

The Girl and the Piglet



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On a bright Saturday morning, Maya pulled on her red rain boots and blue overalls. Her yellow shirt peeked out at the sleeves. She was going to visit a farm for the very first time. The gravel path crunched under her boots as she walked past a big red barn. A straw-hatted farmer waved from the fence, his green eyes crinkling with a smile.



The farmer, Mr. Hank, led Maya to a pen where a little piglet stood. Its pink skin had light brown spots, and its floppy ears wiggled. The piglet's curly tail twitched as it trotted over. Mud dotted its snout and tiny hooves. Maya knelt down slowly, her dark brown eyes wide. The piglet sniffed her fingers and gave a soft snort.



Mr. Hank chuckled and said, 'This little one is smarter than she looks.' Maya watched as the piglet nudged a rubber ball with its snout, then pushed it under the fence. 'She's curious,' Maya said. 'I think she likes puzzles.' The piglet tilted its head as if listening. Maya's round face lit up with an idea.



Maya turned to Mr. Hank. 'Can we make a puzzle for her? Something with food inside?' Mr. Hank nodded and pulled a small wooden box from his pocket. It had holes on the sides and a lid that could slide. 'We can put tasty treats in here,' he said. 'But we must always watch closely to keep everyone safe.' Maya clapped her hands.



Maya found some apple slices and carrot pieces in a bucket. She dropped them into the box and slid the lid shut. The piglet's nose twitched at the sweet smell. Maya placed the box on the grass inside the pen. The piglet trotted over, its hooves making soft taps. Mr. Hank stood nearby, his work gloves folded, watching calmly.



At first, the piglet just sniffed the box all over. Its muddy snout left little marks on the wood. Then it pushed the box with its nose. Nothing happened. The piglet grunted and pushed harder. The box slid an inch. Maya held her breath. 'Look, she's trying to figure it out!' she whispered to Mr. Hank.



The piglet walked around the box, its floppy ears bouncing. It sniffed the holes and licked one. Then it tried to stick its snout inside, but the holes were too small. The piglet sat back and stared at the box. Maya worried it might give up. But the piglet's small dark eyes were bright and determined.



Suddenly, the piglet nudged the lid with its nose. The lid slid a little. The piglet pushed again, and the lid opened wider. It wiggled its snout inside and pulled out an apple slice. Maya gasped. 'She did it!' she cried. Mr. Hank grinned. 'Told you she was smart,' he said. The piglet munched happily.



The piglet used its snout to slide the lid even more. It pulled out a carrot piece and ate it with a crunch. Then it looked at Maya as if asking for more. Maya laughed and clapped her hands. 'She solved the puzzle!' she said. Mr. Hank nodded. 'Animals can think and solve problems,' he said. 'They just need a chance.'



Maya felt proud of the piglet. She watched as it finished the last carrot and licked its muddy snout. The piglet trotted over to Maya and gave a happy snort. Maya patted its soft, spotted back. 'You're a clever piglet,' she said. The piglet's curly tail wagged. Mr. Hank smiled. 'You made a good puzzle,' he said.



Maya looked at the piglet with new eyes. She had always thought piglets were just muddy animals that rolled in the dirt. But now she saw a thinker, a problem-solver, a friend. 'I didn't know farm animals were so smart,' she said. Mr. Hank nodded. 'They surprise you,' he said. 'Every animal has its own kind of cleverness.'



Maya decided to make another puzzle for the piglet. She found a bigger box and cut more holes. She hid apple slices inside and watched the piglet sniff and push. This time, the piglet solved it faster. It wiggled the lid open and gobbled the treats. Maya cheered. Mr. Hank stood by, keeping a watchful eye on them both.



The sun began to set, painting the farm in golden light. Maya knew it was time to go home. She knelt down and gave the piglet a gentle pat. 'Goodbye, clever friend,' she said. The piglet oinked softly and nudged her boot. Mr. Hank tipped his straw hat. 'You're welcome back anytime,' he said.



On the walk home, Maya thought about the piglet. She remembered how it sniffed and pushed and figured out the puzzle. She smiled, her freckles crinkling. Farm animals are smart, she thought. They can think and solve problems. And they can be friends, too. Her red boots splashed in a puddle, but she didn't mind.



That night, Maya told her family all about the piglet. 'She solved my puzzle!' she said. 'Piglets are clever!' Her family listened with wide eyes. Maya drew a picture of the piglet with its muddy snout and curly tail. She hung it on the wall. She knew she would never see farm animals the same way again.



Maya learned that farm animals are intelligent and curious. With a grown-up nearby to keep everyone safe, she had made a puzzle that helped the piglet show its smarts. Now she sees piglets as clever friends, not just muddy animals. And she can't wait to visit the farm again and build another puzzle for her new friend.