



THE KIND DEEDS MESSENGER

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ADVENTURES OF BROTHER BUZZ THE ELF BUMBLE BEE

AT THE LILY POND

By DOLORES WILKENS KENT



Mr. Hopper and Mrs. Greenfrog Meet Sunray and Brother Buzz at the Lily Pond.

IT WAS cold. A bracing sort of cold that chilled the poor little nose of Brother Buzz when he poked it out of his den in the very early hours of the morning. The sky was gray, the gray that seems even then to hold a promise of the dawn, but Brother Buzz didn't know that, and he thought it gloomy indeed.

But he was very excited for this was to be a big occasion. He was going with "Sunray," a fairy of the day whom he was to meet for the first time, to see Mr. Hopper, the toad, and all his relations at the Lily Pond.

Above all, two humans were to be there! He had never been really near humans before—merely seen them—but these were different, a boy and girl who were going to the Lily Pond on purpose to see the frogs and toads, even as he and Sunray were.

This was an adventure! Brother Buzz dressed very carefully for he wanted to look his best. He brushed his black suit thoroughly and placed his little silk hat with the greatest care at the angle it would be the most becoming.

Then he stood in the doorway to look around and wait for Sunray. The gray of the heavens seemed like pearl and the light was brightening; in the east a faint rose glow appeared.

How refreshing the air was! Brother Buzz didn't feel cold any more, only that he was ready and anxious to go. Would Sunray ever come? He was so afraid that the others would be there ahead of him.

Then he heard a sweet voice calling, "Brother Buzz, Brother Buzz, are you up?"

He looked all around him, but could not see anyone, yet, that was certainly the voice of a fairy. A low laugh the touch of a hand on his eyes and Sunray stood before him. Golden hair and big blue eyes, and a smile as tender and merry as Starbright's own.

Her gown was of soft gray and rose, with a gleam of gold and crimson in its folds. Fresh and fragrant, many-colored roses were woven into a wreath that crowned her curls.

Brother Buzz stared and stared until Sunray laughed again, saying, "What is the matter, Brother Buzz, don't you like me?"

"Buzz, buzz," he said, "I should say I do. Why, you are almost as pretty as Starbright."

"Wait," said Sunray, "look at my wings," and stretching out her arms, folds of heavenly blue gauze became wings, dotted with sparkling jewels in all the colors that were gathering in the eastern sky. From palest pink and yellow, clear light green and delicate lavender, to the deeper gold, crimson and orange, they flashed with every movement of her arms.

"Oh, oh!" cried Brother Buzz, "it is beautiful!"

Sunray seemed very pleased with his admiration.

"Well, shall we go to the Lily Pond?" asked she, "The sun is rising higher every minute and our little friends, the toads and frogs, will be waiting for us."

Sunray flew lightly over Brother Buzz's den and hovered on a pink blossom.

He and Sunray flew swiftly out of the garden. Over "Surely, I am ready now," said Brother Buzz.

the meadows, on and on until they saw a tiny river flowing slowly along. They followed its course, coming at last to a wide pool where the water had been dammed up. It was bordered with green trees and tule grass. Tall purple and white flags grew upon its edges, and pussy willows, like tiny downy powder puffs, were reflected in the deep blue and green of the water beneath.

Flying down they settled on a comfortable branch closely overhanging the Lily Pond from where they could see all that happened on both the land and water.

Just then, sweet and clear, arose the lovely song of the roads. Birds were singing their morning songs in the trees and the hum of bees and insects sounded like tiny motors far away, the shrill tones of the hyla, and deeper croaking of the frogs accompanying them.

"Good day, Brother Buzz," croaked a throaty greeting. And there was Mr. Hopper, the toad. That is to say his head was there, the rest of him was reposing on a big rock under the water.

"Why, good morning," said Brother Buzz, "do you know Sunray, Mr. Hopper?"

Mr. Hopper looked about him blankly.

"Sunray, yes, but where is she?" he asked.

Again the low sweet laugh, and Brother Buzz saw Sunray wave her little hand over Mr. Hopper.

"Well, well, I declare, so there you are, Sunray!" exclaimed he, "and how are you today?"

"Fine, thank you," said Sunray, "but where are the human children that were to be here? Brother Buzz is very anxious to see them, as well as to meet the frogs and polliwogs."

