

The Tale of Brownie Beaver
CHAPTER 19: THE NEW SUIT

by Arthur Scott Bailey



Three days had passed. And as soon as he had finished his breakfast Brownie Beaver hastened to the tailor-shop of Mr. Frog, who had been making him a suit of clothes.

Much to Brownie's disappointment, he found that Mr. Frog's door was locked. But he sat down on the doorstep and waited a long time. And at last Mr. Frog appeared.

After bidding Brownie Beaver good-morning, Mr. Frog yawned widely, remarking that he had been out late the night before, "at a singing-party," he said. "What can I do for you?" he asked Brownie Beaver.

"You can let me have my new suit of clothes," Brownie told him.

"You must be mistaken," Mr. Frog replied. "I don't remember you. I'm not making any suit for you."

At that Brownie Beaver became much excited.

"Why—" he exclaimed—"I was here three days ago and you measured me... Don't you know me now?" he asked.

"Sorry to say I don't," was Mr. Frog's answer.

Brownie Beaver was desperate. He had looked forward eagerly to having his new suit. And he wanted it at once.

"You advised me to get a new hat and a collar," Brownie reminded him.

Mr. Frog smiled.



“Ah! That’s it!” he cried. “You’re wearing them now; and it’s no wonder I didn’t recognize you. You look ten years younger.”

Brownie Beaver was puzzled.

“I’m not ten yet,” he said. “So if I look ten years younger, I must appear very young indeed.”

“The new clothes will fix that,” Mr. Frog assured him.

“But you just told me you were not making a suit for me,” said Brownie

“Quite true, too!” answered Mr. Frog—“because it’s all finished. So, of course, I’m not making it now.”

They had stepped inside the shop. And Mr. Frog carefully took some garments off a peg and spread them before Brownie Beaver.


“There!” he said with an air of pride. “The finest suit you ever saw!”

“I’ll slip it on,” said Brownie.

“Oh! I wouldn’t do that!” Mr. Frog told him. “You might stretch it.”

But nothing could have kept Brownie Beaver out of his new suit. He scrambled into it quickly, while the tailor stood by with a worried look upon his face.

“The coat seems to be all right,” Brownie remarked. “But there’s something wrong with the trousers. I can’t see my feet!” He bent over and gazed down where his feet ought to have been. But they had vanished. And an end of each trouser-leg trailed on the floor. “These trousers are too long!” Brownie declared.



“Then you stretched them, putting them on,” Mr. Frog said. “I warned you, you know.”

“I was very careful,” Brownie said. “I’m sure it can’t be that.”

“Then your legs are too short,” Mr. Frog told him glibly. “They look to me to be much shorter than they were when I measured you.”

“My legs—” Brownie Beaver exclaimed—“my legs are exactly the same length they were three days ago! You’ve made a mistake, Mr. Frog. That’s what’s the matter with these trousers!”

But Mr. Frog shook his head.

“I made them according to your measurements,” he insisted.


“Let me see your figures!” Brownie Beaver cried.

But Mr. Frog shook his head again.

“I don’t do business that way,” he explained. “As soon as I’ve finished a suit I throw away the stone on which I’ve written the measurements. It saves trouble, if there’s any complaint afterwards.”

“Well!” said Brownie. “What can we do about this? I can’t wear the trousers as they are.”

“You’ll have to get your legs stretched,” Mr. Frog told him. “Just tie a stone to each foot and wear the trousers for a few days. As soon as you see your feet, take off the stones.... It’s simple enough.” He helped tie some heavy stones to Brownie’s feet. And then Brownie swam away.



Now, swimming with your feet weighted like that is no easy matter. But Brownie managed to reach home. He stayed there, too, for the rest of the day, because it was hard for him to move about. And since he had nothing else to do, he went to sleep.

When he awoke, about an hour before sunset, he couldn't think at first what made his feet feel so heavy. He thought he must be ill—until he remembered about the stones being tied to his feet.

Then he looked down. And to his great surprise and joy there were his feet sticking out of his trousers, just as they ought to stick out!

Brownie untied the stones. He had not supposed his legs would stretch so quickly as that. And he told himself that Mr. Frog was a good tailor. He certainly knew his business. Now, as a matter of fact, Mr. Frog was a very careless person. He had thrown away Brownie's measurements before he made his clothes, instead of afterwards. And he had made the new suit entirely by guesswork. It was only natural that he would make some mistake; and so he had cut the trousers entirely too long.

When he discovered that, he wanted to get Brownie out of his shop. And what happened next was simply this: After Brownie's trousers were wet in the pond, they dried while he was sleeping. And while they were drying they were shrinking at the same time.

Though Brownie Beaver didn't know it, his legs had not stretched at all. They were exactly the same length they had always been.