

### When the Rooster Came Home to Roost

If Charlie had a moustache, he would have twirled it, bought wax, and curled the tips up like Salvador Dali. The best he could do was a sinister snarl attempting to look debonair, saying, after tracing a charcoal a line under his beak, “In the proper light I look a little like Clark Gable.”

He was visiting a neighboring farm when a vet came with the sirens blaring. He and the waiting farmer rushed to the pigsty. Charlie followed keeping in the shadows. The large boar was clearly in pain, coughing with ugly stuff coming out of his snout and oozing from the corners of his eyes.

Charlie listened.

“I’m worried. Mike is off his feed and seems depressed. He’s given off bothering the sows, sure sign he’s sick.”

The vet poked and probed taking samples of the various discharges including one from the back of the pig. Mikey wasn’t happy and it took at least two tries to tuck a sample safely away. Some of the swabs were kicked to the side of the sty.

“I’m pretty sure it’s a serious case of flu. These swabs will prove it. I can take him with me if you want or leave him with you. You should keep him in isolation. It’s pretty contagious.”

“I’ll keep him. Got a little corral out back that should work. Let me know as soon as you confirm it. You’ll leave me some meds then?”

“Brought them in the van.”

“I’ll walk back with you.”

Charlie waited until they were around the barn and then quickly retrieved the swabs. He had in mind a special dinner for JD; the swabs would provide the missing ingredient.

Three days later JD was wheezing and barking; discharges flowing freely out of his snout. Charlie convinced him he caught it from Barry. “He pooped in your food when you weren’t looking.”

JD said between coughing fits, “Charlie, you’re my friend. I’m telling you now I’ll fire his sorry ass as soon as I’m better. Get me a doctor; I got a campaign to run.” His loyal supporters came to his rallies, pushing to get closer for an autograph or selfie with JD. Most got sick within a week. But when the swine flu jumped to them it became deadly virulent. Most died before Election Day. Charlie was still on the ballot and let everyone know that he really was the best candidate. He went on a whisper stomp around the farm, pointing out that JD only cared for himself. “He knew he had the flu, just wanted you all to crowd together. Everyone knows it’s highly contagious and yet he...”

When the votes were counted, Charlie won. Most of the stricken animals recovered. Harold the Horse, squealed and told the farmer that it was JD who had infected his animals. That was the straw and the farmer called the meat wagon. The house cat heard and warned JD. He was hurt that nobody appreciated his talents and disappeared that night to “places unknown, to a foreign country where they appreciated my talents.”

Charlie was sworn into office, promising the biggest and best health care plan ever. “It’s what JD would have wanted.”

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