

Chapter XXII

Back with Fern

By Keisha and Morgan

As soon as Fern found out that Wilbur's life was in trouble again, she knew she had to come up with a plan that would save him. Since money seemed to be the big issue, she decided that's what she needed to make sure Wilbur was safe for good. If she bought Wilbur with her own money from Mr. Zuckerman, Wilbur couldn't be sold for bacon.

Fern knew her first job would be to talk to her Uncle Homer and beg him to allow her to buy Wilbur instead of selling him to be butchered and then to talk her father into letting her keep Wilbur if she was able to get him back.

The very next morning she went to visit her Uncle Homer on his farm. With big tears in her eyes, she begged her uncle to sell Wilbur to her. He agreed because he could see how much Fern loved Wilbur and wanted to help him. However, because he really needed the money, he told Fern that he would have to ask a fair price for him. He told Fern that if she could come up with thirty dollars in two weeks Wilbur was hers.

Thirty dollars was a lot of money...way more than Fern had, but she knew she just had to get it somehow. She ran to the barn and told all of the animals what Uncle Homer had said and told them about her plan. Wilbur began crying when he heard the news. "We'll never be able to come up with the money in time! I am doomed!" he said.

"Stop that!" scolded Fern. "I will get the money somehow."

As soon as she got home, she begged her father to let her keep Wilbur if she could raise the money in time. Mr. Arable never could resist Fern when she was compassionate about someone or something and agreed. Then Fern ran into her bedroom and grabbed her piggy bank. She broke it open and counted her money. She had four dollars and twenty-three cents. She needed to raise a lot more and quickly, but how?

Soon it came to her. She would ask her teacher and the rest of her class to help her. Maybe they could hold a read-a-thon. If she could get all of the other nineteen kids in her class to raise a dollar each, she would have

almost enough money to buy Wilbur. She was sure they would help if she could convince them how important it was to spare Wilbur's life.

The next day during sharing time, Fern told her class all about her big problem and begged for their help. She was so convincing that they all agreed to help her. A read-a-thon was held that week and the class raised a total of \$20.00 to help Fern save Wilbur.

Fern went back to see Wilbur and the other animals at the Zuckerman farm to tell them all about the money that she and the other children in her class had raised. "That's wonderful," said Wilbur, "but we still need more than five dollars and we have less than a week to get it."

"Don't worry," said the other animals, "we came up with a plan that just might work!"

As usual, the bossy goose took over and explained their plan to Fern. "We think you should make a bet, bet, bet with your brother Avery. Tell him that you bet writing will appear in a web above Wilbur's pen tomorrow," she said. "If he loses he has to chip in the last \$5.77 cents to help you buy back Wilbur. We've heard him say a thousand times, times, times how the writing in the web over Wilbur's pen was just a coincidence and that it could never happen again."

"It's a great idea, but how can it work now that Charlotte is gone?" replied Fern.

"That's where we come in," replied Charlotte's three daughters: Joy, Aranea, and Nellie. "We have been practicing and we will each weave a special web tonight - carrying on where our mother left off."

Fern agreed to the plan, and made the bet with her brother, who gladly accepted. Charlotte's daughters worked all night long until they were exhausted.

In the morning above Wilbur's pen were 3 webs. "Long, Live, Wilbur," they read. Avery was shocked when he saw them but of course paid up. Fern then handed over the \$30.00 to Mr. Zuckerman. With a smile, he let Wilbur out from his pen and sent him home with Fern.

Wilbur lived a long and happy life at the Arable's home and never forgot all that his friends had done for him, especially Fern, Charlotte, and her three daughters: Joy, Aranea, and Nellie.