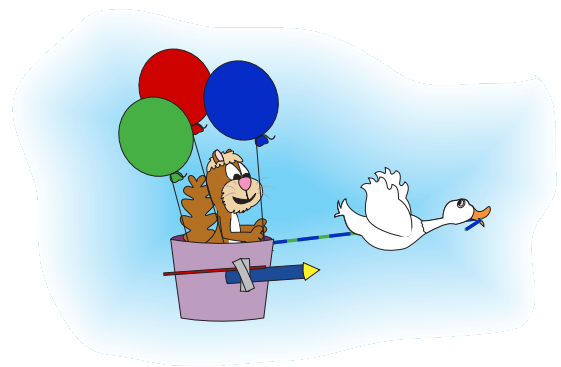
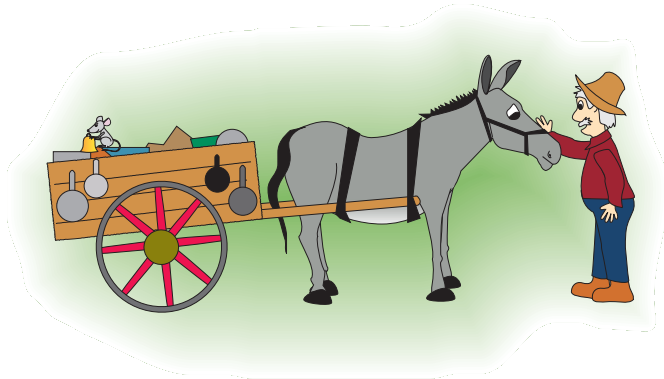




# Third Grade SE

## Reading Book

### Sample Chapters



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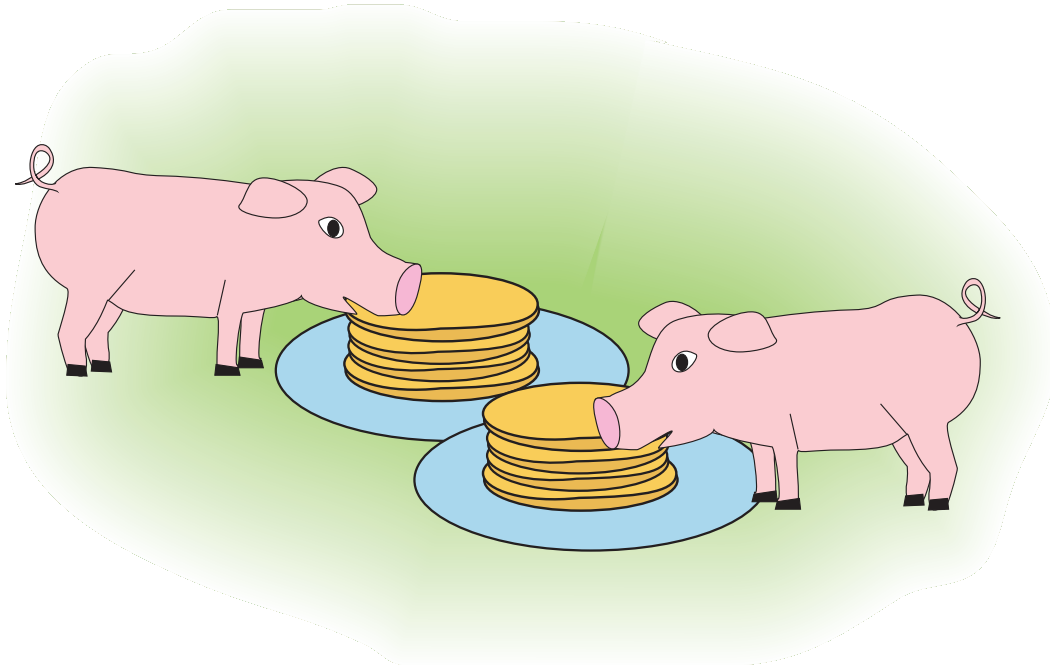
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# *Pigs in the Pancakes*

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by Brian Davis

## Vocabulary Words

combination  
dickering  
inspector  
invested  
livestock  
professional

A customer of Big Tom's Café believes every child should have his favorite animal as a pet. When Buddy buys two pigs from him, there are some very interesting problems at the café.

## Chapter 1 Open For Breakfast

I sat at a booth at Big Tom's. My markers were spread out on the table. I was just finishing a big project. The future of Big Tom's Café rested on my shoulders.

"That looks lovely, Gracie," said my mom as she admired my work.

Dad walked in with a case of supplies. He passed by the booth, too. "It looks like we hired a professional artist!"

I smiled, "Maybe I should hang this in an art museum."

