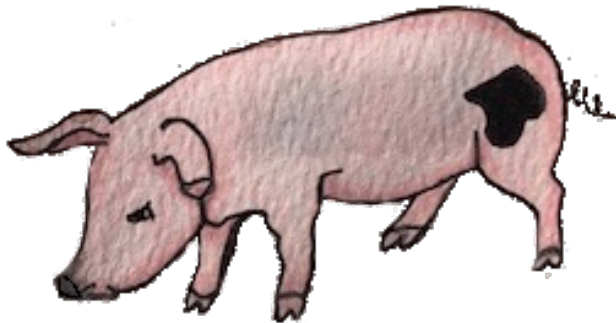


The Adventures of Pigsley and Rio

To the Dam



Michelle L Wessels

Thanks to my son, Joshua, for helping illustrate this
book.

The animals in this book live on and around our farm in
the Kwa-Zulu Natal Midlands, South Africa.

Published 2020 by Michelle L Wessels

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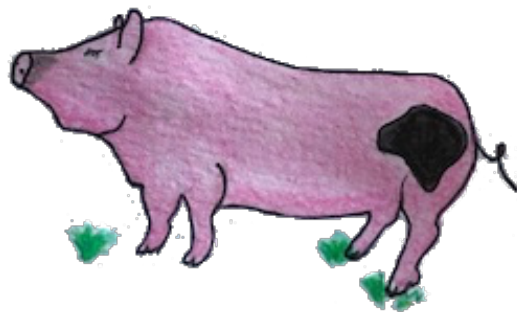
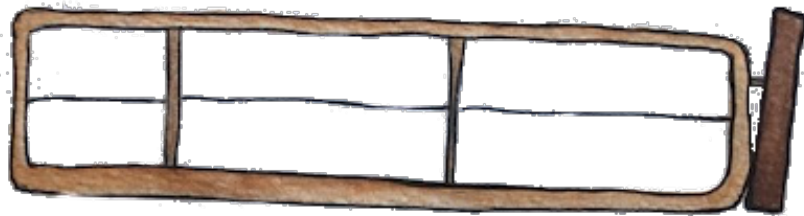
Storyteller: Michelle L Wessels

Illustrators: Joshua & Michelle Wessels

The sun brightened the early morning sky, waking the animals on the farm.

Pigsley, the pig, trotted out of the barn where he slept wondering what adventure he should go on.

He headed in the direction of the cottage, where the people lived, hoping to meet his best friend Rio, the dog.



As Pigsley passed under the big tree, lots of tiny leaves rained down on his head. At first he was confused.

"Raining leaves?" he thought. "How odd!"

He looked up and saw the branches blowing in the wind:

this way,

that way,

every which way.

And the pig started dancing.



Rio came bounding up to Pigsley.

