Stories of Stuff

Leather Pig
by Shelley Trower
From a tale told in Lostwithiel library

When Holly got married, her husband gave her a large leather pig, to add to her collection. She has about twenty-five pigs in total, including pottery pigs, carved wooden pigs, and a tiny jade pig.

After their wedding, her husband put the large pig in the boot of their car, and he travelled with them on their honeymoon across Europe. Since then, their children, and grandchildren, have all had their turns riding that pig. He has lost both of his eyes, and his tail came off, but Holly has it still in a drawer ready to be restored. He still has both ears, so he can hear.

One day Holly tells the pig's ears, that when she first moved to Cornwall as a small child, her family had a pig, just like him. Sometimes, that pig got sunburn and he loved being scratched on his back. Her father rode that pig, hurtling up the field on it. Holly's pig tells her now, that he'd love a scratch on his back, and he'd be happy to take her for a ride.

'Why don't we take a trip along the river', says the pig.

'Alright then, let's go later, when it's cooled down a bit.'

At dusk that summer evening, they walk out together, down the alley to the river.

'Jump on', says the pig. Holly straddles the pig's back, and he takes her along to where the trees open out, to where it gets marshy and the bubbles come up from the deeps.

'Is it safe?' Holly asks.

'If you're on my back it is', says the pig, because he can feel the way even without his eyes. He takes her right to the edges of the river, where the mud grows thick.

'You can get off now', says the pig. Holly stands aside on a tuft of grass, and watches her pig roll blissfully in the mud.

'Thank you', says the pig when he has finished. 'I've always wanted to do that.'

When they get home, Holly gives him a good scrubbing, but leaves a little spot of mud behind an ear so they can remember their adventure.