"We Was Robbed!"

A Gift from Chapter XIV of *Miss Missy's School*

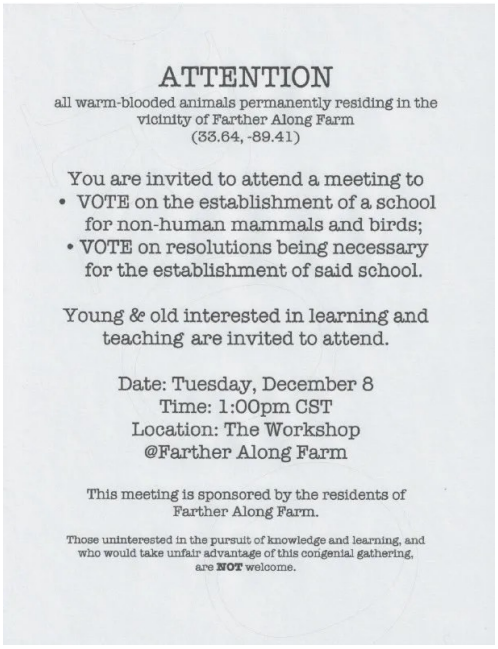
Dear Readers and Their Grownups,

After yesterday's sneak-peek at the "Epilogue: Old Things & Ways Explained" from ***Miss Missy's School Book I: A Pack of Farm Dogs Starts a School,*** it's time to get back to the story. This is family reading time gift number eight from Miss Missy's School. You can find links to the previous gifts here. Click here for a PDF of this post.

You may remember that in "Chapter XII: It's Parliamentary, Sir" Missy and her pack--including Tiger the Cat--tell Marica and John about their plans to start a school for all of the animals who live on or near Farther Along Farm. John asks, "How do you propose to gather students, besides Bebe and Tommy?" and Miss explains that they will be posting fliers announcing an organizational meeting, and that some of her pack will be calling on their animal neighbors.

Let's join Aubrey and Gilbert in the Hidden Pasture, where Mr. Turkey and his flock live.

XIV: We Was Robbed!


ATTENTION

all warm-blooded animals permanently residing in the vicinity of Farther Along Farm
(33.64, -89.41)

You are invited to attend a meeting to
- VOTE on the establishment of a school for non-human mammals and birds;
- VOTE on resolutions being necessary for the establishment of said school.

Young & old interested in learning and teaching are invited to attend.

Date: Tuesday, December 8
Time: 1:00pm CST
Location: The Workshop
@Farther Along Farm

This meeting is sponsored by the residents of Farther Along Farm.

Those uninterested in the pursuit of knowledge and learning, and who would take unfair advantage of this congenial gathering, are **NOT** welcome.

Happily, Aubrey and Gilbert were welcomed into their little woodland friends' homes. They took no fliers, as very few of the bunny rabbits, squirrels, smaller songbirds, armadillos (which they took great care not to startle) and so forth could read. Instead, to each group in turn they explained the idea of a school, answered many questions, and invited each group to send representatives to the Mass Meeting.

The last community Aubrey and Gilbert needed to contact was that of the turkeys. For the most part, Aubrey got along fine with the turkeys. Gil, on the other hand, had time and again to restrain his natural instinct to go after them. For their part, the turkeys didn't make the best neighbors. For generations, they had harbored resentment toward people and all things associated with people. Even after all these years they simply could neither forget nor forgive being passed over as our national

bird by the bald eagles. Not even being honored as the center of attention at Thanksgiving Dinner could heal this wound. Aubrey and Gilbert were going into fairly hostile territory but in the spirit of fairness and inclusion, they had to do it.

They thought it best that Aubrey do the talking.

“Good morning!” Aubrey called out cheerfully to the flock of turkeys in a corner of the hidden flower pasture. “Mr. Turkey,” she addressed the large gobbler presiding over the group, “I wonder if I may have a moment of your time?”

“I’m busy,” Mr. Turkey said rather gruffly without even looking up.

“Oh! To be sure, sir, I’ll only take a minute or two.”

“Okay. What d’ ya want?” he asked.

Aubrey took a deep breath. “Well, sir, we would like to invite you and representatives of your flock to a Mass Meeting to discuss the establishment of a school for animals in these parts.”

“A school?” Mr. Turkey looked up and glared at Gilbert out of the corners of his eyes. “Why would we want to go to school?”

Here Aubrey briefly recited the benefits of learning, ending with (as Marica had suggested), “and the presence of Great American Turkeys at our humble little school would be an honor beyond compare, Mr. Turkey.”

“You gonna teach history at this school of yours?” Mr. Turkey asked, spreading his great beautifully colored wings in a display of bravado.

This was enough to make Gilbert’s fur stand on end and necessitated that he deploy all of the temperance he could muster. Aubrey caught her breath but tried to remain calm.

“Well, not me personally,” she answered. “But we certainly will study history.”

“American history?” Mr. Turkey asked with more than a bit of disdain. “You gonna teach American history to these animals?”

“Why of course, sir! American history is a wonderful subject. Every animal should know American history,” Aubrey casually asserted.

“You think so, do you? American history ain’t what it’s cracked up to be. We was robbed, I tell ya.” Mr. Turkey’s bristles were bristling.

“I, I, I’m sorry, sir,” Aubrey said meekly. “I don’t think I know what you mean.”

“We was robbed, I tell ya,” he began. “Robbed of our rightful place in American history.” At this point the little female turkeys and the young ones began to make their way further along the fence line. They had heard this story before. Aubrey and Gilbert though were rather stuck. They couldn’t retreat without offending Mr. Turkey, and they certainly did not want to do that.

“We was robbed,” Mr. Turkey continued. “We made sacrifices for those ungrateful Americans. Can’t begin to tell you how many of us gave our lives to keep ’em fed when they first came over from the Old World. For centuries we…” Mr. Turkey began to retell this often-told grievance.

At some point, Gilbert yawned rather conspicuously in the hope of signaling to Mr. Turkey that perhaps his tale should come to a speedy conclusion. Unfortunately, Mr. Turkey did not receive the signal. Aubrey yawned and yawned and her head bobbled up and down and Mr. Turkey just kept going on and on. Mr. Turkey was well acquainted with the particulars of Early American History.

“As I have said before, and to paraphrase the only Founder true to the true American spirit,” Mr. Turkey continued, “‘Eagles have been found in all countries, but we wild turkeys are peculiar to America. The first of our species seen in Europe being brought to France by the Jesuits from Canada, and served up at the wedding table of Charles the ninth. We are besides, the real birds of courage!’ Eagles! Scavenging cowards! We was robbed!!”

Here Mr. Turkey spread his wings and flapped them to demonstrate just how courageous he was, and the females and youngsters all at the very same time half-heartedly flapped their wings and flew into the trees.

Gilbert, sensing a golden opportunity, leapt to his paws and shouted, “Bravo! Bravo, man! What an epic tale that was my man,” he said while nudging Aubrey and casually taking several steps back. “Thanks for sharing.”

“We’ll be looking forward to seeing you at the meeting!” Aubrey called out as she and Gilbert began running toward home just as fast as they could.

“We was robbed! We’re the respectable species, I say!” Mr. Turkey hollered after them. “Put that in your history books!”