



**A
Lesson
at the
Pond**

by Jennifer Lebedev

Far away and in the mountains there was a castle. In the big castle lived only a man, his cook and his dog. Their names were Wil, Curtis and Pip-Pop. They lived a happy life. Not far from the castle and in the woods there was a pond. Although the pond was small, many creatures lived there: frogs, snakes, fish, flies, worms and even a toad. And the pond creatures were often sad. One day a frog, two fish and a fly were talking together at the pond. They were not happy.

The frog, whose name was Frankie, jumped onto a lily pad and **looked at himself** in the water. "Have you seen Curtis from the castle?" he asked. "He has a long, handsome moustache. I don't like my face. I want a moustache."

The two fish, whose names were Sheldon and Shanna, swam over to the lily pad. They looked at the frog and then they **looked at themselves**. "Have you seen Wil from the castle?" they asked. "He has shiny glasses. We don't like our eyes. We want glasses."

The fly, whose name was Fanny, flew down to the lily pad. She looked at the frog and the fish and then she **looked at herself**. "Have you seen Pip-Pop from the castle?" she asked. "He has a big, beautiful tail. I don't like my wings. I want a tail."



That night there was a full moon. The frog, the fish and the fly slept soundly. The next morning they met at the pond. They met to share their unhappy news.

Frankie tried to jump onto the lily pad. He couldn't. He fell into the water. When he came out of the water he cried, "Look at me! I have a moustache! It's handsome but it's too long. I

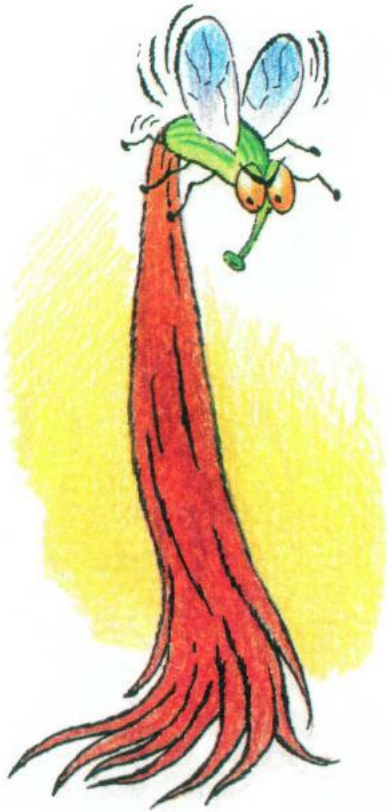


cannot jump. Every time I try to jump I **hurt myself**." The frog **saw himself** in the water. "I look stupid! A frog can't have a moustache. I don't want this moustache. I want my old face again."

Sheldon and Shanna tried to swim over to the lily pad. They couldn't. They swam into a rock. They swam and swam. Finally they found the lily pad. They cried, "Look at us! We have glasses! They're shiny but they're too heavy and too thick. We cannot see. Every time we try to swim we **hurt ourselves**." The fish **saw themselves** in the water. "We look stupid! Fish can't have glasses. We don't want these glasses. We want our old eyes again."

Fanny tried to fly down to the lily pad. She did, but she flew too fast. She fell into the water. When she came out of the water she cried, "Look at me! I have a tail. It's beautiful, but it's too big. I can't fly with it. I only fall. Every time I try to fly I **hurt myself**." She **saw herself** in the water. "I look stupid! A fly can't have a tail. I don't want this tail. I want my wings again."

For the next month, the frog, the fish and



the fly were very unhappy. They wanted to help each other, but they couldn't even **help themselves**. Everyday they **thought to themselves**, 'I want to be **myself** again!'

Finally another full moon came. That night

the frog, the fish and the fly slept soundly. The next day they met at the pond. They met to share their happy news.

'I have my old face again!' cried Frankie.

'We have our old eyes again!' cried Sheldon and Shanna.

'I have my wings again!' cried Fanny.

They **looked at themselves** in the water. They were pleased.

'You know,' said Frankie. 'I like Curtis' moustache, but I don't want a moustache on my face. I like **myself** without a moustache.'

Fanny smiled. 'I think we are all very **happy to be ourselves** again.'

'Yes,' said Sheldon and Shanna, 'we don't need glasses. Fish swim very well without them. It was silly to want to have glasses.' The two fish **laughed at themselves**.

Suddenly a snake came over to the pond. It didn't see the others. It **was looking at itself** in the water. It began **to talk to itself**. 'I don't like my skin. A rabbit has fur. I want fur, too!'

'NO!' cried the frog, the fish and the fly. 'Be careful what you wish for!'

The snake looked at them. 'Why?' it asked.

'Some things you cannot change,' they said. '**Be yourself** and you will be happy.'

castle ['kɑ:sl] замок
 cook [kʊk] повар
 pond [pɒnd] пруд
 creature ['kri:tʃə] создание, зверь
 worm [wɜ:m] червяк
 lily pad ['lɪli ,pæd] лист лилии
 moustache [mə'sta:ʃ] усы
 to sleep soundly крепко спать
 full moon полная луна
 to hurt [hɜ:t] oneself ушибиться
 fur [fɜ:] мех

