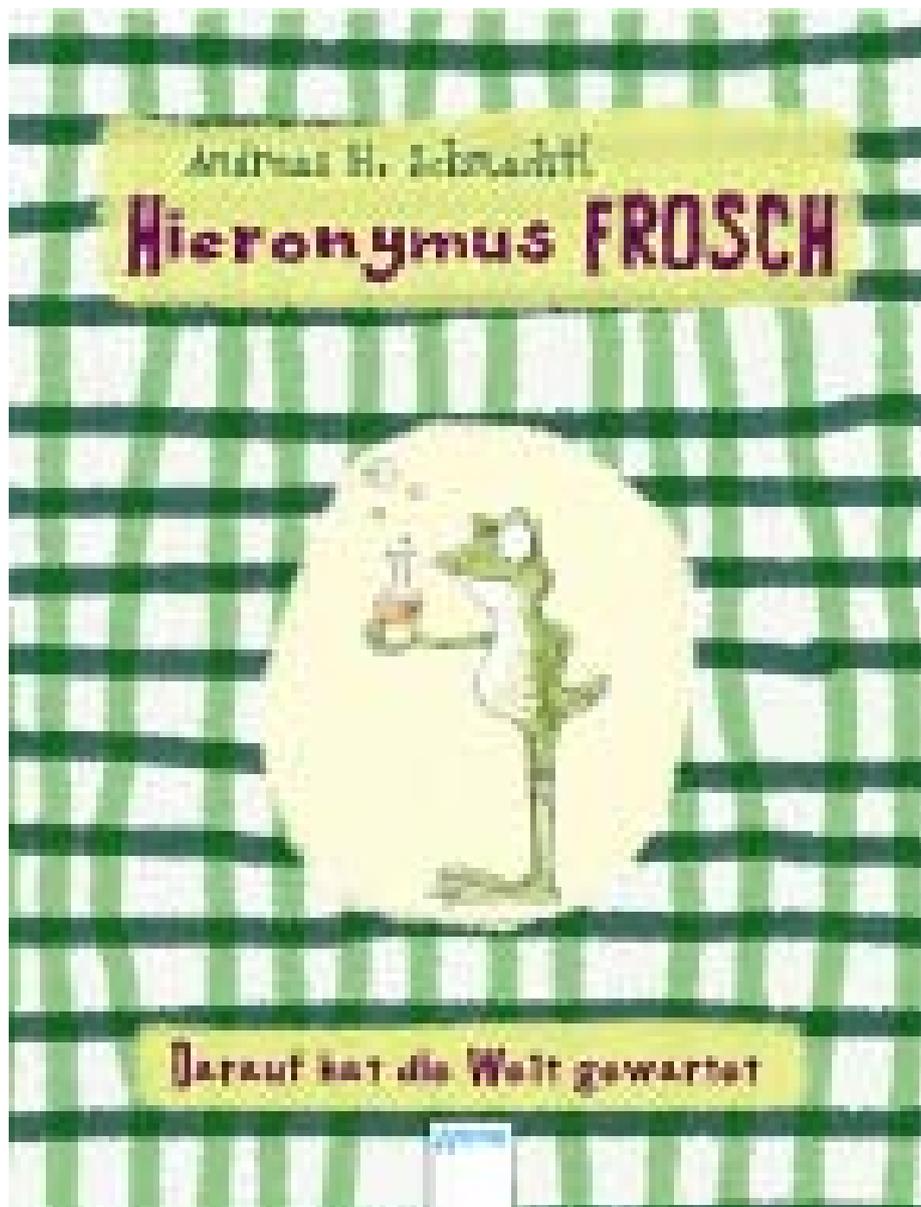


## Sample Translation



**Hieronimus Frog**  
**Just What the World has been Waiting for**  
**by**  
**Andreas H. Schmachtl**

German title: Hieronymus Frosch - Darauf hat die Welt gewartet

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Translated by Johanna Ellsworth

## **Hieronymus Frog**

### **Just What the World has been Waiting for**

The scientists divide the class of amphibia into two orders. Firstly, the caudata. All salamanders and newts belong to that order. And secondly, the anura – the toads and, of course, the frogs.

And even though some people are totally unable to tell them apart, they keep on insisting that there is a prince in every frog.

Of course that's **nonsense**.

Because in the first place there are lots of frog girls, too. Who, if anything, would probably rather be princesses.

