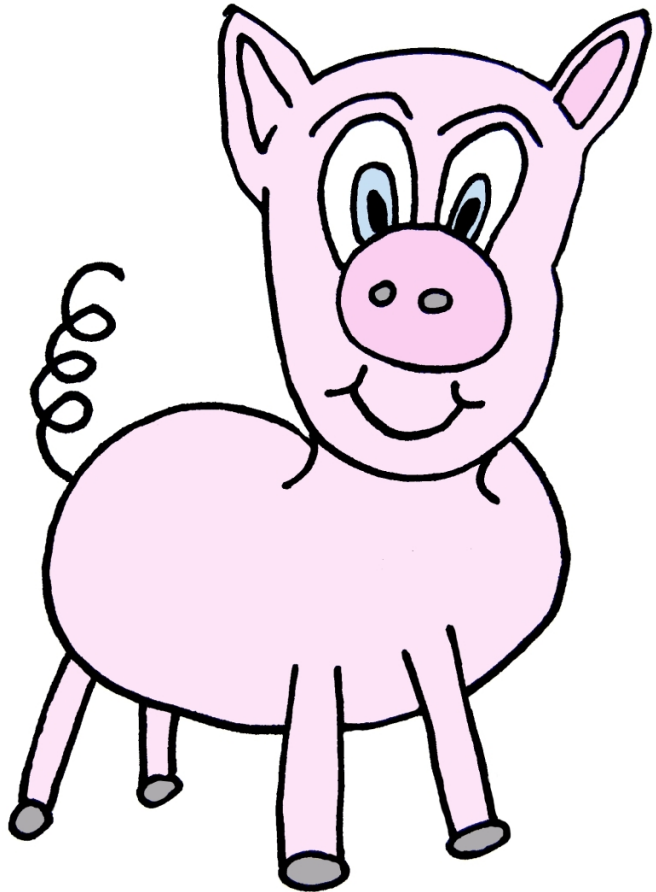


# Thomas and Valentine



Ana Sánchez de Abajo and Adrie Berg



For Pek.



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## *The market*

A long time ago after a long journey a young farmer named Thomas arrived in a small distant town. Thomas was a courageous brave man who, together with his wife Miranda, wanted to start a new life as a farmer. They had bought a small farm and the only thing they were still missing were some farm animals.

One morning Thomas got up bright and early and started walking full of anticipation to a neighbouring town. This town had a market where they sold all kinds of animals.

The market was huge with lots and lots of corridors which led Thomas as through a maze past strange new smells and sounds.

At the market they had a lot of different animals for sale and Thomas had to think about which animals he needed to buy and which would be most beneficial to have on his farm. He did not have a lot of money so he needed to think well about his purchases and buy only the animals that they needed the most.

While walking across the market one of the first animals he encountered were chickens. They were quietly picking seeds from the ground and were healthy looking, with soft feathers and a shiny orange beak which you could see reflecting the light from some distance. Thomas thought that these animals would be easy to take care of and he imagined himself gathering fresh eggs every morning. He decided to buy a nice pair.

In the next stall he noticed a number of sheep, covered in soft white wool. This wool would be perfect for Miranda and she could use it to make nice warm clothes. He bought some sheep and continued his walk across the market.

At the end of the path he heard a familiar sound, '*miaow, miaow!*'. Thomas thought about the farm and that it would probably house quite some mice and a cat would help them to make these mice disappear. Thomas liked the idea of a farm without mice and bought a pretty black kitten with beautiful green eyes.



## ***Oink, Oink***

Although he already had quite some animals to take home Thomas had the feeling that he was missing something. A special animal that would accompany him and would be his friend in this new phase of his life. After a stroll over the market he did not find any special animal that convinced him to buy it, until he entered a small path and suddenly was faced by a strange little pink animal.

The animal had very little hair, a strange snout and a little tail like he had never seen before. He approached the merchant and asked *'What kind of animal is that? I have never seen an animal like that before'*. The merchant replied, "To be honest, I have no idea. This animal is new in this country and I have only a few animals for sale".

