

The Pigman & Me

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Chapter 1

I am a tall, skinny, teenage boy with blond hair. I live with my older sister Betty and my mom. My parents are divorced and dad left us when I was two years old. We move a lot because mom has trouble paying the rent on time. We don't have a lot of money. We were all in the car on the way to our new house when I found my pet chameleon Albert in my moms coffee cup. He got out of his cage and was missing for weeks. When I found Albert in my moms coffee cup he was dead. Mom pulled over so I could bury him. Then we got back in the car to go to our new house.

Chapter 2

When my mom, Betty and I pulled up in front of our new house in Staten Island we were excited. The house was brown and

green and had a big yard. The best part was that it had a huge apple tree in the yard. The worst part was all of the cockroaches inside. I hate cockroaches! Mom set up cockroach killer and we left to go to the movies. When we got back I opened the closet door and 5,000 cockroaches fell out onto me. I started screaming and mom promised to get more cockroach killer. My sister killed as many as she could by stepping on them.

Chapter 3

Since we are poor we can't afford to buy a big house like this by ourselves. My mom's friend Connie helped to pay for the house and she is going to live with us. Connie is Italian and has identical twin sons, Nicky and Joey. Connie and the twins are going to live downstairs in the new house and my mom, my sister, and I are going to live upstairs. They aren't moving in until tomorrow. So I decided to go outside to see

if there were any people around and that's when I met a girl my age named Jennifer. Jennifer is Polish and told me that most people who live here are Polish. She also told me that I live next to the only colored families in town. Jennifer said that the kids in school might be mean to me because I'm not Polish. But she said that she wanted to be my friend. When I went back inside mom had everything unpacked already.

Chapter 4

The next morning mom told Betty and I that we had to stay in our apartment upstairs and not go into Connie and the twin's apartment downstairs. We also had to stay on our half of the yard when we were outside. Then Connie and the twins arrived with a moving van full of all of their things. Their grandma, Nonna Mamie, and grandpa, Nonno Frankie, came with them too. Nonna Mamie went inside the house to clean and

Nonno Frankie came outside with me. He liked the big yard and said that it would be good to grow tomatoes in. Mom yelled at him out the window to stay off our half of the yard. Nonno Frankie and I talked for a little bit longer. He told me some funny jokes. Then mom yelled at me out the window to stay off his half of the yard. He told mom it was okay but she didn't care.

Chapter 5

When it was time for dinner, Nonno Frankie called upstairs and invited us down to eat with them. At first mom said no, but then Nonno Frankie told her a joke and made her laugh and then she agreed. My mom, my sister and I all got ready and then headed downstairs for dinner. As I walked through Connie's apartment I noticed how nice everything was. When we got to the kitchen Nonno Frankie, Nonna Mamie, and Connie served the twins and us the best meal

I had ever seen or eaten. There was so much food and everything tasted so good! There were fried eels, spaghetti, mozzarella, Italian ham, garlic bread, green olives, pork chops, sausages, chicken, wine, and then dessert! There was good conversation and everyone had a great time. Nonno Frankie and Nonna Mamie left on Sunday to go home to Manhattan. I was sad that Nonno Frankie had to go.

Chapter 6

By Tuesday, I missed Nonno Frankie. Jennifer came by and I told her all about how great Nonno Frankie is and promised that she could meet him next weekend. Jennifer took me to her house to meet her parents. They are much older than my mom and they have white hair. Jennifer called them zombies. Jennifer told me that she has eleven older brothers. She said that a lot of kids in this town have old parents and a lot

of brothers and sisters. We decided to go back to my house and sit under the big apple tree and talk. Jennifer told me that she is afraid that she will end up like her mother, a zombie stuck in this town with a lot of kids. I told her that she will escape from this town and so will I. We decided that the apple tree is our escape and that it will remind us that we will get out of this town.

Chapter 7

Nonno Frankie and Nonna Mamie came back next Saturday. They brought all the tools and materials they needed to make a vegetable garden, like shovels, hoses, and seeds. Jennifer came over and we started joking around and helping Nonno Frankie set up the vegetable garden. Once the garden was set up, Nonno Frankie took Jennifer, the twins, and me down to the river to catch killies and crabs. We brought the killies and crabs we caught back to the house and

Connie, Nonna Mamie, and Nonno Frankie got started making another big and delicious dinner. Jennifer stayed over and had dinner with everyone in the house. After dinner Jennifer told Nonno Frankie how everyone in town is a zombie. Nonno Frankie put a bunch of cans in a garbage bag and attached strings to it. He placed the bag in the street so that a car would come by and drag it. When the car came by and dragged the bag it made such a loud noise that all of the zombies stood up to watch! Nonno Frankie woke up the zombies!

Chapter 8

By the end of the summer lots of things happened. My mom got us four dogs from her job at the animal shelter (one of them named “Lady” was my dog), Connie began to date a butcher she met named Chops, and Jennifer and I spent a lot of time in our apple tree eating apples and talking about

everything. It was almost time for school to start, so mom took Betty and I to the Salvation Army to get some back-to-school clothes. I was starting to get nervous about starting at a new school with all new kids. Jennifer told me all about the kids that I would meet, but I was still really nervous. Nonno Frankie saw that I was scared about starting at a new school and he started to talk to me and joke with me to calm me down. He gave me lots of advice and told me to just be myself and be happy with who I am. Nonno Frankie was becoming my pigman. A pigman is someone who helps you.

