

FREDDIE THE FROG

By: S. Brown Harris

Freddie was a handsome green frog who never ventured off of land. He longingly watched as his friends and family splashed happily in Grosspointe pond. “What great fun!” Fannie declared as she sunned on the lily pad. “Freddie, come join us.” She called to him.

Day after day, Freddie made excuse after excuse not to get in the water. One day, Fannie tired of his excuses. “Look Freddie, if you don’t like us, why don’t you just say so!”

The blue ring around Freddie’s big black eyes lowered with embarrassment. Finally, he gathered his courage and stammered. “It’s not that I don’t like you. ‘Cuz I really do. Especially you, Fannie.” His voice lowered shyly. “If I tell you, will you promise not to laugh?”

“I promise! Cross my heart and hope to die.” She declared faithfully.

Freddie gathered his courage and blurted out, “I’m afraid of water. I’m so afraid that I even hide inside when it rains instead of rejoicing with everyone else.”

“Freddie, that’s nonsense. Why, you’re a frog. You were born in water. And besides, water is as natural as land. Look at all of the good things that happen because of water.”

“Oh yeah, like what?” Freddie challenged her with all out disbelief.

“Well for starters, life! Look how much life there is in water. And look at how much life depends on water. If water didn’t exist, we’d all die from thirst, including all

of the beautiful trees and flowers. There'd be no water lilies for me to sun on. If it wasn't for water, why Freddie, you and I wouldn't even exist. We were born in water."

Seeing that Freddie was still not convinced, Fannie's face crinkled with concern. "Why are you so afraid of water?"

"I'll tell you but remember you promised not to laugh."

"I promise, Freddie. I won't even if you say something as stupid as you can't swim."

Freddie gasped and took a large gulp of air. One look at him and Fannie exclaimed, "Surely that can't be it?"

Freddie stammered. "It's true, Fannie. I'm the only frog in the whole wide world who can't swim. If I jump in the water, I'm sure to drown."

"Sure to drown?" Fannie pushed down her laughter. She turned very serious. "Freddie, ALL frogs, even you, are born knowing how to swim."

"Really." Freddie replied somewhat skeptically.

"Really, Freddie. Why birds know how to fly, right?"

"Well, yes." Freddie answered not sure where Fannie was going.

"Bunnies know how to hop, right?"

Freddie nodded yes.

"Snakes know how to slither, right?"

Freddie nodded yes again.

"Then Freddie, you know how to swim. When's the last time you tried?"

Freddie dropped his eyes. "Why never."

"Never?" Fannie was astonished. "You mean you've never even tried?"

Freddie shook his head as he shivered with fright.

“Well Freddie, it’s time.”

“Are you sure, Fannie?”

“Sure I am! Come on, I’ll show you.” She grabbed Freddie’s hand and before he could stop her, she leaped in the water with him.

To Freddie’s surprise, his feet paddled the water. “I’m swimming! I’m swimming!” He shouted with glee.

THE END