



### **STORY: THE GREEDY FROG**

An Australian Tale Retold by Dianne de Las Casas

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In the time of dreaming, there lived a GIGANTIC frog. He was nearly as big as a mountain! After rainbow serpent came down from the sky to create the earth, mountains rose, valleys formed, and water appeared in every form. There were rivers, billabongs, lakes and ponds. The land was beautiful and all the animals shared the water.

One day, the gigantic frog became very thirsty. So he hopped over to the rivers and he drank all the water – SLURP! He was still thirsty so he hopped over to the billabongs and he drank all the water – SLURP! He was still thirsty so he hopped over to the lakes and he drank all the water – SLURP! Can you believe he was still thirsty?! So he hopped over the ponds and he drank all the water – SLURP!

When he was finished, guess how much water was left? That's right! None! The gigantic frog was a greedy frog! He drank all the water in Australia! The water had filled his gigantic belly, making it big and round. He could hardly move. He became so tired that he fell into a deep sleep.

Now the land was without water. The river beds were cracked, the billabongs were parched, the lakes were dusty, and the ponds were dry. Because there was no water, terrible things happened to the land. The trees sagged, the leaves fell, and the flowers wilted.

The animals were so thirsty, they could barely move. With all their strength, they came together to discuss their troubles. Kangaroos, wallabies, koalas, dingos, wombats, kookaburras, emus, and eels gathered. Wise Wallaby said, "Perhaps we can talk to the greedy frog and ask for our water back." One by one, the animals tried to talk to the greedy frog but still he slept.

Koala said, "We have to do something soon! We cannot live without water!" Dingo said, "Let us force the water out of him by jumping on him." One by one, the animals jumped on the greedy frog but still he slept. Kangaroo even bounced thirty feet in the air but it did no good. The animals were upset and about to give up.

Emu said, "I have an idea. Let's make the greedy frog laugh. Once he starts laughing, his belly will shake and all the water will spill out of him." One by one, the animals climbed onto the greedy frog and began tickling him. Kookaburra tickled the frog's neck. Wombat tickled the frog's knees. But Eel began twisting and dancing on the greedy frog's belly.

The greedy frog slowly began to quiver and quake. Then he began to shiver and shake. His belly began to wiggle and jiggle. Suddenly, he burst out laughing and the animals ran for cover as the water spilled out. The waters ran into the river beds. The waters rushed into the billabongs. The waters tumbled into the lakes. And the waters poured into the ponds.

Once again, water had returned to Australia and the animals were able to share the water. Again, the trees stood tall, the leaves danced in the wind, and the flowers lifted their faces to the warm sun. The once gigantic frog shrank and shrank and shrank until he was no bigger than the size of your hand. The earth was beautiful once more.

From that time on, the animals agreed to take no more than their share of the water. Everyone that is, except for the greedy frog. To this day, the greedy frogs still live in Australia. The Aborigines know that when they fill their bellies up with water and bury themselves deep beneath the earth, it is a warning that a drought is coming.

And that is the tale of the Greedy Frog.

