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Raymond G. Falgui

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The Big Bad Wolf Versus Hogzilla

by

Raymond G. Falgui

“Today more than a billion domestic pigs live among us. There are millions more in the wild and the numbers are escalating rapidly ... Pigs are exceptionally adaptable animals, and in many places their natural predators have declined or been eradicated altogether...”

“And then there was Hogzilla – an allegedly feral pig who roamed the forests and pastures of a 1500-acre fish hatchery, gorging himself on anything he came across.”

- from blogs on the *National Geographic* website
(<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/ng-blogs/>;
<http://www.thorninpaw.com/mt/archives/000745.html>)

It started the way it was supposed to, the way it had been for centuries, perhaps even millennia.

The Big Bad Wolf knocked on the door of the First Little Pig.

“Little pig, little pig, let me come in,” he said.

The words were familiar and comforting. The Big Bad Wolf was a traditionalist. He had been doing this forever, it seemed, but he had never once changed the words – and never once wanted to. That was what he was supposed to say. And the little pig was supposed to say: “Not by the hair of my chinny chin-chin.”

Instead, the little pig opened the door.

And the little pig wasn't so little anymore.

The First Little Pig was huge: he was almost as big as the wolf, and clearly outweighed him by several hundred pounds. The wolf's arms looked positively scrawny next to the First Little Pig's muscled haunches.

“What do you want, Wolf?” the First Little Pig asked in an unfriendly way.

The stories never said anything about what happened after the Big Bad Wolf blew

the house down and got his paws on the little pig. The Big Bad Wolf couldn't speak for other wolves, but he himself had never been cruel. One sharp nip on the neck, and the pig slipped into oblivion as its lifeblood spilled out of it. Quick and painless. The Big Bad Wolf did not torture his victims or play with his food. He just did what he was supposed to, what came naturally to him.

The pigs never resisted. The Big Bad Wolf couldn't remember the last time he'd had to fight for a meal.

But he would have to fight this time. The Big Bad Wolf could see it in the First Little Pig's eyes. He would have to fight the First Little Pig. And he would probably win – Nature had given the wolf the not inconsiderable advantages of claws and fangs. But the First Little Pig would hurt him – hurt him badly – before it went down. And perhaps it was because he had not had to fight for so long, but the Big Bad Wolf discovered that he had no stomach for such a fight.

“What do you want, Wolf?” the First Little Pig asked again.

“Uhhhhh ... nothing,” the Big Bad Wolf said, turning quickly away. But then he

turned back.

“Uhhhh ... if you don’t mind my asking, Pig, how did you get so big?”

“Human growth hormone.”

“Excuse me?”

“The farmer injects me with growth hormone. I get big. Then they harvest the hormones from me. They get big.”

“I ... see,” the Big Bad Wolf said, though he actually didn’t.

“That doesn’t seem very natural,” he added, with a hint of complaint in his voice.

The First Little Pig laughed loudly.

“Nature is what the farmer wants it to be, Wolf. Try the pig down the street. He’s owned by an organic farmer.”

Then the First Little Pig slammed the door in the face of the Big Bad Wolf.

So the Big Bad Wolf could do nothing but walk down the road and knock on the door of the Second Little Pig.

“Little pig, little pig, let me come in,” he said.

When the door opened, the Big Bad Wolf was much relieved. The Second Little Pig was bigger than he remembered pigs were supposed to be (but they’d been getting bigger and bigger over the years, now that he thought about it), but nowhere near the size of the First Little Pig. I can handle this pig, the Big Bad Wolf thought to himself.

But immediately he began to doubt himself. The Second Little Pig was not as big as the first one, but it seemed tougher – harder – somehow. There wasn’t much fat on it; what it did have seemed to be pure muscle. Its hooves were not dull but chipped and cracked, as if they’d been used in many a fight. And the Big Bad Wolf couldn’t be sure if he’d just imagined it, but he thought he’d seen the sharp glint of fangs when the pig briefly opened its mouth.

But that wasn’t the most disturbing thing by far. What disturbed him the most, the Big Bad Wolf realized, was the way the pig was looking at him. It was an oddly familiar

look, but the wolf was certain he’d never seen such a look before on the face of a pig.

It took a few seconds before he realized where he’d seen such a look before.

“Cat got your tongue, Wolf?” the Second Little Pig asked. “What’s the matter? Never had anything look at you as prey before?”

