

Journey with Frawg and friends on a tortoise shell boat through the magical lands of Terramore. Twelve masterpiece illustrations to embellish the fascinating story. To be read to children of all ages by people or amphibians 8 years and up.

The Other Side of Yore

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# **The Other Side of Yore**

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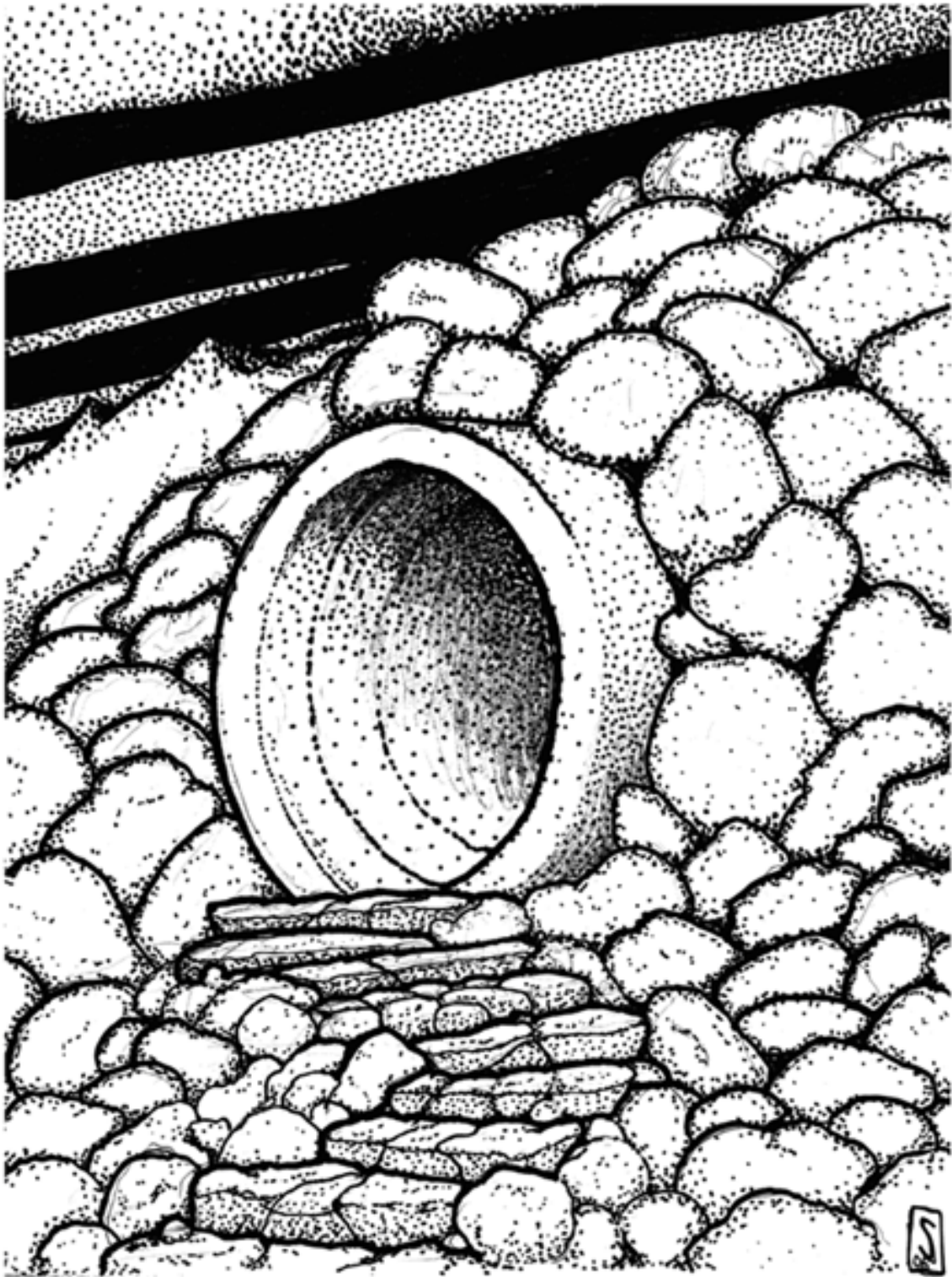
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## Chapter I – Frogtown

