

scary tales.



holiday hippo
by chris read

1 It was a dark and stormy night. Poor Frank was riding his bicycle in the rain. Going home after his football practice. And to make things worse, his high school football team lost 1,307-0. It seems like getting the Kansas City Chiefs to play the high school football team wasn't such a good idea after all. And to make things worse, every player on the team was under 6 foot tall.

But it wasn't his fault. He wished every day to be a tall lad. So it was no wonder that when a tall, weird guy with a fedora hat and a long beard told him he could make himself taller by just drinking his elixir that he took the chance and drank it all up.

2 It was December 22. Frank slammed the front door shut. He stormed up into his room and turned his computer on. Perhaps listening to some novelty Christmas songs would cheer him up. So he put on the classic song "I Want a Hippopotamus For Christmas." It did the trick.

The dinner was served. A big old ham with stuffing and mashed potatoes and green bean casserole and macaroni and cheese. Frank went downstairs and ate the entire thing. And then had to go to the bathroom.

When Frank was sitting there, he began to poop. And poop he did. His poop was the biggest poop he had ever pooped. He got a little bit worried. He worried even more when he discovered the gray rash growing on his leg.

3 "He's been eating like crazy! And he has this gray rash on his leg," Frank's mom said. Frank rolled up his pants and the doctor looked at it.

"It's as hard as a rock!" the doctor said.

"What is it?" asked Frank.

"Honestly? I've never seen anything like it before in my life," the doctor answered.

"Well, that didn't help," Mom said in the doctor parking lot. Frank began walking on all fours. "Why are you doing that?" Mom asked.

Frank grunted at her. Worried, Mom took Frank to the hospital.

4 It was December 23. Frank was laying in the hospital bed. His mom and dad were there with him. By now, all Frank could speak was in grunts. He could never tell his parents that he drank that elixir from that tall stranger a few days ago. Not that he wanted to, anyway.

“At first glance, I would say that there was something wrong with his brain, wanting to walk on all fours like a dog. But it’s that gray rash that is growing on his legs that is worrying me a lot,” the doctor started.

“What’s wrong with my son?!” Frank’s mom asked.

“We have no clue,” the doctor replied.

Suddenly, Frank roared a big, giant roar that startled all three of them. His rash suddenly grew to his head and before they knew it, they all stared at the hospital bed in amazement.

5 “Oh my god! Frank is...is...a giant monster!” Frank’s mom yelled.

“Actually, it looks *not* like a monster, but rather a hippopotamus,” the doctor corrected.

“My son! He’s turned into a hippo!” Dad yelled. “What did you DO to him?!”

“We didn’t do anything, we swear! You saw it! He just turned into a hippopotamus for some reason!” the doctor lamented.

“But *why*?!” asked Mom.

“Well, there is only one thing in the entire world that can change a man into a different species. It is quite the rarest rarity. But it would have to be a quintillion-to-one shot that he even ran into it to begin with. It’s called... hippotanium,” the doctor explained.

“Hippotanium?” asked Mom and dad.

“That has to be the only answer. But how, and why, in this peaceful city, could such a rare thing exist?” asked the doctor.

Then the four o’clock news started. “We’ve just received reports of a man being arrested with a large quantity of hippotanium,” the newscast said as they showed the picture of the tall stranger. Frank grunted and snarled a lot. Then they knew.

6 “Is there a cure, something to reverse its effect?” asked Dad.

“Well, there is *one* thing, but it hasn’t been tested yet. It’d have to get here from Brazil though. It’s called unhippotanium,” the doctor explained.

“Please! I don’t want a hippopotamus any more!” Mom said.

“OK, I’ll get right on it,” the doctor said.

The doctor cleared Frank so he could be home for December 25.

Honestly, Frank didn’t care since he was a hippopotamus. There was one problem though. Since Frank was a hippopotamus he could no longer fit through the front door. And unfortunately, it snowed last night. Mom and dad saved the Christmas presents they got him for when the unhippotanium came.

Dad looked at his son the hippopotamus standing in the snow shivering. He got an idea.

7 “Oh man! Where *is* that axe?” Dad was fumbling around in the garage.

“Aha!” Dad found it. He chopped the front door of the house down. Then he chopped a little bit more room so Frank could get in. And as Frank lumbered into the house, a look of relief sprang on him. And then a look of shock.

It was Christmas morning. And amidst the chaos, he forgot that his in-laws were flying in from Newark. A car drove up to the house. Mom’s parents came out. They looked at the extra room in the hole Dad carved out to put Frank in the house. They came up to the house and rang the doorbell. Frank’s dad answered it.

“Oh my goodness! I totally forgot!” Frank’s dad said.

“Forget? How could you possibly *forget* your wife’s parents were coming?!” asked Ruth.

“Well, you see, Frank turned into a hippopotamus,” Dad said.

Frank’s dad’s in-laws were convinced he had turned into a nutcase so they were going to use the phone to call the loony bin. But as they entered, they found a hippopotamus, on the sofa, gnawing at the end table.

“Frank, don’t eat the end table!” Mom said. And then she ran into the room. “Mom! Dad! What are...oh my god!”

8 I'll spare you the craziness that ensued after that since I only have one page left.

Months had flew by. Then Frank's parents got the phone call they had been waiting for: The unhippotanium had come in. So they loaded Frank into the back of the pickup and sped to the hospital. They got there. The doctor had the needle ready. Steady, and just a little poke. And the unhippotanium had been administered. They waited. Nothing happened.

"I told you it hadn't been tested," the doctor said. It was a few nanoseconds after the doctor said that that the most amazing thing happened.

9 "I guess 'Here lies Frank Stephenson, 2009-2024' is okay," Mom told the engraver.

"I got the obituary typed up," Dad said with a tear in his eye.

But, just as he was about to read it, Frank, no longer a hippopotamus but a human boy, knocked the front door down.

"Frank?! You're...alive!" Mom said. She rushed towards him, wanting to give him a big hug, but she stopped short because Frank shot her. And then Frank shot his dad.

Frank had a crazed look in his eyes. Saying nothing, he walked over to the end table, bite marks and all, and noticed the obituary laying on it. He picked it up and read it. Then Frank got a pen, crossed out his name, and wrote in 'Bill and Judy,' the names of his parents.

Then he came to his senses. He noticed mom and dad dead on the floor.

"Mom! Dad! What happened?!" Frank said. He held up his arm. He got a look of horror when he had discovered he was holding a recently-fired pistol.

"I...I shot them?! But I can't go to prison!" Frank whined.

The cops were called. They busted the door down. Inside they found Bill and Judy dead from a gunshot wound. Then, next to them, laid Frank, also dead from a gunshot wound.

The End.