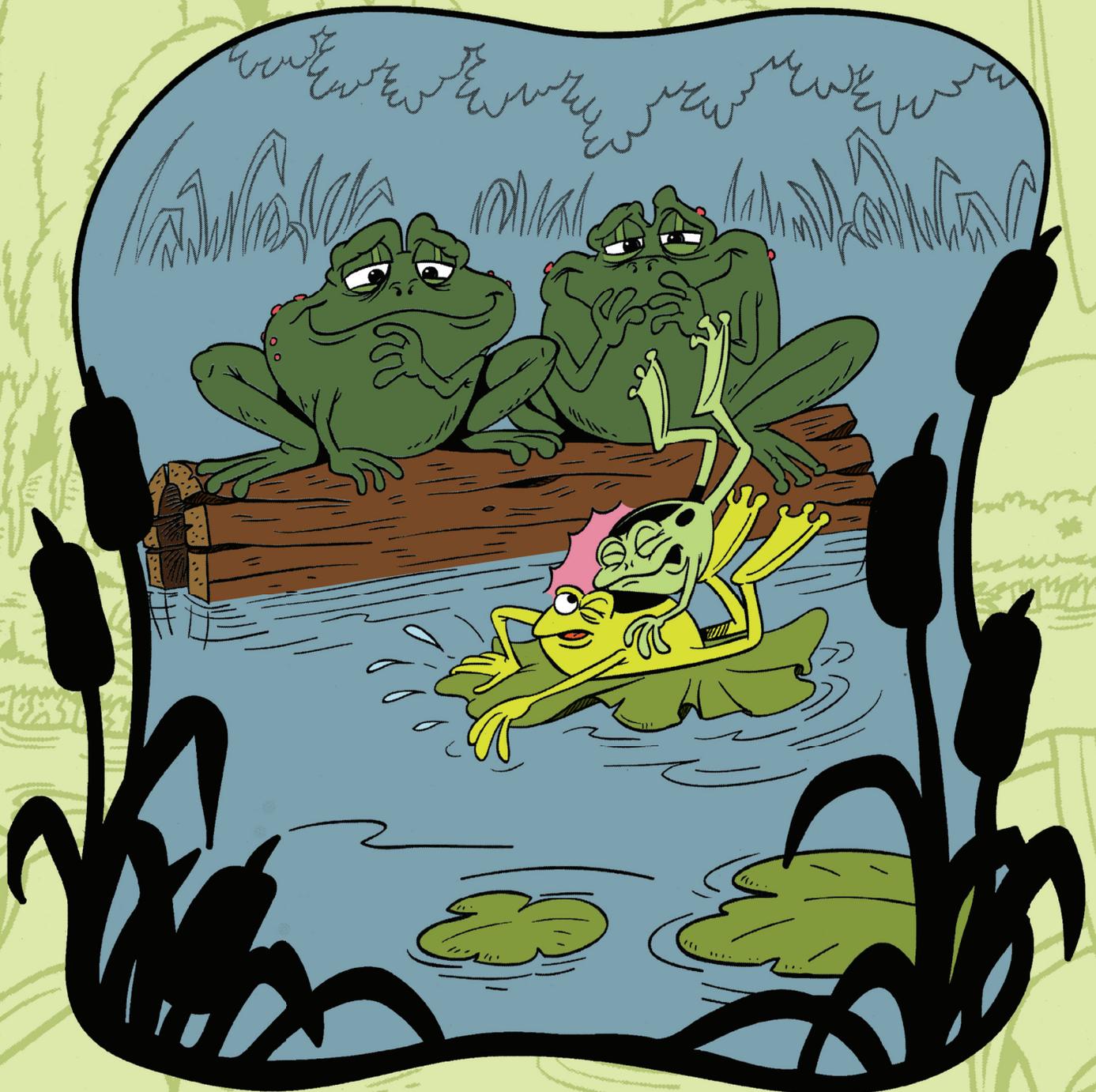


# STORY FOUR

# THE BENSON BLUES



# **THE BENSON BLUES**

**LILY LEARNS TO GO TO AN ADULT IF SHE IS UNABLE TO SOLVE  
A PERSISTENT "SMALL" PROBLEM USING KELSO'S CHOICES**

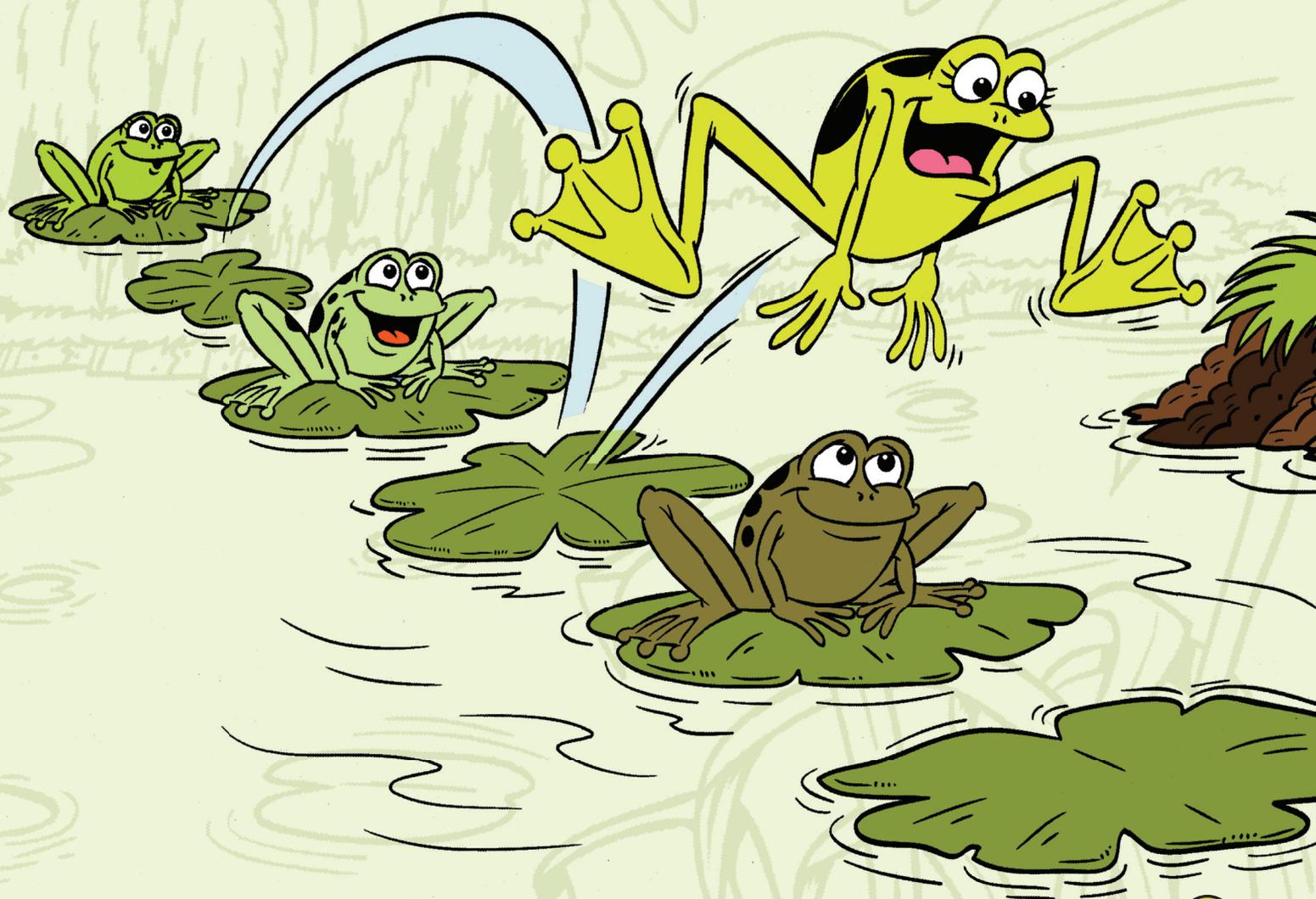


All day long Lily thought to herself, "Boy, oh boy! I can't wait until tonight! We're going to play Lily Pad Leap Frog and we're going to have a blast!"

As you can tell, the frogs at Willow Pond had invented an unusual way to play this game. Instead of playing leap frog on the shore, they played the game in the water!

First, everyone would line up on a lily pad. The last frog in line had to jump over each of the other frogs, one at a time, until he or she reached the empty pad at the front of the line. As you've probably figured out, a frog who missed and landed in the water had to go to the end of the line and begin again.