And in the second place, strictly speaking, you wouldn't need that many princes as there are frogs.

And in the third place there is much, even much, much more than just a little crown in some frogs. Adventurousness, for instance, the mind of an incredible inventor or loads of brilliant ideas. And **Hieronymus Frog** was just such a super frog. By the way, he did not like silly nicknames like "Ronnie". He preferred to simply be called "Frog". After all, he was one.

Naturally he was grass green, the way it is appropriate for a grass frog (a species of the genus of *rana temporaria*, as the scientists say).

But mainly **Hieronymus** was a natural tinker, a remarkable researcher and therefore a true hero. Because he found a solution for all of life's tricky problems – a solution the whole world had more or less been waiting for. Without any doubt.

Hieronymus lived at Ivy Road No. 12. To be exact, he lived in an extremely wet spot of the Butterfingers' yard. Maybe it was the wettest spot in the yard because being a frog, Hieronymus enjoyed wet feet very much.

So that he would not have to make do without a refreshing bath even in the greatest summer heat, Mrs. Butterfinger had installed a zinc tub next to his front door. Rather old and a bit battered (the tub, that is, not Mrs. Butterfinger), it was always full of pure rainwater. Hieronymus liked his tub that was decorated with buttercups around its rim and a pretty carpet made of duckweed just as much as the small pond nearby. Actually

he liked it even better. Because he had the tub all to himself. Which was very handy whenever Hieronymus wanted to carry out one of his scientific experiments.

For instance he had recently learned through a spectacular self-test that it is extremely hard to swim in frozen water since frozen water is pretty hard. In this condition it is called “ice”, by the way. What a sensational discovery!

Hieronymus kept making discoveries like that practically non-stop. Or he would tinker around a bit and invent something even more spectacular. Most of this happened in his workshop – his favourite room in the frog’s home underneath the buttercups. But to be honest, the workshop WAS his home. More or less at least, since his kitchen, living room, bedroom and workshop were one room. Only the bathroom had a separate door.

Emmy Hopscotch, née Shrew, lived one skip-and-a-jump away from the frog home under the currant bush (black currants, of course) with her four little Hopscotches.

So Emmy could test right away how Hieronymus’ inventions worked out in real life. Such as the world’s first **fully automatic pea counting machine**.

Nobody would have been a more suitable test person than Emmy Hopscotch since she frequently cooked peas. For mixed vegetables when combined with carrots, for instance. Or in a stew for her babies.

And when someone asked her, “Say, Emmy, how many peas do you use? Like for five portions?”, Emmy Hopscotch could now reply, “Just a moment.” Then she simply turned on the fully automatic pea counting machine according to the manual and said finally, “Twenty-five. There are twenty-five peas in my stew for five portions.”

“Exactly twenty-five?” that someone might inquire.

Whereupon Emmy would confirm, “That’s what I said! After all, I’ve used a **Genuine Hieronymus Frog Invention**. And then Emmy and that someone would wonder how they had ever been able to get by without that scientific sensation.

Well, Hieronymus himself had been wondering about that for a long time. Und he also wondered why the ladies and gentlemen of the local Science Club never reacted to his brilliant ideas, since he had applied for an official membership countless times already. Because it would have been nice to discuss his research findings with his colleagues once in a while.

But apparently these scientists did not want him in their club. They claimed that if he gave a lecture, no one would understand him. And that at the most a frog could be a subject of research but never a researcher. And then they even said that his application was a libel on justice! Whatever that was supposed to mean.

“Okay, well, then not,” Hieronymus had said. “Let these **Snotty Club Guys** think what they want. Nobody can spoil the fun of researching, tinkering and inventing for me!” He had been born to tinker, after all. Yet still this club thing upset him just a bit.

### **By Return of Mail**

The day started with a **KA-BOOM** – and a Hieronymus who flew through the air in a wide semi-circle.

Well, actually the day had started with Hieronymus taking a look at the calendar and realizing that tomorrow was his birthday. And his sisters’ and brother’s birthdays, too. And the worst part was that he had forgotten to send out their birthday cards. And that though he had been writing them for a whole week! Because that was how long it took to write 2 999 birthday cards for 2 999 brothers and sisters. But even if he could manage to transport that huge stack of birthday cards to the nearest mailbox, they would never get there in time by tomorrow.

