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A Children's Circus

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"This way to the big show!" children were shouting from every direction. "Come right along! Look at the Frog-Child, the Snake-Lady, the Toad-Man, the Turtle Babies!"

A dozen children had organized a circus—a real one, with a parade, performers, and an admission price. The money would go to the children's ward at the local hospital. Every friend they knew came running.

The parade wound around the yard to the sound of drums and combs covered with tissue paper. Two little girls rode ponies with cloth monkeys (bright bead eyes and all) balanced on the horses' heads. A boy on a rocking horse did tricks. There were all the usual circus acts, if not quite the most dangerous ones.

Then a boy stepped forward in his best ringmaster manner:



"Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls, Cats and Dogs—we now have the great privilege of presenting the Frog-Child, the Snake-Lady, the Toad-Man, and the Turtle Babies. Step this way! No extra charge!"

The audience trooped curiously through a side tent—and burst out laughing the moment they stepped inside.

A child in a bright green suit was hopping around, croaking "Galloo, Galloo, Goog-a-room, Goog-a-room!" A girl wrapped in an imitation snakeskin announced solemnly, "I eat things whole"—and swallowed a tiny crumb to prove it. The Toad-Man grunted magnificently. The Turtle Babies snapped and played and drew their heads under their paper shells, just as promised.

The costumes were extraordinary, considering they were made almost entirely from paper.

"We think you are marvelous!" the audience called out—and all the animals bowed, and answered in voices that sounded remarkably like what snakes, toads, frogs, and turtles might say, if they ever chose to speak.

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