

Ed Nelson's Newsletter

Home of the Richard Jackson Saga, Ever and Always, and the upcoming Cast in Time series.

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NEW RELEASE DECEMBER 1st

James Fletcher, now the Count of Cornwall is facing new adversaries in the Franks. They try to assassinate him and his family precipitating a full out war. In the meantime, advancements are made in steam engines, cannons, ships, and electricity.

Continue on with this wild ride through the eighth century.

Jim is getting an Irish Wolfhound puppy in Book 5. What should I name him? Email Suggestions.

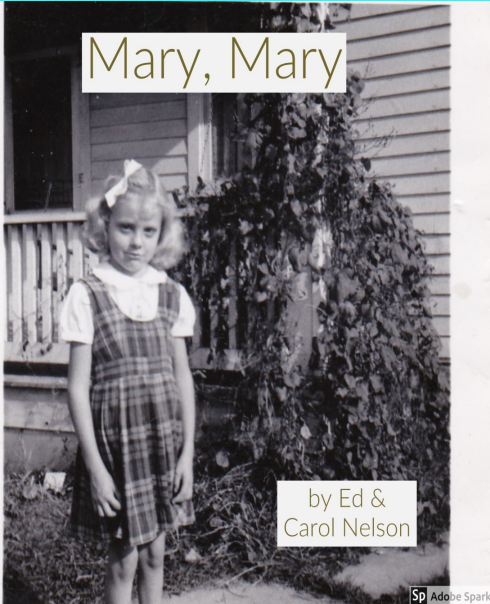
Book 1: The Beginning

Bank robbery, bull riding in the rodeo, a western movie, rustlers, among other events, occur as young Rick is on a cross-country trip, hitchhiking from a small Ohio town to California. This alternate history is of what should have been rather than what has been.



[See on Amazon](#)

Recommended Reading



Little known is that this is my wife's first day of school picture taken in 1950.

Mary Mary is a series of short stories about Rick Jackson's sister. Mary is a precocious child who looks at life a little differently. This is a read that will bring a smile to your face and joy to your heart. Also a headache if you think about it too much!

Mary, Mary on Amazon

This month's short story is titled "Mary Goes to the Fair."

Some background on Mary. She is Rick Jackson's little sister.

She comes from a very rich family and as such has a bodyguard, Sally, and a driver, Jim.

Mary can be violent, not tantrums, physical violent. She was taught this after a kidnap attempt.

That is another story.

Mary Goes to the Fair

On Monday Mrs. King told us we would be taking a field trip on Friday. We would be going to the Calaveras County fair. That is where they hold a famous frog jumping contest. If we wanted to we could enter a frog in the contest. We could rent one there or bring our own.

If we brought our own we had to show that he couldn't get out and hop around the bus. For some reason, she looked directly at me and Patty when she said that.

At the dinner table, I told everyone about the contest. My brother Ricky was there, he had just flown in from England. He told me he would help me capture one tomorrow after school. We agreed it would be an adventure for us so we would dress up.

The next day Ricky was waiting for me as soon as I got home. He was wearing Dad's safari jacket and pith helmet. Carrying a large butterfly net to catch the frog with and a bait bucket to hold them, he looked a little silly but I didn't say anything. I changed into my Annie Oakley outfit and collected my air rifle from its hiding place.

We had read about Mark Twain and his story so I knew it was a western. I was dressed for the part. I didn't kid Ricky as I didn't want to embarrass him.

We went down to the fishing pond. We went past the old oak tree where the ducks had been hanging but they were gone. Ricky told me they were probably a bear's lunch. I gave my air rifle another pump.

We could see frogs in the fishing pond but they were too far out, so Ricky couldn't use his net. We kept going upstream from there. Ricky said he knew of a smaller pond that would be perfect. I kept watching out for the bears after I pumped up my air rifle once more.

When we got to the pond it had bullfrogs, all sorts of bullfrogs. It was easy for him to reach out with his net in front of the frogs and then I would fire into the water behind the frog. They would jump right into his net.

We captured four of them and took them home. They were huge. Ricky told me these were unusually large and that he wanted to check something out. Later he told me that there was a story about Mark Twain and Bret Harte never winning the

Calaveras frog jumping contest. For two years their entry would come in second. The third-year they showed up with a Goliath frog. The other bullfrogs were about eight inches long while their frog was over a foot long. When they tried to enter it the rules were changed that all the frogs had to be a particular shade of green. That was the only difference in the looks of the frogs.

