It was a typical group of adventures that set out into the murkiness and humidity near the local town one evening. You had a couple burly fighter types, classed for close quarters combat and able to clear a room with ease. The swift rogue, spotter of traps and dodger of fireballs. The token healer, who stood only three feet off the muddy ground but was the most nimble of the group.

Finally, there was the arcane spellcaster; the wizard. The only girl of the group, standing only two feet taller than the halfling cleric, Noa was ready to get her feet wet and earn her way through the world, doing good deeds and serving the common good. Although, she'd never intended to *literally* have her socks soaking in the muddy waters of Fetid Swamp, the land Noa and her party were currently traipsing through. Thankfully, the swamp didn't quite live up to its namesake, and the only challenges the environment caused was having to wring out muddy footwear and cloaks as they made their way through. Noa sighed and mussed her blonde hair with a swipe of a hand and mulling over the components she was still lacking for some of her basic spells. She thought she would've had time to gather some off before setting out, but the bullywugs were becoming a greater nuisance to the nearby town and had to be dealt with sooner rather than later. As such, Noa was left to fret about her lack of components as the party trekked through the swampy waters, constantly scanning for the amphibious targets.

Night fell and there were no signs of the bullywugs. The group lamented having to camp out in the swamp, but they'd only covered a small portion, and doubling back to town this late sounded even less appealing. They worked to set up camp, Noa secretly grateful they didn't encounter anything remotely dangerous yet. She'd've been quite the liability! The waning sunlight was more than enough for Noa to see, so she finished up her part in setting up camp, and informed the party that she was going to go out to gather some ingredients for her spells. The fighter wondered if she needed an escort, the kindly half-orc making the gesture, but she declined. She could take care of herself, no matter how fresh she was out of the academy! They agreed, but cautioned her to not wander off too far, in case the bullywugs decided to make off with the only wizard in the party. The group shared a laugh and Noa, smiling, set off out on her own.

To find what she needed, Noa needed to get deeper into the swamp, so she found herself knee-deep in the goopy water before long, her cloak a lost cause of filth at this point. She was still well within range of the camp at this point, the glow of the fire

## Never Split the Party

they'd managed a bright glimmer from behind. Noa figured she could track her progress by the reflection on the waters the fire light gave, and wouldn't go further if she lost track of it. With that in mind she began searching fervently for the watery plant life required for some of her most potent novice spells. She had some success immediately, and began filling a watertight satchel with the dripping foliage, having to uproot them from the much beneath the surface. Her eyes were focused in on spots underwater, having to move a little, stop, then move again. Noa kept up this repetitive task for some time, slowly easing away from the camp, too caught up in her searches to pay attention.

Noa lamented how out of shape she was after a while. Slogging through that water and having to tug her feet out of the sucking mud time and again was wearing her out. Not that she was fat – quite the opposite, being a petite thing – but physical activity wasn't high on the academy's priority list. Still, Noa pressed on, having found at least half of what she needed. She was still lacking some rarer plants, and the sun was still up a hair, so she pressed onward. If she could find those, she'd really be set for a while! Noa became engrossed in her task, subconsciously not settling for anything less but a fully-stocked inventory, and plodded straight ahead, the water up to her waist now. The wizard only came to a stop to catch her breath and take inventory, and to let the muddy waters settle around her to give her the most vision.

It wasn't until she had a rough time seeing underwater that Noa realized two things: The sun had fully set, and there was no more fire light dancing along the surface of the waters. The increasing ambiance of crickets chirping through the air added a serene peace to the Fetid Swamp, with other animal life teeming about her as well. Including bugs, Noa noticed, having to slap more than one mosquito off her cheek. She sighed and turned around, having to squint. The camp fire was barely visible, just a tiny dot in the darkness, and she blinked in surprised. The youthful adult hadn't realized she could push herself this far! Feeling proud, and deciding what she'd found would have to do. Noa made to go back to camp.