“This isn’t right,” the Big Bad Wolf said. “I’m the predator, you’re the prey. It’s not supposed to be the other way around.”

“It is what it is, Wolf,” the Second Little Pig answered, not unkindly. “The farmer stopped feeding us regular. ‘Feed off the fat of the land,’ he said, but the land’s got no fat on it. Pretty soon, neither did my brothers and sisters. They starved and died. I didn’t want to go out that way, so I ate them. Ate their corpses one by one, and found that I had a liking for meat. But you can’t get meat by waiting for it to die. You’ve got to hunt it. I started with rats, then worked my way up.

“Can you guess what I’ve started eating now?” the Second Little Pig asked, smiling broadly to show that all its teeth were now sharp and deadly.

“But I’m the Big Bad Wolf.”

“No one’s even sure what good or bad is anymore, Wolf,” the Second Little Pig said. “Now git! I’d eat you too, but I’ve already had my fill of your brothers.”

And the Second Little Pig opened the door wide, and the Big Bad Wolf could see in the living room the skins of three of his brothers, laid out like rugs.

The Big Bad Wolf fled with the sound of the Second Little Pig’s laughter ringing in his ears.

The Big Bad Wolf went up the mountain to tell his pack the bad news.

But the pack already knew. “We’re moving over the next mountain to the nature preserve,” they said. “They throw dead meat to you from the trucks, so you never have to hunt or go hungry again.

“This is not the way of things!” the Big Bad Wolf howled to the moon, but his brothers did not hear him. They had slunk away, their tails between their legs.

The only animal left on the mountain with the Big Bad Wolf was an old coyote who sometimes trailed the pack, feasting on its leavings.

“Grandfather, what do I do?” the Big Bad Wolf asked.

“Near the house of the Second Little Pig is the lair of the Third Little Pig, but that is its name no more. The Third Little Pig was also injected with human growth hormone, but it escaped from its farmer and turned feral in the wilderness, becoming the creature known as the Hogzilla.”

“I have heard of the Hogzilla,” the Big Bad Wolf said. “The farmers banded together and hunted it down and killed it.”

“No,” the coyote said. “That is the tale the farmers tell. The Hogzilla killed many of the farmers and scattered the rest. Now it rules unchallenged in its own domain.”

“How could such a thing come to pass?” the Big Bad Wolf asked.

“You are a wolf, and still remember that you are a wolf,” the coyote said. “You already know the answer to that question.”

The coyote left the wolf then. For many nights, the Big Bad Wolf howled to the moon, mulling over the coyote’s words.

At last, the Big Bad Wolf came to the house of the Third Little Pig (aka the Hogzilla). He knocked on the door, then said the words so dear to his heart.

“Little pig, little pig, let me come in”

The door opened – but there are no words to describe the Hogzilla. No words, at least, that could be used for a pig. Instead, one uses the words to describe a force of nature, for the shadow of the Hogzilla fell

over the wolf like the darkness that blankets the land.

“What do you want?” the Hogzilla asked, its voice the rumbling of thunder. But it was as if the wolf did not hear, or heard words inside his own head.

“Then I’ll huff, and I’ll puff, and I’ll blow your house in!” the Big Bad Wolf said.

And with a howl, the Big Bad Wolf blew until there was hardly any breath in him. When it was over, the house of the Hogzilla was no more, though the Hogzilla itself remained unmoved.

“Stupid git!” the Hogzilla said, but the rumbling of its voice was now the coming of an earthquake. “Stupid git! You smashed my house. You’ll pay for that.”

But the Big Bad Wolf only smiled, and bared his fangs.

The Hogzilla won the battle, of course, and it is said that nothing now remains of the Big Bad Wolf except for a pair of furry foot-warmers the Hogzilla uses on cold winter nights.

But there is another tale the old coyote tells, and in his telling of it, it was the Big Bad Wolf who won. The Big Bad Wolf devoured the Hogzilla, then grew so large and terrible from his meal that he promptly paid a visit to the First and Second Little Pigs. But that was only to set things to rights. For the old coyote says the Big Bad Wolf does not even hunt pigs anymore. Instead, he hunts a prey that he holds responsible for the upending of the natural order, not to mention the rewriting of traditional fairy tales. But what such a creature is I do not know, nor did the coyote tell.

Excuse me, for a moment, but I think I hear a knocking on my door.