

## THE FROGS

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On the shores of Lake Aragon there rose a mighty city. The humans who inhabited the city of Aragonitus were prosperous and happy, until the day that the Mist Monster arrived. After that day, whenever the mist rose from the lake, cries of fear echoed through deserted streets and as the mist receded, the mourning humans would painfully collect the debris left by the Monster, the dismembered corpses of their kind who had fallen victim to the mist.

The Frog Kingdom that shared this once peaceful valley with their human counterparts also wept, for they loved the humans very much. Although the Monster did not threaten the Frogdom, the frogs resolved to eliminate this dreadful scourge of humanity. Indeed, they had their means, for the powerful Frog Prince Grughth was experienced in the magic necessary to combat the Mist Monster. This magic, in order to be fully operative, needed only the resolve of the Frogdom and the bravery of the Frog Prince. The historic Glen by the Valley of the Stream without Beginning contributed a locale for the Frog consensus. There, one night, as frogs are wont to do, they met and orgied in a frenzy that left half their numbers dead and half of the remaining numbers fertilized. This assemblage also marked the frog consensus and formed the imperative that sent Frog Prince Grughth to meet the Mist Monster. The next misty night, Grughth hopped into the city without fear, he knew that he was to succeed. The ensuing battle would be minor for a frog with such magic. The Mist Monster, although renown for terrorizing humans, was no match for a determined Frog Prince with the consensual Magic of Frogdom as his driving force.

It was not known by frog or by human whether the Frog Prince died before or after he had dispelled the Mist Monster. But at least one human has the distasteful memory of fearfully stepping out into the mist that fateful night and stepping onto a slimy something on its way to (or from) destiny. It is also known, by all humans, that the Mist Monster never again appeared in the city by Lake Aragon. As time so cleverly does, time passed and humankind completely forgot about the horror of the Mist Monster. They never credited the deceased Frog Prince with their salvation, for indeed, they never knew of the fateful relationship between magic frogs and misty monsters. Frogs carry this burden well; they recognize their unrequited love for humanity, and carry their devotion without reward, without recognition, and without regret. Humans, however, the forgetful lot that they are, claim never to have heard of Mist Monsters and the associated horrors they entail. Humans, arrogant as they are, honor Frog Princes only in mythology, ungraciously suggesting that the Prince of Frogs would turn human when he was kissed by a Princess.

That humans can be so scourged and yet so cleansed of their tragic memories amazes frogs even of this Age. Indeed, even Mist Monsters find the fact that

humans have totally forgotten their existence, much less the terrible price they had extracted from humankind. Without knowledge of the unwitting death of the Frog Prince at the hands (or rather the feet) of his allies, Mist Monsters lacked the audacity to return to the city. Being creatures of the mist, they now content themselves dwelling in forgotten memories, disremembering our thoughts, as they, at times passed, had dismembered our bodies.

And only true believers of the Arcane Story will not forget the consequences of stepping on slimy things on misty nights.