

LESSON OF THE LILY

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FADE IN:

**EXT. MARSHY FOREST - DAY**

The sun shines brightly through the branches of weeping willows and oaks. Ferns dot the ground, leading to a still pond. Numerous lily pads drift on the water's surface.

MEELYN, a 10 year-old forest sprite with a sprig on top of his head, chases a dragonfly through the ferns.

CALLUM (O.S.)

Hey, are you listening to me?

CALLUM, six years Meelyn's senior with a lily pad sprouting from his hair, steps up beside his junior and shoos away the insect.

MEELYN

Aw, you scared him away!  
(under his breath)  
You meanie.

CALLUM

It's our job to help the creatures,  
not bug them.

MEELYN

(snorts)  
Bug! Get it?

Callum shoots Meelyn a stern look and the younger sprite deflates, looking ashamed. Callum's expression softens as he pats his pupil's shoulder.

CALLUM

I've got some awesome stuff to  
teach you today. We can play when  
the work is done, okay?

Lifting his head back up, Meelyn gives his mentor a firm nod.

As Callum lectures, Meelyn's eyes dart between the lily pad on top of his teacher's head and those floating in the pond.

Meelyn pokes the sprig on his own head, gaze plastered on the blossom drifting on the water.

CALLUM (CONT'D)

Alright, bud. I've got to help the  
crows sort through their  
collection. Why don't you try  
helping the toads here?

Meelyn gives Callum a nod, and his mentor flies off.

**EXT. POND - BANK - CONTINUOUS**

The young sprite promptly rushes over to the pond bank. He desperately reaches his arms out toward the lily pad.

LITTLE TOAD/JADE (O.S.)

Ribbit!

A LITTLE TOAD hops over, resting beside Meelyn.

MEELYN

Ooh! Hi! What's your name? I'm Meelyn.

LITTLE TOAD/JADE

Rrribbit.

MEELYN

Jade? Well, hi Jade!

Still reaching for the lily pad, the sprite leans further and further in, now standing on his tip-toes.

MEELYN (CONT'D)

Ooh, I wish I were as tall as Callum!

(to Jade)

You're even smaller than me. Have you ever had trouble reaching something?

JADE

Croak!

Jade bounds past Meelyn and splashes into the pond. Caught off guard, the sprite loses his balance.

MEELYN

Woah woah woah!

**EXT. POND - UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS**

SPLOOSH! Meelyn plunges into the pond. He kicks and thrashes, some weeds tangling around his ankle.

Jade swims past the struggling sprite in the direction of the lily pad. Gurgling, Meelyn reaches after him, but this cry for help goes unseen.

Running out of air, the sprite digs his fingers into the bank and heaves himself out of the water.

**EXT. POND - BANK - CONTINUOUS**

Meelyn slumps over, a soggy mess. One foot remains underwater, weeds still tangled around it.

Catching his breath, Meelyn glances back to the lily pad. What's this? Jade proudly sits on a rock at the center of the pond, the very same lily pad resting on his head.

MEELYN

(huffs)

You know I wanted that! It's mine!

Meelyn grabs at some reeds growing on the pond shore, crafting a fishing rod. He casts out the line, but he misses.

JADE

Croak-croak-croak!

MEELYN

Stop laughing at me!

Meelyn begrudgingly reels it back, but the line goes tense. He jerks it. SNAP! The line breaks, smacking him in the face.

MEELYN (CONT'D)

Gah! Oww!

Angry tears well in Meelyn's eyes. He repairs the rod and casts the line out again.

Ever so carefully, he maneuvers the hook underneath the lily pad...YANK! He reels it in and plops it on his head.

MEELYN (CONT'D)

I wonder if Callum will like it?

Jade squeaks violently at Meelyn. The water BUBBLES beneath the toad. The "rock" he squats on rises out of the water -- revealing the MOTHER TOAD!

MOTHER TOAD/PAMELA

Ribbit!

Meelyn lets out a panicked YELP, dropping his fishing rod into the pond.

MEELYN

Are you his mama? I-I had no idea, ma'am!

She takes a step toward Meelyn, squishing a lily in her path.

MEELYN (CONT'D)

Ah, what's your name? I'm Meelyn!

MOTHER TOAD/PAMELA

Croak!