"If you will both come down to this branch near me," said Mr. Hopper, "I'll introduce you to my cousin, Jumpy Greenfrog, very charming I assure you, though she is inclined to be rather silly over her children. Not that they aren't nice enough little things, but, of course, they can't compare with mine. Here she is now," and he motioned toward the edge of the pool where a frog was quietly sitting behind a bunch of grass intently watching something.

"As they looked she made a rapid spring, a dart so fast that the eye couldn't follow it, and then sat contentedly chewing.

"She is eating the thousands of tiny specks of weeds which make the water green and unfit for use. These are eaten also by frogs, polliwogs, and water dogs," said Sunray.

"They go to the bottom of the pond and busy themselves in eating the decaying leaves that would otherwise spoil the water," said Jumpy, joining in the conversation.

Brother Buzz cried in astonishment, "Why, they work just as the birds, bats and toads do on land!"

"Yes," Sunray nodded, "all creatures have their place and purpose in this world. We are all workers."

"After a few weeks," continued Jumpy Greenfrog, "our babies begin to change. The gills vanish, they breathe the air through their throats and they don't eat the green anymore, but the tiny eggs of flies and living things that are brought to life in the water, so again, they clear it. They grow very fast and soon—but, who is this?"

They turned to see two humans, a boy and girl slowly walking around the Lily Pond toward them.

"Now, Sally," said the boy, smiling, "you heard the toads sing, what do you think of it?"

"It's lovely, just like their eyes," answered Sally, "and I do think that those polliwogs are the cunningest little things!"

Our friends stayed very quietly where they were, for Sunray had with a wave of her hand made them invisible to the children. Now they could hear and see without being afraid.

The boy and girl seated themselves on the bank nearby. "I wonder if we could see some of the large polliwogs, Kay?" said Sally.

"Not for a few weeks yet. The tiny ones have to grow their legs first, two front and two hind ones. The front have four little webbed toes, and the back ones have five. The tail gradually grows shorter and shorter until it disappears and a complete little frog one morning creeps out of the water, or it may be a toad, as the only difference one can see between them while they are polliwogs, is that the tiny frogs are dark brown all over and the ones that will grow into toads look as though they had been sprinkled with gold dust."

Jumpy Greenfrog turned up her nose in disgust, that anyone couldn't see how much prettier her babies were than those of the toads! Mr. Hopper looked equally upset.

"How big are the tiny froggies?" asked Sally.

"Not bigger than my thumbnail," answered Kay, "the prettiest little things, in their bright green coats, with their brilliant shining eyes. Once on land, they live an entirely different life from that of their cousins, the toads, who grow to be at least six times larger than the frogs."

"The frog must live near the water, not where it is dry. My teacher says that if we ever see one trying to hop along a dusty road, we should take him to the nearest pond or ditch with water, that we can find, or he will die. His skin is like blotting paper and can hold a lot of moisture, but he must dip into the water often, though he breathes air and really lives on land."

Mrs. Greenfrog approved with a nod as Kay stopped to rest and Sunray said softly, "This boy knows animals, Brother Buzz; he understands their needs."

Brother Buzz said longingly, "He is fine, I wish I could talk to him."

"That is the trouble," said Sunray sadly, "humans do not understand what other creatures say. It is a pity, as they seem to know so many things that are unnecessary. But let's listen to Kay."

"The frog jumps so high that he is saved from the heat and dust of always being on the ground. His hind legs which he doubles up and unfolds, with a sharp jerk, are like springs and send him swiftly through the air," continued Kay.

"The toad's coat looks like my cat—I mean it has a pattern like pussy's," remarked Sally, looking at the one that had just come up on the bank.

"Yes," said Kay, "and he has another under that one. I do wish I could show you how he takes off the old coat, Sally, it is so funny," and Kay laughed heartily.

"Oh, what does he do?" cried Sally excitedly. While Mr. Hopper said in a superior tone,

"These humans seem very easily amused. I can't see anything funny about the way I take off my coat, can you, Sunray?"

Sunray smilingly put her finger to her lips in warning, saying, "Hush, let's listen first."

"Well," continued Kay, "when the old coat becomes too tight, it splits up the back, showing the new one beneath. Then Mr. Toad pulls and tugs until he gets first one arm and then another out, and then he pulls it off over his head, just as a little old man would, rolls it into a ball and what do you think he does then?" asked Kay.

"I don't know, do tell me," pleaded Sally.

"Why, he swallows it!" and Kay and Sally roared at the thought of anyone swallowing their old clothes.

