

# THE ADVENTURES OF JERRY MUSKRAT

## CHAPTER 18: JERRY MUSKRAT'S BIG COUSIN



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Fiddle, faddle, feedle, fuddle!  
Was there ever such a muddle?  
Fuddle, feedle, faddle, fiddle!  
Who is there will solve the riddle?

Here was the Laughing Brook laughing no longer. Here was the Smiling Pool smiling no longer. Here was a brand new pond deep in the Green Forest. Here was a wall of logs and bushes and mud called a dam, built by some one whom nobody had seen. And here was Grandfather Frog asking Jerry Muskrat if his big cousin had come down from the North, when Jerry didn't even know that he had a big cousin.

"I—I haven't any big cousin," said Jerry, when he had quite recovered from his surprise at Grandfather Frog's question.

"Chugarum!" exclaimed Grandfather Frog, and the scornful way in which he said it made Jerry Muskrat feel very small. "Chugarum! Of course you've got a big cousin in the North. Do you mean to tell me that you don't know that, Jerry Muskrat?"

Jerry had to admit that it was true that he didn't know anything about that big cousin. If Grandfather Frog said that he had one, it must be so, for Grandfather Frog is very old and very wise, and he knows a great deal. Still, it was very hard for Jerry to believe that he had a big cousin of whom he had never heard.

"Did—did you ever see him, Grandfather Frog?" Jerry asked.

"No!" snapped Grandfather Frog. "I never did, but I know all about him. He is a great worker, is this big cousin of yours, and he builds dams like this one we are sitting on."

"I don't believe it!" cried Billy Mink. "I don't believe any cousin of Jerry Muskrat's ever built such a dam as this. Why, just look at that great tree trunk at the bottom! No one but Farmer Brown or Farmer Brown's boy could ever have dragged that there. You're crazy, Grandfather Frog, just plain crazy." Billy Mink sometimes is very disrespectful to Grandfather Frog.

"Chugarum!" replied Grandfather Frog. "I'm pretty old, but I'm not too old to learn as some folks seem to be," and he looked very hard at Billy Mink. "Did I say that that tree trunk was dragged here?"

"No," replied Billy Mink, "but if it wasn't dragged here, how did it get here? You are so smart, Grandfather Frog, tell me that!"

Grandfather Frog blinked his great goggly eyes at Billy Mink as he said, just as if he was very, very sorry for Billy, "Your eyes are very bright and very sharp, Billy Mink, and it is a great pity that you have never learned how to use them. That tree wasn't dragged here; it was cut so that it fell right where it lies." As he spoke, Grandfather Frog pointed to the stump of the tree, and Billy Mink saw that he was

right.

But Billy Mink is like a great many other people; he dearly loves to have the last word. Now he suddenly began to laugh.

“Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!” laughed Billy Mink. “Ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha!”

“What is it that is so funny?” snapped Grandfather Frog, for nothing makes him so angry as to be laughed at.

“Do you mean to say that anybody but Farmer Brown or Farmer Brown’s boy could have cut down such a big tree as that?” asked Billy. “Why, that would be as hard as to drag the tree here.”

“Jerry Muskrat’s big cousin from the North could do it, and I believe he did,” replied Grandfather Frog. “Now that we have found the cause of the trouble in the Laughing Brook and the Smiling Pool, what are we going to do about it?”