The first few minutes were typical of a humid swampy environment. The only sounds outside the croaks of frogs and chirping crickets were that of Noa sloshing through the swamp water. Things got a little suspicious for the wizard, however, when the croaking seemed to grow louder and more intense. Her pace slowed as she attuned her senses more to her surroundings than the fire light off in the distance. It wasn't multiple frogs croaking together to produce the echoing sound. This one sounded slower, elongated, and deeper. The cricket noises were drowned out altogether, or had they stopped? Noa stood up straight when a guttural croak sounded off, what sounded like a few feet behind her! She spun with a splash in the water and fired off a bit of prestidigitation to send a sparkling flare just overhead. The sparkling glow revealed a bulging pair of eyes floating just above the water. Then with a loud splash, something massive erupted from the swamp! Noa startled and the woman stumbled backwards as a large feral frog soared up and landed with a splat against shallow mud, some of which got on Noa. "Oh wow!" she gasped, thinking at first it was a bullywug ambush. Relief flooded her as the massive frog sat there innocently, croaking that croak that had made Noa uneasy just minutes before. The slimy creature seemed to stare at her, its mouth alone seemingly gigantic to the petite wizard. A nervous giggle escaped the wizard as she slowly stepped backwards to not startle it. Innocent as the animal life was, they could do some serious damage if they put their minds to it.

Especially if they saw someone as a threat! Or worse...

"...A meal," Noa gulped. As if on cue, the giant frog before her blinked its beady eyes and seemed to stare right at the wizard. "There there big guy, I'm not gonna hurt you. I'm not a big bug for you to eat, just a harmless little wizard out harvesting some plants for spells. That's all, see?" she said, showcasing it her satchel as if it would understand. Her face fell when the frog opened its mouth just a bit: Enough for a thick, nasty tongue to slip out and slather over its amphibious lips, its lustful hunger apparent when the belly growled and shook the very swamp waters. The giant frog took a waddling hop forward, splashing closer to Noa. "Oookay fine, no more Ms. Nice Wizard!" Noa stepped back and threw her hands up in a simple gesture. With a swift incantation of "magia apparatus missilium!!" and somatic action Noa conjured up three glowing darts of pure magical force and fired them directly at the looming amphibian. "Hah!" she exclaimed, euphoria flooding her and heart starting to pound as she'd never experienced real combat before. Any excitement that pent up drained instantly, however, with the magical darts seemingly bounced off the frog and fizzled into the water.

And the frog seemingly *glowered* in her direction. It definitely did not like that!

"Oh no..." That spell was her best stab at disabling the frog, and it hadn't so much as harmed a scale on its body! She tried once again, but flubbed the words. The frog

jumped closer, its wide, obviously-empty belly splashing up muck across Noa's face. She sputtered and had to clear her vision only to find the big frog within reach! She hobbled backwards in the swamp water and tried a third time, muddy fingers somehow able to pull off the proper movements and sending more darts at the frog. They again fizzled, and the hungry frog seemed to get even angrier at her continued feeble attempts to defend herself. Its tongue oozed out from its mouth and slurped across its lips once more. Noa grimaced at seeing gobs of goopy, viscous saliva pour from the bulbous tip of that tongue and drip into the swamp water. Knowing she only had one more shot, Noa focused right on that dripping tongue tip, and fired her spell one last time. The spell hit home and the frog made a croak of surprised, batting at its protruding tongue as if it was on fire. Noa, however, didn't pause to see the results of her spellcasting, and turned to flee as fast as her legs would carry her through the now knee-deep waters.

"Help! Guys, help! There's a reeeally big frog out here and it won't stop... *looking* at me!" Noa called out several times for the other, much more physically-capable members of her party, but to her dismay she realized she'd completely lost sight of the camp fire. Either the fire had gone out, or she'd gotten herself turned around in the confrontation with one of the swamp's largest creatures. Noa no longer heard croaking nor the loud splashes that occurred whenever the frog landed back in the water, and was hoping against hope that she was out of range of the hungry animal.