“How can you be a good frog brother if you don’t even send out birthday cards on time?” Hieronymus thought. “That’s totally impossible.”

There had to be something he could do about it. “Think hard, frog,” Hieronymus told himself. “**Come on, think!**”

And suddenly he had a great idea. A breakthrough in the art of mail delivery! A milestone in the field of special engineering! And probably a scientific sensation, too.

As always, Hieronymus started by making a drawing of his ideas. Because whatever he had drawn on paper, he would not forget that easily.

Then he went about to make a list of all the things he needed for his invention, and finally he went inside his workshop.

As always in cases like this one you could hear hammering and sawing sounds coming through the open window – which usually meant that another genuine Hieronymus Frog invention was slowly taking shape.

This morning it was... the **semi-hydraulic postcard mailing machine!**

On the outside the ingenious monster machine did not look like much. But it could shoot ... err ... send out his 2 999 birthday cards by air mail, so to speak.

At least that was what Hieronymus figured. He was about to do one last test run when the machine started to make trouble. It rumbled and sputtered, and before Hieronymus knew what was happening, the frog had kind of sent himself.

That was the reason for that **KA-BOOM**, by the way.

The postcard mailing machine catapulted Hieronymus straight out of his workshop window and sent him flying across Butterfingers' yard until he landed in one of the evergreens at the other end of the yard.

Hieronymus held on to a thin twig, swaying gently in the breeze. Of course Emmy had heard the noise and figured right away that Hieronymus had to be the cause of it.

Good that the little Hopscotches were still sleeping in their beds. Otherwise they would probably have split their sides with laughing. What they always did when a mishap happened to their favourite frog.

And to be honest, that happened on a regular basis.

"What did you do this time?" Emmy called up into the fir tree.

"Mhm har," Hieronymus laughed, embarrassed. "That was a scientific throwback."

Emmy shook her head in surprise. "Well, a fir tree isn't a suitable place for a frog. Come down, will you?"

And Hieronymus contemplated how to do that. The best thing would be a ladder... No, that wouldn't work. But if he had a large sheet, he could take a daring jump... No, that wouldn't work either. Cutting down the fir tree was probably out of the question, or? But being a scientist, he had to at least consider all options in-depth.

Finally he just climbed down the trunk.

Emmy wiped a few needles off the frog before inviting him in for a glass of woodruff juice. "Tell me truthfully," she said. "What happened?"

Hieronymus told her that tomorrow was his brothers' and sisters' and his birthday and that he therefore had to send out 2 999 birthday cards. As soon as possible.

"Two thousand and..." Emmy almost choked on her juice. "There are really **3 000** of you?"

"Wait a minute," Hieronymus replied, doing some quick calculations in his head. "2 999 + myself? Yes, we're exactly 3 000 siblings. It was quite a mumble jumble in the pond back then." The memories made him smile fondly. "As young tadpoles we used to blow air bubbles under the ducks' feathers. Oh well, those were the days!"

"Then what happened?" Emmy asked.

“Well, then we grew legs,” Hieronymus explained. “And then everybody went his or her own way.”

Emmy thought about the chaos her little Hopscotches created all the time – and there were only four of them. “Do you see each other once in a while?”

“Only rarely,” Hieronymus admitted. “That’s why it’s so important that I get my postcard mailing machine to work. It’ll be a regular sensation, by the way.”

For the rest of the day there were more hammering and sawing sounds coming from the workshop.

Once in a while you could also hear Hieronymus curse. It was so bad that Emmy even had to cover her young Hopscotches’ ears!

But finally, at dinnertime, 2 999 birthday cards shot out of the small workshop window and started to fly off as fast as the wind in all four directions.

“I’m a geee...!” Hieronymus cried.

Actually he had wanted to say “genius” but instead there was another enormous KA-BOOM – and a Hieronymus sailing through the air once again.

“Mommy!” the four little Hopscotches called and ran to the window, giggling.

“Hieronymus is hanging in the fir tree!”

“I know,” Emmy sighed. “It’s a scientific sensation!”

## No Streaks

One fine day Hieronymus said to himself, “Today is a good day for a discovery.”

But then he thought: discovery? I can’t even *see* anything!

Unfortunately that was true. His window panes were so dirty that he could not see through the windows at all. That was probably why it was always so dark inside his home.