Thomas was very surprised and his curiosity was aroused. He asked *'What do they eat? What is their use? Do they provide milk? Do they lay eggs? Why does it make such a strange 'oink oink' sound?'*

The merchant was able to respond to some of the questions. He only knew the animal ate little acorns, it did not give any milk and did not lay any eggs but he did not know anything more about these special animals.

As soon as Thomas heard the term '*acorns*' he directly thought '*What a coincidence!*'. This was the animal that he had to buy because on the farm there were quite a few oak trees that produced big shiny acorns and for this animal they could be used as food. Also, Thomas was enchanted by the pink round snout, the big ears and the small curly tail of the animal. He could not get the sweet soft '*oink oink*' sound out of his mind, so he bought one of the strange animals.

Together with his new animals he began the trip back to the farm where his wife Miranda was waiting impatiently to see which animals her husband would bring home.

When he arrived Thomas told her about his fantastic adventure at the market and showed her the chickens, the sheep and the little kitten he had bought. Miranda was very pleased with the animals because now they had a source of eggs and soft wool. Miranda was terribly afraid of mice so she was very happy with the cute kitten.

Suddenly Miranda moved with her nose and noted a peculiar smell. *'Argh, what a foul smell! What do you have in that crate that is making the strange 'oink oink' sound?'*, she said. Then Thomas showed her his new friend.

Miranda looked horrified at the sight of the animal and asked *'What kind of animal is that?'*, to which Thomas replied with a big smile *'This is a very strange animal, which we know very little about but I am sure we will be very happy with this animal, I have called him Valentine.'*

Miranda was not so happy with the bad purchase her husband had made and she asked him about the advantages of the animal. *'It does not lay eggs, does not have warm wool, does not give any milk, what is its use?'*

Then suddenly Miranda realised that her husband had forgotten to buy some cows. Without cows they would not have any fresh milk to drink in the morning and would not be able to make tasty cheese.

Miranda told Thomas that he should return the stinky pink animal and attempt to trade it for a cow. Although Thomas at first did not agree eventually he promised Miranda that the next morning he would travel to the market and trade in his friend Valentine and buy a cow.

## *The trade*

The next day Thomas got up bright and early. He put his little pink friend in a crate and left for the market. The little twisted tail was the only part that stuck out of the crate and during the entire route all he heard was his sweet singing '*oink, oink*'.

Once at the market he searched through all the paths but was unable to locate the merchant whom had sold him the pink animal. Also he noted that there were no other '*oink oink*' sounds on the market, just the sounds that his friend Valentine made. But he did not think of giving up. He had to find the merchant that had sold him the pink animal. He searched and searched some more and at long last he found what he was looking for.

He approached the stall but he did not see any other pink animal. The merchant was now selling other animals. He had rabbits, quacking duck and big cows. '*Great, cows!*'. Thomas was happy that the merchant now sold cows, because it meant Miranda's plan, to trade Valentine for a cow, could now work.

Thomas started explaining why he could not keep the pink animal on his farm mainly because his wife would not accept it. It took him more than 10 minutes to explain that he had a difficult time parting from the animal, because they had developed a friendship but it was a difficult situation and the animal had to be returned.

The merchant listened with attention but at the end he had to disappoint Thomas and tell him he could not be of service. He did not have any more pink animals and he could not take Valentine back, because it would be very difficult to sell it again. To make things a bit better he did offer a big discount if Thomas would buy a cow. Thomas tried to convince the merchant again but without luck and he decided to buy a cow and take both the cow and Valentine in his little crate back home.

During the walk back home Thomas was very worried. During each step he tried to think of a solution for the situation with Valentine and his wife Miranda. After a while it occurred to him that the best thing would be to simply set his friend free. The took him out of the crate and told him to run and enjoy his freedom but Valentine did not move and kept close to Thomas.

Thomas walked on and increased his speed, to try and get away from his pink friend but it proved impossible. Valentine was running on his short little legs to not lose his master. At last Thomas could no longer bear to leave the little animal behind and did not see any other option than taking his friend Valentine back home with him.