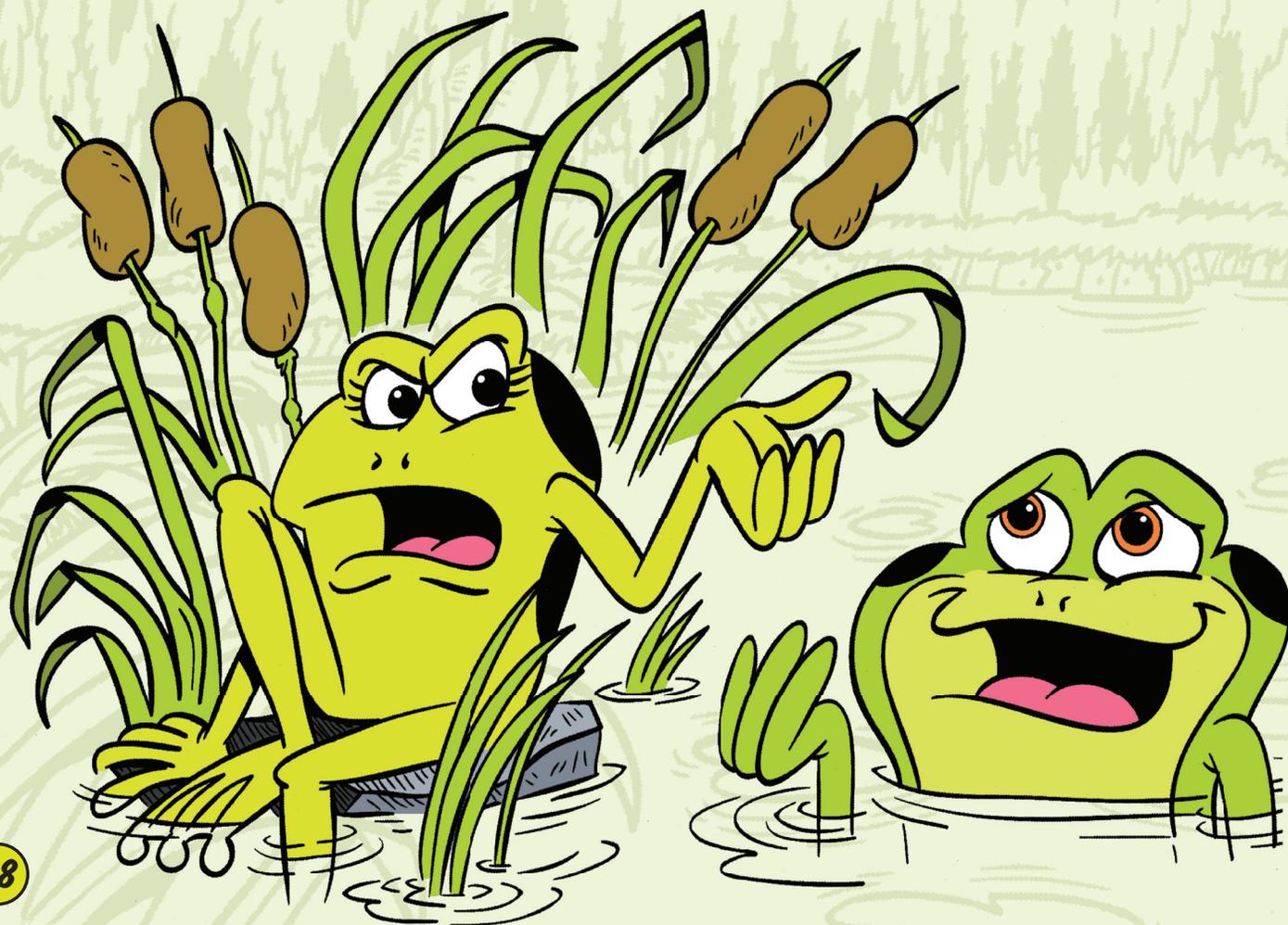
Sometimes, fifteen or even twenty frogs would be playing at sunset by hopping on tippy lily pads. They would weave their long line between cattails and reeds, croaking as they slipped and slid.



But on this particular evening, Lily (known as the best hopper for her age) wasn't playing. In fact, she wasn't even watching. She was up behind the beaver lodge, sitting by herself on a pile of floating reeds and grasses. Kelso decided to swim over and see what she was up to.

"Your choices are not working!" she grumbled to Kelso. "I've tried and tried, but Benson keeps ruining our game of leap frog."

