



Freddy Goes to Florida

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first published between 1927 and 1958, the 26 classic books about Freddy the Pig have delighted five generations of children and are now going on to delight a sixth. They are available for the first time as Overlook paperbacks.

Walter R. Brooks introduced Freddy the Pig in *Freddy Goes to Florida*. Freddy and his friends from Bean Farm migrate south for the winter, with every mile of the way a terrific adventure complete with bumbling robbers and a nasty bunch of alligators. This is vintage Freddy and the whole ensemble cast at their charming best.

Freddy Goes to Florida Details

Date : Published September 15th 1997 by Overlook Juvenile (first published 1927)

ISBN : 9780879518080

Author : Walter R. Brooks , Kurt Wiese (illustrator)

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From Reader Review Freddy Goes to Florida for online ebook

Monika says

I was surprised to discover that this book is so old. Very good tale for kids written with awesome imagination and creativity. It clearly shows how great heart the author has to have.

Shadowdenizen says

I just may be writing this through rose-colored glasses...

BUt I loved this book as a child, and I loved re-reading it as an adult. It *immediately* brought me back to my childhood, reading under the covers with a flashlight since I was so caught up and just had to finish!

Sure, objectively, this book is a bit slow-paced, and not alot actually *happens*, but I can argue that that's actually a part of it's charm, as this was written in 1927 (more than 75 years ago)!

The enjoyable relationship of the characters (in this case, talking animals), coupled with the adorably charming illustrations, and the straightforward and innocet writing style all add to the "Old-Timey-Charm" that so pervades this book.

Hannah Long says

As fictional pigs go, it's hard to beat Freddy. A thoughtful, poetic pig, Freddy goes through a variety of professions and adventures in 26 books, spanning 30 years. Every time my family goes on a long trip, we'll grab a Freddy audiobook from the library and - all of us are well out of middle school, by the way - settle in to enjoy the ride. Don't be fooled by the titles, these are entertaining and intelligent fare.

Freddy Goes to Florida is the first book, published in 1927, and while it's enjoyable, it's not as well honed as some of the later stories (Freddy and the Ignormus remains my favorite). Here, in fact, Freddy isn't even the main character, but one of an ensemble of farmyard animals that decide to go south for the winter. You'll find many of the things which were so delightful in the series, if rendered a bit crudely in this early attempt: the vivid characters, the entertaining yarns, the wry, no-nonsense gentle humor. If the characters are a bit broadly drawn and the yarns a bit tedious at times, it's still a good start to a delightful series.

Tamara says

I read this aloud with my son and had some issues with it. First of all, the animals are pretty cruel to each

other, especially the "married" ones, who really tear each other down. There is also abuse, such as a girl beating a cat and a man whipping his son. Lastly, it's just not that interesting. I was eager to be done with it.

Beth says

This is a delightful children's book written in the late 1920's. It is a series featuring barnyard animals Freddy the pig and his friends. The animals have human characteristics among themselves while still appearing an acting entirely as animals to the humans in the story. In this installment, Freddy and some of the other animals decide to migrate south for the winter. Along the way, the animals face various trials and tribulations, including an encounters with some not-so-nice characters.

Recommended!

Read for graduate school at FSU: LIS 5564 Information needs of Children

Emily says

Originally published in 1927 under the stultifyingly bland title "To and Again," this is the first book in what shortly evolved into the Freddy the Detective series. It's about a group of animals on a farm in upstate New York who decide to migrate to Florida one Winter. They have several adventures on the way there and back again, the greater part of which involve foiling a series of "rough-looking" men, who are after either them (free livestock!) or, later, the treasure they manage to pick up along the way. Freddy, who is a pig, is a minor character in this one. Clearly the books got a lot better after he became the focus of the series -- had this been our first Freddy book, it would have been our last. Sadly I found it just a little humdrum and undistinguished. The seven-year-old, however, had no complaints. He enjoyed it unreservedly, and even I, jaded reader that I am (animals + treasure = yawn) could see hints of the gently wry humor that appealed to me so much in the later book that was our first exposure to Freddy, Freddy and the Popinjay. We listened to a wonderful recording of that one, and I suspect part of the reason I liked it so much had to do with the slow rich drawling voice of the narrator -- so perfect for these books. Who knows, maybe if I'd heard him reading this book I'd have liked it just as much. There are some good bits here. I particularly liked good-natured Mrs. Wiggins, who may be the first cow in fiction I've come across who I'd really like to have as a friend.

