

## Grandfather Frog's Journey

by Thornton W. Burgess

Grandfather Frog sat on his big green lily-pad in the Smiling Pool and—Grandfather Frog was asleep! There was no doubt about it, Grandfather Frog was really and truly asleep. His hands were folded across his white and yellow waistcoat and his eyes were closed. Three times the Merry Little Breezes blew a foolish green fly right past his nose;—Grandfather Frog didn't so much as blink.

Presently Billy Mink discovered that Grandfather Frog was asleep. Billy's little black eyes twinkled with mischief as he hurried over to the slippery slide in search of Little Joe Otter. Then the two scamps hunted up Jerry Muskrat. They found him very busy storing away a supply of food in his new house. At first Jerry refused to listen to what they had to say, but the more they talked the more Jerry became interested.

"We won't hurt Grandfather Frog, not the least little bit," protested Billy Mink. "It will be just the best joke and the greatest fun ever, and no harm done."

The more Jerry thought over Billy Mink's plan, the funnier the joke seemed. Finally Jerry agreed to join Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter. Then the three put their heads together and with a lot of giggling and chuckling they planned their joke on Grandfather Frog.

Now Jerry Muskrat can stay a very long time under water, and his teeth are long and sharp in order to cut the roots on which he depends for much of his food. So Jerry swam out to the big green lily-pad on which sat Grandfather Frog fast asleep. Diving way to the bottom of the Smiling Pool, Jerry cut off the stem of the big green lily-pad close to its root way down in the mud.

While Jerry was at work doing this, Billy Mink sent the Merry Little Breezes hurrying over the Green Meadows to call all the little meadow people to the Smiling Pool. Then, when Jerry Muskrat came up for a breath of air, Billy Mink dived down and, getting hold of the end of the lily-pad stem, he began to swim, towing the big green lily-pad after him very slowly and gently so as not to waken Grandfather Frog. When Billy had to come up for air, Little Joe Otter took his place. Then Jerry Muskrat took his turn.

Across the Smiling Pool, past the Big Rock, they towed the big green lily-pad, while Grandfather Frog slept peacefully, his hands folded over his white and yellow waistcoat. Past the bulrushes and Jerry Muskrat's new house, past Little Joe Otter's slippery slide sailed Grandfather Frog, and still he slept and dreamed of the days when the world was young.

Out of the Smiling Pool and into the Laughing Brook, where the brown water flows smoothly, the three little swimmers towed the big green lily-pad. It floated along of itself now, and all they had to do was to steer it clear of rocks and old logs. Once it almost got away from them, on the edge of a tiny waterfall, but all three pulling together towed it out of danger. At last, in a dear little pool with a mossy green bank, they anchored the big green lily-pad.

Then Billy Mink hurried back to the Smiling Pool to tell the little meadow people where to find Grandfather Frog. Little Joe Otter climbed out on the mossy green bank and Jerry Muskrat joined him there to rest and dry off. One by one the little meadow people came hurrying up. Reddy Fox was the

first. Then came Johnny Chuck and Striped Chipmunk. Of course Peter Rabbit was on hand. You can always count Peter in, when there is anything going on among the little meadow people. Danny Meadow Mouse and Happy Jack Squirrel arrived quite out of breath. Sammy Jay and Blacky the Crow were not far behind. Last of all came Jimmy Skunk, who never hurries.

Each in turn peeped over the edge of the mossy green bank to see Grandfather Frog still sleeping peacefully on his big green lily-pad in the dear little pool. Then all hid where they could see him when he awoke, but where he could not see them.

Presently Billy Mink reached out with a long straw and tickled Grandfather Frog on the end of his nose. Grandfather Frog opened his eyes and yawned sleepily. Right over his head he saw jolly, round, red Mr. Sun smiling down on him just as he last saw him before falling asleep. He yawned again and then looked to see if Billy Mink was sitting on the Big Rock.

Where was the Big Rock? Grandfather Frog sat up very suddenly and rubbed his eyes. There wasn't any Big Rock! Grandfather Frog pinched himself to make sure that he was awake. Then he rubbed his eyes again and looked down at the big green lily-pad. Yes, that was his, the very same lily-pad on which he sat every day.

Grandfather Frog was more perplexed than ever. Slowly he looked around. Where were the slippery slide and Jerry Muskrat's new house? Where were the bulrushes and where—where was the *Smiling Pool*? Grandfather Frog's jaw dropped as he looked about him. His own big green lily-pad was the only lily-pad in sight. Had the world turned topsy-turvy while he slept?

"Chug-a-rum!" said Grandfather Frog. "This is very strange, very strange, indeed!"

Then he turned around three times and pinched himself again. "Very strange, very strange, indeed," muttered Grandfather Frog over and over again. He scratched his head first with one hand and then with the other, and the more he scratched the stranger it all seemed.

Just then he heard a giggle up on the mossy green bank. Grandfather Frog whirled around. "Chug-a-rum!" he exclaimed. "Billy Mink, come out from behind that tall grass and tell me where I am and what this means! I might have known that you were at the bottom of it."

Then out jumped all the little meadow people and the Merry Little Breezes to shout and laugh and dance and roll over and over on the mossy green bank. Grandfather Frog looked at one and then at another and gradually he began to smile. Pretty soon he was laughing as hard as any of them, as Billy Mink told how they had towed him down to the dear little pool.

"And now, Grandfather Frog, we'll take you home again," concluded Billy Mink.

So, as before, Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter and Jerry Muskrat took turns towing the big green lily-pad, while in the middle of it sat Grandfather Frog, catching foolish green flies which the Merry Little Breezes blew over to him.

Reddy Fox, Johnny Chuck, Peter Rabbit, Danny Meadow Mouse, Striped Chipmunk, Happy Jack Squirrel and Jimmy Skunk raced and capered along the bank and shouted encouragement to the three little swimmers, while over-head flew Sammy Jay and Blacky the Crow. And, never once losing his balance, Grandfather Frog sat on the big green lily-pad, enjoying his strange ride and smacking his lips

over the foolish green flies.

And so they came once more to the Smiling Pool, past the slippery slide, past the bulrushes and Jerry Muskrat's new house and the Big Rock, until Grandfather Frog and his queer craft were once more anchored safe and sound in the old familiar place.

"Chug-a-rum!" said Grandfather Frog. "I think I'd like to go again."

Source:

Burgess, Thornton. "Grandfather Frog's Journey." *Mother West Wind's Animal Friends*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company. 1920. Electronic.