As soon as Thomas arrived at the farm he quickly built a shed of wood on a remote area of the farm. Of course he made sure Miranda did not see him. He imagined that if Valentine could stay in the shed he would pass by every night with a big basket of fresh acorns to eat. In return Valentine needed to promise to never leave the shed. Thomas explained his plan and Valentine was very happy with the solution and accepted the terms.



Miranda did not know anything about the plan. She thought Thomas had exchanged the weird pink animal for a big milk cow but every night when Miranda went to bed Thomas sneaked out of the farm to collect the nicest acorns that had fallen from the trees and he brought these to his faithful friend Valentine.

Valentine was very happy in his shed, where he was playing all day long and eating his acorns. He was growing and growing and the shed seemed to become smaller all the time.

One day Valentine got up and approached the door of the shed which was a little bit open. Just in that moment a beam of sunshine hit his little leg and he noted a sensational warm itch that moved through his entire body.

The sun was wonderfully warm and he could not control himself and decided to hold his other leg in the sun as well. Then followed his snout and little by little he moved out into the open until his entire body was covered by sunshine and his feet were in the soft grass of the farm.

Oh, no! Miranda had seen through the window that a pink animal was walking about and she was screaming hysterically.

Thomas, who was working in the stables, heard Miranda's screams and started running towards to farm to see what was going on. He saw Valentine was outside, enjoying his freedom, lying in the warm sun and breathing the fresh air. When Thomas looked at the farm he saw the face of Miranda, red with rage and her jaw shaking with anger.

Thomas did not know what to do. In his heart he was happy for Valentine whom he could see enjoying his freedom. However, he was also sad because his wife was very angry about the presence of Valentine on the farm.

In the end it was impossible for Miranda to live on the same farm as Valentine and there was no other solution than to send him off the farm.

## *Flor*

Valentine was very sad that he had to leave his friend Thomas but after getting a taste of freedom in the sweet warm sun he had gotten excited about a new adventure out in the fresh air.

At the moment of goodbye Thomas accompanied Valentine to the entrance of the farm and after a soft embrace they said their goodbyes, both wishing to see each other again some time soon.

Thomas had tears in his eyes and with pain in his heart he gave Valentine a last big bag of acorns and watched sadly as Valentine slowly walked away from the farm.

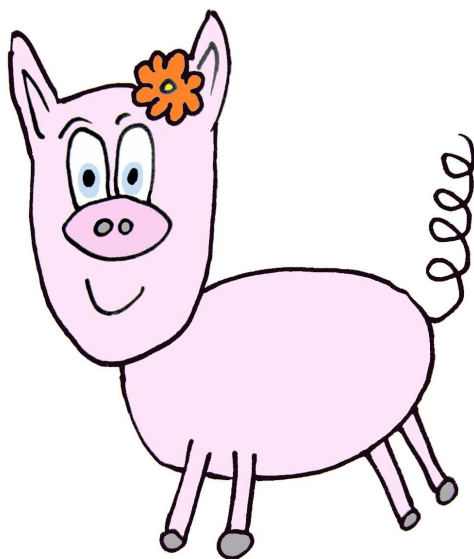
Valentine did not have a clue about where to go and he could not remember how it felt like to be free. Confused and overwhelmed by the green fields he started walking without direction.

After some days Valentine arrived disorientated in a small town that somehow felt familiar. He walked into the town and saw a little house hidden in the bushes.

The house was painted green and had a big garden that was full of little white daisies. Inside the house Valentine noticed an attractive sexy silhouette. His curly tail moved up and he felt a strange sensation in his belly. The only thing he could do was knock on the door. '*Knock, knock, knock!*'.

Nobody answered and the door remained firmly closed. The silhouette had disappeared and the only thing he could hear was an awkward silence. Valentine could not believe the silhouette he had seen was part of his imagination and he remained near the house. He walked around the house a few times but did not hear or see anything out of the ordinary. It remained quiet and when Valentine got tired he decided to have a little nap in the field of soft daisies.

