

A Day At The Pond (part II)

trill, croak, ribbit, pweep!

“Lovely, just lovely. See Algernon? See what happens when you pick a key, any key, and stick to it? Look over there. Alice is waving at us and smiling at this morning’s melody; this is much better than the other day, isn’t it? And look, even Michael has been inspired by us this morning; he’s got his guitar out and he’s strumming away merrily. Alright then, we seem to have gotten the campers off to a happy start today so let’s call it quits for now and I’ll see you all at sunset, okay?”

“Aaaah! Life is good at the moment and I can’t wait to tell Merlin my good news. I wonder where he is? Oh, here he comes now...”

“Hey Merlin, my wise and well-weathered wizard, how’s things? Check this out, dude! I’m back in human form! Great isn’t it? Eeer, no, none of the witches relented and kissed me but listen to this Merlin, it’s just too weird! Well, there I was, sitting on my lily pad, checking out my froggy form when I realized that all the hopping and swimming around has made my back legs look, you know, super. But when I looked at the front ones, I wasn’t so happy and I thought I should do some work on them. I decided that I really liked the pond and didn’t want to give up the water altogether so I figured I’d build a canoe. Yeah, a canoe. Think about it Merlin! With a canoe and a paddle, I could give the back legs a rest from all the work and instead build up some muscle tone in the front legs and the abdomen. I mean, look at my gut! I’ve put on three grams this last month! Well, I was careful with what I ate Merlin, but there aren’t too many low-fat water skimmers or flies low in cholesterol around this place so it’s not like I had much of a choice, is it? Anyway, I knew that I wouldn’t be able to build the canoe by myself, so I got a few of the other camp creatures to help me out. First, Joseph the jaybird flew into the tree over there and dislodged this really good sized gum-nut for me. Then Walter the woodpecker did some cool carving and hollowed it out. Next, Belvedere the beaver gnawed some decent sized woodchips from the lodge to use as pontoons and Samuel the spider helped me lash it all together with that super-strong web of his. Finally, Rose the red-breasted robin brought me a tamarind pod from the other side of the meadow to use as a paddle. Voila! One canoe and paddle ready to be tested. Before I took off, I remembered something from my human days about christening a ship on its maiden voyage. So I got Henrietta the hummingbird to bring me back a pollen sac from the bottle plant by the bridge and then I smashed it across the front of the canoe and named it ‘Heartbeat’ Why that name? Because it’s the only sound I hear whenever she’s near, Merlin – a mournful dirge generated by the ebb and flow of emotions in that sad place – I should have picked her when I had the chance...”

“Anyway, there I was, Merlin, zipping around the pond, captain of my own ship. Man, it was just so cool to see things from on top of the water instead of under it. Anyway, I was having so much fun that I forgot about the little bit of current where the water runs under the bridge and before I knew it, I’m being dragged along and I gotta confess, I looked anything but the competent captain as I tried to break free of its pull. I mean, my poor little arms just weren’t strong enough, Merlin. So, before I know it, I’m scooting along at a real scary pace and as I looked around for a way out, I saw Felicity on lily pad three. She launched herself off the lily pad and straight into the canoe! I mean, I know she likes me and all, but that was just plain crazy, Merlin! She almost tipped the both of us out! And then she kisses me! I tell you Merlin, I enjoy a good kiss as much as the next man but that really adds a new dimension to a tongue kiss let me tell you. Next thing I know, there’s a blinding flash of light...”

“Suddenly I’m on my stomach in three inches of water looking at this frog still attached to my lips. Then there’s another blinding flash of light...”

“Now I’m on my stomach in three inches of water looking into some soft brown eyes. Trouble is though, Merlin, these eyes belonged to a man! Yep, you heard me right, a man! It turns out that Felicity was actually a Spanish minstrel by the name of Feliciano and he too had fallen foul of the Terrible Trio who changed him into a frog as well. Man, they have a warped sense of humour, those

three. Me, they left as a male, you know, with male ‘bits’ and male thoughts but him: him they changed into a female frog with female bits and male thoughts. I’ve got half a mind to report all three of them to RSPCA and the Camp Rangers for cruelty to frogs and human beings. Anyway, it turns out that Feliciano knew he was male (but female in form) and he was worried that since I was the only other frog in this pond that I might, you know, well, you know. So, he was forced to bite the bullet and kiss me in order to break the spell and save his amphibian virtue. Hehehe! It’s actually kinda funny when you think about it and I suppose we both did deserve it...sorta. It’s sort of lucky for me too I guess – I always thought the spell could only be broken by kissing one of the witches. I never would have dreamed of kissing Felicity/Feliciano and I had resigned myself to being a frog for a long time since choosing between the three of them was really hard to do. Well it wasn’t really that hard Merlin, my heart had already made a choice, but I just didn’t want to hurt the other two’s feelings.”

