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# Why Grandfather Frog Has No Tail

by Thornton Burgess

Old Mother West Wind had gone to her day's work, leaving all the Merry Little Breezes to play in the Green Meadows. They had played tag and run races with the Bees and played hide and seek with the Sun Beams, and now they had gathered around the Smiling Pool, where on a green lily pad, sat Grandfather Frog.

Grandfather Frog was old—very old, indeed—and very, very wise. He wore a green coat and his voice was very deep. When Grandfather Frog spoke, everybody listened very respectfully. Even Billy Mink treated Grandfather Frog with respect, for Billy Mink's father and his father's father could not remember when Grandfather Frog had not sat on the lily pad watching for green flies.

Down in the Smiling Pool were some of Grandfather Frog's great-great-great-great-great-grandchildren. You wouldn't have known that they were his grandchildren unless someone told you. They didn't look the least bit like Grandfather Frog.

"Oh Grandfather Frog, tell us why you don't have a tail as you did when you were young," begged one of the Merry Little Breezes.

Grandfather Frog snapped up a foolish green fly and settled himself on his big lily pad, while all the Merry Little Breezes gathered round to listen.

"Once upon a time," began Grandfather Frog, "the Frogs ruled the world, which was mostly water. There was very little dry land—oh, very little indeed! There were no boys to throw stones and no hungry Mink to gobble up foolish Frog-babies who were taking a sun bath!"

Billy Mink, who had joined the Merry Little Breezes and was listening, squirmed uneasily and looked away guiltily.

"In those days all the Frogs had tails, long handsome tails of which they were very, very

proud indeed," continued Grandfather Frog. "The King of all the Frogs was twice as big as any other Frog, and his tail was three times as long. He was very proud—oh, very proud indeed—of his long tail. He used to sit and admire it until he thought that there never had before her and she said:

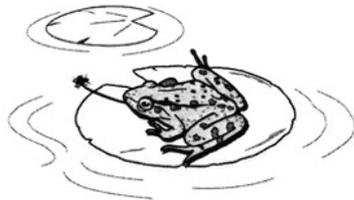
'Because you can think of nothing but your beautiful tail, it shall be taken away from you. Because you do nothing but eat and sleep, your mouth shall become wide like a door, and your eyes shall start forth from your head. You shall become bow-legged and ugly to look at, and all the world shall laugh at you.'

"The King Frog looked at his beautiful tail, and already it seemed to have grown shorter. He looked again, and it was shorter still. Every time he looked, his tail had grown shorter and smaller. By and by when he looked, there was nothing left but a little stub, which he couldn't even wriggle. Then even that disappeared, his eyes popped out of his head, and his mouth grew bigger and bigger."

Old Grandfather Frog stopped and looked sadly at a foolish green fly coming his way. "Chug-arum," said Grandfather Frog, opening his mouth very wide and hopping up in the air. When he sat down again on his big lily pad, the green fly was nowhere to be seen. Grandfather Frog smacked his lips and continued:

"And from that day to this, every Frog has started life with a big tail, and as he has grown bigger and bigger, his tail has grown smaller and smaller, until finally it disappears, and then he remembers how foolish and useless it is to be vain about what nature has given us. And that is how I came to lose my tail," finished Grandfather Frog.

"Thank you," shouted all the Merry Little Breezes. "We won't forget."



The story "Why Grandfather Frog Has No Tail" is told from the point of view of

- A a young frog
- B Mother West Wind
- C an outside narrator
- D Grandfather Frog



## My First Marathon

by Leslie Hall

### Wednesday 10/22/03

Only a few days left before the skating marathon! It doesn't seem real yet. I am getting ready in every way I can.

Up until this week, I have been adding miles to my training sessions. Last Saturday, I skated over 30 miles. That is the most I have ever skated at one time. The next day, I was a little tired and sore, but it made me feel confident that I am ready for the 26-mile marathon course. Now I am cutting back on the number of miles to make sure I am rested. I have also been going for leisurely skates, rather than working on speed.

I fly to Pasco, Washington, tomorrow afternoon, so tonight I will be packing and doing all of the last-minute chores.

#### To Do

- Check weather forecast
- Pack clothes
- Pack skate gear (helmet, knee pads, elbow pads, and wrist guards)
- Clean skate bearings
- Check brake and replace if necessary
- Buy spare set of wheels
- Pack emergency kit

I'm taking tools, spare bearings, and a spare brake—I probably won't need any of it, but I'm going to be prepared for any Pasco fiasco! That one time in Monterey taught me to always carry an emergency kit. A screw had popped off my skate when I was careening downhill. Fortunately, there was a lawn nearby, so I bailed out without any damage. The nearest sporting goods store was 5 miles away, so I had to improvise. The auto parts store had the replacement I needed, but it still meant a 2-mile walk in bare feet.

I'm also going to go online to look at the weather forecast, so I'll know which clothes to pack. As long as there's no rain, I'll be happy. Polyurethane wheels slide on a wet surface, which can only mean disaster—and lots of bruises.