The next morning when he was waking up he opened his eyes and saw the beautiful silhouette standing right beside him. The silhouette said to him, *'Hello, my name is Flor, what are you doing here?'*



Valentine, intoxicated by her beauty could hardly speak. He stuttered when he told her his story. Afterwards Flor invited him to go inside. Once inside the house of Flor she told him it was dangerous outside. *'In the neighbouring villages they have started the Slaughter'*.

Valentine had never heard of that word. ‘What does Slaughter mean?’ he asked innocently. Flor, who was surprised to find that he did not know what she was talking about started to explain. *‘We are pigs, very useful animals because our meat is tasty and juicy. Every part of our bodies is fit for consumption. Our ears, our legs, our nose, our thighs, our ribs, everything’.*

Valentine could not believe what he was hearing. At one moment he was send off his farm for being a useless and stinky animal and now, all of a sudden, he was an endangered animal because of his tasty meat. Just thinking about his ribs on the barbecue made his entire body shiver.

After evaluating the situation he decided it was best to hide together with Flor in the green house on the edge of the forest.

Flor explained that he was welcome to stay but should not open the door for anyone and that he should always be careful and not make too much noise. In the house they had a supply of food that would last them several months, so they could wait without problems for the spring season. By then the Slaughter would be over and they would be safe again.





## *Herman*

In the meanwhile Thomas remained very sad about loosing his good friend. He was unable to get a good nights sleep because he could only think about what could have happened to Valentine. Through his window he watched the oak trees full of shiny acorns that nobody ate and he felt sorrow in his heart.

Every afternoon Thomas took a stroll past some of the neighbouring villages and towns, hoping to encounter Valentine but he never caught a glimpse of his friend Valentine.

On one afternoon he met another young farmer called Herman. They talked about their farms and Thomas could not resist asking Herman if he had seen a strange pink animal with a curly tail.

Herman was surprised by the strange description and with unbelief he asked him *'You mean a pig?'*. Thomas did not know what a pig was and insisted that it was a very strange animal of which he did not know the name. Herman was absolutely sure it was a pig. *'A pink animal with a flat snout and a curly tail, that is a pig!'*. To confirm that it really was a pig he proposed to Thomas to accompany him to his farm.

Thomas accepted the invitation and together they walked to Herman's farm. He had ducks, chickens, sheep, horses, cows and in the back of his farm he had dozens of the pink animals of which Thomas had spoken. His eyes got bigger and he was absolutely amazed.

He could not believe what he was seeing and he could not help himself but check to see if Valentine was one of these pink animals but he did not see him. Thomas could not stop asking Herman everything there was to know about pigs.

Herman explained the animals were very tasty and recently gotten very popular and were worth a lot of money. Very surprised he asked Thomas how he had managed to lose his own pig. Thomas explained that his wife Miranda hated these animals because they are filthy and did not have any real use on a farm. Herman asked Thomas, *'Do you want to change your wife's mind?'*. Without hesitation Thomas replied with a firm *'Yes'*.

Herman was convinced that if Miranda tried some tasty juicy pig meat she would change her opinions about pigs for the rest of her life and he invited Thomas and his wife for a nice dinner at his farm.

Thomas thought it was a very good idea and excitedly walked home because it had gotten dark already. At home Miranda had started to worry and she was happy to see Thomas when he arrived.

Thomas, out of breath, started telling everything that had happened to him that afternoon. He told Miranda what kind of animal Valentine was and that pigs were very valuable and very tasty animals. He also mentioned that Herman had invited them for a dinner to try some pigs meat. Miranda was shocked about the idea of eating meat from such a dirty stinky animal but she was also very curious and after some thought she decided to accept the invitation.

The next day Thomas and Miranda went to Herman's farm to have dinner. Even before entering the door they noticed a delicious smell around the house. They took their places at the table and Herman offered them an abundance of different plates.