Maria says

Meh.

This is a children's book written in 1949, which was highly popular, apparently, back in the day, although I've never heard of them, and I'm certainly old enough. I got it on audio without knowing anything about it, or I probably wouldn't have chosen it.

It's the adventure of a group of farm animals who decide to migrate to Florida for the winter, and their many adventures along the way. If written today, many of the situations would be frowned upon for being "politically incorrect," or some other such nonsense, but were considered silly and funny not so long ago.

Personally, I thought it was fun as a child's book goes, but it was a LOT longer than I would expect a chapter

book to be for this age group. Maybe because back then, kids' main entertainment was books and not 30-second blurbs on social media. How times have changed. Still, even when I was 10 years old, I would have thought this was too long and too goofy for me.

Sarah Sammis says

Freddy Goes to Florida by Walter R Brooks (born January 9, 1886, died August 17, 1958) is the first of the Freddy the Pig books. It was originally published as To and Again (like a precursor to The Hobbit, aka There and Back Again, but with barn animals). After the success of the third book, Freddy the Detective, the first two books were re-named to have Freddy in the title.

Freddy is a pig who lives with a variety of other barn animals on Mr. Bean's farm (no, not that Mr. Bean). The dynamics between Freddy and the other animals reminds me of Babe (the movie, not the book by Dick King-Smith). Frankly it wouldn't surprise me one bit if the makers of Babe took some inspiration from the Freddy books to fill out the ensemble cast.

Freddy while talking to a barn swallow decides he's had enough of winter on the farm. Migrating to Florida sounds like a grand idea. When he decides to walk to the Sunshine state, the other animals on the farm (including a pair of spiders) decide to follow along. The book chronicles their trip down and back, including some episodic adventures on the way.

Freddy and his friends are completely ignorant on what it will take to get to Florida or what to expect along the way. The fun, though, is in the journey itself. They see new things, meet new people and animals, don disguises, duel with alligators, thwart robbers and save the day.

To go with the silly text, are equally delightful pen and ink illustrations by Kurt Wiese.

M. says

A book first published in 1927 with a charming and adventurous storyline. Freddy the pig and some of his farm animal friends are tired of living in cold and drafty barns during upstate New York winters. They make arrangements with the other animals to keep the farm well run for the farmer and his wife and then they head south to Florida. On the way they meet some good guys (including the president) but also pontificating politicians, hungry alligators, and men with thievery on their hearts. They keep walking and find a cache of gold they can give to the farmer to fix up the farm buildings; they spend their winter playing on the sand and seeing the sights in Florida; and during miles of walking, they work together to outwit the bad guys while they enjoy the scent of orange blossoms drifting on the Florida breeze. When spring is about to arrive, they decide to go home, encountering yet more adventures along the way.

This is a classic book important to the development of children's literature as a separate genre. The language is paced and somewhat outdated but the story is positive, straightforward, and full of action a la 1927. While the animals are willing to try brute force to continue their journey if absolutely necessary, mostly they figure out ways to persevere while they trick and outthink the bad guys.

Might do better as a read aloud. Many kids raised on action won't get past the beginning chapter to enjoy the

storyline. Middle school readers might be more receptive. Well worth reading.