Once upon the other side of Yore, within the dreary swamps of Terramore, Frawg sailed in his tortoise shell, searching for his herbs and spores on every slimy shore. For Frawg Findig III, you see, was an herbalist who made his trade collecting spores, spices and plant specimens for foods, brews, and even medicines. Frawg made a trip once a year to Frogtown where he would sell his goods to the people who lived there. Without Frawg's goods, the doctors could not cure the ills nor treat the wounds of all the frogs, toads and lizards who inhabited Frogtown, so his job was a very important one indeed. Today, Frawg was happy; for this was the day he made his annual trip to Frogtown and got to see his friends. As he sailed in his tortoise shell boat around a bend in the river, he began to sing a song:

*“Long was my journey and far have I roamed*

*But now my trip is over and I'm a-traveling home.*

*Oh, Frogtown my hometown put the vittles on the grill*

*For I am coming home now to eat and drink my fill.*

Just then, Frawg heard a buzzing noise breaking through the leaves of the trees above him. He looked up to see a bright blue dragonfly hurtling through the air above, being chased by a huge and hungry robin. The dragonfly dove behind a branch of leaves and suddenly hit another branch as he was looking back at his pursuer, then fell tumbling down towards the water. The robin, thinking better of chasing the hurtling bug towards the water, turned his wings and flew away. With a loud splash the dragonfly landed in the water just beside Frawg's boat.

Frawg kept a net on his boat, which he used to catch butterflies. He would catch the butterflies and take a bit of the wax from their wings to make powerful medicines.

Frawg used his butterfly net to scoop the dragonfly out of the water just before a gigantic fish came out to swallow it. Frawg put the soaked dragonfly down on the tortoise shell floor and gave him a blanket to cover up with. He could see that the dragonfly's wing had been broken by the crash with the branch.

“That was a very close call! You were almost breakfast, Dragonfly!”  
said Frawg, “What is your name?”

“B-B-B-Buzz!” said the dragonfly.

“Why are you stuttering?” asked Frawg. “Are you cold?”

“F-Frogs e-eat dragonflies!” stammered Buzz.

“Oh, you don't have to worry about that!” replied Frawg. “I'm a vegetarian!”

Frawg brewed up some special herbal tea for Buzz to warm him up and to help heal his broken wing.

“When we get to Frogtown, I will take you to my doctor friend and he will fix your broken wing. Until then, this special tea will ease your pain,” said Frawg.

Buzz took the tea and began to sip on it, but he said, “Oh, I can't go to Frogtown! They'll eat me!”

“Have no fear, Buzz! You're with me. Now tell me, where are you from and where are you going?”

“I am from North Bugton, Frawg. I have been sent by my people in search of dandelions. There is a shortage of nectar in my land and if I do not find a source before our stores run out, my people will suffer!”

“Yes. I have noticed that many types of flowers are in short supply throughout the land. I, myself, am out of dandelion wine and am traveling to Frogtown to buy some more. I will buy some dandelions for you and your people also, if you wish.”

“Yes!” exclaimed Buzz, “Thank you, thank you!”

Soon, the travelers could see the lights of Frogtown far off around a bend in the river. By and by they approached the drainage tunnel that led to the docks of the town. Frawg placed Buzz in a sack so that he wouldn't be seen by the frogs who lived there. The dragonfly grumbled a bit about being closed up in the sack, but Frawg assured him that he would only have to stay in the dark until they got to the house of Dr. Croaks.

Frawg came to the docks of Frogtown and threw out his lines to the dockhands that worked there. The dockhands were happy young

water frogs, bright green, big and strong. They helped Frawg to tie his tortoise shell to the dock and then proceeded to unload his cargo.