They tried a big plate of cured ham with an extraordinary taste, fabulously barbecued ribs, marinated cutlets, sausages, bacon and a lot of other tasty dishes.

Miranda could not believe it and she could not stop eating. Every new dish seemed tastier than the previous and Miranda was surprised by the huge range of flavours.

Thomas could hardly look at all the food on the table. He did not want to think about the possibility that one of those pieces of meat could be his friend Valentine. He was unable to enjoy the food and during the entire evening he did not even try a small piece of meat.

Miranda had definitely changed her mind. She was surprised by the big number of different products that could be made from a pig. After this evening her interest could not be stopped, asking Herman all she could about taking care of pigs and about their value.

Herman patiently explained everything, the ideal weight of a pig before it should be slaughtered, the type of food which is the best and everything about taking care of a pig. Miranda remembered Valentine and started daydreaming about his tasty ribs, juicy sausages and all of the tasty products they could make.

During the dinner Miranda kept insisting that they should try and find Valentine. Thomas started thinking the worst. He knew that if they would find Valentine now, for sure Miranda would want to eat him. His friend was in danger!

After the dinner Miranda and Thomas decided to walk home. That way Miranda, who had ate a lot, was able to let all the pig-meat settle. Poor Thomas was walking with an empty stomach and a heavy heart. They walked for more than an hour passing various paths and unfamiliar towns.

It was a very nice stroll until suddenly Thomas saw a strange light at the end of a curvy street. He focused his vision on the window and immediately recognised a familiar sight. A curly tail that could only be of his friend Valentine!

Even though he could hardly control his emotions he decided not to say anything to Miranda.

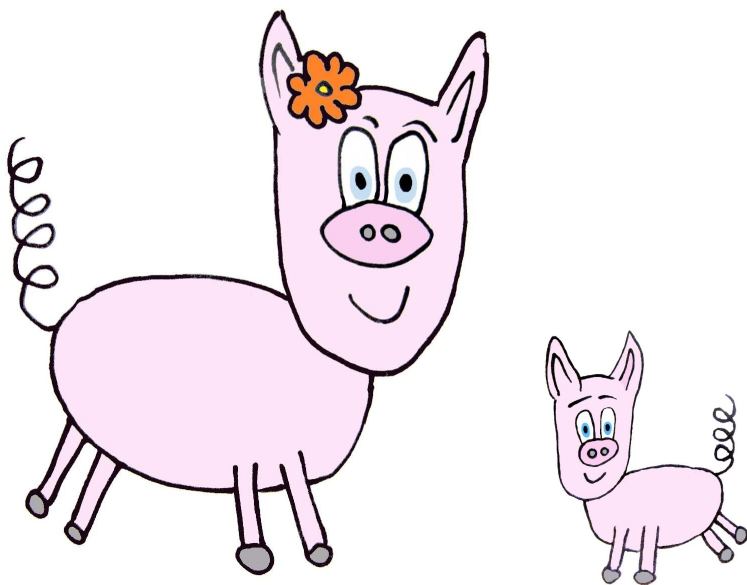
## *Found*

When they arrived home after their long walk Miranda went straight to bed. She was tired from all the walking. Thomas waited a few minutes until Miranda was sound asleep and then quickly left the house in search of his friend Valentine. He ran and he ran, until he arrived at the house where he had seen the familiar curly tail.

He knocked on the door but nobody answered. Thomas knocked again and again until suddenly Valentine jumped out of the window, right in the arms of Thomas. In a firm embrace they were spinning circles of happiness. They were so happy to be together again that nothing would break them apart ever again.

Thomas, out of breath because of all the emotions he was experiencing, told Valentine that in the neighbouring villages the people had started the Slaughter and that Valentine was in danger.

Valentine let him finish his sentence and said, *'Don't worry, I already know and I'm being very careful, but I have something more important to tell you'*, and he called Flor. Flor walked to the door cautiously. Next to her side stood a small pretty piglet of only a few days. *'This is my wife Flor and our little son Alex'*, explained Valentine. Thomas got tears in his eyes and embraced the entire family.





