

My story like so many others started out the very same way. I saw all of the news footage about the teacup pigs and fell in love. I did tons of research on pigs and decided they were not the pet for me. And then one fine August day I walked into our local pet store, and fell head over heels in love. With a pig.



All logic and reasoning flew out the window. She was mine and I was going to love her forever and ever. I bought her for \$80.00. What a great deal right? No, not really. They told me she was a mini pot belly. No bigger than 80 lbs or so. We were inseparable from the start. She followed me around closer than a puppy. The first order of business was to find a vet with pig knowledge. That is a lot harder than it sounds. I was able to find two. One was closer to us than the other. Both seeming to have the same background in farm animals, but the closer one also took care of domestic animals. So we chose him. He seemed wonderful at first. He spayed her without a problem. But when we took her back to get the stitches out he grabbed her by the legs and flipped her. She had NEVER been treated that way and proceeded to poo and pee all over herself and the table. I had a bag of treats for her and she would have lain right down to get her belly rubbed. That should have been a red flag, but I didn't see it.

Later he talked us into getting her tusks removed. I had done research, but there is a lot of conflicting information out there. She was 10 months old and 123 lbs. He injected her with 14ccs of Ketamine over a two hour period. I never left her side and did everything I could for her. It was horrible. Her mouth was bleeding; there was blood on her shoulders from the needles. It took me and a nurse to hold her down. I thought I was going to be sick. I couldn't believe I was putting her thru this. When it was over veterinarians' wife, who was also the secretary insisted that the pig leave NOW. She could not take another second of her squealing. My Dr said it was fine, she could go home. We lifted her off the table and she literally dragged herself to my car. She could not stand. Her elbows were bloody and sore from walking on them. We lifted her into my car and

she sat in the back seat. She seemed OK. I paid the bill and we left. Five minutes into the drive I heard her make a sound. Like Huuhhh. Huuuuhhh. I looked back and she was between my seat and the back seat on the floor. She seemed OK. I patted her head and told her we would be home very soon and how very sorry I was and how much I loved her. About ten more minutes we were only five minutes from home. I was thinking how am I going to get a sleepy pig this size out of my car. I reached back and patted her butt to try to wake her up. Nothing. I pulled her leg and called to her. Nothing. I pinched the inside of her leg, the soft skin by her tummy. Nothing. Except pure panic. I knew she was dead. I pulled the car over and jumped out. Her weight had forced her head under the seat. I pulled the seat forward and pulled her out. I tried to get her as flat as I could. I did mouth to mouth and chest compressions. She was gone. The Ketamine had finally kicked in after her adrenaline was gone and she became paralyzed. She exhaled and her chest was frozen, she was not able to take another breath. I laid in the backseat curled up with my Charlotte Rose on the side of the road for a long time. I couldn't believe she was gone. I loved that pig as much as anyone could ever love someone else. I pleaded for her to come back to me. She did not. My husband and I buried my Charlotte Rose that day. I wrapped her in her favorite blanket and tried to say my good byes. I planted a rose garden over her grave and made a marker, complete with a stone pig. It was April 14th 2011. This is the last picture ever taken of us together just days before her death.



To have loved a pig and been loved back so completely is a gift. A gift to be cherished and remembered always. I was beside myself for days. A month later I was still sleeping with her stuffed pig and crying at random times. I could barely function. After she passed several friends came to me and said they did not believe she was full pot belly pig. I went back to that pet store and confronted them. They not only confirmed this as true but actually laughed about it. They said they all know that the mini pigs they sell are actually mixed with farm pig. Had Charlotte lived she may have maxed out at 300 lbs or

more. I explained the gravity of their decision to sell these pigs. These pigs were starting their lives as beloved pets would more than likely end up on some ones plate. I was horrified and outraged that they had done this to so many of us. They have since stopped selling piglets.

And then one fine day I saw an ad on Craggs List for teacup pigs. \$200 and the parents were on sight. Joy was born April 26th 2011. 17 days after Charlotte Rose had passed away. It was like it was meant to be. I called the man up and set up a time to meet him. It was June 23rd the day I got my new baby. I saw the piglets and they were all so cute. There were red flags everywhere, but you know when you are subjected to the cuteness of the pig logic fly's out the window. The piglets were about 8 weeks old. They were 5 lb. All black and all red. I have a thing for gingers so I knew I wanted red, and had to be a girl. In the story Charlottes Web. Charlotte had three daughters that stayed with Wilbur. One of those was Joy. Joy was her new name.

The red flags that I spoke of were many. First the piglets were not with mom. They were kept in a separate enclosure by the house. They had not been handled and were very skittish. There was no food or water in the enclosure with them. I was then showed the parents. I have a hard time judging weight and size. He said they were about 50lbs. The mother was all black and had mange quite bad. The father a beautiful red. He also had turkeys, ducks, and pheasants and dogs. We saw no food or fresh water for any of them. I knew this was not right, but did not question him.

I brought her home and we fell in love. I understood her and her me. I tell people "Do you have joy in your life, because I do".



I took her to the other vet I mentioned. He is wonderful and very apologetic for what a fellow vet did to us. He is much more knowledgeable about pot belly pigs. He informed me that Joy is NOT a teacup pig, for there is no such thing. She was just underweight. And maybe a bit younger than the “breeder” said. He also stated that there has been so much unscrupulous breeding that it is hard to get a pure line anymore. You really have no way of telling just how big a pig is going to get. Unless you have the money and the resolve to check out its genetics. I love my Joy unconditionally. But I do understand that she is NOT a teacup pig. Maybe if I am lucky she might be a mini. But I am not going to hold my breath. I am just hoping she gets no bigger than 100lbs. Right now she is almost 7 months old and weighs over 60lbs.



I hope that what you the reader takes away form my story is....if you choose to get a pig, it is a commitment. A trust that you share with another being. You must be prepared to honor that trust no matter how big that pig gets. Pigs are smart, strong willed, and stubborn and loud. They can be destructive. All things that are cute when they are 5 lbs but harder to deal with when they are 50lbs or more.

Do not make the same mistakes I did. Do your research. Really be honest with yourself about the time, energy, space and money it takes to have a pig. Then if you choose to get a pig make sure to track down a really knowledgeable veterinarian. Your pig should be spayed or neutered right away. The bigger and older they are the harder it is on the pig. Always use isoflourine gas. NEVER injectables. Female pigs DO NOT have tusks that are EVER a problem. Males have to have the tusks trimmed by someone who knows what they are doing. NEVER pulled. A tusk goes deep into the jaw bone, pulling causes pain and damage.

As hard as owning a pig is, the rewards are even greater. They are the fourth smartest being on the planet. Humans, primates, dolphins and pigs. Pigs speak to you like no other animal can. They are dog like in that they wag their tails and will meet you at the door. But there is so much more. When you look into the soulful eyes of a pig and she looks back at you, you know that is what love is all about. Unconditional love... that is what P I G means to me.