### Thursday 10/23/03

I admit that I love going to new places, but I don't always like what I have to do to get there. After spending most of the day waiting in airports and sitting on planes, I am looking forward to a long skate tomorrow.

The last plane trip into Pasco from Seattle was the nicest leg of the journey—I sat next to a woman who reminded me of my grandmother. I liked her all the more because she was impressed that I was going to compete in a marathon. Trying to be modest, I said that skating a marathon was comparable to running about half the distance, and she said, "Yes, but how many people can go out and run 12 miles?"

She also said that she admired the way I had set a goal and worked toward it. I'd never thought of my training that way—I had been so focused on training that I hadn't even thought about how hard I had worked to get to the marathon. But she is right—three months ago, I would have laughed if anyone had suggested that I skate 26 miles, let alone 30.

### Friday 10/24/03

I dragged my friend Clarissa out for a skate. It was warm, but so windy we were tempted to turn around. The wind was our friend on the way back, though.

Unlike me, Clarissa is a sprinter—she has a faster natural stride, but skated only 5 miles, about half the distance I did. I was trying to convince her to sign up for the marathon, but she doubts she has the stamina.

### Saturday 10/25/03

Today I decided to carbo load. I've read that eating lots of carbohydrates the night before a race can give your body extra stores of energy, so we went out for a dinner that included French fries and a gooey dessert. This was after skating another 10 miles, so I didn't feel too guilty.

### Sunday 10/26/03

Today is the day! Wish me luck!

#### LATER:

I did it! My time was 2 hours and 15 minutes. I would have come in about 10 minutes faster, but I took a wrong turn and added a mile at the very end. But I met my goal of maintaining a place in the middle of the pack. There were lots of skaters who came in before me, and even more who came in after me.

When we were lining up at the starting line, I felt nervous and even a little intimidated by all of the high-tech racing gear and skates. All of the other skaters were dressed in the kind of spandex outfits that bicycle racers wear, while I was wearing baggy shorts and a T-shirt. They

had "personal hydration systems," which were basically lightweight backpacks equipped with a water pouch and drinking tube. Some even had rearview mirrors, which were round mirrors attached to wristbands. But the interesting thing is that the impressive equipment did not necessarily mean those skaters would skate faster!

I guess it's time to set a new goal. Maybe I can beat this time at the next marathon—I hear there's one in Arizona in November.

Read these sentences from the passage.

**I dragged my friend Clarissa out for a skate. It was warm, but so windy we were tempted to turn around. The wind was our friend on the way back, though.**

Use details from the passage to explain what the author **most likely** means when she describes the wind as a "friend."

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3.

**Directions:** Read this article. Then answer the questions that follow.

### **Conversations with Apes** **by Aline Alexander Newman**

Raring to go! Panbanisha, a female bonobo (buh-NO-bo), often hitches a ride - but she'd probably rather drive. One day, while out in the woods of Georgia, Panbanisha suddenly leaped into a parked golf cart. By pushing the accelerator with her foot, she started the engine. Gripping the steering wheel with both hands, she looked over her shoulder and backed up. Next she shifted gears and zoomed ahead. The only reason she stopped was because she rammed the cart into a tree! (She wasn't hurt.)

"We never taught her to drive," says Sue Savage-Rumbaugh, the primatologist in charge of the Georgia State University Language Research Center in Atlanta. But that didn't prevent this smart ape from teaching herself.

Of the great apes - bonobos, gorillas, orangutans, and chimpanzees - bonobos are the most like humans. Savage-Rumbaugh decided to study them to see whether they could pick up language on their own, as humans do. It turns out that they can. In fact, Savage-Rumbaugh has discovered that bonobos can learn to do lots of things on their own.

Growing up in the language center lab, Panbanisha and her brother, Kanzi, had human caretakers, watched TV, and played with toys. Both drink from a glass, brush their teeth, and use the toilet. They also communicate. At first, the apes simply listened - picking up the meanings of words by hearing people talk. Later they learned to say things by pressing symbols on a portable computer.

One day, a young female bonobo named Tamuli stole Savage-Rumbaugh's keys. The researcher begged and pleaded and even offered food in exchange. But the mischievous ape laughed and refused to give them back. Finally Savage-Rumbaugh asked Kanzi to tell Tamuli to return the keys. "Kanzi turned, made a series of sounds to her, and she came right over and handed them to me," says the scientist.

Did Kanzi actually "speak" to Tamuli? Savage-Rumbaugh thinks he did. She knows they communicate in many ways. She wasn't surprised when Panbanisha took a piece of chalk and drew a long line on the floor leading to the door. "She wanted to go outside," the researcher says.

But on another occasion, Panbanisha's behavior astonished even Savage-Rumbaugh. The ape hadn't been allowed outside for days and was staring longingly out a window. Suddenly she hopped down and drew on the floor. Savage-Rumbaugh looked at her sketch and gasped. Panbanisha had written an upside-down V - the symbol from the portable keyboard that stands for a hut in the forest. Clearly, Panbanisha was telling Savage-Rumbaugh she wanted to go there!