Dad rubbed his chin, "You would have to give it some fancy name, like the Mona Lisa. No, that one's already taken."

I giggled. Sometimes my dad can be so silly.

"I know," said my dad. "You can call it, 'Open For Breakfast!'"

"How did you ever think of that?" teased my mom. "You're a genius."

"There's just something about it that says, Open For Breakfast," explained my dad.

"Maybe it's the words I wrote on it?" I said.

"Could be," nodded Dad.

I finished coloring in the last egg yolk. Big Tom's great announcement was now finished. Starting tomorrow, our café was open for breakfast. I grabbed the tape and looked for just the right place for the poster.

Mom and I had hired a cook to help us at breakfast. The cook's name was Natalie. She was about the same age as my grandmother. She had some experience with Big Tom's Café. Her husband and she were our very first customers.

Natalie lives on a farm with her husband, Rockwell. Everyone calls him "Rocky." I learned that in her interview. Maybe you think an eight year old shouldn't be interviewing an adult for a job. But Mom has always said I am a good judge of character. Besides, I was filling salt shakers while Mom talked to her.

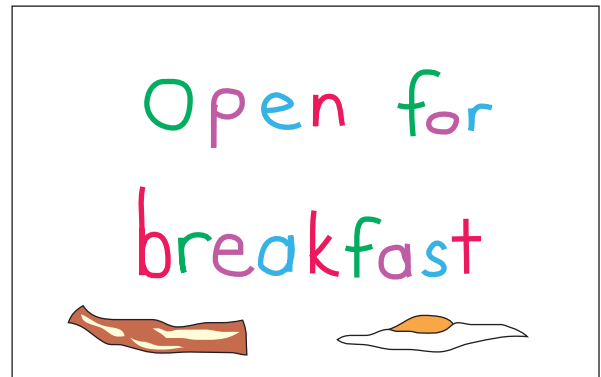
My other brothers and sister were doing schoolwork. I'm usually the first one done with my work. It just comes easy for me. When I finish, I like to hang around the café. You meet lots of interesting people, like Natalie.

She has five children. All of them are grown up. She likes to cook, but her youngest son just left for college. Now, it's just her and Rocky. Her husband likes to eat at Big Tom's for lunch. It isn't just the food. It's also a time to relax and talk to friends.

Natalie said she wanted the job to keep an eye on Rocky. I knew she was just teasing. Taking the job was Rocky's idea. He patted his round stomach and gave his wife all the credit. When he heard we were looking for a breakfast cook, he knew his wife would be perfect.

It was also the perfect job for her. She missed cooking for all her children. Plus, her farm was very close to the café. In fact, one of their pastures was a short walk from our backdoor. So I guess you could say we were neighbors.

I'm glad we hired Natalie. She has a nice smile and a cheerful laugh. Yesterday morning, she came in for training. We didn't train her. She trained us.



Natalie isn't the bossy type, until she gets into the kitchen. She looked over the supply room and made a list of everything she would need. Natalie and Rocky raised hogs, as well as other animals. She insisted we use meat from her farm.

Dad wasn't too sure about that at first. He called it a conflict of interest. I'm not sure what that meant. But after he tried some of the fresh sausage, smoked ham, and hickory bacon, he was very interested. There was no conflict at all.

"Rocky is bringing up my sausage grinder. We'll put it here," she pointed to the things she wanted my father to move.

Next she grabbed a big can of baking powder. "This will never do," she said. "We need to keep this in the freezer."

"The freezer?" asked Dad. "I don't think it's going to melt."

"I don't want my baking powder to lose its bounce. We'll only serve flaky biscuits and fluffy pancakes here," she answered.

Natalie was still giving orders when Rocky walked in the door. He watched for awhile and smiled. "I have the sausage grinder," he finally announced. "Maybe you could give me a hand, Oliver."

My dad nodded. He considered it a break. Rocky laughed as he walked to his pick-up truck.

"What's so funny?" asked my dad.

"The look on your face," answered Rocky.

"My guess is you've seen that look before," said Dad.

"Sometimes when I look in the mirror," said Rocky. "I know exactly what you're thinking. You give Natalie a job. Now, you're wondering who hired who."

Dad sighed, "Exactly."

Rocky patted Dad on the back. "It will be all right. Once she's settled in, she'll do all she can to make Big Tom's a big success. Why do you think she wants everything perfectly organized?"

Dad looked puzzled, "To wear me out?"

Rocky laughed, "No. She knows she's going to be busy. By the time she's done with the kitchen, she'll be able to do the work of three cooks."

That sounded exciting to me. It was like a second grand opening. Only, this time I hoped I didn't have to do the cooking. I already had a job for the breakfast time. I was going to be a waitress.

