onion and sauerkraut sausage across the table.

"And this!" Rudyard had gotten into the act, lobbing handfuls of tiny green peas in every direction like confetti.

"Food fight!" howled Bo. Mustard-covered asparagus flew like small, slimy spears.

"HEY!" Dandelion shouted



suddenly. "Mom's coming—with Aunt Pearl!"

In seconds, the two women were there. Mrs. Pinkley, hands on hips and irritated, surveyed the table. "WHO is responsible for this mess?!" she barked.

After a moment's silence, every kid's eyes fell on Charles as he let

out a loud hiccup. Aunt Pearl turned to her pet in horror.

"Charles, shame on you!" she wailed. "And after all those expensive lessons!"

Charles was hiding his eyes behind his two enormous front trotters. Dandelion wondered if pigs could cry. She caught her brother's eye.

Doodlebug sighed. "It wasn't Charles, Mom."

"Charles's manners are perfect," Dandelion agreed, looking down. "It was us."

"Holy oinkers, thank heavens!" Aunt Pearl hugged Charles' head with relief.

Mrs. Pinkley scanned the faces of the guilty children. "The lot of you needs to learn some manners from Charles!" she said sternly. Then she broke into a smile. "Gracious—I never thought I'd ask my family to behave like pigs!"

The porcine pride and joy just snorted, very happily. 🐷



Thistle, you're awfully quiet.

Um... well... erm...

Snort!