Those hopes were dashed when she heard something not unlike a *mlem* from behind, and her brain didn't register what it was until something thick and slimy punched her in the small of her back. She tumbled face-first into the swamp, immediately rousing out of it and coughing. She turned and saw, under the sparkling light of her cantrip, the thick pink frog tongue, now firmly attached to her back. "Damn!" Noa instinctively reached around and grappled the tongue, her hands too small to even grip around half of it. "Ew, gross!" The thick slimy drool oozed over her hands and glued them to the tongue, Noa's heart skipping a beat when she realized she made herself even more stuck. She looked up in time to see the giant frog, maw agape, the long tongue leading right into it. "Don't you dare!" she hollered, just as the frog indeed dared. It retracted the tongue, and the light woman was no match. Noa yelped when she was pulled right out of her boots, the now-barefoot wizard dragged backwards through the water with her legs kicking through the muck. "No no no!" Noa braced herself mentally, as she couldn't move her hands, and ended up splatting hard against the protruding fleshy gut

of the frog, with her head smacking against its slobber-soaked lips. "Urf, I'm not your food, stupid frog!"

The giant amphibian thought just that, however, and proceeded to retract its tongue up ward the last couple feet. "No, stop!" Noa cried, her shoulders strained as her stuck hands forced her arms to bend up backwards to filter into the maw with the tongue. Her breath was forced from her when her waist was hefted up out of the water, almost as if the tongue had a hook around her leather belt and was hauling her in! Her butt ended up sitting on the malleable belly of the frog a moment, arms restrained behind her, as the frog lips clamped shut around them. "Ew ew ewwww!" Noa lamented, feeling hot frog drool run down her arms with the tongue worming every which way in the mouth, tip still poking out and glued to her back. She kicked her legs and splashed water everywhere, heels thumping loudly against the thick scaly belly of the frog. The stomach seemingly went **grrrwwwwl** in retaliation, but Noa knew better: The frog was tasting and sampling her supple body and liked what it was sampling. "Don't eat me you big... dumb... frog!"

The wizard felt her bound hands pulled deeper-still into the cavernous frog mouth, lips pursed near her shoulders. She heard every *smck smk* of the lips as they worked around her and slowly pulled the rest of the tongue up. Noa lost her leverage and her seat as she was yanked up to where her back pressed against those frog lips, stale cold breaths washing over her. "Someoooone! Help meeee!" Noa cried, all dignity relinquished, the thick tongue straining against her back to try and get her inward. She turned her head just in time to see (and hear) that big frog mouth part wide open. Her eyes bulged at the sight, the quivering pink insides built upon millions of years of evolution to do what they were about to do that very moment: Devour her, whole and alive. "Oh gods!" Noa wailed when her back, no longer obstructed by frog lips, slipped beyond the threshold, the tongue's retraction complete.

"Let me go!" Noa squealed, her body sinking into the frog's slobbering mouth. Her butt crept past the lower lip and sank right on to the wide tongue inside, the tip finally detaching from her. Noa tried to thrust her body forward, her legs and now arms able to reach, but her leverage was too awkward. Her legs dangled out of the maw along with most of her chest and above, with the tongue repositioning itself around her midsection in several slow, slimy loops. The lips formed closed around her again, and suckled loudly against her. **Schlrrrrmp**! Noa's thin chest was pulled inward, leaving nothing but the wizard's arms, legs, and head sticking out around drool-laden lips. "Pplease stop! Gods, help me!"

Noa vainly grabbed through the air, trying to form some semblance of a spell. Her satchel, in the process of being slurped into the mouth, had been wrenched from her grasp and was floating a few feet away (which, as far as Noa was concerned, was miles away for all the good it did). She couldn't concentrate, though, with the massive tongue looping around her middle and squeezing against her abdomen. That combined with the volumes of slobber now pouring down her legs that she continued to try and kick, left the wizard with no means of concentration. Noa gritted her teeth, eyes wide trying to spot anyone or anything in the darkness, but there was no-one here but her and the frog. It widened its jaws again, long, oozing strands of drool sagging down from the roof of the mouth and drizzling the wizard. Noa's head smacked wetly against the lower frog lip, disorienting the wizard momentarily. The woman's limbs fell limp as they were dragged inward, flopping about and smacking wetly against the inner cheeks or the squirming tongue of the creature. The dizziness dissipated just as the entirety of Noa's body was encased in the mouth, the jaws hanging open for one last precious instant. "NO!" the wizard wailed, tears flowing down Noa's cheeks as the frog closed its giant maw around her whole form. "HIIIp!"