Mom had the schedule all worked out. I would have to get up extra early. Mom would teach Mark and Tracy first thing in the morning. Buddy and I would help at Big Tom's. When Mark and Tracy finished, Mom would teach Buddy and me. After the breakfast crowd left, we would all work on assignments.

Homeschool had been fun so far at Big Tom's the last few weeks. We'd sit in the booths. Mark and Tracy even helped teach Buddy and me sometimes. Mom and Dad were always around if we had any questions. Sometimes, I helped Mark and Tracy study for tests. I held flashcards or quizzed them from Mom's teacher's manuals. It was fun being the teacher, only Mark wouldn't sit in the corner when he didn't do what I asked.

"Baby Girl, hold the door open for us," said Dad. Rocky and my dad were carrying the sausage grinder.

"Baby Girl!" I thought. I'm a waitress and a teacher. I can't believe he called me "Baby Girl."

# *The Bobcat Cowboys Take the Cake Part 1*

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## Vocabulary Words

appetizer  
bridle  
corral  
mutton  
notorious

by Brian Davis

Starlet Fussybunny and Frazzle O'Hare are about to be married. They are planning a wedding without bobcats. Is that possible in Rowdent Gulch?

**Chapter 1**  
**Here Comes the Bridle**

Bobbybill and Bubba lifted the gate onto the hinges. The new corral was now finished. Billybob would be back at anytime with their new livestock. He had the animals hidden on the mountain. The bobcats didn't want the rightful owners to steal them back.

"It's good to learn something new," said Bubba.

"You mean corral building or sheep rustling?" asked Bobbybill.

"Sheepback riding," said Bubba. "It will be nice to not have to walk everywhere."

"Oh, that," said Bobbybill. "It will also make our getaways much quicker. Think of all the time we'll save. We were really getting behind on our bank robbing."

"If we don't have the time, we can't do the crime," grunted Billybob as he joined the conversation.

He'd just arrived with the sheep. The bobcat had ropes around the sheeps' necks. Billybob led them into the corral. The sheep trotted around the pen looking for a way to escape.

"I know how we can save time," said Bobbybill. "We can just eat the sheep. That way we don't have to steal to get money to buy things from Otto Muskrat's store."

Billybob sighed, "It was a lot easier when we could just steal things from Otto's store."

"Then he went and put up that NO STEALING sign," nodded Bobbybill.

"Oh well. After we paid Otto to have Davy Beaver deliver all the stuff we stole, it was cheaper to buy it anyway," said Billybob. "Now that Davy's working for him again, he has free delivery when you actually pay for your stuff."

"Maybe we should have stolen Davy Beaver, too," suggested Bobbybill.

"Oh no! He would eat us out of house and home," said Billybob. "Think of all the things we have that are made out of wood."

"We could steal the NO STEALING sign," suggested Bobbybill.

Billybob smiled, "That's a good idea. I'm glad to see my smartness rubbing off on you."

"Some rubbed off on me, too," said Bubba. "Then I took a bath."

"You're right there," said Bobbybill. "You're clean out of smartness."

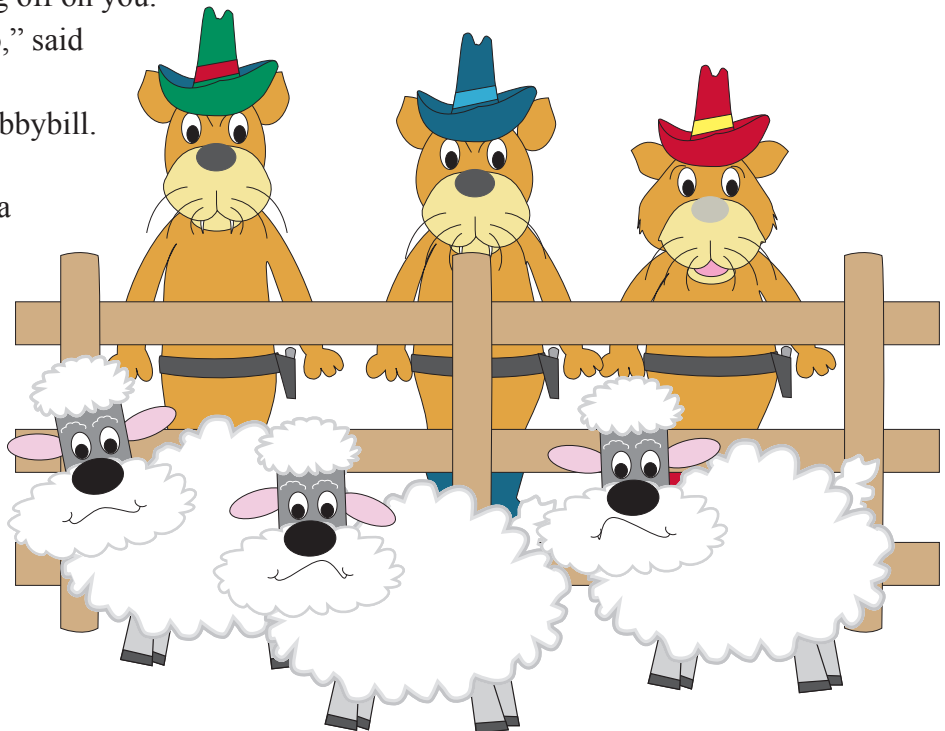
"I like the sheep," said Bubba as he reached through the corral and patted them on the head.