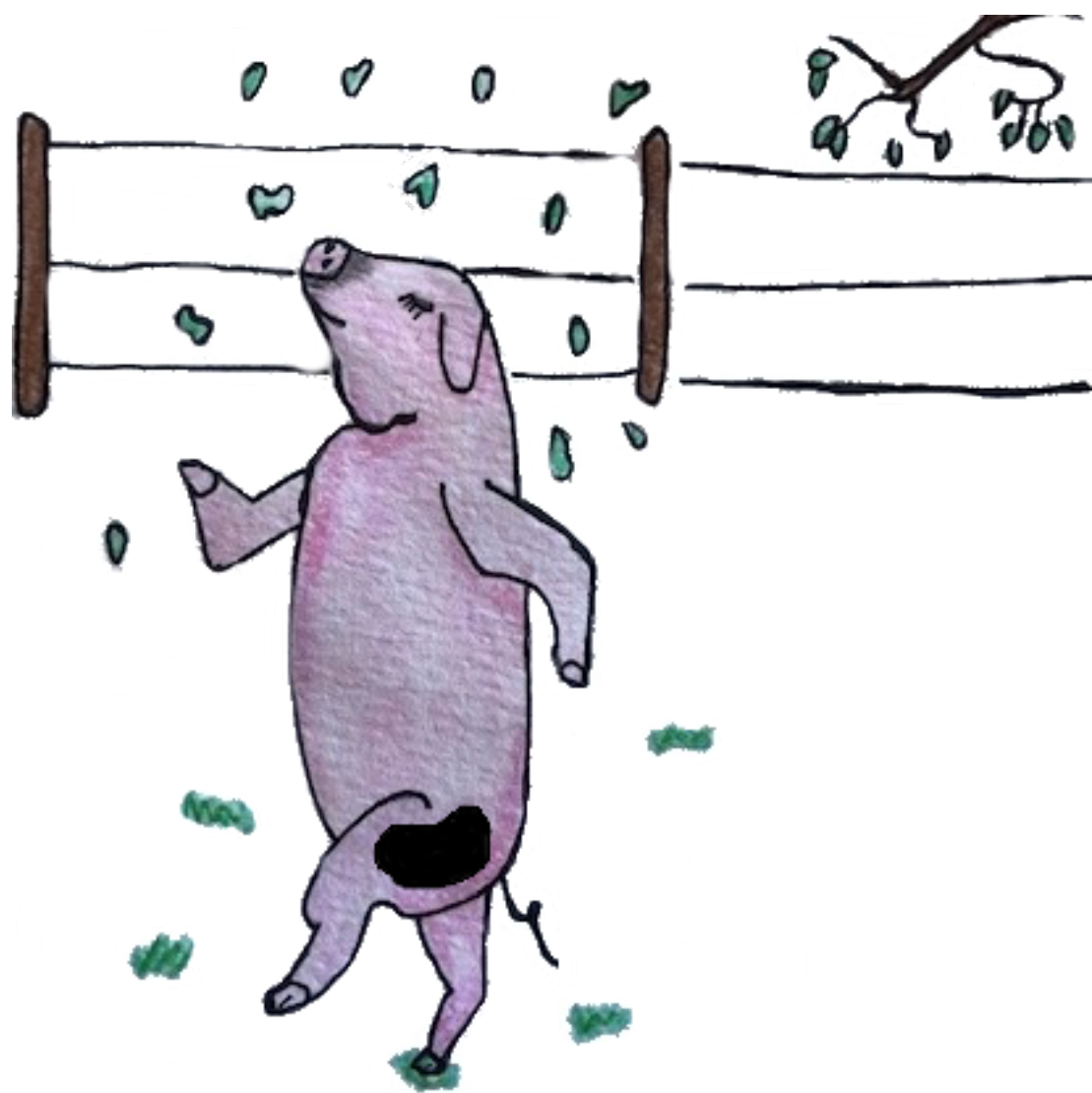
"Morning, Pigsley!" he woofed. "I've been running all over the farm looking for you. You weren't in the barn, you weren't by the..."

Rio stopped. With a puzzled expression, he looked at the pig and asked,

"What are you doing?"

"Hello, Rio." snorted Pigsley in delight. "I'm dancing in the leaves. Look! It's raining leaves. Come and dance with me."

So Rio joined his friend. They danced together: skipping, bouncing, twirling and whirling.



Then the leaves stopped.

And the friends stopped.

They looked at each other, then looked up.

The wind was no longer blowing.

The leaves were no longer falling.

"Ahhh..." sighed a disappointed Pigsley.

"Oh, dear," said Rio. "What should we do now?"

But before the pig could reply, Rio answered.
"I'm so hot after dancing, let's cool off in the dam. I'll race you! Come on, Pigsley."

And so they ran...
past the cottage,
down the track,
through the forest,
and to the dam.



Rio was so excited because he loved swimming.

He was first to reach the dam and leapt into the water, splishing and splashing about. He didn't like to get his head wet, so he swam doggy paddle.

"Come and swim Pigsley!" shouted Rio.

Even though Pigsley was feeling very, very hot, he didn't want to swim. In fact, he didn't know HOW to swim. He preferred to play at the edge of the water, dipping his trotters in.

Did you know that a pig's feet are called trotters?



"Hello." said a voice from the middle of the dam.

Pigsley looked up from playing in the mud. He saw a bird with golden feathers sticking out from the top of its head, like a crown.

The pig had never seen such a beautiful bird, gliding gracefully across the dam.

He stared,
and stared,
and stared some more.



"Pigsley, what are you looking at?" shouted Rio as he swam toward his friend.

Pigsley shook himself out of his stare.

Remembering his manners, he returned the bird's greeting.

"Hello," he said. "My name is Pigsley. Who are you? What are you?"

"My name is Caity, I'm a Grey Crowned Crane." replied the bird.



"Have you come here to find food?" asked Pigsley.

"Yes, this is one of our feeding areas. And we have made a nest on the small island in the middle of the dam." answered Caity.

"Do you have any chicks?" asked the curious pig.

"We have two, Coby and Bing. They're hiding in the reeds. They're very shy and stay close to their father." explained Caity.



