

THE ADVENTURES OF JERRY MUSKRAT

CHAPTER 14: SPOTTY THE TURTLE KEEPS RIGHT ON GOING



BY THORNTON W. BURGESS

“One step, two steps, three steps, so!
Four steps, five steps, six steps go!
Keep right on and do your best;
Mayhap you’ll win while others rest.”

Spotty the Turtle said this over to himself every time he felt a little down-hearted, as he plodded along the bed of the Laughing Brook. And every time he said it, he felt better. “One step, two steps,” he kept saying over and over, and each time he said it, he took a step and then another. They were very short steps, very short steps indeed, for Spotty’s legs are very short. But each one carried him forward just so much, and he knew that he was just so much nearer the thing he was seeking. Anyway, he hoped he was.

You see, if the Laughing Brook would never laugh any more, and the Smiling Pool would never smile any more, there was nothing to do but to go down to the Big River to live, and no one wanted to do that, especially Grandfather Frog and Spotty the Turtle.

Now, because Billy Mink could go faster than Little Joe Otter, and Little Joe Otter could go faster than Jerry Muskrat, and Jerry could go faster than Grandfather Frog, and Grandfather Frog could go faster than Spotty the Turtle, and because each one wanted to be the first to find the trouble, no one would wait for the one behind him. So Spotty the Turtle, who has to carry his house with him,

was a long, long way behind the others. But he kept right on going.

“One step, two steps, three steps, so!”

And he didn’t stop for anything. He crawled over sticks and around big stones and sometimes, when he found a little pool of water, he swam. He always felt better then, because he can swim faster than he can walk.

After a long, long time, Spotty the Turtle came to a little pool where the sunshine lay warm and inviting. There, in the middle of it, on a mossy stone, sat Grandfather Frog fast asleep. He had thought that he was so far ahead of Spotty that he could safely rest his tired legs. Spotty wanted to climb right up beside him and take a nap too, but he didn’t. He just grinned and kept right on going.

“One step, two steps, three steps, so!”

While Grandfather Frog slept on.

By and by, after a long, long time Spotty came to another little pool, and who should he see but Jerry Muskrat busily opening and eating some freshwater clams which he had found there. He was so busy enjoying himself that he didn’t see Spotty, and Spotty didn’t say a word, but kept right on going, although the sight of Jerry’s feast had made him dreadfully hungry.

By and by, after a long, long time, he came to a third little pool with a high, smooth bank, and who should he see there but Little Joe Otter, who had made a slippery slide down the smooth bank and was having a glorious time

sliding down into the little pool. Spotty would have liked to take just one slide, but he didn't. He didn't even let Little Joe Otter see him, but kept right on going.

“One step, two steps, three steps, so!”

By and by, after a long, long time, he came to a hollow log, and just happening to peep in, he saw some one curled up fast asleep. Who was it? Why, Billy Mink, to be sure! You see, Billy thought that he was so far ahead that

he might just as well take it easy, and that was what he was doing. Spotty the Turtle didn't waken him. He just kept right on going the same slow way he had come all day, and so, just as jolly, round, red Mr. Sun was going to bed behind the Purple Hills, Spotty the Turtle found the cause of the trouble in the Laughing Brook and the Smiling Pool.