"A far neater thing to do than to leave them lying around, as I bet you do, my fine young friend," muttered Mr. Hopper, who didn't appreciate being laughed at. But he listened eagerly when Kay went on.

"The toad is able to live in dryer places than the frog, for just beneath his skin he has tiny cells filled with a sort of liquid that keeps it moist. This is also, a means of defense, his only weapon, as he can't bite or scratch, and can't run away quickly. This liquid is burning to the taste and smarts if you should get it into a cut on your hand," explained Kay. "There are larger bags of this stuff under the skin back of his eyes."

"Does the frog change his skin too?" asked Sally.

"Yes," answered Kay, "but not the way the toad does, his skin just peels off in tiny pieces. He does not pull it off like a coat."

Mrs. Greenfrog looked slyly at Mr. Hopper and grinned, for she was not going to be laughed at. Mr. Hopper pretended not to notice, and Brother Buzz said quickly, "This is so interesting, I do think your families are wonderful, Mrs. Greenfrog and Mr. Hopper." They both looked very pleased and Sunray gave Brother Buzz a gentle glance of approval.

"What do the frogs and toads do in the winter?" asked Sally.

"They creep into holes and corners or bury themselves under boards in the sand, sleeping away the long, cold months," said Kay.

"Oh, look, look!" cried Sally, pointing to the water. "What is that tiny silvery polliwog?"

"I am so glad that teacher showed me some the other day," said Kay, who was no less excited than Sally, while Brother Buzz nearly fell into the water trying to get a good look himself.

"Those are newts, or water dogs," said Kay. "The little mother lays one single egg at a time and wraps it up in the leaf of a water plant to hide it and to prevent it from washing away. To do this, she uses her two tiny front feet that are very much like hands. The water dog polliwogs look like fishes at first, with outside gills, but afterward they grow legs. Their tails, however, remain. They are very slim and dainty, like tiny weeny crocodiles, but smooth and soft, and dark brown in color. In the spring the male has a red tipped frill down his back and an orange or scarlet throat. The female is not so prettily dressed, being all brown, but equally cunning. They are perfectly harmless and live on the young of beetles, flies, dragon-flies, gnats and other water insects. They do splendid work helping to clear the water and air. There is one now, see?"

Brother Buzz, also saw the little newt as he walked about down in the pond.

"Oh, he is just darling," cried Sally, "how I wish I could have one for a pet."

"No, no," said Kay decidedly, "they must have plenty of water; they only take a little walk on land, at times. It is cruel to keep things in a place they are not fitted for, and we can enjoy them so much better by watching them eating and playing happily about in their own way."

Brother Buzz beamed to hear this, and Sunray clapped her hands. Jumpy said, "One boy that wouldn't throw stones at us. I wish they were all like him," and Mr. Hopper nodded vigorously.

"Come, now, Sally, we must go home," said Kay.

"Will you bring me back again, some day?" asked Sally, "I want to watch those darling polliwogs grow."

"Surely, we'll come often. There is so much to see and hear, and I'll tell you all my teacher tells me," answered Kay as he walked slowly away.

"He has certainly taught me a great deal," said Brother Buzz.

The little water-dog had climbed up on the bank and was creeping about near them. Sunray waved her hand again, and the water-dog said, "Good morning, friends. Didn't I see some human children here? I waited for them to go before I dared to come out."

Mr. Hopper croaked more deeply than usual as he replied, "Yes, but these are most unusual children, as different from others as Brother Buzz, here, is from most bumblebees. They are trying to learn all they can about animals and how to care for them. I am strong for that kind of child."

Sunray, with a beautiful light upon her face, said:

"Some day all children will be like that. This is just the beginning. Humans will then realize that everything in the world has its place and is doing its necessary work, and that we must be kind and appreciate each other."

"It will be fine, I hope it comes soon," said Mr. Hopper; "well, folks, I must get busy; I have another song or two for this morning." And he disappeared into the water to come up some distance away and began singing.

Brother Buzz and little Red-frill had a nice chat, and then Jumpy said goodbye and hopped off, and Brother Buzz and Sunray flew slowly homeward.

"Did you like this adventure, Brother Buzz?" she asked.

"Yes, very, very much," said Brother Buzz quietly, "it has made me think. It is so wonderful how every little creature in this great big world has a real job. I wonder, I wonder Sunray, what is yours?"

Sunray smiled beautifully as she softly answered,

"We Sunrays brighten the world and try to make people happy, Brother Buzz," and Brother Buzz felt that this was the best job of all.