Savage-Rumbaugh frequently takes the apes hiking in the forest. "Kanzi likes to make fires," she says. He learned by watching her make them. Kanzi walks around picking up sticks, which he snaps with his foot and piles in a heap. Then he borrows a lighter to ignite the blaze. The apes use the fires for roasting marshmallows! When it's time to leave, Kanzi douses the flames with a bucket of water.

Savage-Rumbaugh hopes that as people learn more about bonobos, they'll grow to respect them and feel as strongly as she does about protecting them in the wild.

Which detail **best** supports the main idea of the article?

- A Bonobos sometimes live in language labs.
- B Bonobos can take hikes through the forest.
- C Bonobos can learn language on their own.
- D Bonobos sometimes take objects from humans.

4.

**Directions:** Read this passage from the book *No Small Thing*. Then answer the questions that follow.

### The Ride Home by Natale Ghent

In this passage, Nathaniel and his sisters, Cid and Queenie, cannot believe their luck when they are the first to answer an advertisement for a free pony. They waste no time in claiming Smokey as their very own. Since Smokey has never been ridden, they need to tame him enough to ride him.

I take the reins and walk Smokey through the gate and down the lane. Queenie is skipping along next to me. We haven't even hit the road when Cid starts in about how she wants to ride him.

"You have to wait. I don't want them to see us riding him in case Smokey kicks up and one of us falls off."

"You're not the boss of everything," Cid says.

At this point I want to hit her with the reins, because I know it would hurt a lot. "Just wait until they can't see us," I hiss at her, my eyes squinting. She can see that I'm serious and backs off.

Queenie is walking with one hand on Smokey's neck. She hasn't said a thing, but her eyes are as wide as saucers. I run my hand along the pony's neck. I can feel his muscles moving in an easy rhythm as he walks. His eyes are dark and kind, and his nostrils are bright pink and dewy on the inside.

When we can't see the farm anymore, I tell Cid she can ride him. "I'll hold the reins while you get on."

She hands me the bag of brushes, then swings her leg up. Smokey quickly steps to one side. Cid hops on one foot like a pogo stick, her other leg still slung halfway over Smokey's back.

"Hold him still!" she says angrily.

"Just hurry up and get on!" I tell her, and then I talk to Smokey the way cowboys do in the movies. "Whoa now, easy, boy." I stroke his muzzle for extra assurance. He snorts and tosses his head. He doesn't know what to think. I rub his forelock and talk softly in his ear until Cid slings herself up. Smokey's back legs buckle slightly as he considers her weight. I hold the reins near the bit and hand the rest over Smokey's head to Cid. When I let go, Smokey lays his ears flat. I can tell he doesn't like the idea. Cid taps his sides with her heels - and the ride is on!

Smokey springs forward, then steps quickly to one side. His back legs compress, and then he prances like a Lipizzaner<sup>1</sup>. Queenie watches with her big eyes. Cid holds the reins tightly with one hand and clutches a handful of Smokey's mane with the other. She keeps her legs pressed to Smokey's sides. Her teeth are clenched and her face is serious. I have to admit I'm impressed with her guts - really impressed - but I would never tell her that.

"Give him another little kick," I say, when Smokey stops. Cid kicks him, and he lunges forward again.

Despite all the snorting and stamping, Smokey never goes really wild. I can tell by his eyes that he feels obliged to put up a bit of a fuss - for dignity's sake - but that his heart isn't mean at all. He soon settles and gets used to the idea of the weight on his back. He walks quickly, blowing through flared nostrils and swinging his head from side to side. His mane dances up and down and his tail streams out behind him like a comet. Queenie trots beside him, her hand against his neck like she's afraid to let go in case he disappears into the summer air like a mirage<sup>2</sup>.

By the time Cid lets me on him, Smokey is pretty much broke<sup>3</sup>. He doesn't try to step away when I get on, but stands and waits for me to gather the reins. He whinnies loudly while he waits, and I can feel the air pushing through him, his sides quivering against my legs. His coat is soft and warm, and I fit comfortably behind his withers like he was made for me. I give him a nudge with my heels, and he lurches forward, picking along the gravel road with quick, even steps.

The sunlight is fading now. We move in and out of the shadows, the trees casting long, dark bands across the road. I am so happy, I feel like I could ride forever.

#### Horse Terms in the Story

- **reins:** narrow straps used to guide a horse
- **muzzle:** the part of a horse that includes the nose, jaws, and mouth
- **bit:** a bar connected to the reins that goes into a horse's mouth
- **withers:** the part of a horse between its neck and back

<sup>1</sup>**Lipizzaner:** a breed of horse trained for jumping

<sup>2</sup>**mirage:** something unreal

<sup>3</sup>**broke:** tamed

This passage is told from the point of view of

- A Cid
- B Smokey
- C Queenie
- D Nathaniel

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The author helps the reader understand Smokey's nature **mostly** through the use of

- A Cid's behavior toward Smokey
- B Nathaniel's descriptions of Smokey
- C Nathaniel and Cid's dialogue about Smokey
- D Nathaniel and Queenie's dialogue about Smokey