

## Larry The Freeloader

*This story was written after two events--first a ceramic frog was given to Katrina as a gift from a staff member at the school. She immediately rejected it, because it was "not Kermit." During the same time period, she started to protest when I would bring other students into our speech therapy sessions together. I introduced the concepts of jealousy and "freeloading" to her, and she took off on her own, looking up the terms on her Braille note dictionary, and writing this interesting story that helped her to process her own jealousy. After she wrote it, she was able to discuss with me her own feelings of jealousy when asked to work with other students.*

Hi ho, Kermit the Frog here, every day, my best friend Katrina Manalo and I always do our normal routine. Every morning in our apartment, we wake up, go to the bathroom, go downstairs for breakfast, wash up and brush, and get dress. Then we go out on Sesame Street to play with our friends. Sometimes Katrina and I take care of young children and teach them lectures about letters, numbers, and lots of other stuff. Sometimes Katrina and I go to Grover's house for a playdate with Grover. Sometimes Katrina and I cool off in the pond when it's a hot day. Sometimes Katrina and I report Sesame Street News as co-reporters. Sometimes I teach Katrina a Sesame song or two. When it's noontime, Katrina and I have lunch either at Hooper's Store, at a friend's house, or at home in our apartment. Then we do our lectures, our news flashes, and playdates all afternoon. When it nighttime, we go home to our apartment, have dinner, take showers, wash up, and go to bed. Not only Katrina and I are great husband and wife, we're also very best friends and we like working together. But one Sunday, something different was happening at our apartment. Katrina was listening to her iPhone when she heard me calling from downstairs.

Katrina went downstairs: "Hi ho Kermit, and hi ho, 'huh, who are you?'"

"Katrina, I'd like you to meet my cousin, Larry The Frog. Larry, this is my best friend, Katrina Manalo." I introduced my new cousin to Katrina.

"Hi ho, Larry The Frog here, it's nice to meet you Katrina." Larry shook Katrina's hand. Larry looks much different from me, he wears a jacket, he looks much shorter than me, and he's a freeloader which means someone who takes advantage of the generosity of others.

"Don't worry Katrina, Larry wouldn't stay here in our apartment forever, he's just staying for one week on our spring break." I explained. But this week on spring break, Katrina didn't feel comfortable with Larry. On Monday, we went to the library for storytime. The librarian read us a fable about the dog and his reflection. Larry liked the part when the dog dove in the pond to get more bones, he realized it was just his own reflection, and he end up losing his bone.

"The moral of this fable is, never be greedy of what you want. Because you might end up having nothing, the end." the librarian said as we cheered quietly in the library.

"Uh Kermit, I thought we're gonna teach the children our lectures today." Katrina was feeling green with jealousy.

"Sorry Katrina, better luck next time." I whispered and continued our spring break with Larry. On Tuesday, we went to Grover's house to have a playdate with Grover.

"Grover, I'd like you to meet my cousin, Larry The Frog. Larry, this is my best Muppet friend Grover." I introduced Larry to Grover.

"Oh, hello Larry, welcome to my house, come inside and I'll show you around." Grover gave a tour of his house. Larry liked Grover's toys, the furniture, and Grover's Super Grover costume.

"Cool stuff Grover, boy, I wish I had a superhero costume, then I can fly and save the day." Larry slipped on Grover's cape and helmet and pretended to be Frogman. We all played pretend rescue, but Katrina didn't because she was feeling left out. I pretended to be the lost frog who wanted to get home. Frogman helped me get home safely to my pond where my father frog was waiting. Grover pretended to be my father, at least he gets to croak.

"Oh thank you Frogman, you saved my son, you're my hero." he would say, and gave Frogman a hug.

Later, Katrina asked: "Kermit, can I play pretend too?"

"Sorry Katrina, this game only has three players, but maybe next time we'll include you." I said as we cleaned up Grover's toys.

On Wednesday, we headed to Sesame Park to cool off in the pond. Larry and I dove in and swam around looking at the dragonflies, the fish, and the lily pads.

"Hey Kermit, can I join in too?" Katrina dipped her feet into the water.

"Sorry Katrina, Larry and I can swim by ourselves. But you can sit here and watch us swim, okay?" I insisted and splashed back into the pond with Larry. Katrina sat near the pond and watched us swim, climb trees, and camouflage in the tall green grass.

"I wish I could get Kermit to love me again, then we can do all the things together." she felt more green with jealousy.

On Thursday, we went to Mother Goose's nursery school for Sesame Street News. "Hi ho, this is Kermit the Frog on Sesame Street News. And I'm speaking to you from Mother Goose's nursery school where the author Mother Goose writes classic nursery

rhymes. And today, we're going to look at some of Mother Goose's nursery rhymes with the help of my co-reporter, Larry The Frog." I reported in my reporter outfit as Larry came with his reporter outfit.

"Wait Kermit, we're suppose to do the report together. Besides, I'm your real co-reporter, not Larry." Katrina begged as she entered the school.

"Sorry Katrina, this news flash only requires two reporters. And three's a crowd, but, you can just sit here and watch us, okay?" I sat my best friend down on the school bench. Then I went to Larry to report on Mother Goose. Mother Goose has written Humpty Dumpty, Little Miss Muffet, Mary Had A Little Lamb, Little Bo Peep, Hickory Dickory Dock, Peter Piper, Hey Diddle Diddle, Jack and Jill, Jack Be Nimble, the old woman in the shoe, Old King Cole, Old Mother Hubbard, and other nursery rhymes in lots of countries.

"You see that ladies and gentlemen, Mother Goose wrote these poems to help her nursery rhyme friends have fun." Larry reported.