The giant frog had one simple thing on its mind: Devour the plump mound of meat encased in its jaws. It was a lively catch, do be sure, and it could feel her squirming and writhing about madly within its mouth. It couldn't help but take a moment gliding its tongue all over its catch, finding particular joy when the tongue was dragged across bare flesh of they prey's face. The protests and muffled cries within seemed to intensify whenever it did that, but the frog couldn't help but do it again and again. It looped its tongue around the petite prey's legs, rear, back, and chest, fully-trapping limbs against the body and reducing the constant motions within. The high-pitched noises only ceased when it planted the tip of its tongue over top its catch's face, and smeared frog drool all over it. The frog placed a webbed foot to its bulging stomach when it responded to that flavor with a hungry growl, and the urge to complete its meal overcame any such desire to sample the prey's tastes any longer.

Noa, world full to the brim with slimy slobber coating her body and a tongue constricting most of her, felt her form tugged backwards. The frog's lips parted slightly as it proceeded to eat her alive, with her back being pulled harshly into the squelching

gullet that she was blind to. Her eyes, used to the pitch-blackness of the sealed maw, had to adjust as the piddling remains of her cantrip flooded the innards. She saw the glistening pink cheek walls pulsate, and the tongue that bound her rapidly unravel now that she was seated into the back of the throat. When freed Noa vainly reached for the edge of the mouth, but was too far back to even reach half way forward. The frog seemed to murmur contently around her, the growl actually bubbling up from the belly beyond. The mouth, hanging open limply, sealed at that moment, and everyone was deaf to Noa's cries from that moment forward.

The frog closed its eyes, tilted its head back, and swallowed the young female wizard whole in one thick, slimy **GLOURK!** The balled-up bulge made the sagging stomach bloat out further with various curved outlines pressing against the skin. The terrified Noa wailed to herself as she quickly squeezed out of the throat and into the acid-saturated stomach, the noisy **slosh** overpowered by a loud hybrid of a croak and a belch. The guttural announcement of a successful meal made Noa cry out in despair, the belly walls sifting her about as gurgling enzymes played about along the floor. "No, gods, no!" Noa knew that not a soul knew where she was, including the adventuring party she'd ventured out with. Now she was however far away from them, slowly stewing away in a massive frog's churning stomach, with no means of escape.

The giant frog remained rooted for the spot, sitting contently with a full belly that sagged into the swamp waters some, with it shifting about in time to the desperate wizard's struggles. It guided a webbed foot over the belly again, this time patting it here and there, enjoying the feeling of being so full. It wasn't often such large prey wandered out into its territory like this, and the frog always savored these rare meals. The prey that was struggling about in its bowels (a feeling it was all-too-familiar with) wasn't the largest thing it had ever eaten, but it was certainly larger than what typically dwelled in Fetid Swamp. The frog lapped at its lips once more, and slowly began to wander, hopping from point to point.

Inside, Noa let out a hiccuping cry of terror whenever the stomach jerked suddenly in one direction. Her face, when not soaked with frog drool or stomach acid, was stained with tears as she was thrown about. Waves of the sticky fluids rocked back and forth over her, with more and more of the enzymes seeming to materialize out of nowhere as time wore on. Soon the wizard found herself wading in the itchy juices, with the fabric of her clothes starting to fray and come apart at the seams. Noa prayed to every god she knew, cursed the frog that ate her, and flailed with all her might, but not one thing was helping her get out of that frog stomach.

That was, she thought horridly, until its body digested her completely, and whatever was left deposited at the bottom of the swamp.

That thought made her freeze a moment, before the terrified wizard tried pushing and beating against the belly walls with what little strength she had left. Noa's pants and cloaked were rapidly fizzling away, but she ignored the gradual disrobing, with the itchy, stinging fluids now having free full access to her bare form. Half her effort was spent trying to stand up and out of the acids, only for her to slip and splash right into them, with more flooding the burbling gut every moment. The stomach continued to squeeze and toss Noa about, and before too long there was almost no space that was fluid-free in the increasingly-tightening stomach. Noa was forced to curl up on herself somewhat as the fluids flowed over her body, another muffled belch from above sapping more air from her.

She was forced to lay there among the goopy fluids, too worn out to move, as the pool slowly rose higher and higher, loud **glrrrn**s sounding out every now and then. It wouldn't be long before the roiling process of digestion overtook her completely. "H-help..."

