



The Parable of the Frog in Need of Water

Once upon a time, Ferrdie the Frog needed relief from the heat. Life sure was hard, and if Ferrdie didn't do something very, very soon to make his situation better, he'd dry out and fry!

Where he lived, it had gotten quite dry, and as you know, frogs like water. Frogs need water to survive. Or, rather, they need water so that their happiness can survive. And Ferrdie had become quite unhappy. His house –that little nitch in the soil that he had carefully carved out for himself –shaded him nicely and kept him cool when the sun was bright and hot, but this wasn't enough to keep him happy and content, being that he was a frog and he loved water.

Normally, it rained every day in the late afternoon, and this rain brought moisture into his home. Sweet, cool, delightful moisture. What a way to live! He didn't have to go anywhere in search of a pond or a lake or a puddle, because the water came right into his home. The rain brought out the bugs and he would dine with ease. All he had to do was poke his head out of his hole and wait and watch. Soon, very soon, in practically no time at all, the soaking rain would sprout an insect out of the ground, and schwip! He would capture that insect with his agile tongue and enjoy its exquisite nourishment.

But one year, the rains didn't come on schedule. The ground became very dry. Ferrdie's house

grew warmer and warmer as the sun soaked the soil with its dry heat. Bugs crawled by his door less and less frequently. To satisfy his hunger, Ferrdie

had to leave the shaded shelter of his home and hop across the hot dry dirt until he spotted a bug and schwipped it for his meal. That was not fun. That was not easy. But Ferrdie comforted himself with the knowledge that soon the rains would come back and his life would return to the

normal level of comfort that he'd been used to.

Soon did not happen soon enough. Day after day, the drought continued. Ferrdie cried out to complain of his misery. When would life be comfortable again? he wanted to know.

His home dried out. His skin dried out. He had to find water! He would die if he didn't find water soon, very soon - today even! He knew of one solution: He could burrow deeper into the ground, where the soil was damp, like he always did in the wintertime. There, he could wait however long was necessary for the rains to begin. But he didn't like that solution. It wasn't wintertime. He shouldn't have to hibernate right now. He should be able to enjoy life as



he normally did in the springtime, feeling damp and snacking on bugs that the rain brought to his doorstep.

Ferrdie became very impatient. He could wait no longer. He had to do something! So he left his home to find a nice, wet pond.

A few hops later he made a magnificent discovery! Right there, so close by to where he lived, was a pond! The water sparkled clear and blue and wet. There were steep cliffs all around the edge of the pond, and Ferrdie realized that once he got into that water, he might have a hard time getting out. But oh how wet the water looked!

Splash! Ferrdie ended his long wait for rain. Oh how good the water felt on his skin! Oh how wonderful it felt to swim in. The pond had a strange smell to it - no mucky smell, no algae, no plant growth, no lily pads with their fragrant flowers. But it was wet! And cool! How delightful!

After the sheer enjoyment of just swimming around wherever he pleased, he began to get tired, so he relaxed and let himself float. Suddenly, a huge hand swooped down into the water right in front of him. What was this! Why did it want to capture him? He darted off in the opposite direction and swam down deep into the pond. The hand could not reach him there. But eventually he had to go back up to get air. Cautiously, he returned to the surface and breathed. No hand. Wow, what a relief! But oh my, how tired he felt! He swam to the side of the pond. He tried to climb up the cliff on the side of the pond, but it was too smooth and steep. He failed.

The giant hand swooped down again and this time it enclosed around him. Ferrdie panicked. Ferrdie squirmed. Ferrdie fought against the hand to squeeze through a crack in the fingers, but the hand was too strong, too big, too frightening. Then, at last, the hand opened up. Now was his chance! With a quick glance, he determined which direction to jump to get back into the pond, and with a great push from his hind legs, he flew through the air and plopped into the wet, cool water.

Again, Ferrdie stayed down in the safe depths until he needed to breath. Cautiously, he searched for that hand. Not seeing it, he allowed himself to calm down. Exhausted, he relaxed his tired body. When he noticed he felt hungry. But there were no bugs in this water. The time had come to get out of the pond and get back to the soil where he knew there was plenty to eat.

Ferrdie summoned the energy to whoosh himself over to the side of the pond. He reached up to cling to the cliff wall, but the side of the cliff was smooth, way too smooth. He tried again. And again and again and again. He'd have to seek out a better side of the pond. Something about this pond water was draining his energy, but he made it to the other side, and again he tried to climb up the cliff. Again it was too flat and too smooth to climb up.

He needed to rest. He needed to recollect his energy. But whether he rested or swam, he felt weaker and weaker. Water had always refreshed him in the past, so he forced his legs to carry him deeper into the pond. That didn't help, so he floated up to the surface. After a time, floating was all he could manage with his little remaining strength. Then his lungs began to burn and he could no longer pull in air. The world grew blurry. He could no longer think, not about rain, not about bugs, not about the hand that had pulled him out of the water.

The next day, the hand scooped up his lifeless body. "Poor frog," said the person of the hand. "I tried to tell you that the chlorinated pool water would hurt you. Why didn't you let me save you?"