Chapter 9

On the first day of school I found out that I had a lot of classes with Jennifer. This made me happy. All of the kids Jennifer had told me about were in my classes. Strangely enough, the first trouble I got myself into

wasn't with any of the bad kids Jennifer told me about. It involved a nice, smart boy named John Quinn. In gym class me and another boy were playing paddleball for a while. Then John Quinn came up to me and told me that I had to give him my paddle. I didn't know that you could only use the paddles for fifteen minutes, so I got nervous and scared and did something stupid. I hit him with my paddle and wound up giving him a black eye. The gym teacher came over and told me about the fifteen-minute rule and I felt really bad. I kept saying that I was sorry to John over and over again. Later on he told everyone that he was going to get me back on Monday after school. I was scared because I had never been in a fight and didn't even know how to fight. I was upset because it was an accident and I didn't mean to hurt John.

Chapter 10

That weekend I was sitting by the apple tree alone when Nonno Frankie came over. He saw that I was scared and upset and asked me what was wrong. I told him all about what had happened in school with John Quinn and he gave me some pointers on how to fight and how to avoid getting into fights in the future. By the time Monday morning came I was very nervous. All day in school I couldn't think about anything because I was so scared. After school there were 300 kids waiting across the street with John Quinn standing in the middle. I walked over to John and we both put our fists up. I yelled and tried to kick him like Nonno Frankie taught me, but I missed and wound up falling down. Everyone thought John had punched me, including John. John walked away and Moose (a bully) came over to hit me more. That's when my sister came running over and hit Moose and knocked him down. She told everyone that if they tried to hurt me again, she would rip their

guts out. The boys didn't look happy, but they all left. The next morning the principal made John and I shake hands and we became friends. After that I didn't mind going to school at all.

Chapter 11

In December one of our dogs had 9 puppies! So including the 4 dogs we already had, we had 13 dogs in the house. My mom wanted to sell the puppies, but no one was calling to buy them. Then something terrible happened. One day Lady (my dog) bit Betty. It wasn't a big bite, but mom made us put Lady to sleep. We buried her in the backyard near my apple tree. Right after Lady died, my sister got really sick and had a very high fever. One day when I was sitting near her, her eyes rolled up in her head and she started shaking. I was so scared that I called my mom for help. Luckily, Betty was better in a couple of

weeks and was able to go back to school. Moose still picked on me in school sometimes, but nothing too terrible. Nonno Frankie was always there to help me with anything I asked, just like a pigman should. He taught Jennifer, the twins, and me how to catch and throw a baseball. Jennifer and I didn't need any help sled riding though. We were the best! Times got tough at the house because mom lost her job and Connie and her boyfriend Chops were having problems. We had almost no food in the house. Mom finally told Connie that she could let her boyfriend come to the house as long as he brought over meat for them to eat. Connie was very happy about this.

Chapter 12

By the time spring came, there had been a lot of death. My dog Lady died, my neighbors chicken died, and my neighbor's baby died. Jennifer and I started talking

about death a lot while we sat in our apple tree. We were depressed and didn't ever want to die. One day Nonno Frankie noticed that we were upset when we were in our apple tree and he asked us what was wrong. We told him that we were worried about death and he told us not to worry. Nonno Frankie told us that we wouldn't talk or think about death if we were free and alive inside. He told Jennifer and I not to let wacko mothers or zombie parents make us forget how great we are. Then he ran over to where the dogs were fenced in and barking. We have 26 dogs now because some of the dogs had babies. Jennifer and I ran after him. He threw open the fence and started yelling, "I am different!" Jennifer and I yelled it too. Nonno Frankie, Jennifer, me, and all of the dogs ran around the yard. It felt like we were all leaving death far behind us.

Chapter 13

From that day on, Jennifer and I decided that we would never forget how important freedom and being a little daring is. We even started going up in airplanes and making new friends. One of my school projects even got published in the school paper! It was starting to feel like this town was home and Nonno Frankie was like a father to me. I really felt alive. But then the bad things began to happen. I did a presentation in science class on trees and I told the class how you can kill a tree by cutting the bark all the way around. Sure enough, a few days later Moose and the other bullies cut the bark around the apple tree Jennifer and I loved so much. They killed it. The next bad thing was the worst ever. One night Connie talked to my sister Betty about love and boys because Betty wanted to know and mom would never tell her. When mom found out she got really

mad at Connie and yelled at her and said a lot of mean things. I knew nothing would ever be the same.

Chapter 14

Mom and Connie stopped talking and Nonno Frankie and Nonna Mamie didn't come around because they were fighting. Then Connie told mom that she was getting married to her boyfriend Chops and that she was going to move in with him. This meant that we would have to sell the house and move again. It was really hard to say goodbye to Jennifer. Jennifer was my best friend and she cried a lot the week before I left. As it turns out she grew up and married a boy from town and never did escape. It was also hard to say goodbye to my pigman, Nonno Frankie. Mom had told my sister and I not to talk to him, Nonna Mamie, Connie, or the twins, but I didn't care. I needed to talk to him. I asked him what was going to

happen to me and what I was going to become. He told me to close my eyes and concentrate and I will see the answer. What I saw was a big, golden pen. Nonno Frankie told me that I would be a writer. He told me that whenever I need an answer to something I should close my eyes and I will see it. Then Nonno Frankie and I shook hands and said goodbye. I knew a piece of my heart was with him. My mom, Betty, and I got in the car and mom started talking about how great our new apartment would be. I looked out the window at the town as we drove away.