

TRACE

**Traditional Children's Stories for a common
Future**

Froggy girl

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There once lived a husband and a wife, who almost reached old age but were still childless. Desperate for a child, they always used to pray to God for one. Once they went to celebrate a feast day, where they once more prayed to God to grant them a child, if only a little froggy. Upon return home, the wife felt she was pregnant, and nine months later gave birth to a... what!? A froggy! Nonetheless, Froggy was their pride and joy. The little one was always out in the vineyard, and she would seldom come home. As the old man was always busy working in the vineyard, his wife used to bring him lunch there every day. But she grew old and one day she started to complain, 'I cannot move a limb, let alone take the meal to my husband; my legs won't hold me up anymore.' Their froggy daughter, now fourteen, had just come from the outside and said, 'Mother, I can see you are old, you cannot walk nor bring my father a meal. Let me take the lunch to him.' Mother replied, 'My dear froggy daughter, how could you take the meal to him when you cannot carry it; why, you don't even have arms to hold the pot.' Froggy girl said, 'Oh but I can manage; you just have to mount the pot on my back and tie it to my legs. Don't worry.'

'So, try then, see if you can do it,' mother said, then loaded the pot up onto froggy's back, tied it to her legs and sent her off. Froggy girl boldly carried the pot, but when she reached the garden door, she could not open it nor jump over to her father, so she called to him. Father came, took the pot off her and ate lunch. Then Froggy girl asked him to pick her up and put her on a cherry tree. When he did so, she sang, her voice echoing all around so beautifully as if it were the fairies' song.

It came to pass that the king's son came nearby to hunt in the forest and overheard her song. When the singing ceased, he approached the old man, asking him who was it that sang so lovely. The old man said he wouldn't know; he sees and hears no-one but the ravens flying over him. 'Oh, tell me, whoever it is; if it's a lad, he'll be my companion, if it's a girl, she'll be my sweetheart,' implored the prince. But the old man feared to reveal the truth and kept saying he did not know. And so, the king's son went back home. The next day Froggy again brought her old father lunch, again he put her on the cherry tree, and again she sang heavenly. And lo, again the king's son came to hunt nearby just to hear the song and to see the singer. Froggy was singing up on a cherry tree and the whole valley resounded with her song. The song ending, the king's son again asked the old man who was the singer. The old man told him he wouldn't know. 'And who brought you your lunch?' asked the prince. 'I did,' answered the old man, 'When I came home yesterday, I was so tired that I could not eat, so today I brought lunch with me.' The prince said, 'That song thrills my heart. Old man, you must know who is that singing, tell me; if it's a lad, he'll be my companion, if it's a girl, she'll be my sweetheart.' Finally, the old man spoke, 'I would tell you, but it would embarrass me and make you cross with me.' The prince was persistent, 'Have no fear, just tell me.' So, the

old man told him it was a froggy singing, and that she was his daughter. 'Tell her to come down.' Froggy got off the tree and sang once more. His heart jumping with joy, the young man told her, 'Be my sweetheart. Tomorrow, the two of my brothers' sweethearts shall come to the castle. The one brother to whom his sweetheart brings a more beautiful flower the king shall turn over the kingdom. Will you come too, as my sweetheart, and bring the flower of your choosing?' Froggy replied, 'I will be there as you wish, but you are to send a white rooster for me to ride on.' He went home and sent a white rooster for her. She turned to the Sun for help, asking for a dress made of sunshine. The next day, she took the dress made of sunshine with her and straddled the rooster. When she reached the guards at the city gate, they would not let her in, but after she threatened to complain to the king's son about them, they gave in. As soon as she was inside the city, the rooster turned into a white fairy, and Froggy became the most beautiful girl in the world, in a dress of sunshine. The flower she had chosen was an ear of wheat, and so she walked on into king's palace. The king first approached his eldest son's sweetheart, asking her what kind of flower had she brought? She showed him a dog rose. The king came up to his second son's sweetheart asking her what kind of flower had she brought? She showed him a carnation. The king turned to his youngest son's sweetheart and, seeing her hold an ear of wheat, spoke to her, 'You have brought the best and most useful flower of all, which proves you know there is no life without wheat and that you will reign with great competence. What need we have of other flowers and of loftiness?! Marry the youngest of my sons, whose sweetheart you are, and to him I shall give my kingdom.' And so Froggy became the queen.