



Once upon a time, more than a couple few years ago, when Southern California was still mostly open land and towns were few and far between, there were lots of Burrowing Owls happily living here. But there was one little Burrowing Owl who was NOT happy. Binky was the youngest Burrowing Owl in his family and lived in a quite nice burrow with his parents and 8 brothers and sisters. But he didn't like being crammed in a small burrow with all his

family and it was so boring when they were all underground for the night.

"Boring?" you ask. "Why didn't he just go to his room and watch TV?" Because there are not separate rooms in a burrow and TV hadn't been invented. "Not even basic cable?" Nope. "Can't he play video games on his smart phone or text his BFF's (Best Feathered Friends)?" This was a long time ago and there were no smart phones -- or even dumb phones -- and the only Burrowing Owls he knew were already right there in the crowded burrow with him.

Then one day, while the family was outside and the young ones were flapping their wings to learn how to fly or eating bugs off the ground, a cowboy came riding by. Cowboys and vaqueros liked Burrowing Owls who stood there bobbing their heads as

they rode by and called them "howdy birds." And when Binky heard that, he got so excited and started jumping up and down and saying "I'm going to be a cowboy! Yee Haw!" But his older sister told him, "You can't be a cowboy because you don't have a cowboy hat or cowboy boots or a horse to ride or a rope for catching things and you know you are not allowed to play with guns. But mostly you can't be a cowboy because you don't have a hat."

"But but," said Binky, "I will be a cowboy, I will , I will."

"Yeah," said his sister, "when pigs fly."

Well a few days later young Wilbur Wilberforce was playing cowboy on his family's ranch near where Binky lived. And when his momma called him in for dinner he rushed so fast his cowboy hat flew off but he didn't stop to pick it up because they were having Tater Tot pie for dinner and it was his favorite. You take a big pan and pour in some Tater Tots and then add some collard greens, refried beans, ramen noodles, Brussels sprouts, jalapenos and pour melted cheese all over it. Then you put a layer of Tater Tots on top of it, add a big splort of whipped cream and some strawberries.

Later that night a coyote, whose name was Princess Maria Elena Christina LeShaun Lakshmi Endive but everyone just called her Pookie, came by and thought she would take the hat back to her den for her three pups -- Inky, Dinky and Stinky -- to play with. As she was trotting across the field near where Binky lived she saw a plump rabbit, dropped the hat and in three leaps had pounced on the rabbit to take home to Inky, Dinky and little Stinky. Thus it was that when Binky came out into the sunshine the next morning, blinking and yawning, he saw the cowboy hat! "Yee Haw!" he shouted, because that's what he thought cowboys said, "I got me a hat. Now I am going to be a cowboy!"

"Like I said," sniffed his older sister, "when pigs fly. Burrowing Owls can't be cowboys." Just then there was a shadow overhead and the sound of beating wings and all the Owls scurried as fast as they could back underground to get away from the danger.

And when they came back out, what to their wondering eyes should appear, but a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer WHOA, PARDNER! THAT'S THE WRONG STORY! Sorry about that. What they did see wa

Me, Fearless Fred Pork Chop, the flyin'gest flying pig in the world.



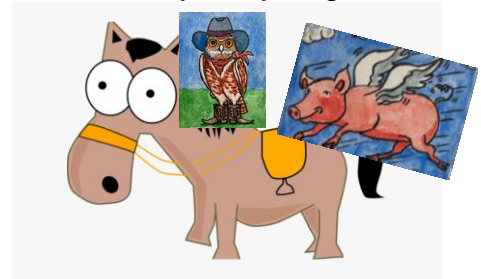


“Yee Haw Haw Haw!” cried Binky, “I got a hat and a flying pig so now I can be a cowboy!”

Then he thought to himself, whoever heard of a cowboy named “Binky”? He needed a real cowboy name, like “The Rancho Cucamonga Kid” or “The Chino Caballero” or “The Rattlesnake Rider.” Then he thought that since he was a kid and had once found a stale jellybean on the ground and it tasted wonderful, he would call himself “the Jellybean Kid.”

He and Fred decided to go off to the big city to seek their fortune, because they thought that was the cowboy way. But The

Jellybean Kid quickly got tired of hopping and flying a little and thought to himself, “a horse, of course, that would really be the cowboy way.” And as luck would have it, they spotted a horse in the next field. They flew up on its back and shouted “Giddyup Rosinante!” but the horse did not move. “Hi yo Sliver, away!” they cried and nothing happened. “On Smedley, on you great stallion!” didn’t work either. And then they realized that even if they could guess the horse’s name they couldn’t reach the stirrups or handle the reins and they were stuck flying and hopping and walking.



