

## Grandfather Frog Gets Even

by Thornton W. Burgess

Old Grandfather Frog sat on his big green lily pad in the Smiling Pool dreaming of the days when the world was young and the frogs ruled the world. His hands were folded across his white and yellow waistcoat. Round, red, smiling Mr. Sun sent down his warmest rays on the back of Grandfather Frog's green coat.

Very early that morning Old Mother West Wind, hurrying down from the Purple Hills on her way to help the white-sailed ships across the great ocean, had stopped long enough to blow three or four fat, foolish, green flies over to the big lily pad, and they were now safely inside the white and yellow waistcoat. A thousand little tadpoles, the great, great-grandchildren of Grandfather Frog, were playing in the Smiling Pool, and every once in a while wriggling up to the big lily pad to look with awe at Grandfather Frog and wonder if they would ever be as handsome and big and wise as he.

And still old Grandfather Frog sat dreaming and dreaming of the days when all the frogs had tails and ruled the world.

Presently Billy Mink came hopping and skipping down the Laughing Brook. Sometimes he swam a little way and sometimes he ran a little way along the bank, and sometimes he jumped from stone to stone. Billy Mink was feeling very good—very good indeed. He had caught a fine fat trout for breakfast. He had hidden two more away for dinner in a snug little hole no one knew of but himself. Now he had nothing to do but get into mischief. You can always depend upon Billy Mink to get into mischief. He just can't help it.

So Billy Mink came hopping and skipping down the Laughing Brook to the Smiling Pool. Then he stopped, as still as the rock he was standing on, and peeped through the bulrushes. Billy Mink is very cautious, very cautious indeed. He always looks well before he shows himself, that nothing may surprise him.

So Billy Mink looked all over the Smiling Pool and the grassy banks. He saw the sunbeams dancing on the water. He saw the tadpoles having such a good time in the Smiling Pool. He saw the Merry Little Breezes kissing the buttercups and daisies on the bank, and he saw old Grandfather Frog with his hands folded across his white, and yellow waistcoat sitting on the green lily pad, dreaming of the days when the world was young.

Then Billy Mink took a long breath, a very long breath, and dived into the Smiling Pool. Now, Billy Mink can swim very fast, very fast indeed. For a little way he can swim even faster than Mr. Trout. And he can stay under water a long time.

Straight across the Smiling Pool, with not even the tip of his nose out of water, swam Billy Mink. The thousand little tadpoles saw him coming and fled in all directions to bury themselves in the mud at the bottom of the Smiling Pool, for when he thinks no one is looking Billy Mink sometimes gobbles up a fat tadpole for breakfast.

Straight across the Smiling Pool swam Billy Mink toward the big green lily pad where Grandfather Frog sat dreaming of the days when the world was young. When he was right under the big green lily

pad he suddenly kicked up hard with his hind feet. Up went the big green lily pad, and, of course, up went Grandfather Frog—up and over flat on his back, with a great splash into the Smiling Pool!

Now, Grandfather Frog's mouth is very big. Indeed, no one else has so big a mouth, unless it be his cousin, old Mr. Toad. And when Grandfather Frog went over flat on his back, splash in the Smiling Pool, his mouth was wide open.

You see he was so surprised he forgot to close it. So, of course, Grandfather Frog swallowed a great deal of water, and he choked and spluttered and swam around in foolish little circles trying to find himself. Finally he climbed out on his big green lily pad.

"Chug-a-rum?" said Grandfather Frog, and looked this way and looked that way. Then he gave a funny hop and turned about in the opposite direction and looked this way and looked that way, but all he saw was the Smiling Pool dimpling and smiling, Mrs. Redwing bringing a fat worm to her hungry little babies in their snug nest in the bulrushes, and the Merry Little Breezes hurrying over to see what the trouble might be.

"Chug-a-rum!" said Grandfather Frog. "It is very strange. I must have fallen asleep and had a bad dream."

Then he once more settled himself comfortably on the big green lily pad, folded his hands across his white and yellow waistcoat, and seemed to be dreaming again, only his big goggly eyes were not dreaming. No, indeed! They were very much awake, and they saw all that was going on in the Smiling Pool. Great-Grandfather Frog was just pretending. You may fool him once, but Grandfather Frog has lived so long that he has become very wise, and though Billy Mink is very smart, it takes some one a great deal smarter than Billy Mink to fool Grandfather Frog twice in the same way.

Billy Mink, hiding behind the Big Rock, had laughed and laughed till he had to hold his sides when Grandfather Frog had choked and spluttered and hopped about on the big lily pad trying to find out what it all meant. He thought it such a good joke that he couldn't keep it to himself, so when he saw Little Joe Otter coming to try his slippery slide he swam across to tell him all about it. Little Joe Otter laughed and laughed until he had to hold his sides. Then they both swam back to hide behind the Big Rock to watch until Grandfather Frog should forget all about it, and they could play the trick over again.

Now, out of the corner of one of his big goggly eyes, Grandfather Frog had seen Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter with their heads close together, laughing and holding their sides, and he saw them swim over behind the Big Rock. Pretty soon one of the Merry Little Breezes danced over to see if Grandfather Frog had really gone to sleep. Grandfather Frog didn't move, not the teeniest, weeniest bit, but he whispered something to the Merry Little Breeze, and the Merry Little Breeze flew away, shaking with laughter, to where the other Merry Little Breezes were playing with the buttercups and daisies.

Then all the Merry Little Breezes clapped their hands and laughed too. They left the buttercups and daisies and began to play tag across the Smiling Pool.

Now, right on the edge of the Big Rock lay a big stick. Pretty soon the Merry Little Breezes danced over to the Big Rock, and then, suddenly, all together they gave the big stick a push. Off it went, and then such a splashing and squealing as there was behind the Big Rock!

In a few moments Little Joe Otter crept out beside his slippery slide and slipped away holding on to his head. And, sneaking through the bulrushes, so as not to be seen, crawled Billy Mink, back towards his home on the Laughing Brook. Billy Mink wasn't laughing now. Oh, no! He was limping and he was holding on to his head. Little Joe Otter and Billy Mink had been sitting right underneath the big stick.

"Chug-a-rum!" said Grandfather Frog and held on to his sides and opened his mouth very wide in a noiseless laugh, for Grandfather Frog never makes a sound when he laughs.

"Chug-a-rum!" said Grandfather Frog once more. Then he folded his hands across his white and yellow waistcoat and began again to dream of the days when the frogs had long tails and ruled the world.

Source:

Burgess, Thornton. "Grandfather Frog Gets Even." *Mother West Wind's Children*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap Publishers. 1911. Electronic.