"They're so wooly. They'll be comfortable to ride."

"When can we start?" asked Bobbybill.

"As soon as those bridles arrive," answered Billybob.

"We can't go sheepback riding if we can't steer. You did order those bridles, didn't you Bubba?"



"I put the order in the mail today. I still have an extra order form if we ever need to replace one. Here it is," Bubba handed the paper to Billybob.

"Why would we need to replace one?" asked Billybob.

"I've heard a lot of sheep have been stolen lately. Three were taken outside of Rowdent Gulch two days ago," explained Bubba.

"Two days ago?" asked Bobbybill. "Isn't that when we were stealing these three sheep outside of Rowdent Gulch?"

"Yep," said Bubba. "It's a good thing we didn't run into those sheep wrestlers."

"That's sheep rustlers, Bubba," corrected Billybob. "Not sheep wrestlers."

"So don't wrestle with them again, Bubba. You got them all dizzy," added Bobbybill.

"But I was winning," smiled Bubba. "I'm pretty good at sheep wrestling."

"Bubba," Billybob was looking at the order form. "What is this?"

"That's the order form for the bridles. See?" Bubba pointed to the lines on the paper. "I put our names on this line. Then I put our ages here, and our height and weight on the next line. Then you check a box that asks if you're ugly or good looking."

"Why would they ask us all those kind of questions?" asked Bobbybill.

"To make sure we get the right size bridle," explained Bubba. "And, if you're really ugly, they'll send you a handsome bridle so everyone has something nice to look at."

"Did you check ugly or good looking for me?" asked Bobbybill.

"Ugly, of course. I knew you'd want a handsome bridle," said Bubba.

"Thanks," smiled Bobbybill.

"Wait," said Billybob. He shook the order form. "This isn't for mail order bridles. It says mail order brides. Bubba, you went and ordered us some wives!"

"Oh no!" cried Bubba. "We're going to need three more sheep. Give me that order form and I'll send for more bridles."

Billybob tore the order form into tiny pieces. He ground it into the dirt with the heel of his boot. Bubba looked upset. He picked up the pieces of paper.

"Our wives aren't going to like riding sheep they can't steer," said Bubba.

"Hush-up, Bubba," said Billybob. "We're not getting married to some mail order brides."

"Cause it would break the hearts of all the girl bobcats around here?" asked Bobbybill.

"No," explained Billybob. "Mrs. Bobcats think they have to run everything. First they'll want us to wash our paws before eating. Then they'll want us to say please and thank you when we're holding up stagecoaches. The next thing you know, they'll only want us to rob slow trains, because fast ones are too dangerous."

"But isn't that like mom?" asked Bobbybill.

"Before Daddybob married Momma, he was the most notorious bobcat in the whole territory. Afterwards, he was only the most notorious bobcat in Rowdent Gulch," Billybob reminded them.

"Momma didn't want Daddybob to travel," Bobbybill remembered.

"She wanted Daddybob to teach us everything he knew," said Bubba. "Remember when he used to take us ambushing?"

"And chicken thievin'," Billybob remembered with a smile. "Those were great father-cub times. I don't think we would have turned out as well as we did if it weren't for those times with Daddybob."

"We might have ended up honest," Bobbybill shuddered.

*The Bobcat Cowboys Take the Cake*

“Then poor old Sheriff Prairie Dog would have nothing to do,” said Bubba.

“What would the whole town do without us?” added Bobbybill. “If we didn’t break things and steal things, half the stores would close down. Critters would lose their jobs. Cubs and pups would go hungry. Rowdent Gulch might become a ghost town.”

“And ghosts are scary,” added Bubba.

“There’s only one thing to do,” said Billybob. “We’ll have to stop the pony express and get the order back. We don’t want to end up with three brides.”

“We were supposed to rob the toy store today,” said Bobbybill.

“We’ll just have to reschedule,” said Billybob.

“But I’m out of bubbles,” sighed Bubba.