John says

I knew about these delightful books when I was a kid but never came across them. They've been notoriously hard to find for years until Overlook Press started reprinting them. Freddy the Pig is a genius among pigs. There isn't anything he can't do once he puts his mind to it. When he decides the Bean Farm animals should go South for the winter like the birds, it's a road full of adventure for them. In the second book, Freddy Goes to the North Pole, he starts a tourism business for local farm animals and wildlife which finally leads him to conducting a tour to the North Pole to visit Santa. These are the first two books in the series and Brooks was still trying to find his footing, they are fun but lack some of the more sophisticated themes that he addresses in the later books. Apparently, he really hit his stride with the next book, Freddy the Detective, and I'm looking forward to getting around to it. The joy with his stories come from a combination of great characters (Jinx the cat, Mrs. Wiggins the cow, Charles the rooster and his hen-pecking wife, Henrietta), a matter of factness from tone (this is a world where people just accept that the Bean Farm animals can talk, they think it's a bit odd but they accept it) and an adept weaving of complex "adult" concepts into fun, breezy plots with just the right touch of suspense. Brooks never talks down to his audience. If a kid doesn't understand what a "constituent" is before he starts reading, he will by the time Brooks is through. I look forward to spending long hours reading these stories to my kids someday. For some reason these first three volumes can be a bit hard to find even in their reprint, you can also find the first three published in one volume.

Amanda Payne says

This is one of the funniest, warmest books I've ever read! The whole family laughed and laughed! This book provides some wonderful mementoes and connections for our family. Highly recommended!

Mandolin says

Migration. "Why didn't we ever think of it before?" the animals of Mr. Bean's farm ask themselves. Faced with yet another cold winter living in stables and barns that are insufficiently heated, Mr. Bean's animals are intrigued by a swallow's description of migration and decide to follow the birds' example and make their way to Florida. After drawing straws to determine who must stay behind to see Mr. Bean through the winter, Charles the Rooster, Mrs. Wiggins the Cow, the spiders Mr. and Mrs. Webb, Jinx the cat, a dog, a pair of ducks, a few mice and, of course, Freddy the Pig, gather their belongings and set out on their way to the sunny, warm South. Their journey is adventurous and includes encounters with robbers, alligators and an evil man who tries to capture them for work and dinner! But they are intelligent, creative animals and escape each perilous encounter relatively unharmed and finally arrive in Florida, where they enjoy a warm and interesting winter. When spring comes, they find themselves missing their old home and make the return journey...which ends up being very profitable and happy for all, including Mr. Bean.

My dad encouraged me to read this book, which he remembered fondly from his childhood. I'm so glad he did! The story is told with a nice mix of humor and morals, teaching the importance of perseverance, friends, and self-worth. It's no wonder the series became so popular! Though he's not the star in this first book, Freddy the Pig shows great promise, coming up with clever ideas and adorable songs. My favorite is his song

at the end of the book: "After all," he said to himself, "it's exciting to travel and have adventures but there's no place like home." ... And then he made up this song: "Oh, a life of adventure is gay and free, and danger has its charm; And no pig of spirit will bound his life / By the fence on his master's farm. Yet there's no true pig but heaves a sigh / At the pleasant thought of the old home sty. But one tires at last of wandering, And the road grows steep and long, A treadmill round, where no peace is found, If one follows it overlong. And however they wander, both pigs and men / Are always glad to get home again."

Amy Layton says

This was such an entertaining book. Apparently this series was super popular back in the day (and back in my childhood--Tori, I'm looking at you!), so I was truly surprised I didn't hear of it sooner than I did. This was a fun little romp along the east coast, and it was great watching Freddy and his pals meet the president, outwit some crocodiles, and find some gold. This is one of the few books from the past that has actually....aged really well. So, kudos to you, Freddy!

Review cross-listed here!

