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an extract from

Frog the Barbarian

Written by

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To Mum and Dad

Guy Bass



To my weird and wonderful studio-family at Dynamo, for the best support and inspiration EVER

Oda

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The Shyclops

"Oh dear, oh dear," the old man muttered, shuffling from foot to foot. "Chop chop…"

"My sword, husband," insisted the woman. "It's in the picnic basket. Next to the porkberry pie."

"Wait, you're really picking a fight with me?" asked Frog. "OK, then I promise not to use all of my mightiness on you – it wouldn't be fair." He reached down to his scabbard and wrapped his fingers around the handle of his sword. "Behold … Basil Rathbone!" Frog drew out the gleaming, magical blade with a flourish. "He's the only sword with his own song!" he cried. "But you're not allowed to sing along."

With that, Frog took a deep breath…

The Basil Rathbone Song

Basil Rathbone!
Most Powerful Sord in Kingdumland
Basil Rathbone!
Everyone say Oooh and gather round!
He can slice through iron or a blayde of grass
You're bound to be impressed by his sharp-i-ness
Basil Rathbone!
Most Powerful Sord in Kingdumland
Basil Rathbone!
He sometimes makes a swishing sound
Changed from a stick in seconds flat
By a dying wizard with a verry tall hat
Basil Rathbone!
Most Powerful Sord in Kingdumland
Basil Rathbone! The sord that I own!
Basil Rathbone! He's never on loan!
Yeah yeah yeah yeah (fade out)

The woman's eyes grew wide. The round old man shrieked in horror. Frog grinned.

"Pretty intimidating, isn't it?" he chuckled. "Basil Rathbone's the most first-rate, magically unbreakable sword ever. I bet you've never … seen … anything—"

A dark shadow fell over Frog, and he realized that the looks of horror on the man and woman's faces may not have been in response to Basil Rathbone. Slowly, he turned back towards the lake.

A monster had emerged from behind the waterfall, and now loomed over him. This fat, burly brute was as tall as a house, with tufts of hair dotted all over its body, four great arms (each carrying a tree-trunk club) and a single eye in the middle of its forehead.

"DON'T LOOK AT ME!" it bellowed.

Frog saw a club rush towards him and

then found himself flying through the air. The impact was so hard he felt the breath leave his body. He slammed into a tree and crumpled to the ground, head spinning and ears ringing.



"The Beast of the Apocalypse! The End is upon us!" shrieked the old man as the creature lumbered out of the water towards him.

"No, it's a *shyclops!*" cried the woman. "They cannot stand to be watched – do not look it in the eye!"

"STOP JUDGING ME! DON'T LOOK AT ME!" the beast cried.

Frog opened his eyes. He sat up and checked that he was still in one green piece.

"Ow…" he said, rubbing his head. He looked up to see the old man frozen in terror as the shyclops loomed over him.

The man just had time to mutter "It's the End of the—" before the shyclops kicked him to the ground with its giant foot.

"Husband!" cried the woman and raced, screaming, towards the shyclops. The

stunned beast stumbled backwards, swinging its clubs wildly. The woman was swift and agile, dodging the first two swings, but the third struck her a glancing blow across the head. As she fell limply to the ground, the beast raised all four clubs above its head...

Frog looked down to see his magical sword still gripped tightly in his hand.

"Hey! Pick on someone your own mightiness!" he cried, bounding towards the shyclops in great hops.

"TOO CLOSE...!" the shyclops boomed.

Frog activated his kroak cloak. His mysterious camouflage ability rendered him all but invisible. Only his catastrophe pants could be seen. It was more than enough to embarrass the shyclops even further.

"AWAY! GET AWAY!" The mortified beast flailed its clubs wildly.

The invisible Frog sprang upwards, grabbing a club as it sped past his head. It propelled him skywards. He spiralled in the air before landing squarely on the back of the shyclops's neck.

"NO! LEAVE … ME … ALONE!"

"Stop doing an evil monster rampage and I will!" insisted Frog, reappearing as he clung on desperately to one of the creature's hair tufts. The shyclops stomped and flailed in panic but couldn't shake off its determined green passenger.

"This is just a taste of my mightiness pie!" insisted Frog. "Don't make me feed you the whole thing!"

"ALONE! ALONE!" the beast roared – and swung all of its clubs towards its own head.

THUD.

With that, the shyclops fell to the ground, unconscious.

"Whole pie … it is," panted Frog, hopping down from the shyclops' back.

"W-we're alive?" blurted the old man, getting to his feet. "It's not the End?"

"It appears not," said the woman, inspecting the bump on her head as she strode towards Frog. "That was impressive work, pond-gobbin – a shyclops who feels judged is a fearsome opponent… We have lost many a warrior to their shamefaced rampages. Perhaps I will not chop off your head after all."

Frog tutted and sheathed his sword. "Yeah, well I wouldn't feel proper fighting a lady and a flobbily old fossil anyway," he said.

The woman bristled.

"Flobbily? Who's he talking about?" asked the man, picking cake out of his beard.

"By the six-and-a-half realms – I don't think this creature knows who we are," said the woman.

"Majesties!" came a cry. A dozen guards emerged from the treeline, dressed in battle-worn armour and wielding swords and shields. The foremost guard – red-faced and sporting a strikingly bushy moustache – added, "We heard, 'AAH!' and 'OOOH!' and—" he gasped at the sight of the stunned monster. "Grool's beard – it's a shyclops! Protect the King and Queen!"

"Yes, save us! Save us again!" shrieked the old man.

"You're too late, Captain Camperlash," said the woman. "This determined little gobbin did your job for you."

"He did? He did!" concurred the King, happily.

"I am not a gobbin," Frog began. "I'm a—Wait, did he say, 'King and Queen'?"

"Mud-suckin' gobbin spewn! Shut yer hole an' avert yer ogle!" growled Captain Camperlash, his face redder than bloodberries. He brandished his sword in Frog's direction. "None may look upon the Majesties without prior appointment!"



"Unclench, Captain," said the woman. "This creature clearly does not know that he is in the presence of the sovereign monarchs of Kingdomland."

"The wuh?" blurted Frog.

"Hello gobbin," she said, holding out her hand. "We are the King and Queen of Everything."