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## **The Toad and the Frog and Other Fables**

By Kenneth L. Haley

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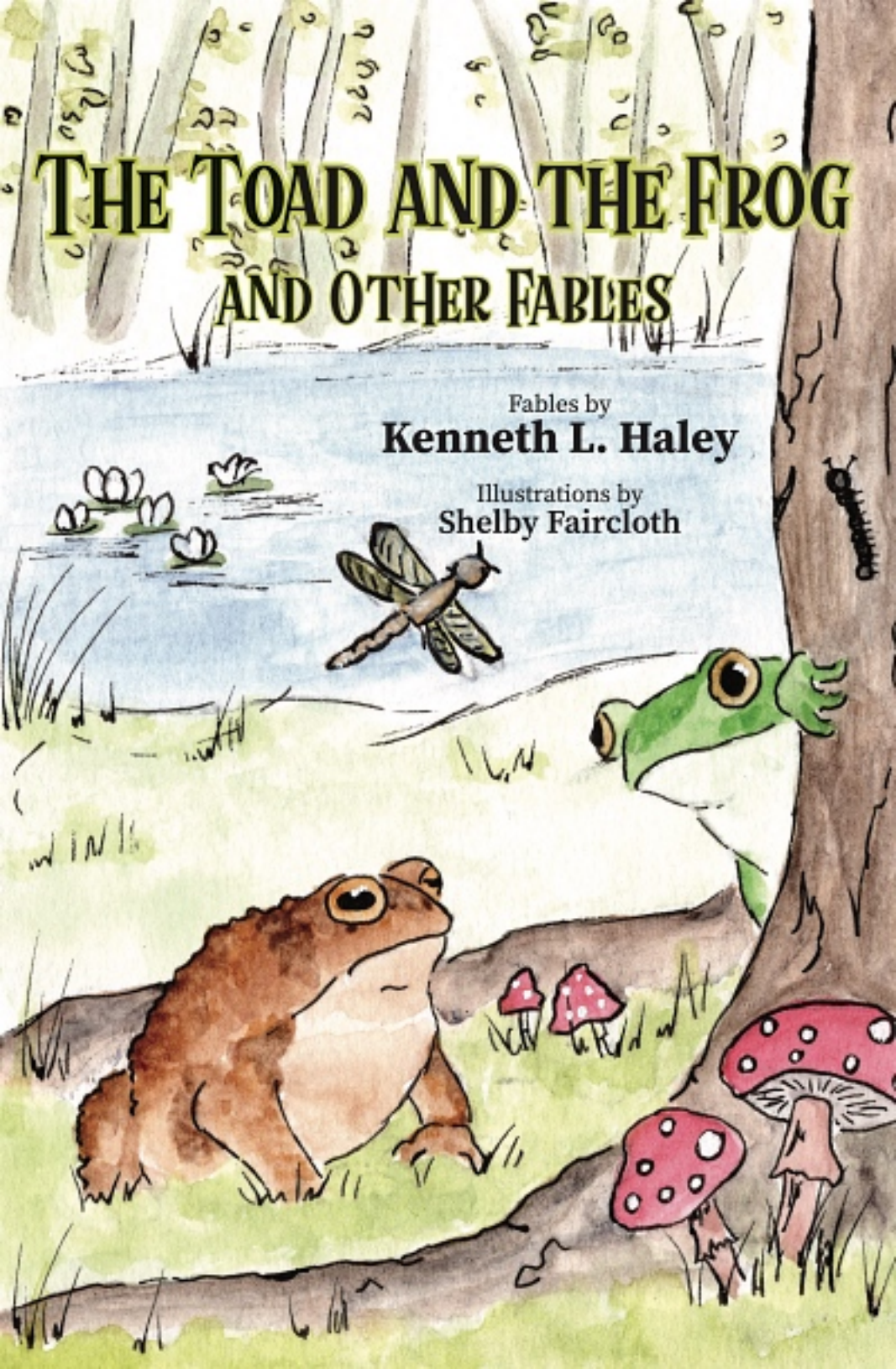
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**Kenneth L. Haley**

