

# THE ADVENTURES OF JERRY MUSKRAT

## CHAPTER 24: A MERRY HOME-GOING



BY THORNTON W. BURGESS

“The Laughing Brook is merry  
And so am I,” cried Jerry.  
Grandfather Frog said he was too.  
And Spotty was, the others knew.

The trees stood with wet feet where just a little while before had been the strange pond in the Green Forest, the pond made by the dam of Paddy the Beaver. In the dam was a great hole made by Paddy himself.

Through the Green Forest rang the laughter of the Laughing Brook, for once more the water ran deep between its banks. And in the hearts of Grandfather Frog and Jerry Muskrat and Spotty the Turtle was laughter also, for now the Smiling Pool would smile once more, and they could go home in peace and happiness. And there was one more who laughed. Who was it? Why, Paddy the Beaver to be sure, and his was the best laugh of all, for it was because he had brought happiness to others.

“You beat me up here to the dam, but you won’t beat me back to the Smiling Pool,” cried Jerry Muskrat to Spotty the Turtle.

Spotty laughed good-naturedly. “You’d better not stop to eat or play or sleep on the way then,” said he, “for I shall keep right on going all the time. I’ve found that is the only way to get anywhere.”

“Let us all go down together” said Grandfather Frog. “We can help each other over the bad places.”

Jerry Muskrat laughed until he had to hold his sides at the very thought of Grandfather Frog or Spotty the Turtle being able to help him, but he is very good-natured, and so he agreed that they should all go down together. Paddy the Beaver said that he would go, too, so off the four started, Jerry Muskrat and Paddy the Beaver swimming side by side, and behind them Grandfather Frog and Spotty the Turtle.

Now Spotty the Turtle is a very slow traveler on land, but in the water Spotty is not so slow. In fact, it was not long before Grandfather Frog found that he was the one who could not keep up. You see, while he is a great diver and can swim fast for a short distance, he is soon tired out. Pretty soon he was puffing and blowing and dropping farther and farther behind. By and by, Spotty the Turtle looked back. There was Grandfather Frog just tumbling head first over a little waterfall. He came up choking and gasping and kicking his long legs very feebly. Spotty climbed out on a rock and waited. He helped Grandfather Frog out beside him, and when Grandfather Frog had once more gotten his breath, what do you think Spotty did? Why, he took Grandfather Frog right on his back and started on again.

Now Jerry Muskrat and Paddy the Beaver, being great swimmers, were soon out of sight. All at once Jerry remembered that they had agreed to go back together, and down in his heart he felt a little bit mean when he looked for Grandfather Frog and Spotty the Turtle and could see nothing of them. So he and Paddy sat down to wait. After what seemed a long time, they saw something queer bobbing along in the water.

“It’s Grandfather Frog,” cried Paddy the Beaver.

“No, it’s Spotty the Turtle,” said Jerry Muskrat.

“It’s both,” replied Paddy, beginning to laugh.

Just then Spotty tumbled over another waterfall which he hadn’t seen, and of course Grandfather Frog went with him and lost his hold on Spotty’s back.

“I have an idea!” cried Paddy.

“What is it?” asked Jerry.

“Why, Grandfather Frog can ride on my flat tail,” replied Paddy, “and then we’ll go slow enough for Spotty to keep up with us.”

And so it was that just as the first moonbeams kissed the Smiling Pool, out of the Laughing Brook swam the merriest party that ever was seen.

“Chugarum!” said Grandfather Frog. “It is good to be home, but I think I would travel often, if I could have the tail of Paddy the Beaver for a boat.”