

Reading Notes

plaster	a paste applied to walls which hardens as it dries
roller towel	a long, continuous towel sewed together and hung on a roller; it can be washed and reused
dagger	a short sword-like weapon
specimen	an example

Vocabulary

1. one of the pigs is a **runt**. _____
2. I know more about raising a **litter** of pigs than you do. _____
3. This is the most terrible case of **injustice** I ever heard of. _____
4. Saved from an **untimely** death. _____
5. No, I only **distribute** pigs to early risers. _____

Comprehension Questions

1. Name each Arable family member, including the children's ages. _____

2. How does Fern convince her father not to kill the runt? What is her reasoning? _____

3. What is the first thing Fern teaches her pig? _____

4. What does Fern name her pig? Why does she choose that name? _____

5. Why does Fern say "Wilbur" instead of answering her teacher's questions about Pennsylvania's capital? _____

Quotations

“But it’s unfair,” cried Fern. “The pig couldn’t help being born small, could it? If I had been very small at birth, would you have killed me?” Mr. Arable smiled. “Certainly not,” he said, looking down at his daughter with love. “But this is different. A little girl is one thing, a little runty pig is another.”

Fern couldn’t take her eyes off the tiny pig. “Oh,” she whispered. “Oh, look at him! He’s absolutely perfect.”

Discussion Questions

1. *What does the word “arable” mean? From what Latin word does “arable” come? Why is it a good name for a farm family?
2. Study the pictures on pages 5 and 6. How has the illustrator contrasted Avery and Fern?
3. Reread Fern’s objection to the runt’s death and Mr. Arable’s reply in the first quote above. In what way is a pig different than a little girl? Who do you agree with, and why?

* Discussion questions that have a * are NECESSARY to discuss with students, as they may appear on a test and are generally important in understanding the full flavor of the story.

Enrichment

Focus Passage: Copy the 2nd and 3rd paragraphs from page 5 (beginning with “Can I have a pig ...” and ending with “Let’s eat!”)

What is Mr. Arable subtly trying to communicate to Avery through his response? _____

Reading Notes

apple-blossom time	springtime
enchanted	fascinated
manure	animal excrement
cellar	a room beneath the barn

Vocabulary

1. He would stand and **gaze** up at her with adoring eyes. _____
2. Fern **peered** through the door. _____
3. It **relieved** her mind to know that her baby would sleep covered up _____
4. he would stand and watch the bus until it **vanished** around a turn. _____
5. When she **waded** into the brook, Wilbur waded in with her. _____

Comprehension Questions

1. How does Wilbur keep himself warm on cold nights? _____

2. Describe some of the ways Fern pampers Wilbur. _____

3. How does Fern feel about Wilbur? How does Wilbur feel about Fern? _____

4. Who buys Wilbur? For how much? _____