\* \* \*

The others had no idea where Noa had ended up.

Noa's party had grown concerned when the wizard didn't return from her material component gathering within an hour's time. They'd gone out and searched for her, starting with the direction she had set off. It was so dark and the waters so deep, however, that they didn't have much luck finding their lost comrade. They didn't fear her slain, as the deadliest creatures they were aware of out here were the bullywugs themselves, and, while thieves, they were no murderers. The group returned to camp, fearful that Noa'd been taken captive by the thieves to be used as some form of ransom. They could do nothing at that point then rest, knowing that the light of day would vastly increase their odds of finding Noa, or at least getting a clue as to what happened to her.

Morning arrived swiftly, and the party broke camp and set out again in search of Noa. While their initial trajectory was sound, Noa had veered off a considerable distance form the straight shot she'd intended to take from camp. As the party had the assistance both of teamwork and daylight, they did no such thing, and did not come across the lost satchel or clothing that Noa lost prior to being devoured. As they slogged deeper and deeper into the mucks of the swamp, none of them knowing what sort of plants a wizard would need for their spells, their worries grew. Eventually, the party turned their efforts from Noa specifically to the bullywugs they'd been sent to root out in the first place. If they found those amphibious creatures, maybe they'd provide a clue as to the whereabouts of their wizard ally.

Although the remains of Noa's supplies and clothes were a lost cause, fate had other plans when it came to the frog itself! As the group ventured, they came across what they thought was a half-submerged boulder in the waist-deep waters of the swamp. Sitting 50 feet away from them, they saw on closer inspection that it was a living thing! There sat a massive frog, napping and looking as innocent and harmless as ever. Its bulging stomach occasionally expanded as a slow sleepy croak would emerge from it. The group are amused by coming across such a large creature, though it was obviously docile, and wasn't a bullywug, so the trio pressed onward without confrontation. The big frog, half-asleep from its night-time meal still stewing away in its belly, had no desire to try and snag a large breakfast. So the two entities left each other in peace, the party none the wiser that they'd just passed up what remained of Noa.

The powerful feral frog stomach didn't mess around. Over the course of the night the bloated thing gurgled and churned loudly, diligently working to digest the long-since-limp lump of meat down into mush and nutrients for the frog's biology to make good use of. Whatever slight bulges Noa had made to the frog's bulk had long-since vanished, and by morning it was back to normal completely. The frog only aroused from its deep slumber as a pressure began to build up around its backside. Digestion of the novice wizard was complete, and whatever she had left behind was of no use to the giant creature's body, and was filtering through its intestines, having left the stomach a while back.

The frog stirred some 30 minutes after the adventuring party had left it behind, uttering out a rumbling burp that made the waters before it quiver. It hobbled forward a lazy

step or two along the mud, webbed feet squishing into the muck and belly mushing down and pancaking into the water. The giant frog made its way along to a wider part of the swamp where it usually took care of business, where the waters flowed deep and any stench that could add to Fetid Swamp's reputation would largely be muted. The big frog hunched forward slightly, tipping its rear end up out of the water, exposing its anus to the humid climate above. The twitching backside contracted and the giant frog began to relive itself of Noa's remains. Several glopping mounds of shit was squeezed out its asshole, plopping into the murky waters below. Among the mounds of dung were a few broken bones, bleached white, sticking out every which way of the logs. Strands of blond hair decorated every stinky glop of poo as well, and the frog kept up the act until it was fully-relieved of the burdens of waste it carried.

The last little mound was pushed out without thought. Noa's skull, white as her cloak once was and stained with shit, plopped into the water and sunk down to join the rest of her remains and the frog's leavings. Finally relieved of all the waste the lithe human female caused, the frog amicably croaked once, and used its strong legs to hop away from it all. It splashed into the waters far away and went for a swim, the weight lifted off him and still powered by what Noa had provided as a squirming frog meal the night before.

The eager young wizard had started her intrepid journey on what was supposed to be a simple quest: Find some thieves and bring them to justice. She learned too late, however, that one should never go it alone out in a potentially dangerous environment! The lesson cost Noa her life, and left her as nothing more but fat on a frog, and a pile of dung at the bottom of a swamp.