Illustrations by  
**Shelby Faircloth**

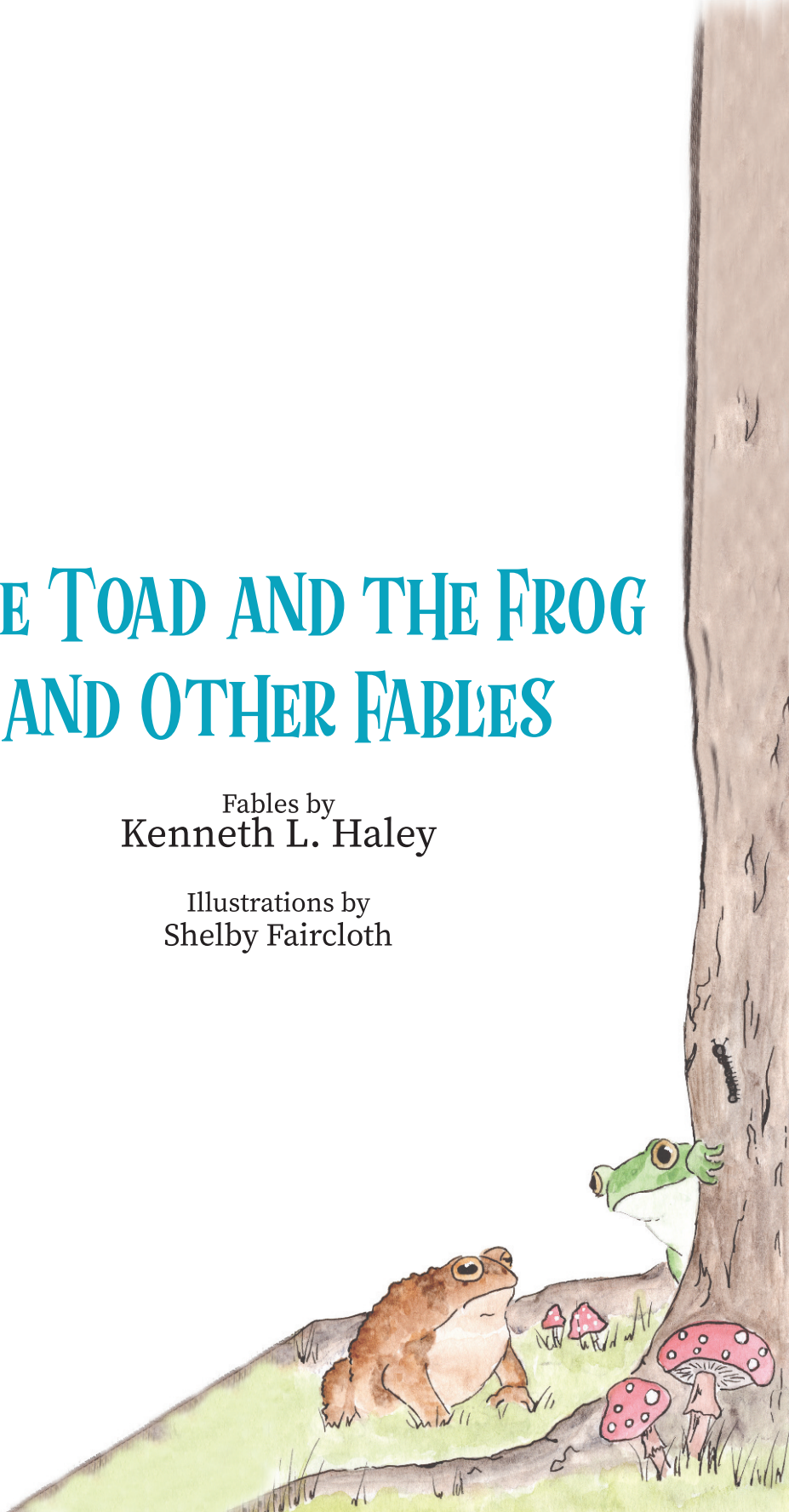




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Paperback ISBN: 978-1-64719-859-6

Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-64719-860-2

Printed on Acid Free Paper



# THE TOAD AND THE FROG

ONE FINE EVENING, just at dusk, a toad and a frog happened to meet under an old tree near a little pond. They looked at each other for a few moments, and then the toad spoke.

“Cousin Frog, you are looking very well this evening. Are the bugs still plentiful in your neighborhood?”

The frog replied, “Oh, thank you, Cousin Toad. All is well, and yes, we have many bugs by the pond. You appear well-fed. You are able to find plenty as well?”

“Oh, yes,” replied the toad. We have bugs a plenty around the old barn.” This was where the toad lived, for it was close to the little pond and just beyond where they were meeting.

“Still,” he continued, “I find the same old bugs a bit boring. Oh, yes, we find plenty, but all the same type around the old barn. Some variety might be nice.”

With this, the frog and the toad just sat and watched each other for some time. Neither seemed inclined to leave, but neither continued the conversation either. Finally, the frog spoke again. “I say, Cousin Toad, what would you think about changing places for a day? You go to my pond, and I will go to your old barn. We will both enjoy the change in scenery and diet, and we can meet here again in this same spot tomorrow evening, just as we did today.”

The toad sat for a moment in his toady sort of way, thinking it seemed, for toads often seem to be sitting and thinking, as opposed to his cousin who seemed to be more inclined to exercise, jumping and swimming and all that sort of thing. With a few moments in thought and a few blinks of his eyes, the toad responded.

