

The Story of Ferdinand
by Munro Leaf

Drawings by Robert Lawson

Once upon a time in Spain

there was a little bull and his
name was Ferdinand.

All the other little bulls he
lived with would run and jump
and butt their heads together,

but not Ferdinand.

He liked to sit just quietly and
smell the flowers.

He had a favorite spot out in
the pasture under a cork tree.

It was his favorite tree and he
would sit in its shade all day
and smell the flowers.

Sometimes his mother, who
was a cow, would worry about
him. She was afraid he would
be lonesome all by himself.

"Why don't you run and play
with the other little bulls and
skip and butt your head?" she
would say.

But Ferdinand would shake his head. "I like it better here where I can sit just quietly and smell the flowers."

His mother saw that he was not lonesome, and because she was an understanding mother, even though she was a cow, she let him just sit there and be happy.

As the years went by Ferdinand grew and grew until he was very big and strong.

All the other bulls who had grown up with him in the same pasture would fight each other all day. They would butt each other and stick each other with their horns. What they wanted most of all was to be picked to fight at the bull fights in Madrid.

But not Ferdinand--he still liked to sit just quietly under the cork tree and smell the flowers.

One day five men came in very funny hats to pick the biggest, fastest roughest bull to fight in the bull fights in Madrid.

All the other bulls ran around snorting and butting, leaping and jumping so the men would think that they were very very strong and fierce and pick them.

Ferdinand knew that they wouldn't pick him and he didn't care. So he went out to his favorite cork tree to sit down.

He didn't look where he was sitting and instead of sitting on the nice cool grass in the shade he sat on a bumble bee.

Well, if you were a bumble bee and a bull sat on you what would you do? You would sting him. And that is just what this bee did to Ferdinand.

Wow! Did it hurt! Ferdinand jumped up with a snort.

He ran around puffing and snorting, butting and pawing the ground as if he were crazy. The five men saw him and they all shouted with joy. here was the largest and fiercest bull of all. Just the one for the bull fights in Madrid!

So they took him away for the
bullfight day in a cart.

What a day it was! Flags were
flying, bands were playing...

and all the lovely ladies had
flowers in their hair.

They had a parade into the
bull ring.

First came the Banderilleros
with long sharp pins with
ribbons on them to stick in
the bull and make him mad.

Next came the Picadores who
rode skinny horses and they
had long spears to stick in the
bull and make him madder.

Then came the Matador, the
proudest of all--he thought he
was very handsome, and bowed
to the ladies. He had a red cape
and a sword and was supposed
to stick the bull last of all.

Then came the bull, and you
know who that was don't you?
—FERDINAND.

They called him Ferdinand
the Fierce and all of the Banderilleros
were afraid of him and
the Picadores were afraid of
him and the Matador was
scared stiff.

Ferdinand ran to the middle of
the ring and everyone shouted
and clapped because they
thought he was going to fight
fiercely and butt and snort
and stick his horns around.

But not Ferdinand. When he
got to the middle of the ring
he saw the flowers in all the
lovely ladies' hair and he just
sat down quietly and smelled.

He wouldn't fight and be fierce
no matter what they did. He
just sat and smelled. And the
Banderilleros were mad and
the Picadores were madder and
the Matador was so mad he
cried because he couldn't show
off with his cape and sword.

So they had to take Ferdinand
home.

And for all I know he is sitting
there still, under his favorite
cork tree, smelling the flowers
just quietly.

He is very happy.