Jefferson says

Whimsical Pre-WWII Americana with Talking Animals on a Road Trip

Freddy Goes to Florida (1927/1949) by Walter R. Brooks begins like a whimsical *Animal Farm*. Orwell probably didn't get inspired to write his grim Stalinist parable by reading about Freddy and company, but in Brooks' book Mr. Bean's animals are sick and tired of working and living uncomfortably during winter on his farm. The rooster Charles hates having to wake up before sunrise to crow (Mr. Bean threatening to fricassee the rooster for dinner if he doesn't do his job), while the horse Hank has rheumatism. And so when a barn swallow explains migration, Charles and Hank call a meeting to discuss migrating to Florida for the winter.

The animals argue about who will go and who will stay to help Mr. Bean run the farm--until the cat Jinks has everyone draw lots. Jinks also gets a robin to draw a map of the way south, and when Mr. Bean is away in town, the cat leads the migrating animals out on their journey, "with his tail held straight up in the air like a drum-major's stick." In addition to the mischievous Jinx (useful in a pinch), the traveling companions are comprised of phlegmatic Hank, the young dog Robert, the cow Mrs. Wiggins ("a character"), the pig Freddy (a songster with "an inquiring mind"), a few mice like Cousin Augustus (good at chewing through things), the white duck sisters Emma and Alice (good at teaching swimming), and the barn spider couple Mr. and Mrs. Webb (tiny-voiced and philosophical). Will Charles' wife Henrietta (who likes to henpeck him) let him go?

The book depicts the adventures of the animals as they walk to, in, and from Florida, featuring roads, rivers, and towns, a treasure, a swamp, a doll baby carriage, the Grandfather of All the Alligators, some timid burglars, and a dangerous and desperate man with a black moustache and a dirty-faced son--and more. As they journey south, the animals begin to realize that maybe Mr. Bean isn't such a bad master after all, and they resolve to bring him a present when they return home.

The light-hearted book has many funny moments, like Henrietta's explanation for why hens don't crow, Mr. Webb's conversations with an ant and a fly, the animals' welcome in the nation's capitol, Mrs. Wiggins' heroic defense of a bridge armed only with a few mice, the animals' enjoyment of jewelry and disguising of themselves on the way home, etc. Every animal plays a key role at least once during their adventures. There are also some bizarre touches like when we learn that Mrs. Wiggins gave Jinx and Robert some milk, without being told just how she managed this.

Here are some examples of Brooks' dry humor and clear style:

- "Mr. Webb, however, was firm in his decision, as spiders are apt to be."

- "Mrs. Wiggins had a sense of humor. That means that she always laughed at the wrong time."

- "Now, if you are a rather timid burglar, and you light a match in a dark room and see a cat that is within an inch of your nose, you'll probably do just as Ed did. He dropped his match and let out an awful yell."

This is the first of 26 Freddy books, and whereas in later novels Mr. Bean's animals talk with each other AND with people, here they are limited to speaking with other animals, because although they understand human speech perfectly, people only hear them quack and squeak and bark etc. Perhaps this is because animals "hear better than people." Another difference is that here Freddy is but one supporting character among many, whereas later in the series he becomes the mover and shaker and hero of the animals' adventures (which must be why the original 1927 title of this book, *To and Again*, was changed in 1949 to *Freddy Goes to Florida*).

Audiobook reader John McDonough has the perfect gravelly voice and sensitive manner for the book, taking humorous things seriously and serious things humorously. I got a kick out of his horse, mouse, and spider voices, and he sings Freddy's songs with tune and gusto. The only drawback of the audiobook is that it lacks the illustrations by Kurt Wiese, so charming, realistic, and humorous.

When I binged on the Freddy the Pig books in elementary school in the 60s, I missed much of the humor and read the stories as exciting and interesting adventures, while now I feel less suspense and laugh more. Their quirky charm and affection for animals make them a pleasure to read. You should enjoy *Freddy Goes to Florida* if you like talking animal stories (like *Charlotte's Web* minus the pathos), journey and return adventure stories (like *The Hobbit* minus the fantasy world), idyllic rural American stories (when phaetons could be found in garbage dumps, the best way to get to Florida was by surface streets, and small farm communities spread out everywhere), and lightly satiric stories targeting foolish and or bad humans. It's the kind of book you read smilingly.

