

THE ADVENTURES OF JERRY MUSKRAT

CHAPTER 4: GRANDFATHER FROG'S PLAN



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Just as Old Mother West Wind and her Merry Little Breezes came down from the Purple Hills, and jolly, round, red Mr. Sun threw his nightcap off and began his daily climb up in the blue sky, Great-Grandfather Frog climbed up on the Big Rock in the Smiling Pool. Early as he was, all the little people who live along the Laughing Brook and around the Smiling Pool were waiting for him. Bobby Coon had found two traps set by Farmer Brown's boy, and Billy Mink had almost stepped in a third. No one felt safe any more, yet no one knew what to do. So they all waited for the advice of Great-Grandfather Frog, who, you know, is accounted very, very wise.

Grandfather Frog cleared his throat. "Chugarum!" said he. "You must find all the traps that Farmer Brown's boy has set."

"How are we going to do it?" asked Bobby Coon.

"By looking for them," replied Grandfather Frog tartly.

Bobby Coon looked foolish and slipped out of sight behind his mother.

"All the Coons and all the Minks must search along the banks of the Laughing Brook, and all the Muskrats and all the Otters must search along the banks of the Smiling Pool. You must use your eyes and your noses. When you find things good to eat where you have never found them before, watch out! When you get the first whiff of the man-smell, watch out! Billy

Mink, you are small and quick, and your eyes are sharp. You sit here on the Big Rock until you see Farmer Brown's boy coming. Then go hide in the bulrushes where you can watch him, but where he cannot see you. Follow him everywhere he goes around the Smiling Pool or along the Laughing Brook. Without knowing it, he will show you where every trap is hidden.

"When all the traps have been found, drop a stick or a stone in each. That will spring them, and then they will be harmless. Then you can bury them deep in the mud. But don't eat any of the food until you have sprung all of the traps, for just as likely as not you will get caught. When all the traps have been sprung, why not bring all the good things to eat which you find around them to the Big Rock and have a grand feast?"

"Hurrah for Grandfather Frog! That's a great idea!" shouted Little Joe Otter, turning a somersault in the water.

Every one agreed with Little Joe Otter, and immediately they began to plan a grand hunt for the traps of Farmer Brown's boy. The Muskrats and the Otters started to search the banks of the Smiling Pool, and the Coons and the Minks, all but Billy, started for the Laughing Brook. Billy climbed up on the Big Rock to watch, and Grandfather Frog slowly swam back to his big green lily pad to wait for some foolish green flies for his breakfast.