As you know, Rio was a friendly and excitable dog. When he saw Pigsley talking to Caity Crane, he also wanted to introduce himself. So he started swimming towards her.

His big splashes and loud excited yapping made Caity feel nervous. She swam quickly to shallow water, spread her big wings, gave an ENORMOUS flap and lifted into the air. As she flew to the field, she made a honking sound.



"Where are you going?" barked Rio as he watched the crane fly away.

The disappointed dog paddled slowly back to the pig, he did not realise that loud noise frightens birds.

Pigsley stood at the edge of the dam mesmerised. That is a big word which means: to be so interested in something that you do not think of anything else.

He had never seen a bird with such big wings.



The pig was so fascinated by Caity that he forgot to look where he was stepping. He lost his balance and fell into the water.

SPLASH!

"Help!" squealed Pigsley. "Help me, Rio!"

Remember, Pigsley could not swim. He did not even know how to float.

Hold on Pigsley, Rio will rescue you. He is swimming as fast as he can.

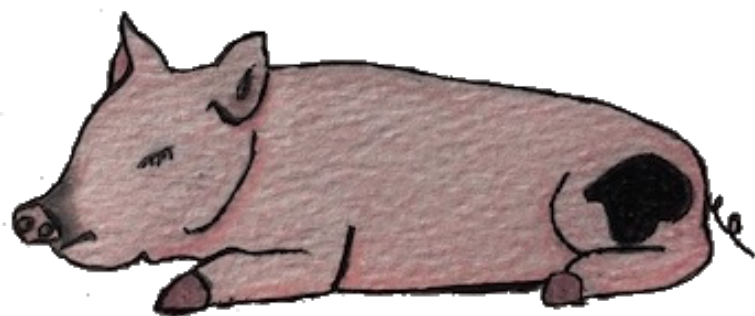


Just then the pig felt something at his back. Rio was pushing Pigsley out of the water and onto the bank.

A very distressed pig lay on the grass, coughing and spluttering.

Rio climbed out of the water, shook himself and lay down next to his friend.

"Are you okay, Pigsley?" he asked. "You gave me a BIG fright."



"Thank you, Rio. Thank you for saving me."
replied the grateful pig. "I'll remember to be
very careful next time."

The friends sat on the grassy bank drying
themselves in the sun. They watched the cranes
stamping their feet in the long grass.

What were they doing?

But there was no time to ask because the sun
was setting behind the hill and they heard the
farmer call.

"Piiiiigsley!"

"Riiiiio!"



The friends stood up and walked home to their dinner and beds. It had been an exciting day and one they would dream of for a long time.

Goodnight Pigsley.

Goodnight Rio.

We look forward to your next adventure.



A Poem

Caity the Grey Crowned Crane

My name is Caity

I'm a crane.

My golden crown
is my claim to fame.

I nest in wetlands,
amongst the reeds,
where my chicks
hatch, hide and feed.

When you hear my call
you know I'm near.

But don't come too close
or I'll fly off in fear.



Interesting Facts

A crane stands about 1 meter tall.

When their wings spread out they measure 2 meters from tip to tip.

Cranes live near water and grassland. They make their nest in marshes or dams with reeds.

When a crane finds a partner, they will stay with each other for life.

A female crane lays between 2 and 4 eggs at a time. Both parents sit on them until they hatch.

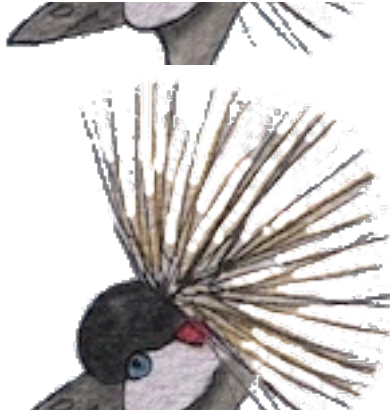
Cranes that are old enough to live away from their parents stay in a big group called a flock.

Cranes eat plants, seeds, insects, snakes, small fish and the eggs of water animals. They stamp the grass to disturb the insects, which they eat.

Like all nature, we need to respect and look after these beautiful birds.

To learn more about the Grey Crowned Crane and other cranes of South Africa, visit the KZN Crane Foundation website:

www.kzncrane.co.za



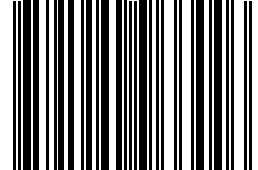
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in:

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