

Carol Barnshaw

A Fairly Fairy Story

Once upon a time there was a frog—quite a handsome, man-of-the pond sort of frog, who lived on a very nice pad (lily pad that is) in a suburban pond . . . but nevertheless he was dissatisfied.

One day as he was leisurely paddling around in his pond he suddenly felt all tingly and magic, and looking up he saw a beautiful princess. She looked into the pond and fixed her gaze on him—he wiggled with excitement and raised an eyebrow; she smiled. Ah, he thought, at last I have what I need—one kiss and I'll be a prince! (Yes, he had read all the right fairy stories when he was a tadpole).

'What do you want froggy-o' said the fairy princess (she was one of the modern trendy gum-chewing type)

'More'

'More what?'

'More everything'

'What—more pain, sorrow, sickness, debts?'

'Of course not—joy, happiness, love, status'

'Sorry ducky said the princess, 'this is the twentieth century—mass production, world population year and all that—we can't sort out bits for fussy frogs like you—if you want more of one you'll have more of the other'

Not how I imagined my princess, he thought. Maybe I'd better try another angle.

'I want to help others to live in this modern frustrating urban society—I want to be freed of the constrictions this world imposes on me'

'Free!' princess looked angry. 'Free? What more freedom do you want—we've got rid of all this religious bit, morals, commandments, even conscience, we have abolished the family— no family responsibilities now, no financial cares (three cheers for the welfare state she cried as she stood to attention)— you can go where you like—restrictions? Rubbish!'

Princess looked cross. Frog began to think that may be this female chauvinist wasn't his salvation after all. Then, suddenly, in a fit of temper she swung her transistor radio round and with a sickening thud he was knocked off his lily pad and into the pond . . .

With a jump the frog awoke from his rather alarming dream—as near to being covered in perspiration as a frog can get. He was reassured to find it was a pleasant day—lots of pleasant, helpful, friendly frogs around. 'Maybe I'll get the idea of a princess' he said to himself.

No, he didn't live happily ever after. That only happens in fairy stories. 'Anyway, the princess (in the story) kisses the frog, and not the prince. So who wants to be a prince?' he muttered.





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