

THE ADVENTURES OF JERRY MUSKRAT

CHAPTER 2: THE CONVENTION AT THE BIG ROCK



BY THORNTON W. BURGESS

Jolly round, red Mr. Sun looked down on the Smiling Pool. He almost forgot to keep on climbing up in the blue sky, he was so interested in what he saw there. What do you think it was? Why, it was a convention at the Big Rock, the queerest convention he ever had seen. Your papa would say that it was a mass-meeting of angry citizens. Maybe it was, but that is a pretty long term. Anyway, Mother Muskrat said it was a convention, and she ought to know, for she is the one who had called it.

Of course Jerry Muskrat was there, and his uncles and aunts and all his cousins. Billy Mink was there, and all his relations, even old Grandfather Mink, who has lost most of his teeth and is a little hard of hearing.

Little Joe Otter was there, with his father and mother and all his relations even to his third cousins. Bobby Coon was there, and he had brought with him every Coon of his acquaintance who ever fished in the Smiling Pool or along the Laughing Brook. And everybody was looking very solemn, very solemn indeed.

When the last one had arrived, Mother Muskrat climbed up on the Big Rock and called Jerry Muskrat up beside her, where all could see him. Then she made a speech. "Friends of the Smiling Pool and Laughing Brook," began Mrs. Muskrat, "I have called you together to show you what has happened

to my son Jerry and to ask your advice." She stopped and pointed to Jerry's sore tail. "What do you think did that?" she demanded.

"Probably Jerry's been in a fight and got whipped," said Bobby Coon to his neighbor, for Bobby Coon is a graceless young scamp and does not always show proper respect to his neighbors.

Mrs. Muskrat glared at him, for she had overheard the remark. Then she held up one hand to command silence. "Friends, it was a trap—a trap set by Farmer Brown's boy! a trap to catch you and me and our children!" said she solemnly. "It is no longer safe for our little folks to play around the Smiling Pool or along the Laughing Brook. What are we going to do about it?"

Everybody looked at everybody else in dismay. Then everybody began to talk at once, and if Farmer Brown's boy could have heard all the things said about him, his cheeks certainly would have burned. Indeed, I am afraid that they would have blistered. Such excitement! Everybody had a different idea, and nobody would listen to anybody else. Old Mr. Mink lost his temper and called Grandpa Otter a meddlesome know-nothing. It looked very much as if the convention was going to break up in a sad quarrel. Then Mr. Coon climbed up on the Big Rock and with a stick pounded for silence.

"I move," said he, "that in as much as we

cannot agree, we tell Great-Grandfather Frog all about the danger and ask his advice, for he is very old and very wise and remembers when the world was young. All in favor please raise their right hands.”

At once the air was full of hands, and everybody was good-natured once more. So it was agreed to call in Great-Grandfather Frog.