And by and by they came to Los Angeles, which was still a pretty small town back then. In fact it hadn't grown very much at all, mostly because when folks came along on horseback or in an oxcart or just walking by and they asked "What's this place called?" the people would answer with the full, original name "El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Ángeles del Río Porciúncula" and by the time



they said all that, the visitors had gone on. It was only when they gave up and just said “LA” that people stopped and settled there.

Fred and The Jellybean Kid finally got to LA and stood in the plaza, looking all around. They were very excited to be in what they had heard was a “rootin’ tootin’ Cowtown” They knew it was called that partly because in those days raising cattle was the major industry in the area and partly because on Saturday nights the cows would come to town and head down to the **CHEWY CUD SALOON** where they would drink a lot of milkshakes and get all hyped up and go running wild up and down the streets.

And because they had had so many milk shakes they would forget that cows go “moo moo” and instead they’d call out “roo roo” and “too too” and folks would say, “There go them cows rootin’ and tootin’ again.”

After a while our heroes got hungry and they went into “Phat Phil’s Phine Café, Bait Shop, and Horse Barn” and looked at the

menu



HERE'S OUR GRUB, BUB



Tacky Tacos, two for \$2.00 or three for \$5.00

Licorice and used chewing gum pizza \$1.00

Foot long Dodger Dogs with al the trimmings **sorry, sold out**

Flavored water: mud puddle, pond scum, or dirty laundry flavor \$1.00

Dog food sandwich \$1.50 pieces of bread to go with it, \$2.50

Corn cobs 25 cents, wth corn on them \$3.00

Bucket of fishing worms, some still alive \$1.75


Patagonian Fried Road Runner — our speciality, we leave the feathers on \$49.95

Well they knew what most of the food items were but they didn't know what those numbers and that squiggly line meant. When the waitress explained that was money for the meal, The Jellybean Kid thought that was really great cuz' you could get 2 tacos and 2 dollars! He was terribly disappointed to learn you had to pay 2 dollars for the tacos. And neither he nor Fearless Fred Pork Chop had any money. But they did know that if you had a job you got money so they set out to look for a job.

“Hollywood, here we come,” they said. “Why a cowboy Burrowing Owl and flying pig are just what the movies need.” They could see it now: *Flying Pig Trek*, *The Jellybean Kid*, *the Burrowing Owl Cowboy*, *and the Goblet of Giblets*, *Fred*, *The Jellybean Kid and the Avengers*, *The Jellybean Kid and Fred Versus Godzilla and Kong* ... the possibilities were endless.

Alas, movies hadn't been invented yet and the best they could do was get an audition for a puppet show called *Sez Me Street*, starring Big Turd, Burping Ernie, Hermit the Toad, Pickle Me Elmo, Ox Cart the Grinch. But they didn't get chosen.

Fred and The Jellybean Kid made a list of their talents ... The Jellybean Kid, like all owls and hawks, was really good at eating up mice; Fred could fly and wallow in the mud and eat table scraps and garbage but there didn't seem to be too many jobs that called for those unique skills.

But wait, they were missing the obvious answer – they were cowboys and they should get a job being cowboys. So they went out to the Rocking Emoji Ranch [this is their brand ] and they got hired to herd the cattle.



“Get along little dogies,” cried The Jellybean Kid. “Shush, shush, move your tush” said Fred. But the cows just looked at them. “Gee haw! Git ‘em up ya no count milk cans!” yelled the Jellybean Kid and Fred added “Or we’ll tie your tails in knots and bop you on the nose!” This time the cows looked at them and yawned. “All right, you asked for it ya walking hamburgers. We’re going to um we’re going to” But they couldn’t think of what to do to the cows that would make them move. This was just about the

most embarrassing thing that could possibly happen to two rough and ready, wild and wooly cowboys like The Kid and Fred. And a tiny little tear drop squeezed out of The Jellybean Kid's right eye, ran down his beak and plopped silently on the ground. And another tiny little tear came out of his left eye and ran down his beak and plopped on the ground. Meanwhile Fred was



turning red and thinking of changing his name to Mugwump. “Well, pardner,” said the Jellybean Kid trying as hard as he could to sound like a real cowboy, “I reckon either them is the wrong kind of cows or we is the wrong

kind of cowboy. I'm thinking maybe that old burrow wasn't so bad after all and I miss my family. Reckon I'll just mosey on down the trail and go back to being Binky the Burrowing Owl."

"That's a good idea, Hoss," said Fred who was also trying to sound like a cowboy for the last time. "But my cousin Porky says them show biz folks is about to invent the cartoon and he thinks he can get me and you some real (or reel) good parts."



And after some plastic surgery and with a lot of makeup, they did become big movie stars.

And that, boys and girls, is how the elephant got its trunk.

