

*The Tale of Brownie Beaver*  
CHAPTER 18: MR. FROG'S QUESTION

by Arthur Scott Bailey



“Why don’t you get some new clothes?”

It was Mr. Frog that asked the question; and he asked it of Brownie Beaver, who was at work on top of his house. Mr. Frog had been hiding among the lily pads, watching Brownie. But Brownie hadn’t noticed him until he stuck his head out of the water and spoke.

At first Mr. Frog’s question made Brownie a bit peevish.

“What’s the matter with my clothes?” he asked hotly.

“There’s nothing the matter with them—nothing at all,” said Mr. Frog—“except that they are not as becoming to you as they might be. Of course,” he added, as he saw that Brownie Beaver was frowning, “you look handsome in them. But you’ve no idea how you’d look in clothes of my making.”

Brownie Beaver felt more agreeable as soon as Mr. Frog had told him what he meant.


“Do you make clothes?” he inquired.

“I’m a tailor,” Mr. Frog replied. “And I’ve just opened a shop at the upper end of the pond.”

“What’s the matter with my tail?” Brownie snapped. He was angry again.

Then Mr. Frog explained that a tailor made suits.

“We’ve nothing to do with tails,” he said—“unless it’s coat-tails.”



“What about cattails?” Brownie asked. “You’re pretty close to some right now. So you can hardly say you have nothing to do with them.”

Mr. Frog smiled.

“I see you’re a joker,” he said. “And it really seems a pity,” he went on, “that a bright young fellow like you shouldn’t wear the finest clothes to be had anywhere. If you’ll come to my shop I’ll make you a suit such as you never saw before in all your life.”

“I’ll come!” Brownie Beaver promised. “I’ll be there at sunset.”

And he went. Mr. Frog was waiting for him, with a broad smile on his face. Any smile of his just had to be broad, because he had such a wide mouth.

“Come right in!” Mr. Frog said. “I’ll measure you at once.” So Brownie Beaver stepped inside Mr. Frog’s shop to be measured for his new suit.


It was all over in a few minutes. Mr. Frog scratched some figures on a flat stone. And then he went into the back room of his shop.

He stayed there a long time. And when he came into the front part again he found Brownie Beaver still there.

“What are you waiting for?” Mr. Frog asked. He seemed surprised that Brownie had not left.

“I’m waiting for my suit, of course,” Brownie Beaver said.

“Oh! That won’t be ready for three days,” Mr. Frog told him. “I have to make it, you know.”



Brownie thought that Mr. Frog must be a slow worker; and he told him as much.

But Mr. Frog did not agree with him.

“I’m very spry!” he claimed. “On the jump every minute!”

As Brownie started away, Mr. Frog called him back.

“I’d get a new hat if I were you,” he suggested.

“What’s the matter with this hat?” Brownie wanted to know. “It’s a beaver hat—one my great-grandfather used to wear. It’s been in our family a good many years and I’d hate to part with it.”

“You needn’t part with it,” Mr. Frog said pleasantly. “Just don’t wear it—that’s all! For it won’t look well with the clothes I’m going to make for you.”

Then Brownie Beaver moved away once more. And again Mr. Frog stopped him.


“I’d buy a collar if I were you,” he said.

“What’s the matter with this neckerchief?” Brownie Beaver demanded. “It belonged to my great-grandmother.”

“Then I’d be careful of it if I were you,” Mr. Frog told him. “And please get a stiff white collar to wear.”

“Won’t it get limp in the water?” Brownie asked, doubtfully.

“Get a celluloid one, of course,” Mr. Frog replied. “That’s the only kind of collar you ought to wear.”



So Brownie Beaver left the tailor-shop. And he was feeling quite unhappy. He had always been satisfied with his clothes. But now he began to dislike everything he had on. And he could hardly wait for three day to pass, he was in such a hurry for Mr. Frog to finish his new suit.