“Cousin Frog, I think that is an excellent idea. I wonder that I did not think of it myself.” For toads generally considered themselves the more thoughtful and wise of the two. The frogs got the athletic ability, and the toads got the brains, or at least that was how they viewed themselves.

The toad continued. “We shall indeed trade places, and I will meet you here in this very place tomorrow evening as you have proposed. Best wishes, Cousin Frog. And may the bugs be always nearby.”

“Best wishes, Cousin Toad. And may the bugs be always nearby.” This was how toads and frogs always parted from each other, and with that the frog started his jump toward the old barn, and the toad ambled down toward the little pond.

All was fine at first. The frog arrived at the old barn and found some delicious bugs which seldom came to the pond. “Ah,” he said to himself, I do not see what the toad complains about. These are some of the very best bugs, and he seems to have no shortage here.”

Likewise, the toad made his way to the little pond in his own good time, for toads are more thoughtful and slow in their walk. As he ambled to the pond, he noticed how very green and thick the vegetation was, and he marveled at the great variety of bugs!

“Oh, my,” said the toad to himself, “my cousin frog has things very nice here by the pond. Some of these bugs are not so tasty as others, but the variety is outstanding! I think I should never tire of eating here!”

And so it was for a while. Each enjoyed the change of scenery and change in diet. Each thought about making the change permanent. And so most of the evening passed pleasantly for both.

The toad usually slept under some old boards in a corner of the barn. He was seldom bothered there since few animals poked around the old boards, and those who did had no taste for toads. All in all, it was a quiet and restful place, as safe as any he could likely find anywhere. He looked about for a similar place by the pond, but did not find anything suitable. While looking, he attracted the attention of a water snake resting on the bank of the pond. This was not good. The water snake mistook him for a frog and started slithering in his direction. The toad usually did not worry too much about snakes since toads do not taste good, but frogs were a favorite food for water snakes, and the snake might not realize the difference until it was too late for the toad. After all, snakes were not so discerning as toads. The toad was hard pressed to outpace the snake, and would not have done so, but fortunately for the toad, a young and foolish frog jumped up in the grass and plopped down just in front of the snake. The snake could not have ordered a better meal, and so seized upon the young frog at once, allowing the toad to escape.







Meanwhile, the frog at the barn had eaten his fill of bugs, but now found that he was in need of a bath, for the old barn was dusty and dry. He looked about for water to splash in, but found none. Everything was dry, dusty, and irritating to his usually moist skin. He lamented the lack of water and his inability to get a good bath when he wanted it, but forgot about that as he heard something big come into the barn. A dog! He had seen this dog before near the pond, but he had always just jumped into the water. That was the end of it since the dog never tried to swim after him. But here, where was he to go? The frog jumped instinctively, but just banged into the wall, making noise and attracting the dog's attention.

"Now I've done it," said the poor frog to himself. "Oh, that I might have a nice pond to jump into right now!"

In truth, the dog never bothered the toad because toads do not taste good, and the dog had found this to be true one day when he decided to lick one. It was the last time he wanted to do that. So, he was not interested in eating the frog, but the frog did not know this, and so the dog chased the frog around the old barn until he grew tired of the sport and left the poor exhausted frog to himself.

"Oh, my," gasped the frog, for he was quite done in with the chase and had hardly another jump left in him. "If I can make it back to my pond, I don't think I shall ever leave again."

So it was that the toad and the frog each had a very long night and day. While they saw attractive things in the other's homes, those things came with a price each was not willing to pay. They met as planned the next evening at the tree between the barn and the pond.

"Cousin Toad," the frog said as the toad ambled to the tree, "How good it is to see you, but you look tired. Did you rest well at my most excellent pond?"

"Ah, Cousin Frog," the toad replied, "The pond is a veritable Garden of Eden, but I found it accursed with the same affliction. And you, my dear cousin, you do not seem so rested

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as you might be. How fared you in my castle, my most beloved home they call the old barn?”



“Cousin Toad, indeed the old barn is a magnificent structure, but my skin is quite cracked from the dry environment, and like many old castles the place was frequented by beasts and spirits. I hardly slept at all and barely escaped with my life!”

No more was said, except for their usual parting.

“May the bugs be always nearby,” said the frog as he jumped happily toward the pond.

“May the bugs be always nearby,” said the toad as he ambled towards the old barn with a great satisfaction.

And each was forever more perfectly content in his own home.



## THE SNAIL AND THE FLY

ONE EARLY MORNING, a snail was busy making his way down a little sidewalk to a nice little garden at the end. It was not so far as people are concerned, just a few steps really, but it was quite a distance for a snail. The snail liked to visit the little garden this time of year because it was always moist and usually had something good to eat. It was quite a trip, but he was not in a hurry, and the destination was worth the effort.