Presently Diggs Stillwater, Frogtown's Dock Master and a prominent old lizard of the Whiptail family, came strolling down the dock, shouting orders to the dockhands who were unloading Frawg's freight.

“Careful with those root bulbs! You'll scar the wax! Load them into bin number three, and the pockleberry and honeysuckle go in four! And hurry up every chance you get. That's the good lads!”

Then the old Dock Master turned to Frawg, raising his forelegs off the ground while sitting back upon his haunches.

“Well, Frawg, I figured you'd be comin' in about this time. How has the river treated you?”

“The river is the lifeblood of the land, and always treats me well indeed, Master Diggs! Although I must admit its shores have been rather stingy with the dandelions of late.”

“Ahh, Yes. A common complaint these days. Not sure what the trouble is. You might try Hulbert Culpepper in the merchant's'

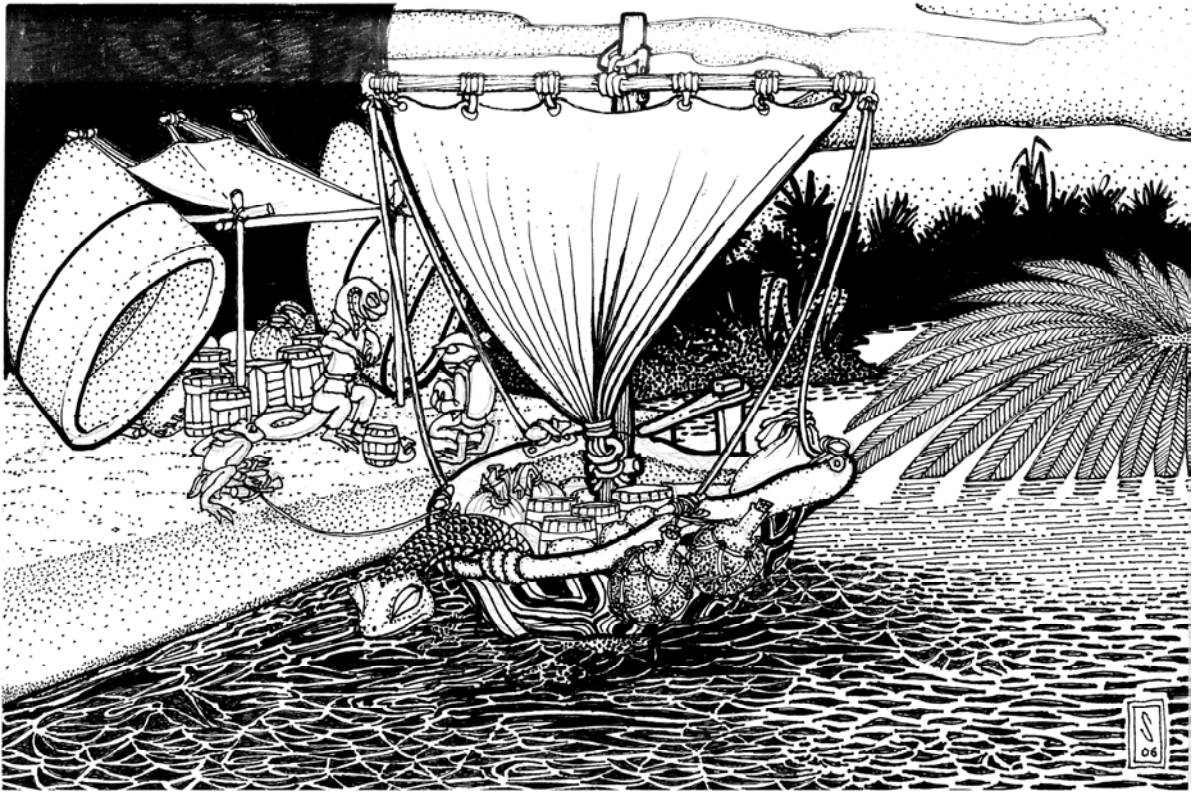
markets....If anyone is to have some dandelion it would sure be him.