Thomas, with his mind clearer than ever, knew that Valentine and his family could not stay in the house because they were surrounded by hunters in search of pigs. Thomas suggested that they all go to his farm, where he would protect them and where he could give them everything they would need.

Valentine was sorry to leave his little home on the edge of the forest but he knew he and his family would be safer and happier on Thomas' farm. Finally they all left in the middle of the night towards Thomas' farm.

Thomas added some extra space to the old shed and gathered a big bag of acorns. Valentine, Flor and the little piglet Alex were very happy.

Miranda did not know that the pigs were on the farm and she should never find out, for Valentine and his family to remain safe. Valentine, Flor and the piglet Alex promised to stay indoors and only go outside during the night so that Miranda would never see them.

Their plan worked perfectly for a few months, until one night Miranda had problems sleeping and she went outside to have a little walk across the farm grounds.

When walking across the farm she thought she saw some pigs far away. She was astonished. Was it her imagination? Maybe she had gotten so excited about having her own pigs and eating them little by little that now she could not believe her own eyes?

## *Discovered*

Miranda started walking in the direction of the pigs and came closer and closer, until suddenly she recognised Valentine. There appeared a big smile on her face and from a distance she screamed *'Valentine, friend! Welcome home! How are you doing?'*

Valentine was very scared and did not know what to reply. Thomas woke up from the scream and started running to see what was going on. *'Oh no!'*, he realised that Miranda had discovered the pigs.

In order to not upset Miranda, Thomas acted as if he too was surprised to see the pigs. Miranda did not suspect a thing. She was way to happy now that Valentine was back and he even brought some friends to her farm.

Miranda offered the pigs to stay on the farm where they could eat all the acorns they wanted. Although shaking with fear Valentine, Flor and the piglet Alex accepted her offer to stay because they did not know what else to do.

After all those emotions everyone tried to go to sleep again. Miranda could not sleep, because she was making plans for the pigs the entire night. Thomas could not sleep because he spend the night trying to think of some solution and the pigs could not sleep, because they were very frightened.

After a few days Miranda had thought of a plan and she called Thomas and told him her simple plan. She wanted to eat one of the pigs. Miranda was enchanted by the taste of pigs meat and she wanted to slaughter and eat at least one.

Thomas could select which one they would eat; Valentine, Flor or the little piglet Alex. For Thomas it was a horrible ordeal. He had started to love the pigs and absolutely did not want to kill and eat any of them but for Miranda it was a clear case. She gave Thomas one week to decide and then one of the pigs would have to be killed and eaten.

That week Thomas had a lot of difficulty sleeping. He could not make a decision and every time he brought the pigs their acorns he felt terrible. The pigs were also very upset. They knew what was going to happen but did not want to leave because eventually they would be noticed and would all be in danger. Also they did not want to break Thomas' heart.

The night before the slaughter Miranda could almost taste the pigs meat in her mouth out of anticipation. She told Thomas it was time to make a decision. She said, *'Valentine is a good choice, because he weighs about 150 kilos and that is an enormous amount of meat. Also Flor is a good option, because the meat of a female pig is very tender. You could also choose the piglet. It is the youngest and has the most tender and juicy meat'*.

On the day itself Miranda was resolved. She placed a sharp knife in Thomas' hands and together they walked in the direction of the little shed. But when they arrived there awaited a big surprise. There was not a pig in sight. All the pigs had disappeared without a trace.

Miranda got angry and started searching the farm. Every field, every shed and even all the rooms of the house but she did not find any pig.

Thomas was equally surprised and promised Miranda he did not have any idea about what had happened. He had lost his best friends again and he did not know how.