Twain and Harte didn't give up they sent a mommy and daddy frog to a friend in Los Angeles to crossbreed them so they were the same color as the American frogs. On the way to Los Angeles, they were lost and never heard from again.

Crossbreed didn't sound good to me, if the mommy frog was cross she would never breed. I didn't understand it that well but it made sense. I knew about breeding because Mum had to explain it to me when two dogs got together in the backyard. That is how mummy and daddy made babies.

I'm not sure I ever want to make a baby. I told Mummy that but she said it could be fun. She also said I shouldn't worry about that until I was a lot older. I think she meant like eleven or so.

The two dogs were stuck together and Daddy had to throw a pan of water on them to get them apart. I hope Mummy and Daddy never got stuck as it would be embarrassing to throw a pan of water on them. It would get the bed wet and be a big mess.

Rick found a book with a toe note in it about Mark Twain and the frog jumping contest. The toe note led him to another book and he found out about their trying to crossbreed frogs. He showed me the toe note. There were a bunch of them. I told him that I thought we only had ten toes so why so many in the book.

He explained they were footnotes. That made even less sense as we only have two feet. There were so many notes they should be called caterpillar notes. They have a lot of feet.

The frogs we had were the same color as the American frogs but were larger. We took one outside and made it jump by hitting the ground behind it. It jumped over twenty-five feet. Ricky had checked and the record at the Calaveras fairgrounds was twenty-one feet. I couldn't wait. Mr. Twain would be thrilled.

I wanted to send him a letter but Ricky said the post office didn't deliver where he was. That must be far away.

Ricky drove us to a pet store where we bought a bunch of crickets for the frogs to eat.

Patty and I talked at school. She came home with me and we went out and captured a bunch of regular frogs using Ricky's net. A girl can never have too many frogs.

Friday morning Patty and I made sure to get to the bus early so we could grab the last seats. If we didn't some stinky boy would put a frog down our backs, we just knew it.

Mrs. King checked the bag I had my bullfrog in. It is a good thing she didn't check my backpack.

Ricky and I had talked about a name for the frog I was bringing. He jumped the furthest of any of them. Ricky suggested Kermit but I thought that was dumb. I named him Jeremiah. Ricky told me that was a neat name, and that after he won they would probably sing songs about him.

As we got on the bus I took wet paper bags out of my backpack and put them under seats. The paper would finish dissolving in a while. I also dropped a frog or two in lunch bags.

We were only half an hour down the road when the frogs got out of the bags. Frogs were jumping everywhere and girls and boys were screaming. They had to stop the bus and get everyone off. The bus driver had to collect all the frogs and let them jump free.

Mrs. King glared at Patty and I but she didn't have any evidence. I checked that fingerprints wouldn't stay on a frog's skin.

Miss Jones who was helping Mrs. King winked at us. She thought it funny. I hoped she still felt that way after she opened her lunch bag. When she did I found out that she could scream a lot louder than I thought she could. She didn't smile when she looked at Patty and me. I think we had better behave around her, at least until next week.

Upon arrival, we were taken to the frog jumping contest registration area. We could rent a frog there. Each of the rental frogs had a little band around its legs to show which one it was. They put a band around Jeremiah's leg. It almost didn't fit.

They had a judge there and he was looking in their rule book but finally said, "This frog is American green so we have to let him enter." I really wanted to send a letter

to Mr. Twain and Mr. Harte about how their plan was working. I told Mrs. King that I wished I could send them a letter. That was when she told me they had lived a long time ago and that they were dead.

That explained why the post office wouldn't deliver their mail. Patty and I giggled about that, revenge from the grave!

I had to get even with Ricky for not telling me. Bullfrogs in bed anyone?

When it came time to jump in the Rosie the Ribeter amateur frog jumping contest Jeremiah was the bullfrog, he jumped twenty-six feet a world record. He is a friend of mine.

I got a blue ribbon. People wanted to buy him from me but I planned to set him free. One nasty guy even talked about frog legs for dinner. That was one thing they didn't serve at the fairgrounds.