I'm assuming it will be the usual forms for your cargo?"

"Yes, and here is my inventory list. The usual portions will go to my regular customers, and the surplus is for wholesale."

Frawg filled out the two forms that Dock Master Diggs gave him and was promptly paid his due. He then slung his sacks over his shoulder and proceeded through the tunnel to Frogtown. Frawg came out into the marketplace, looking for merchants selling dandelions or dandelion wine. There were many lizards, frogs and toads in the market haggling over foodstuffs, clothes and tools. Frawg spotted Hulbert selling grape juice and cider, and asked the fat old toad where a batch of dandelion wine could be found.

*The Other Side of Yore*



**The Docks of Frogtown**

“None of that around here, my dear Frawg. We've had a bit of a shortage lately, and I sold the last tankard a night ago. No dandelions to make it from either. Would you like to try some pockelberry ale?” The toad opened a pot so that Frawg could smell the ale, and though it did smell quite delicious, Frawg declined the offer and asked about Hulbert's brother, Doctor Croaks.

“Ah, the old toad is still kicking strong, and will be glad to see his old friend, Frawg, I am quite sure!” replied Hulbert.

Then he called out for his wife to come out and say hello to Frawg. Trina Culpepper came bustling from beneath the flaps of the merchant tent and greeted Frawg with a grand smile.

“Frawg, you look like you've been taking good care of yourself. We do look forward to seeing you this time of year. Was the harvest good this trip?”

“As good as always, except the lack of dandelions. Dock Master Diggs is packing up your cargo as we speak. You'll find I designated the plumpest pockleberries in the batch just for you.”

“Oh thank you, Frawg, you know how Hulbert loves my pockleberry pie.”

“And he's not the only one, Mrs. Culpepper. Your fame at pie making is known throughout Terramore, I'll wager.”

“Oh stop it, Frawg,” giggled Mrs. Culpepper, “You are too kind.”

Frawg said his goodbyes and walked up the road to the house of his friend, Dr. Croaks Culpepper.

“This is very bad news indeed, Buzz,” whispered Frawg into the sack, “If even the merchants of Frogtown don't have any dandelions or dandelion wine, then something must be very wrong.”

“N-no dandelions at all, Frawg?” stuttered Buzz, “Oh n-no!!”

Frawg finally reached the door of Dr. Croaks. Dr. Croaks lived in a house made of tomato cans at the end of a long tunnel. Frawg gave a hard knock on the can top door.

Presently, Dr. Croaks came pleasantly out to meet him. He was smoking a large pipe and was dressed in a blue and green gown.

“Why Frawg, old Buddy! A most fortunate surprise! I was just making a fresh pot of bog water tea to have with my evening pipe.

You must join me on the back porch where we can watch the stream trickle by.”

Dr. Croaks led Frawg through his luxurious house to the back porch, where young tadpoles could be seen frolicking in a tiny, silvery stream. The good doctor soon brought out a pot of hot bog water tea and the two friends sat about drinking and telling stories of the Great Territorial Wars. Dr. Croaks entertained by blowing smoke rings and then popping them with his long tongue.

“You know, Doctor, you shouldn't smoke. It's very bad for you,” advised Frawg.

“Yes, I know. But you can't teach an old frog new tricks,” replied Croaks.

Suddenly, there was a loud buzzing noise and Frawg realized that he had left Buzz in the sack.

”I almost forgot!” laughed Frawg, “I have a new customer for you, Doctor.”

Frawg opened the sack and let his friend, the dragonfly, free. Buzz looked very relieved to be out in the open air again.

“Wonderful,” said Dr. Croaks, “We'll stew him up for dinner with some fresh sarsaparilla and googleberry leaves!”

Buzz looked sick, he was so scared.

“No!” laughed Frawg. “He is for FIXIN', not for EATIN'!”