“Anyway, we decided to celebrate our new found humanity by going out and getting sloshed together and since we couldn’t find the witches anywhere around the camp (we wanted to surprise them), we figured they must be hanging out at the local tavern, the ‘Witches Workshop’. Sorry, what was that? Were they surprised when they saw us enter the tavern? Hmmm, you could say that I suppose. Sparky saw us first and although she raised an eyebrow (of course she did, she’s only got the one eyebrow anyway, hehe!), she did have a wry smile on her face. Now, Cookie and B, they looked a little more disturbed by our presence, though. The pair of them were chewing on some moss in the corner when they saw us and next thing you know, they’re in a huddle, gesticulating wildly and glancing our way. We decided to ignore them so we grabbed a trencher each of mead and got stuck into celebration mode. I’m not sure of the time that the witches all left, but Cookie and B still looked a little perturbed by our presence there and Sparky, well, she just kept on smiling. Under normal circumstances, I might have been worried by the way they looked at us but then again, it might just have been the distorting effects of the mead that altered my perceptions a little.”

“A tassel of hairs (hic) on a harridan’s hooter,
Yo ho, and a tankard of mucus.(hic)

Hehe! Tonight wush fun, washn’t it, Felishity, Felishno? Sho, you’re heading home tomorrow? Well, shbeen nische (hic) knowing you. Later (uuurp!) dude. Okay, Schshotty, it’sh time for bed...”

Splash!

Good one Scotty, you might wanna try a bed, instead, hmmm? Or have you developed a penchant for aquatic environments? Hehe!

“Great, my ephemeral ego, the conscience, makesh another ushelessh comment! Go ‘way and leave me ‘lone!”

squelch, squish

“Damn, that water wush cold!”

“Whoa! Hey, what’s with all the noise? Oh, it’s you Merlin, what do you want? Yes I’m aware I missed the night time melody session last night, but they’re all big creatures now; I’m sure they can manage to get by without me occasionally. Oooh, my head hurts! What? Okay, okay, I’m up already. Geez, give a guy a break, Merlin. And what are you so happy about anyway? What? WHAT? The witches came to see you? What did they want? What did they say? Oh, geez, they’re not going to turn me back into a frog are they? Oh my, what did I do last night? They what? They asked if you knew if I’d made a decision about who my favourite witch is? Really? They asked you that, did they? Well, I found out last night that if I actually choose one of them, then the other two are morally obligated to respect my choice (and the selected witch’s good fortune) and they’re not allowed to do anything to me. So you see Merlin, I have made a decision on that, and tonight, I’m gonna march straight into her

tent and plant a big wet one on her lips and then I'm gonna...."

"And why, pray tell, don't I want to do that yet, Merlin? I have to do what? Read this book? Gimme a look; 'The Forgotten Art of Wooing a Witch' – you're not serious, are you? You are? Geez, Merlin, look at this thing, it's seventeen pages long and no pictures! Oooh, hang on, chapter five, 'Playful Biting and Reconnaissance Strategies for Choosing a Good Spot' – that sounds pretty good! You're kidding right? I have to read it all, starting from chapter one? Oh, alright then..."

Chapter One – Good Conversation (What Witches Like To Talk About); "Oh, brother."

Chapter Two – The Giving of Gifts (Eye of Newt, Dragonbane, etc -How to Shop For A Bargain); "Okay, that's handy to know."

Chapter Three – Sharing a Meal (How To Swallow Food If It's Still Alive And The Best Wine for Accompaniment) – "Well, I suppose. I have eaten some weird things before."

Chapter Four – Mood Lighting (How to Use Fireflies and Candles to Best Effect); "Well, that makes sense – doing it with the lights on could be interesting."

Chapter Five – Playful Biting; "Wow, some pictures here would have been really handy, but I think I get the idea."

Chapter Six – Doing It and the Afterglow; "Aaah, yes, I remember some of this now. Oh, I didn't know that. Hmmm, interesting."

Chapter Seven – The Day After (or How To Be So Irresistible As To Be Invited Over Again); "Well, who says an old dog can't learn some new tricks? I'll have to thank Merlin for this book, really."

"Okay then, I guess I'm as ready as I'll ever be."

The campsite creatures knew what was about to unfold that night and so, in tribute to Scotty, orchestrated one of the best songs ever heard in the history of the campgrounds. Scotty walked the path to her tent, and stopping briefly to look back towards the pond, gave his fellow creatures a nod of appreciation. He smiled as he approached and saw her silhouetted in the mysterious glow from within her tent.

He opened the tent flap and stepped boldly in, heart racing. She looked up and smiled, her gaze steady but surprisingly soft. Funny how he'd never noticed how beautiful her eyes were before...