

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S NOTES

So what is it about a story of a spider and a pig that has so captured the hearts and imaginations of generations of children around the world? They are decidedly unlikely choices for heroes or positive role models.

I mean, what do most people do when they see a spider? They shriek, jump away, and stamp the life out of the offending little creature. And walking into a spider web really gives us the creeps. Spiders – YUCK! (Wonder why we all happily sing “The Itsy, Bitsy Spider” song, though?) And play word association with “pig” and we quickly think “dirty”, “garbage”, “disgusting”, “gross”, “smelly”. Then after a while we also think “bacon”, “sausage”, “ham” and “yum!”

So, why *would* EB White choose a pig and a spider to tell a story about friendship? Well, friendship is a bit of a mystery itself and decidedly unpredictable. Sometimes our best friends *start out* as folks we don't like at all. Sometimes good friends become enemies overnight. Sometimes true friend-ship comes when and where we least expect it.

And so a baby pig finds a best friend in an ordinary little grey spider. Charlotte takes the risk to offer her friendship to Wilbur, and she is rewarded with his undying devotion, she who has never *had* a friend because she is an -- EWWW! -- spider.. Who would have thought that a spider could help a pig in such an important way, or that a pig could be *anything* to a spider? Well, behind ordinary exteriors lie warm hearts and, most importantly, the amazing ability to be a true friend.

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