"Well there you have it folks, this has been Mother Goose's nursery school. This is Kermit and Larry The Frog returning to your regularly scheduled program." we exit out of the nursery school to get Katrina.

On Friday, I taught Larry all my favorite Sesame Street songs. First, I taught him why it's great to be your own color in Being Green. Next, I taught him my Do Wop Hop song and dance. I hopped and flipped Larry upon my back. Third, I taught Larry the African Alphabet and the Bayou Alphabet. Fourth, I taught Larry how to dance the Disco Frog. Fifth, I played the mandolin and Larry dressed up like different people in If I Were. Sixth, I played my banjo and sang Rainbow Connection to Larry. However, Katrina was just watching us sing, dance, and have lots of fun.

"Kermit loves Larry better than me. And he has all the fun with Larry and never pays attention to me. If only we could get back together again, then Kermit and I can do all the things we always do." she felt even more green with jealousy. The next day was Saturday, and Larry asked us if we can go to Sesame Park to play.

"Why yes Larry, I'd love to come, Katrina, are you coming too?" I asked my best friend.

"Um, sure, I think so." Katrina said, and we all went to Sesame Park. At the park, Larry and I are going to ride our bicycles. We put on our helmets, our protective pads, and got on our bikes.

"Hey Katrina, would you like to ride with us?" asked Larry.

"No thanks Larry, you and Kermit go right ahead, I'm just going to pick wildflowers, by myself of course." Katrina walked away feeling even more green with jealousy. She picked daisies, sunflowers, poppies, and water lilies at a wide field. Afterward, Katrina

looked into the pond that we swam in the other day. When Katrina saw her reflection in the water, there was another girl carrying wildflowers. So when Katrina dove to get more flowers, she realized it was just her reflection. And furthermore, she end up losing her wildflowers just like in the fable of the dog and his bone.

"Oh no, I can't swim, if only there was someone who can get me out. Wait, there is, Kermit!, help me!, help me!" Katrina called from the pond. The sound of her yelling reached me and Larry.

"Larry, my best friend Katrina's in trouble, we have to save her, come on." we got off our bikes, and took a raft on the pond.

"Katrina, hang on to this lifesaver and we'll pull you out." I threw a lifesaver around Katrina. Larry and I tugged and pulled until Katrina was finally safe.

"Oh thank you for rescuing me Kermit, and thank you Larry." Katrina smiled.

"Our pleasure Katrina, now let's get you home for your shower." We sailed back to shore and rode our bikes home to my apartment. While Katrina took her shower upstairs, Larry helped me cook dinner in the kitchen downstairs. That evening, Katrina wasn't hungry at dinner.

"Katrina, what's the matter, do you want to talk about it?" I asked.

"Why don't we just talk alone after dinner Kermit, just you and me." Katrina excused herself and went back upstairs.

"Larry, may I please be excused?" I said politely and followed my best friend. I sat on my bed beside Katrina in our bedroom.

"What's wrong Katrina, don't you like my cousin Larry?" I asked.

"No Kermit, it's just that you love Larry better than me. You and Larry have all the fun listening to stories, playing with Grover, swimming, reporting, and singing together. And I didn't get a chance to spend time with you. I'm really sorry Kermit, this means you're not going to love me anymore?" Katrina hugged me.

"Katrina, I wouldn't say that to the ones I love. Besides, you can love more than one person." I put my flipper on Katrina.

"Does that mean you still love me?" Katrina asked.

"Of course Katrina, just because I love Larry, doesn't mean I'll ever stop loving you. You know why?, Because you're still my best friend a frog can ever have. And I still love you very much Katrina." I hugged my best friend.

"Thanks Kermit, I only wish Larry could stay for one more night." thought Katrina.

"There is a way, follow me downstairs." I led the way down to the living room. I'm going to let Larry sleep on my leather sofa tonight.

"Good night Larry." I whispered as I turned off the living room lights and head back upstairs. I used the bathroom, washed up, and went to bed with my best friend Katrina. The next day was Sunday again, it was time for Larry to go home.

"Thank you for spending time with me on your spring break Kermit and Katrina. But where can I live that's on Sesame Street?" Larry wondered out the door.

"We know just the place, follow us." We led our friend to my old swamp in Sesame Park. This is where I was born before I moved to my apartment. Katrina found an otter for Larry to have for company.

"I now present to you Larry The Frog and Olive The Otter, you two may kiss and rejoice." she announced. So Larry kissed Olive and fell in love with her. Now Larry has a wife/best friend just like me. So now Larry and Olive live in my swamp in Sesame Park so we can visit them whenever we like.

"Thanks for helping me find a new home for me and Olive to live in. Well, I better be hopping, I'm really gonna miss you two." Larry splashed into the swamp with Olive.

"We're going to miss you too Larry, but don't worry, we'll come back and visit you and Olive anytime at Sesame Park." I blessed my cousin.

"Yeah, and next time, you can include me and Olive too?" Katrina added.

"You got it, well goodbye." Larry and Olive swam into the swamp together.

"Goodbye." Katrina and I both waved as we returned to our own home.

When we got home, Katrina said: "Kermit, I love spending my spring break with your cousin Larry. But I love spending time with you much more, you're my best friend, I love you." she hugged and kissed.

"I love you too Katrina, you're my best friend in the whole world ever." I hugged and kissed back. So now that our spring break is over, we can go back to to our normal routine. Once again, Katrina and I teach kids our lectures, play with Grover, cool off in the pond, report Sesame Street News, and sing Sesame songs together. Katrina and I are great best friends and we'll always still be close to each other.