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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

The Frogs and the Fairies

Abbie Phillips Walker

In a pond in a valley, there once lived a large family of frogs. One day, when the sun was shining, all the young frogs came out of the water and jumped onto the shore. "I think it would be fun to see what's in the valley next to this pond," said Billy Bull, a young and curious frog.

"What do you say we go tonight, by the light of the moon, when the larks sing?"

"Yes, let's go, let's go, Billy Bull," said all the other young frogs in unison.

"Better stay home, better stay home," croaked their old Grandfather Bullfrog from his chair on a tree stump at the edge of the pond.

"Oh, listen to old Grandpa croak again!" said Billy Bull. "He's never been out of this pond in his whole life, so what does he know about the valley?"

"Better stay home, better stay home," croaked Grandfather Frog.

"That's fine, Grandfather Frog, if you want to, but we young frogs are going out tonight, when the larks sing. When we come back, we'll tell you what there is to see in the valley," said Billy Bull.



That night, when the moon rose and shone through the trees, all the young frogs hopped out of the pond.

"Better stay home, better stay home," croaked Grandfather Frog again, from his chair on the tree stump. But the young frogs just laughed as Grandpa's warning followed them through the valley: "Better stay home, better stay home."

Now it so happened that the fairies were having a party that night. As Billy Bull and all the other young frogs hopped around in the middle of the valley, they saw the bright lights of the fireflies' lanterns.

"It looks like all the fireflies in the world have gathered for us to feast on," said Billy Bull. "What luck for us."

In the distance, they could still hear Grandfather Frog croaking his warning: "Better stay home, better stay home." But the young frogs didn't listen to the

warning. They only saw the fireflies and the party they had in store for them. The frogs had never seen fairies before, and they thought they were also small insects. So, without stopping to think or getting closer to the fairies, Billy Bull and all his cousins jumped right in. But the fairies were just as fast as the frogs, and the frogs had only just landed in the middle of them when all the fairies' wands went up, and every frog stood still as a statue. They could only stare and listen.

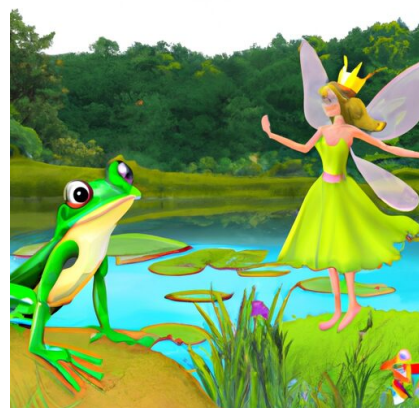
"What kind of creatures are these that dare to disturb us?" asked the Fairy Queen.

"Majesty, they are frogs," said a firefly, "and I think they were planning to eat all the fireflies."

"Eat the lantern-bearers of the fairies?" said the Fairy Queen. "They will pay for that."

"We'll take a toe from each front paw of the frogs. That way, these frogs will probably stay home and not hop around at night. Where do they live?" asked the Fairy Queen.

"In the pond at the end of the valley," said the fireflies.



"Send them home," said the Queen, "and every time they stray far from their pond, they'll lose another toe."

The fairies' wands went over the frogs' legs. And where the frogs had five toes on each front paw, there were now only four left. Then the fairies tapped the frogs' heads with their wands and drove them back to their pond. The fairies left and didn't look back.

"You should have stayed home, you should have stayed home," croaked Grandfather Frog as the young frogs sadly jumped into the pond and buried themselves in the mud at the bottom.

And so it is said that frogs got five toes on each of their hind legs and only four toes on each front paw. If they had listened to Grandfather Frog's warning, they would still have had their other toe...

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