MEELYN

Pamela! What a p-pretty name!

As he talks with her, Meelyn desperately kicks at the weeds around his ankle.

MEELYN (CONT'D)

Um, is it at all possible to reach some sort of agreement? What I have in mind is, I get to keep my lily and you get to keep your distance!

Pamela opens her mouth, ready to shoot her tongue out.

MEELYN (CONT'D)

Wait! I'm just a kid!

Meelyn braces for impact when he feels the weeds snap. Simultaneously, Pamela trips!

Her tongue shoots out, missing her intended target. She falls inches away from Meelyn. He scrambles backwards.

MEELYN

Hah! Not so scary now!

Meelyn tips the lily pad forward like a fedora in a cocky gesture of victory before hurrying away.

Jade hops down from his mother's head and pursues Meelyn into the ferns.

**EXT. MARSHY FOREST - DAY**

Deeper in the forest, Callum waves to a crow as he flies down from its nest in a winding oak.

CALLUM

It was my pleasure, Miss Celica!  
Just give me a caww if you need help in the future!

Callum's smile becomes a look of confusion when he notices Meelyn, dripping wet, below him. He looks even more puzzled when he spots a toad trailing behind his pupil.

CALLUM (CONT'D)  
Hey, bud! Up here!

Meelyn gazes up at his mentor.

MEELYN  
Oh!  
(he pats the lily pad)  
Look! Look!

CALLUM  
I see! Did you get swimming lessons  
from your pal there?

He points at Jade. Meelyn's eyes are wide as saucers as he whirls around.

MEELYN  
You?!

JADE  
Rrp!

Exposed, Jade leaps at the lily pad. Meelyn clutches it to his head and ducks in the nick of time. Recovering, he takes the flower and tosses it to Callum like a frisbee.

MEELYN  
Catch!

CALLUM  
(he catches the lily pad)  
Oh! You fellas were playing a game,  
is that it?

Meelyn starts running, beckoning Callum to toss the flower back to him. Jade is hot on the young sprite's heels, croaking ferociously.

CALLUM (CONT'D)  
Oh, don't leave out your new  
friend!

Before Meelyn can protest, Callum sends the lily pad twirling toward Jade. The toad hops up, ready to catch, when Meelyn dives in front of him and steals it.

CALLUM (CONT'D)  
(sternly)  
Meelyn!

The young sprite doubles back, running toward the pond. He clutches the lily pad against his chest defensively.

MEELYN

(voice wavering)

I wanna be grown up! This is mine!

Callum flies down to Jade, who hops into his outstretched hands. The two of them chase after Meelyn.

CALLUM

(to Jade)

I'm sorry, little guy. My bud's still learning.

JADE

Crrroak.

CALLUM

And my sincerest apologies to your mother, as well.

**EXT. POND - BANK - DAY**

The tall reeds of the pond are just ahead of Meelyn now. He dashes toward the bank when he bumps into something blocking his path - Pamela!

PAMELA

Ribbit! Ribbit!

Callum arrives moments later, still carrying Jade.

JADE

Ribbit!

The little toad hops onto his mother's back. The mother and son glare down at Meelyn, whose face is painted with guilt. The young sprite still clutches the lily pad tightly.

Callum steps up behind his pupil and places a hand on his shoulder.

CALLUM

(gently)

Come on, bud. Please give it to them.

MEELYN

(crying)

But-- But-- I need it! I need to be grown up!

CALLUM

That flower won't make you grown  
up. Your actions will.

Meelyn snuffles. He looks at the lily pad, then his mentor, who gives him an encouraging nod.

The young sprite sighs and returns the gesture. He flutters up to Jade's height and gently places the flower on the little toad's head.

MEELYN

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have tried  
to take it. Can you forgive me?

Jade glances down at his mother, who returns a thoughtful look. He nods.

JADE

Crrroak.

With that, the mother and son turn and head back into the pond. Callum pats Meelyn's head.

CALLUM

You did great, bud! I couldn't be  
more proud.

He reaches into his pocket and procures a marigold.

CALLUM (CONT'D)

The crows gave this to me earlier.  
I think you deserve it.

Callum hands the flower to Meelyn. Admiring the golden petals, the young sprite wipes tears from his eyes.

MEELYN

My own flower... Thank you.

FADE TO BLACK