

THE FOREST FAMILY

A Tale of Acceptance

What you are about to read was originally written in March, 1975. Our youngest child, Frances, was nine years old. The five older children were no longer at home and she was lonely. As is true for many youngsters her age, she was seeking her own individual identity—something most of us can probably recall experiencing as we look back on those early years.

Like any parents, we wanted her to realize how significant and wonderful she really was. To open her eyes so she could begin to see that she was made exactly right for the future God had prepared for her, the story (with a little updating) on the following pages was composed and presented to her with the notation:

“Written especially for Frances”

As time went by, we sensed this personal gift had been helpful, but only recently did its total significance become clear. Some might say it happened by chance. I believe otherwise.

I was preparing some material about the importance of accepting ourselves and accepting others. During my search, I remembered this old tale. When I called and asked our daughter if she would object to its use, she was not only willing but quite excited! Now grown with children of her own, she was eager to share the experience with others so they, too, might see what a gift God has given all of us through each of us.

We pray it will be meaningful to each of you—and perhaps to your children, grandchildren or other loved ones. If the words resonate with you, please free to pass them on.

From Grandpa (And Frances) With Love

THE FOREST FAMILY

Written especially for Frances

God made the Forest Family—including these four:

Brother Rabbit and Brother Squirrel;
Sister Duck and Sister Trout.

To the Rabbit, He gave:

Fur for _____

Crooked back legs for _____

Large ears for _____

Big teeth for _____

Button tail for _____

To the Squirrel, He gave:

Fur for _____

Strong claws for _____

Paunchy cheeks for _____

A big bushy tail for _____

Both the Rabbit and the Squirrel lived on the land—but only one could climb and live in the trees.

To the Duck, He gave:

Oily feathers for _____

Webbed feet for _____

A broad bill for _____

Lungs for _____

To the Trout, He gave:

Fins for _____

A tail for _____

Gills for _____

He made them just like He wanted them so they could be happy and safe and live well where they were to live.

But they were unhappy!

One day Brother Rabbit looked at himself in the mirror of the pond and said, *“I have big, funny ears and a little button tail, and my back legs are crooked. I wish I had a big, bushy tail and tiny little ears.”*

Brother Squirrel said, *“My tail is embarrassing. Why didn’t He make me like that beautiful small-tailed rabbit, and why do I have to live up here in the tree all the time? It’s not fair!”*

But ---

Sister Trout was complaining, too. She said to herself, *“Look up there at that Lucky Ducky. She gets to go on both land and here in the water. Why couldn’t He have made me like that? If I were a Duck, then I would be happy.”*

Suddenly--- at exactly the same time --- all four of the creatures had the same thought: *“I will make myself into what I want to be!”*

So Brother Rabbit found an old evergreen branch and tied it on his tail, and then he took some vines and tied his ears down close to his head.

The Squirrel was busy rolling his tail into a knot, but it was still too big. So finally he got a giant sunflower and put it on the knot, hoping no one would notice. Do you think they did? Then he put two big corn tassels on his ears. He thought he looked elegant. Really, he looked silly!

Sister Duck and Sister Trout decided they couldn’t look like each other, so they decided they would act like the other one. Lucky Ducky swam straight down into the pond, which was fine for the first minute or two, until she got caught in the weeds. Sister Trout swam as fast as she could toward the surface and flopped out on the bank to walk around on land like the Duck had done.

What do you think happened?

Both began to gasp. The Duck needed air; the Trout needed water to live. The Trout flipped and flopped and jumped and wiggled, but she couldn't get back to the water. The air was suffocating her. Gradually, she jerked less and less.

Meanwhile, the Duck who was stuck in the weeds pulled and tugged, trying to get loose. Her duck bill got redder and redder as she went longer and longer without air.

Brother Rabbit and Brother Squirrel heard all the thrashing and gasping and stood by the pond watching to see what would happen.

What do you think happened?

This is what happened. At the very last minute, just when Sister Duck thought she couldn't last a single second longer underwater, her feet jerked loose and she bobbed up to the surface with a big

WHOOSH !

She sprayed water all around the pond. So much water, in fact, that a whole wave washed under Sister Trout and carried her back into the pond. Sister Duck and Sister Trout lay quietly, thankful they were back where they belonged.

Brother Rabbit and Brother Squirrel looked down at themselves in the mirror of the water and then looked at one another and began to laugh, "*How silly we look!*" And they immediately took off the sunflower, corn tassels, and evergreen branches.

When they were finished, the Forest Family looked at each other, and then up toward Heaven, and exclaimed,

*"Thank you God for loving us and making us each special—
just right for the wonderful life You have planned for us."*

Copyright © 2011, 2015 Marvin J. Martin

If you find the information beneficial, and you want to pass it on to others, permission is given to reproduce this material, provided the copies are complete, unaltered and unabridged and circulated free of charge.