

Frog Power
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Beverly Lewis

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Summary: The inclusion of Jason's frog Croaker in the Easter pet parade she is planning challenges Stacy's fear of frogs.

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ONE

Stacy Henry was late for school. It was the first time all year. But Stacy couldn't help it.

Today was Pet Day for Miss Hershey's third-grade class. And something slimy and green was coming to Blossom Hill School. Jason Birchall said so.

Stacy tiptoed down the hall carrying her cockapoo puppy. She stopped at the classroom door and peeked inside. Her classmates were showing off their pets.

Abby Hunter, Stacy's best friend, was




cuddling Snow White, a fluffy white dog. Shawn Hunter, Abby's adopted Korean brother, was tickling Snow White's ears.

Stacy spotted Dunkum in the corner of the room. His real name was Edward Mifflin, but no one called him that. He was Dunkum, the tallest and the best basketball player in school.

Dunkum lifted Blinkee, his fat gray rabbit, out of the cage. He set her on his desk. Stepping back, he clapped his hands two times. Blinkee sat up on her haunches and wiggled her pink little nose. She was the cutest rabbit Stacy had ever seen.

Just then, a low croaking sound came from the middle of the classroom. Blinkee pricked up her long bunny ears.

Stacy shivered. She hid behind the classroom door. The croaking sound continued. *The slimy green nightmare is here! Jason Birchall's bullfrog is the worst creature God ever made,* she decided.



Stacy sneaked around the door and stared across the room. A glass aquarium sat on the desk behind hers. Inches from her desk was Jason's bullfrog. On top of its head, two eyes bulged out.

Stacy leaned against the classroom door, wishing she could go home. She put Sunday Funnies, her cockapoo, on the floor. He strained on his leash.

Abby and Shawn ran to Jason's desk to see the noisy bullfrog. Dunkum carried his rabbit over for a look. Soon, most of the class had gathered around the ten-gallon glass tank.

But not Stacy. She took a deep breath and crept to Miss Hershey's desk. Sunday Funnies followed on his leash.

The teacher smiled at her. "You're a little late today." She petted Sunday Funnies' head.

"I almost didn't come," Stacy blurted out.

Her teacher frowned. "I'm sorry to

hear that, Stacy. Are you feeling all right?"

"I'm not sick or anything." Stacy glanced over her shoulder. *Icksville! Why did Miss Hershey have to change the desks around yesterday?*

"Stacy? Is something wrong?" the teacher asked.

Stacy turned around slowly. "I, uh . . . no, I'm fine, thanks." Stacy inched toward her desk, past Eric Hagel.

Eric's hamster was nibbling on a piece of carrot inside his cage.

"Nice hamster," Stacy said. She hardly even looked at the hamster. Instead, she stared at Jason's bullfrog at the end of the row.

Eric coughed. "Earth to Stacy! Guess what I named my hamster?"

"I don't know," Stacy muttered. She was thinking about a slimy bullfrog named Croaker.

"Come on, just guess," Eric insisted.

“Uh . . . Slimy?” It was a dumb name for a hamster, but Stacy couldn’t get the horrible green bullfrog off her mind.

“Not even close,” Eric said.

“Then I give up,” Stacy said flatly. The hamster made her sneeze.

“This is the smartest hamster in the world,” Eric bragged. “Her name is Fran the Ham. And does she ever ham it up!” He laughed. “Get it—*ham* it up?”


“Of course I get it,” Stacy snapped. And she clumped off to her desk wishing, wishing. She wished Jason Birchall would take Croaker home.

Shawn Hunter rushed over to Stacy’s desk. He grinned. “I rub Sunday Funnies’ neck, yes?”

Stacy nodded. “He likes you, Shawn. Ever since the day he got hit by a car and you helped him.”

Shawn’s eyes danced as he stroked the cockapoo.

Dunkum put his rabbit on the floor be-



side Sunday Funnies. The rabbit and the cockapoo sniffed each other. Sunday Funnies wagged his curly puff of a tail.

“I think they like each other,” Dunkum said.

Stacy petted the rabbit. Her eyes began to water. She sneezed three times.

Miss Hershey asked everyone to sit down. “We have an exciting day ahead of us, class.” She grinned. Everyone knew Miss Hershey loved animals.

Stacy grabbed a tissue from inside her desk and blew her nose. Then she put Sunday Funnies in her lap and cuddled him. “It’s a good thing *you* don’t make me sneeze,” she whispered to him.

Suddenly, Jason Birchall reached over his desk. He was petting Sunday Funnies’ head.

Stacy pulled her puppy away.

Jason frowned. “What’s the matter with you?”

“Stay away from him,” Stacy said.

Gently, she put her puppy on the floor and sat down. She slid her chair close to her desk. Far away from Jason's creepy bull-frog.

Her stomach was squished against the desk. But it was better than having frog breath in her hair!