## *Disappeared*

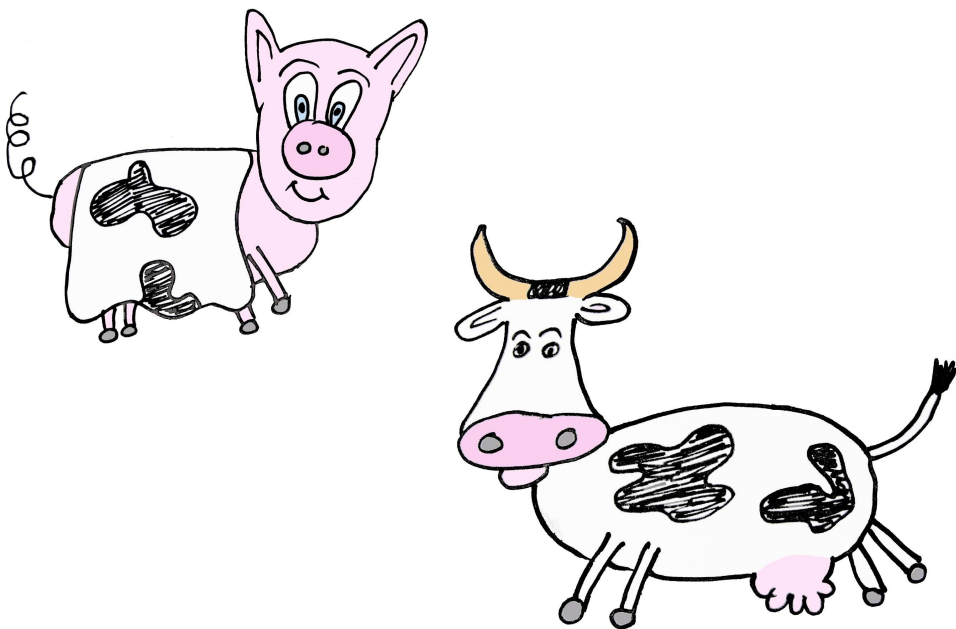
Miranda had had enough! She did not want to have anything to do with pigs ever again. What a horrible animals that disappear without a trace. Thomas tried once more to find his friends without Miranda noticing but even he did not find a trace of the pigs. It seemed they had left for good. Thomas could only hope for the best and assumed they were some place safe.

The next morning Thomas noticed something strange. There were more cows then usual walking on his fields. Thomas walked a little bit closer and took a good look.

Then a big smile appeared on his face. There were three extra cows which were really his three best friends, disguised as cows!

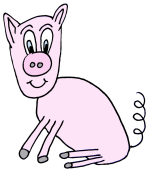
Every day the pigs disguised themselves as cows and enjoyed the open fields, the sun and the soft grass.

Every evening they returned to their shed where they enjoyed the acorns Thomas brought them and had big parties until the next morning.





So ends this story. Valentine, Flor and the piglet Alex lived a long and happy life. Thomas became a successful farmer with a heart for his animals and Miranda eventually forgot about the pigs and never suspected anything.



## **Thomas and Valentine**

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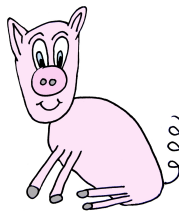
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## Thomas and Valentine

A heartwarming fairytale about Thomas, a brave young farmer, who develops a friendship with a strange unknown animal. However... his wife has other plans.



A tale about loss, intrigue, love, despair and happiness. An instant classic to read to your children which they will want to hear over and over.

An elegant, traditional story that will make you wonder why it was not written before.

## Authors

Adrie Berg is a Dutch engineer in information technology with a unequivocal positive mindset who efficiently conceptualizes his ideas. His background facilitates a structured flow of thought. His compassionate writing style is fluent, direct and graceful. His skill of verbalizing emotions is sometimes overshadowed by his tendency to accept the less than perfect.

Ana Sánchez de Abajo is a Spanish scientist in the field of biochemistry with a phenomenal imagination capable of thinking outside the box. Her style is immersed, imaginative, abundant and poetic. Her talent to translate her clear-cut understanding of social concepts to content is enhanced by her strong natural desire for perfectionism.

The combination of these occasionally contrasting styles proved fruitful. A union that gave rise to a beautiful dramatic composition. Together these authors present this virtually authoritative fairytale about Thomas and his friend that will touch the reader in ways never thought possible.

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