Benson, Kelso knew, was a very large and sometimes grouchy toad who lived at the far end of Willow



Pond. Lily explained that Benson and his friends would sometimes join in on the frogs' games.

"Nothing wrong with playing together," said Kelso. "But what's the problem between you and Benson?"

Lily cried, "He keeps changing the rules so that the toads will win! The rules say that we can only jump one frog at a time, but Benson has decided that now we have to jump two frogs at a time. We frogs aren't big enough to do that! We'll crash into everybody!"

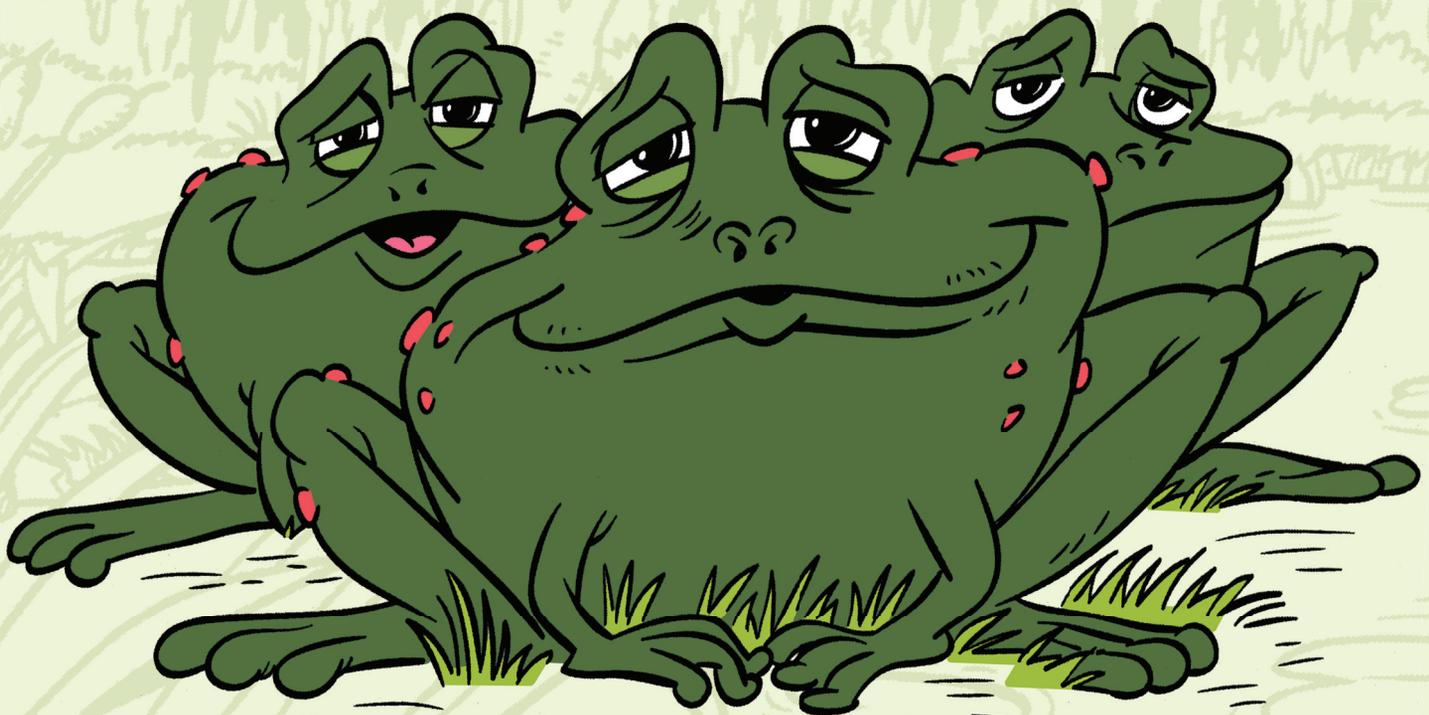


Now, Benson was about the size of a football, and Kelso could see why it might be hard to talk out a problem if he was in a grumpy mood.

“Well,” said Kelso reasonably, “why don’t you make a deal with him, or go to a different game or ignore him or...?”

Lily interrupted: “I tried all those! Over and over—and it’s not working!” She sputtered. “He just keeps ganging up on us frogs, trying to change the rules!”

“Whoa!” Kelso croaked. “You need to remember that those nine choices aren’t magic, and that sometimes they don’t work, no matter how hard you try.”



