

# King Frog and the Snake

**MANY**, many frogs lived in a well just outside of a village. These frogs were ruled by a king frog who treated them most unkindly. The king frog knew that if they ever got the chance, the other frogs would turn against him one day.

As it turned out that day came earlier than he expected. One quiet evening while the king frog was enjoying a tasty meal of tender fish, he was startled by the sound of loud croaking coming from all around him. When he looked up he saw many of the frogs angrily rushing towards him. They were croaking so wildly that the king frog feared for his life.

"What is the matter with you?" he cried out.

"We no longer want you for our king!" they shouted. "You do not care whether we live or die!"

The king frog knew that he was faced with a



serious problem. He was certain that if he remained in the well he would surely be killed.

"I am your king!" he shouted as he drew nearer. "Stop! Stop! If you harm me you won't have a king any more," he pleaded. But the angry frogs no longer listened to his words.

"Down with the king! Down with the king!" the frogs shouted as they charged at the king frog from all corners of the well, causing quite a stir as they splashed water in all directions.

In a panic, the king frog grabbed hold of a rope that was hanging down the centre of the well and hastily scampered out of the well. This rope was one which the villagers used for drawing water from the well. As the king frog hastened out of the well he could hear the shouts of his enemies behind him but he was too afraid to look back.

For a long while the king frog crouched in the cool shade at the root of a tree thinking about his problems. He thought about the easy life he had enjoyed as a king. He had never had to hunt for his own food. It was always served by his loyal servants ..... or so he thought. Now he realized he had been mistaken all along. They were the very frogs who had

joined with the others in turning against him. How could he manage without his servants? He would surely starve to death! And what about his family that he had left behind in the well? He dearly hoped that no harm would come to them.

While he was sitting there, worrying about his fate, the king frog saw a big, black snake slithering into a hole at the root of the tree.

"Ah," said the king frog to himself, "I think I have found the answer to all my problems."

"Hello, my friend," he called out to the snake.

"Who are you?" asked the snake.

"I am the king of the frogs," he replied.

"Well, what do you want with me?" asked the snake.

"I think we can be friends."

"Hiss! Hiss!" laughed the snake. "How can that be? I eat frogs. We can never be friends!"

"Just listen a moment and you'll see," said the king frog. "I know how you can get more frogs to eat than you could ever want."

"What do you mean?" asked the snake.

"The frogs in my well have turned against me, their king. They've chased me out and my family is



in great danger. If you come with me, you can have a feast of all my enemies," said the king frog.

"I see what you mean," said the snake, greedily flicking his tongue out of his mouth.

Soon both the snake and the king frog were on their way to the well. When they arrived, the snake looked down into the well and said, "We have a slight problem, my friend."

"What is it?" asked the king frog.

"I cannot climb down this well and I cannot live in water. How am I to get rid of your enemies for you?"



"That is no problem. I'll show you an easy way into the well. And just above the water level, there's a nice cool hole where you can live comfortably," said the frog.

"You are indeed a smart frog. I can see that we shall be friends for a long time."

"Oh yes, but there's just one last promise I'd like you to make before I take you into the well."

"Anything you ask, my dear friend."

"You must promise me that you'll eat only my enemies. I shall point them out to you one by one. Those which I don't point out are my family. No harm must come to them."

"Of course! Of course!" said the snake, anxious to begin his feast.

The king frog pointed to the rope which was hanging down the well. The snake coiled himself around the rope and quietly slid down into the well. He settled himself inside the hole just above the water level and smiled to himself.

In the meantime, the king frog tried to join the other frogs in the well. However, as soon as he showed his face amongst them, they chased him out as they had done before. With one giant hop he sprang

out of the water and landed in the hole near to the snake. He was pleased that the snake was there to protect him from his enemies. He was even more pleased to point out his enemies to his new friend.

As soon as the snake knew which frogs he could eat, he began to devour them one by one. By the end of the third day all the enemies of the king frog had been eaten by the snake. The king frog was delighted that he had finally got rid of his enemies. He turned to the snake and said, "My dear snake, you have been a true friend indeed. Now you can go back to your hole in the ground and I'll join my family in the well."





"Go back? Not at all! I like it here," the snake shouted. "You have brought me here and here I shall remain. Besides, I can't return to my home now. I'm sure that some other snake has already taken over my hole."

"But there is no more food," croaked king frog.

The snake laughed as he said to the frog, "No more food? So what do you call those frogs still swimming around in the well? Aren't they food? I must continue to have a frog every day, I tell you, or else I shall eat up those frogs all at once this very day."

The king frog was filled with grief but there was nothing he could do to save his family.

"What a fool I've been," he kept saying to himself every day as the number of frogs in his family kept growing smaller and smaller.

Soon the time came when there was only one more frog remaining in the well. That frog was the king himself.

"Get me more food! Get me more food!" hissed the snake.

The king frog was now more than ever scared for his life. "Very well," he said to the snake. "I shall



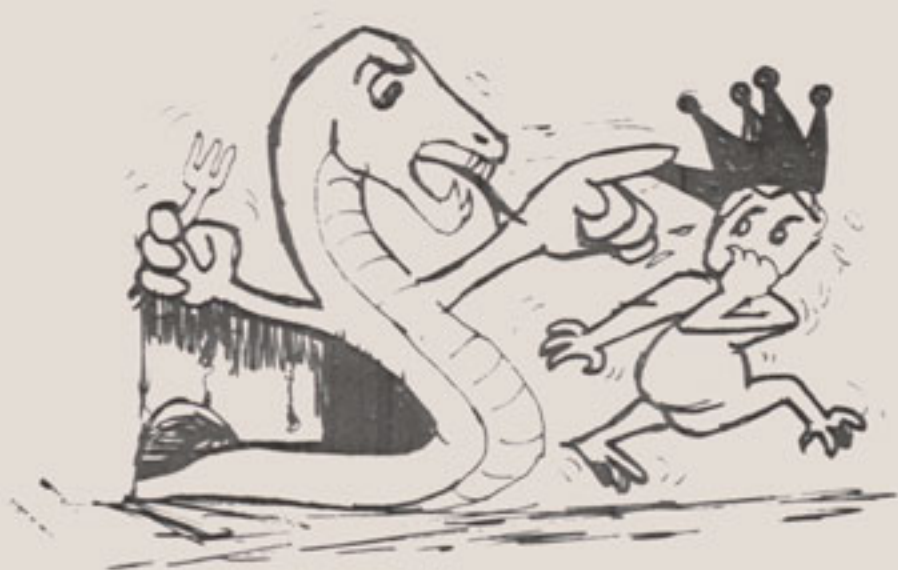
have to go to another pond to get some more frogs for you to eat."

"Well, hurry up, hurry up!" shouted the hungry snake, "Don't keep me waiting!"

And so the king frog left for another pond. After many hours the snake became so hungry that he could wait no longer for the frog to return. He sent a lizard who lived in the well to search for the frog.

"Tell him to hurry back alone if he has found no other frogs," the snake instructed the lizard.

At last the lizard came upon a pond some distance away. In this pond he could see many frogs



swimming about. The lizard spent some time searching among them until finally he found the king frog partly hidden beneath an old rotting log.

"Your friend the snake wants you to return to the well at once," said the lizard to the king frog.

"Go back and tell my friend the snake that I shall never return to that well. Tell him that I know he wants to eat me now," answered the king frog.

So saying, the king frog dived back into the pond.

And so, the proud king frog who had used the snake to get rid of his enemies had not only lost his entire family but he was now forced to live the rest of his life as a common frog in a strange pond among strangers.