***The Angry Reader* says**

It's old-fashioned. The language is great. The characters varied. I think the age of the story just makes it a challenge to really connect with this one.

Craig says

Very fun book to read with the kids.

Bill Stutzman says

What a great series to read aloud--this is the one that started it all!

Mark Lisac says

Several farm animals, all of whom can talk, although humans hear only their animal sounds, are intrigued by a flock of twittering swallows and decide to migrate to Florida for the winter from a place that sounds like upstate New York. They have adventures on the way there and back. This and subsequent Freddy stories were among the books that started me on a lifetime of reading about 60 years ago. Trying this first of the series again (Freddy the Detective is up next, although it may be as far as I go) showed why I was enthralled. Brooks was a real story teller with an inventive but subdued style. The Freddy books are usually seen as literature for older children but there's enough extra in this one to repay a rereading decades after the first time around. It's a model of gentle whimsy. The world would be a better place if many people found a quiet room and read this.

Wreade1872 says

A group of farm animals decide to go south for the winter. I prefer the original title 'To and Again' as Freddy the pig is probably the most underused of any of the animals in this.

It took me a while to get into. It didn't feel much like a kids story, i kept having flashbacks to 'Animal Farm' which didn't help ;).

One of the problems is that there aren't really any child characters. All of the animals except for the pig have the personalities of grownups which is why it felt a bit too grounded and the humour seemed aimed a bit older. That's probably why the pig ends up as the centerpiece of the franchise as he's the only possible child-avatar available.

For a while things plodded along and i wondered how the author would reconcile the human world with these hyper-intelligent animals. Things came to a head in Washington DC in what seemed like pure satire but the author was now stuck with that strange turn of events and the book was the better for it.

Not much time is actually spent in florida and while my knowledge of the U.S.A isn't great i suspect there are some geographical errors here ;).

I also have to say that a couple of events towards the end would definitely have proven fatal (and smoke doesn't wake people up!) so if reading to a child make sure to point out how homicidal these animals are :P .

Overall a bit drab but there were wacky incidents that improved it as it went along.

Jay says

Road trip! I found this book in hardback at the Lakeland public library in 1996 when my daughter was in

first grade to read aloud to her before bed. After a run of the Black Stallion books, "Freddy goes to Florida" provided just the right comic relief with a pig protagonist: no scary wolves coming down the chimney; no running around chasing sheep; no Stalinist ideology; no threat of being hung up in the farmer's smokehouse. Freddy the pig is sick of winter up North on Bean Farm. With his barnyard compatriots, he sets out for warmth and fun in the Florida sunshine. No GPS, no map, no motel reservations -- just a plan and a sense of general direction. Mind you, the Florida to which the porcine pilgrim and his cohorts are traveling is a more primitive Florida without air conditioning, professional football, Spring Break/Bike Week, theme parks, Stuckeys, nightmare Interstates and rockets. These days, few travel here for its own sake -- come for the heat, stay for the bugs.

Along the way, the travelers encounter various characters - some benign, others not. The "nots" include robbers (think "The Brementown Musicians" but without the violence) and, of course, the obligatory Florida alligators intent on gobbling up as many of our intrepid band as possible. Having had enough "fun", Freddy and his prodigal friends make the return trip to Bean Farm where all is forgiven, the fatted calf (who chose to remain behind and not go AWOL with Freddy) is spared, and Freddy declines an offer to "go to work" for Jimmy Dean. (Just kidding.)

This is a wonderful story for a younger child, and a treat for an adult to read aloud. It's a complete fairy tale with a likable ensemble cast (except the 'gators). The book has been recently re-issued, which I guess makes it a quasi-classic.
