

# The Frog

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When Jesus and Magdalene began to cross the sunflower field they met a group of boys, squatting before a rocky outcrop. Covered with lichen and moss, the rock gave off a greenish hue that contrasted with the garnet sweater of one of the boys. Magdalene guessed they were between ten and fourteen years old.

“Look, these country kids can explore nature at their will. City kids know nothing of this fun and games in the open air,” she said tenderly.

Jesus said nothing, but left the path to go to them.

Eager to establish contact with healthy youngsters who didn't need Playstations to have fun, Magdalene followed him. She could now tell that this was lively play, because she could hear laughter. As she approached, the guffaws increased. At that instant Magdalene wanted to be a child again, to join this group and twirl in the pine needles, to climb trees and explore caves.

Finally they reached the jokers, who, engrossed in their play, didn't notice their arrival. Magdalene then peered over their heads and saw the reason for their hilarity: The adolescents had caught a frog and had placed a lit cigarette in its mouth, hoping that the creature would burst like a balloon. After stealing eggs from birds' nests and catching bees in a bucket, they were now amusing themselves with a frog. As the frog had puffed up in defense—not because of the smoke—the boys were now convinced the creature was going to burst at any moment. And if it didn't burst from the smoke, it would burst under a hail of stones.

Magdalene got ready to give the boy closest to her a couple of slaps when Jesus placed a hand on her shoulder. “Don't do that.” Her arm didn't even lift and her muscles relaxed.

At this moment the adolescents noted their presence and disbanded,

fleeing through the sunflower field. They laughed again, as amused now as they were before they had been caught. The eldest, believing he was a safe distance away, turned and made an obscene gesture at them with his middle finger. "Screw you!"

When Magdalene looked back to see where the frog was, all she found was the extinguished cigarette. It has vanished in a puff of smoke. The mixed aroma of tobacco and moss made her nauseous. Seeing her distress, Jesus embraced her. "Forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Then, some sunflowers began to move towards the east.