The lady who tended the garden kept it nice and moist so her flowers would bloom, and it was beautiful. The snail tried not to damage her flowers too much, but some of them were very tasty. In any case, the snail thought the lady did not mind his presence too much since she had actually stepped around him on several occasions.

He crawled methodically down the damp sidewalk, still wet with the morning dew. He moved, of course, at a snail's pace, since he was what he was. But he did not mind. Inch after inch turned into foot after foot until he was nearly half way there. There was no one around to interrupt his journey until a fly landed directly in front of him. Flies were, well, flighty, and he did not care for them much.

"Hi there, Mr. Snail! How are things in the slow lane? Ha, ha." The fly then flew up and quickly flew to the garden and back. He did it again, and he did it a third time. He landed back in front of the snail, who had hardly moved at all. "I've been to the garden and back three times, and you have barely moved an inch" And with that, he laughed heartily.

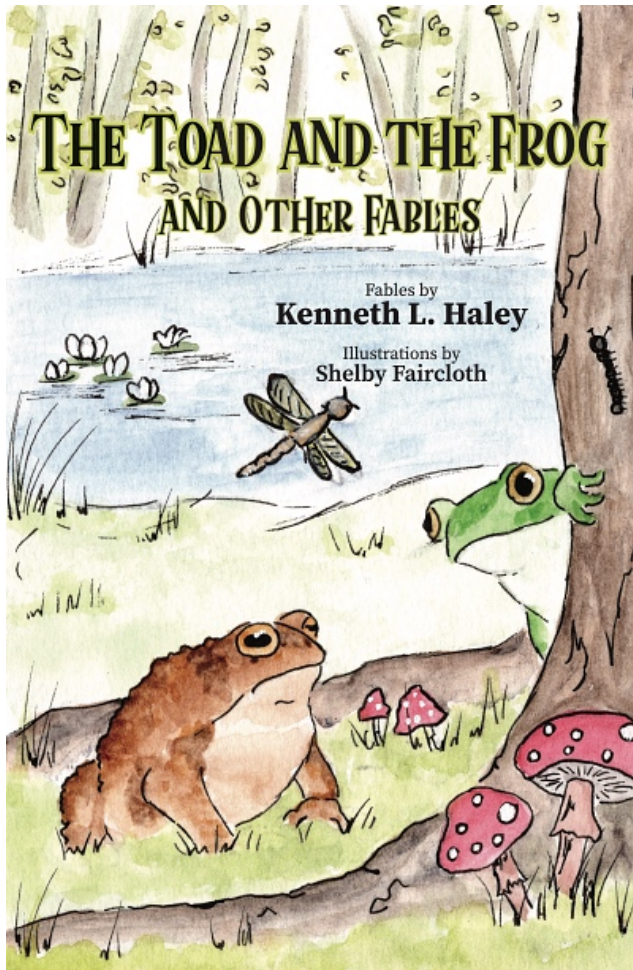
The snail was not amused, but changed his route a little to go around the pesky fly. In response, the fly simply flew up and landed in front of him again. "Mr. Snail! Mr. Snail! You are so slow sometimes I can't tell if you are going forward or in reverse! Ha, ha, ha."

Again, the snail did not respond but simply altered his course a little to avoid the troublesome fly, wishing he would just go away. The trip was long enough without making it longer than it needed to be. An inch or two out of the way was nothing for the fly, but the diversions quickly added to the trip for a snail. Just as he got around the fly for a second time, the fly took to wing and landed in front of him again.

“Mr. Snail! Mr. Snail! What is as slow and slimy as you are?” The bothersome fly clearly wanted a response, but the snail did not answer and for a third time edged around the fly.

“Nothing, nothing else is as slow and slimy as you are!” laughed the irritating fly. He seemed quite proud of himself for the joke, although the snail did not join him in his amusement. The snail simply continued on his way without any response. The fly, for the dim-witted fly was persistent in a way only flies can be, for a fourth time flew straight up so as to land just in front of the poor snail once again. However, this time the fly flew into a newly-made spider’s web hanging from the grass. It was strong for its size and very sticky. The fly thrashed about trying to escape, but he could not. His movements only attracted the attention of the spider who tended the web, and the fly could see the spider starting his way.

“Mr. Snail! Mr. Snail! Help me! Help me!” To which, the snail stopped and replied, “I am much too slow to reach you in time as you have repeatedly pointed out.” The snail never changed his course or pace again, but he could see the spider approach the fly. The spider did what spiders do to flies, and the snail, as he continued, thought to himself. “Silly fly. It is not how quickly we reach our destination that is important. It is whether or not we reach the destination.” And with that, he made his way to the little garden at his own pace.



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