

What the Frog Read

One fish looked forward and another backward like the god Janus. The forward-looking fish said he knew all along that his caudal fin would grow out into two legs and his pectoral fins into two arms. The backward-looking fish said it was clear from the very beginning that they would learn to write. One fish who bethought himself a comedian printed: HAVING FUN – WISH YOU WERE HERE, on a strip of white birch bark, stuck it in an empty wine bottle – there would be no civilization without alcohol – and tossed it into a river.

It floated from one of the seven seas to another. Eventually, it washed up in a coastal lagoon. A big bullfrog saw the glare of the sun bouncing off the side of the bottle and went to investigate. He read the message through the glass and decided to visit his cousins and see what progress they had made over the years.

He croaked goodbye to his family and hopped up onto the bank. Two more hops brought him to a dirt road that he followed into the city. His English was only adequate; the lagoon where he had grown up provided few opportunities for advanced education, but he tried talking to the fish passing him on the street.

No matter how loud he would croak, no one would listen. Some were outright rude, sneering and calling him names – immigrant, intruder, and worse. Others spat at his legs saying they were going to call the police. He tried to tell them about the postcard inviting him to visit but no one would listen.

Finally, an old catfish, whiskers grey with age, bent over and whispered, “If I were you, sonny, I’d get out of town before they throw you in a cage or worse yet, in a pot of boiling water,” and she flapped her head back over her shoulder adding, “humph,” with a fishy breath.

The frog was hungry and tired. No longer having the strength to return to the lagoon he hopped out of town. His final hop took him up on a bush where swiveling his head he looked all around. There, much like an anchorite, he meditated on his situation. Eventually a passing bird saw him and swooped down, taking him back to her nest.

PROVING that you should not always believe everything you read.