QUESTIONS

1. Describe Sunray's appearance.
2. Describe the Lily Pond.
3. What do frogs, polliwogs and water dogs or newts do?
4. Their work in the water, is it like that of creatures on the land?
5. Describe the baby frogs. How do they grow?
6. What is the difference between baby frogs and polliwogs?
7. Describe difference in life of grown toads and frogs.
8. Describe the little water dog or newt.
9. How does Mr. Hopper change his coat?
10. Should we take the water creatures for pets?

SUPPLEMENTARY WORDS

newt	crocodile	gnats	webbed
polliwog	dragon flies	beetles	gills

THE BUCK WHO WOULD SAVE HIS MOTHER

By MIRIAM SMITH

First Prize, La Jolla High School, San Diego, California

One of our prize-winning essays from Southern California



During my stay at Siwash Lake I always dreaded to see the approach of the hunting season. All day I heard the baying of hounds and, worse still, the sounds of shots. My heart was heavy with fear for the hunted things of the woods.

On one occasion I heard a luckless deer being chased down the hillside toward the lake. Then, suddenly almost behind me a doe and fawn leaped out into the clearing near my hiding-place, evidently confused.

Then, across the lake I saw a yearling buck dash out of the underbrush with hunters and hounds in close pursuit. As he stood breathless for a moment he could see the deer and fawn; then rushing into the water he swam desperately across. A moment later three men led by dogs came into sight and I detected one of them to be Bob, a guide for hunters, whom I knew. They got into a boat and followed the buck, who finally reached the shore and went to the doe and fawn, that was sprawling helplessly on the ground with one leg caught in some fallen branches.

The men landed at a place where shrubs concealed them. Immediately they began shooting, with their only thought to kill. *The brave buck, his flanks dripping with blood, stood as a shield to protect his mother and the fawn.* I could stand it no longer, so when they paused for an instant, I hurried to the side of the defiant buck

and put my arms around his neck. He did not shrink away, but pressed against me as if mutely begging protection, for he seemed to know that I was his friend. The men were astonished. I asked Bob how he *could* allow those men to shoot at the brave, defending buck. I also asked him if he did not remember the law, when a deer reaches the sanctuary of the water it cannot be killed.

He did not answer immediately, but upon his return from the shore where the men had gone away in the boat, he told me that he knew he was breaking the law but the hunters urged him on. He continued, "It may be kind of foolish but somehow I don't think I can raise my gun on a deer again; that buck has cured me."

I told him that I was so glad he felt that way for now he understood, and my pleadings for my wild brothers had not been in vain.

We freed the fawn and bathed the wounds of the buck, whose bravery left the doe and fawn unhurt. His eyes lost their hunted look and became gentle and trusting. When his legs grew steady, we led them to a place where few hunters came. There, where the tall ferns make a screen of greenery, we sent our friends into the maze of whispering alders and young maples, and listened to the faint swish of the underbrush as they passed through.

A SPECIAL APPEAL TO PARENTS AND TEACHERS

The Foundation is appealing to parents and teachers and guardians of children throughout the country, who are now busy selecting Christmas gifts, to give preference to toys which are constructive and safe. There are many of this kind on the market which serve not only to greatly interest children, but to stimulate the mechanical ability common to almost every boy.

The thoughtless habit of giving children for Christmas guns and other weapons of destruction is responsible for the killing of many thousands of birds and animals, extensive damage to private property and the sacrifice of many human lives each year.

The recent killing of deputy fire warden of Marin County, Mr. C. C. Grimm, by a boy of fifteen, who was amusing himself with a gun in Wood Acres, should be a warning to every parent in the country to condemn the kind of unwholesome pleasure which means in so many cases disaster and death. Mr. Grimm leaves a little family of wife and four children whose whole lives have been ruined by a young boy who should never have been allowed the use of a gun. We can feel only sorrow for a child who has never been given his right to humane teaching, which would have taught him to love nature and animals and set him on the path to being a good and useful citizen. It is thus that many enemies to society are started on the downward path, for it is well known that destructive weapons play a very significant part in making children callous to the suffering of animals and in stimulating their imagination for crime.

A FEW TIMELY DON'TS

Don't give firearms to boys. It is dangerous and besides it is against the law, unless a permit is obtained.

Don't give toys which suggest war and the fallacious glory of armed conflict.

Don't give cap pistols to small children.

Don't give children weapons with which they might destroy animal or bird life, or inflict injury or even death upon their playmates.