After grumbling a bit about having to use his medical skills on a main course, Dr. Croaks put a splint on the dragonfly's wing so that it would heal correctly. Though Buzz was still terrified of the doctor, he thanked the old toad and even managed a smile.

Frawg gave the patient some more of the special herbal tea and the insect quickly fell asleep.

On the porch of Dr. Croak's house, the two old friends talked while the dragonfly slept. The herbalist gave the doctor the supply of assorted herbs and spices he had saved for him and told him of his want for dandelion wine.

“Terramore isn't the only place with the shortage of dandelion. I haven't seen any fresh dandelion in several turns of the moon. Luckily, I have some left from last winter's store. I can give you a few

flasks in trade for the herbs and spices you brought me, but when that's gone, I'm afraid there may be no more flowers to speak of..."

"Oh, no," said Frawg rather sadly. "Why? I've noticed that not many flowers decorate the riversides lately, but I didn't realize that the shortage was so serious. Where have all the flowers gone?"

"No frog knows," sighed the Doctor, "But I aim to ask King Bog when I go to see him tomorrow."

"You're going to see King Bog? Why, is he sick?"

"No," replied Dr. Croaks, "But his daughter, Princess Lily Pad, has fallen into a deep sleep. His wise frogs have no idea how to awaken her. That is why they called for me. I am the most respected doctor in all the land."

"But how will you get there, Dr. Croaks? It's a day's sail to the Palace of Bog, the Frog King!"

"Why, you will sail me, of course, my dear Frawg!" laughed Dr. Croaks.

Frawg had not seen the King since his daughter had been born, shortly after the Territorial Wars. Frawg had been very young then,

but he had been an honored guest, for his service in the king's army as an expert tracker had made him quite famous among frogs. It had been a beautiful celebration, and the Queen of the hummingbirds had even come, to bless the newborn Princess with Nature's Health. He had heard that the Princess had become a very beautiful young lady-frog, and that she was a great lover of the outdoors, like himself. Some even said that wherever she walked, flowers were likely to bloom the next morning.

That night, Frawg slept in Dr. Croaks' comfortable guest room and dreamed of a place he had been to once, far to the south of Terramore, where the flowers grew in armies high above his head, bowing to him in the wind as he hopped gleefully down a hillside. It seemed the dream had only just begun when morning came, its sunlight breaking through the little window and tickling him on the eyelids.

“Rise and hop!” called Dr. Croaks. “The King won't wait forever!”

Frawg hopped from his bed and stretched, yawning as his webbed feet got used to the cold floor. He quickly made up his bed and

brushed his tongue before changing back into his travelin' clothes. He had his bag packed and Buzz comfortably wrapped in the sack before Dr. Croaks had found his walking cane. Frawg found it on the porch where they had talked the night before and the companions began their journey together, out the can top door, down the popsicle stick steps, and over the grassy hill to the waiting docks of Frogtown. Most of the town was still sleeping, but a few dockhands were going about various early morning duties in the bright sunlight.

After Frawg had loaded up his bag and Buzz, he helped Dr. Croaks into the tortoise shell and untied his boat from the dock.

As the tortoise shell floated out into the still morning waters, the dockhands began to sing together as they worked:

*"Swab the decks in early morning; clean the nets as dawn's light  
shines,*

*Check the bilge and draw the anchors, loose the knots and free  
the twines.*

*Gather up yon crawfish baskets, minnow poles and water bug  
net,*

*Fold your trousers, lose your shoes; like it or not, you're gonna get wet!"*

The voices from the singing dockhands grew fainter and fainter until Frawg and Dr. Croaks could barely hear the song as it drifted quietly over the water. They soon rounded a bend in the river way and decided that it would now be safe to let Buzz out of the sack. The insect stretched and fluttered his wings, but the broken one fluttered slowly in its splint.

“Better not do that too much, dragonfly,” warned Dr. Croaks. “Your wing is still healing.”

“Being out of that sack makes me feel like I can out fly a robin!” cried Buzz.



**Frawg, Buzz and Dr. Croaks on the River**

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