

The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County

by Mark Twain

Smiley ketched a frog one day, and took him home, and said he cal'lated to educate him; and so he never done nothing for three months but set in his back yard and learn that frog to jump. Smiley said all a frog wanted was education, and he could do 'most anything and I believe him. When it come to fair and square jumping on a dead level, he could get over more ground at one straddle than any animal of his breed you ever see. Dan'l Webster was the name of the frog. Smiley would ante up money on him as long as he had a red.

Well, Smiley kep' the beast in a little lattice box, and he used to fetch him downtown sometimes and lay for a bet. One day a feller—a stranger in the camp, he was—come acrost him with his box, and says: "What might be that you've got in the box?"

And Smiley says, sorter indifferent-like, "It might be a parrot, or it might be a canary, maybe, but it ain't—it's only just a frog. I'll risk forty dollars that he can outjump any frog in Calaveras County."

And the feller studied a minute, and then says, kinder sad like, "Well, I'm only a stranger here, and I ain't got no frog; but if I had a frog, I'd bet you."

And then Smiley says, "That's all right, if you'll hold my box a minute, I'll go and get you a frog." And so the feller took the box, and put up his forty dollars along with Smiley's, and set down to wait.

So he set there a good while thinking and thinking to his-self, and then he got the frog out and prized his mouth open and took a teaspoon and filled him full of quail shot—filled him pretty near up to his chin—and set him on the floor.

Smiley he went to the swamp and slopped around in the mud for a long time, and finally he ketched a frog, and fetched him in, and give him to this feller, and says: "Now, if you're ready, set him alongside of Dan'l." Then he says, "One—two—three—git!" and him and the feller touched up the frogs from behind, and the new frog hopped off lively, but Dan'l give a heave. He couldn't budge; he was planted as solid as a church.

Smiley was a good deal surprised, and he was disgusted too, but he didn't have no idea what the matter was, of course.

The feller took the money and started away. Smiley he stood looking down at Dan'l a long time, and at last says, "I wonder if there ain't something the matter with him—he 'pears to look mighty baggy, somehow." And he

ketched Dan'l up by the nap of the neck, and hefted him, and says, "Why blame my cats if he don't weigh five pounds!" and turned him upside down and he belched out a double handful of shot. And then he see how it was, and he was the maddest man—he set the frog down and took out after that feller, but he never ketched him.



Exaggeration in Tall Tales

Exaggeration in a story is where a detail or action is increased or made larger. In tall tales, details and actions will be so exaggerated that they become impossible. A tall tale uses exaggeration to add emphasis or make the story more entertaining. Find three examples of exaggeration in this story.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____