“If you’ve really tried to solve the small problem by using two of the choices, then it’s time to go to a grown-up you trust for help.”

“Wouldn’t I be tattling?” Lily wondered.

“Nope,” Kelso reassured her as he jumped down into the cool water. “You’d just be trying to fix the problem.”

Peering up at her he added, “Tattling is when you haven’t even tried to solve the problem and you just want to get somebody in trouble.” With a quick flip of his webbed feet, he was off, chasing a plump dragonfly that skimmed over the water.

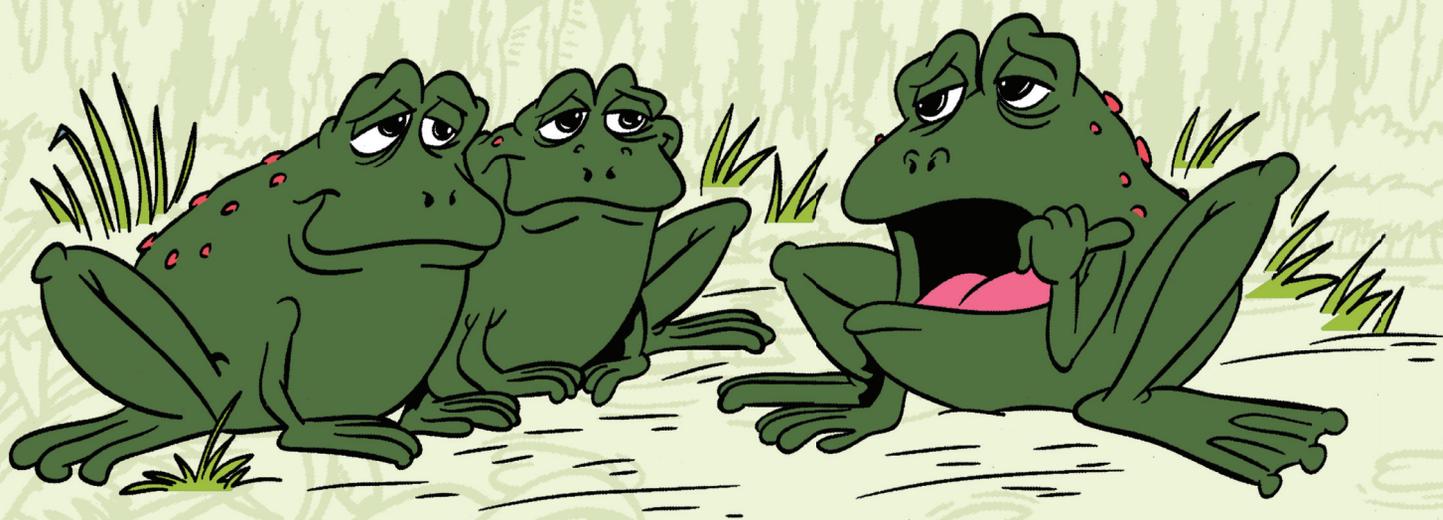
Lily thought as she watched him swim off, “Maybe Kelso is right. I’d better go talk this over with a grown-up. Somebody will know how to fix this so we all can have a good time.”

With a quick dive, Lily swam off to ask one of the older frogs to help her solve the problem with Benson. Kelso watched as Lily and her trusted older friend went to the arguing toads and frogs.

He could hear Benson’s loud croaking above all the noise: “Harrumph. I think that we should all jump two at a time! It’s boring the way you frogs play the game!”

With the help of the older frog, Lily explained that this was unfair because the smaller frogs couldn't hop that far. "If we try to jump like that," she told Benson, "we'll miss and just crash into somebody." To which the older frog added, "And that could be dangerous."

It took Benson awhile to discuss the problem with his fellow toads, but at last he slowly hopped forward, puffed himself up, and proclaimed: "Well, harrumph, we decided that since you guys aren't as big as we are, we'd ....ah...begin our own game of leap toad at the other end of the pond. And we'll leap two toads at a time!"



With huge jumps, Benson and the other toads sprang off toward the far side of the pond.

And so as the sun set on Willow Pond, Lily and her frogmates were once again playing “Lily Pad Leap Frog” together.

Of course, frogs would sometimes skid off a lily pad and land in the water with a loud PLOP. But each time, they helped each other climb back on and, laughing, began the game again.



