

The Prince of the Pond

Recommended for Grades 3-6

Book Summary: The Prince of the Pond

Jade (a female frog) comes across an unusual frog who calls himself Pin (De Fawg Pin) and who can't seem to do any of the proper frog things. She befriends him and, day by day, helps him to learn how to be a proper frog. While Jade teaches him, Pin continually surprises her by showing more bravery than is right for a frog and choosing to have their tadpoles in a well rather than a pond. When the tadpoles are born, most of them are moved to the pond so that fifty tadpoles can live happily in the well until they are big enough for the pond. Pin dotes on them, feeding them and taking a far bigger part in their lives than any other frog normally would. When the froglets move to the pond only one, named Jimmy, stays behind with Pin and Jade. Jimmy is captured by an old hag who loves to cook frogs into a stew.

[SPOILER]

To save Jimmy, Pin calls on his forty-nine other froglets who turn out to have stayed behind in the pond with their parents. He attacks the hag while Jade and the froglets save Jimmy. When Jimmy is safe, they return to their well to find a princess there. She picks up Jimmy and starts to kiss him until Pin knocks Jimmy away so the princess kisses him instead and Pin turns into a human prince. Jade and her froglets don't understand where Pin went and they mourn his loss together.

This is the first book in a series.

Author Biography: Donna Jo Napoli

Donna Jo Napoli was born February 28, 1948 in Miami, Florida. She became an avid reader while growing up, even though there were rarely books in the house. She went to Harvard, receiving her Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics and her Master's in Romance Languages. In 1987, she became a professor of linguistics at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania in addition to serving as a chair of the college's linguistics department. A year later, she published her first book, *The Hero of Barletta*.

She has written a number of fairy tale retellings for children and teens. Her books have also been translated into multiple languages and received numerous awards. She has dual citizenship in the United States and Italy. She is married to a professor of Health Law and they have five children. They currently live outside Philadelphia.



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Discussion Questions: The Prince of the Pond

1. This book is a retelling of “The Frog Prince” folktale. Compare this story with the traditional tale. How is this story different? Which elements of the Frog Prince story did the author have to leave in for the reader to recognize this as a retelling?
2. When the story begins, the first person point of view is ambiguous until it’s revealed to be a female frog. Did you find this point of view effective? Why or why not? What elements of the story are conveyed to the reader that would not be in the story if the frog prince or the witch had told the story?
3. How does Pin not act like a typical frog? Why do you think Jade likes him?
4. Pin jumped on the snake to save Jade from being eaten. Why was this so unusual for a frog to do? What would you have done if you were Pin?
5. At the beginning of the story, Pin lamented being a frog. As time passes, he comes to enjoy being with Jade and being a frog. What inspired this change? Do you think he would be happy as a frog forever? Why or why not?
6. Jade tells Pin, “Sometimes you seem to know nothing and other times you know everything.” What are some instances of Pin knowing nothing as a frog? What are some instances of him knowing everything?
7. What are some of the ways Pin and Jade raise their tadpoles that normal frogs don’t? How are these ways like how human parents raise their children?
8. If Pin is becoming more froglike, is Jade becoming more humanlike? Why or why not?
9. Although the forty-nine other froglets seem to go their own ways in the pond, they come back when Pin calls them to help him save Jimmy. Why do you think the froglets stayed near their parents? Is this normal frog behavior? Why or why not?
10. Why did Pin jump up into the princess’ hands and knock Jimmy out of the way when the princess tried to kiss Jimmy? What do you think would have happened if the princess had kissed Jimmy instead?
11. When Pin is turned back into a human, Jimmy is the only one who understands what happened. How would Jimmy know? What do you think will happen to Jade and her family now that Pin is a human?



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