There had to be *something* he could do about it! “Think hard, frog,” Hieronymus told himself. “Come on, think!”

And while he was standing in front of his house, thinking, Emmy Hopscotch waved at him. “Is there a problem?” she asked.

“A problem? No, no problem at all!” Hieronymus laughed, feeling a little embarrassed about his filthy windows. That was because Emmy’s house was sparkling clean all year round. She would not tolerate even the smallest squirt of fly crap in her home.

"I'm just thinking about this thing with the windows," Hieronymus said. "How are you supposed to get them clean? It's impossible!"

"Well, you could wash them," Emmy suggested.

"W-w-wash them?" Hieronymus said. That did not sound inventive at all and therefore it didn't sound like him, either.

"Yes," Emmy continued. "First wash them with soapy water, then with clean water. And then you could polish the glass with newspaper. Then there won't be any streaks, guaranteed. But it's a lot of work. And you should hurry up. If I'm not mistaken, there's a thunderstorm coming."

So Hieronymus went to work but he did not really make any progress. A lack of foam could not be the problem. Because the foam kept growing, creeping into every corner of his house. And Hieronymus also did not think that he was not scrubbing hard enough. Just as Emmy had suggested, he kept scrubbing the window panes in small circles. Afterwards he rinsed off the foam with clean water, polished the windows with newspaper and looked at the results, annoyed.

"That's not without any streaks," he grumbled. And yet his arms were already hurting and sweat had collected on his brow. All in all this window washing was awfully hard work. And it was tedious! Perhaps it would be more fun if he listened to some music, Hieronymus thought and turned on the radio.

"A bit of Beethoven has never hurt anyone," Hieronymus whistled happily to himself.

Though that was true, even Beethoven did nothing to take away the streaks on the window panes. To make matters worse, the soapy foam had made the floor so slippery that Hieronymus fell on his nose with a splash. Three times.

"I can't work like that!" the frog complained. Irritated, he slipped outside – where the windows were even dirtier than inside. Hieronymus did not feel like imagining the work that was waiting for him here.

"It's got to work another way," he thought. And those who knew him could recognize by the look on his face that he was thinking hard. So hard that smoke had probably come out of his ears if frogs had ears!

**"Think hard, frog,"** Hieronymus said to himself. "Come on, think! After all, the one thing I can always depend on are my brilliant ideas."

Then Björn, the little wren who lived right next to the Butterfinger's door in an old tea caddy (that was no longer in use, of course), came fluttering along.

Björn landed on the grass next to Hieronymus and asked, "Wanna share a spider?"

"I can't," Hieronymus said, thinking hard, "I'm cleaning my windows."

"Oh, I see," Björn said sceptically. "Hopefully you'll get done before the thunderstorm."

And sure enough: a weatherman on the radio announced that very moment, "Due to the hot temperatures we're expecting severe thunderstorms with heavy rainfall in all parts of the country."

"Heavy rainfall...?" Hieronymus was thrilled. Nothing could stop him now. "Excuse me, Björn. I just have to..."

That was all the wren understood because Hieronymus had already run back inside his home. There he fell – **splash!** – on his nose again, grabbed the bucket with the soapy water and came outside again.

Meanwhile the clouds were gathering and the sky had turned such a sinister grey that most animals had already found shelter somewhere.

Only Hieronymus stayed outside and started to soap his windows down. "Why be stingy?" he laughed happily and took even more foam. And as if that was not strange enough already, he even topped it by opening all of his windows all the way! He even opened the window in his attic and put down the small latch so it would not slam shut.

"What're you doing?" Björn asked and looked up at the stormy dark sky.

"Just wait and see," Hieronymus said in his most cheerful tinker's mood.

"No, certainly not," Björn said. "I'm getting my fluffy butt back inside my tea cattle."

"Okay then." Hieronymus waved him goodbye. "See you later."

Finally there was lightning, then rolling thunder. And then the sky opened its gates. Rain was pouring down as if there was no tomorrow, and no tree or bush, no leaf or grass blade stayed dry.

Standing in front of his house, Hieronymus was absolutely thrilled. The rain rinsed the foam from his windows. The water dripped from the glass, leaving it sparkling clean without a single streak. Without any polishing at all. Yes, and what was even better: the rainfall even rinsed all the foam right out of his home.

"**This is sensational!**" Hieronymus cheered, more than pleased. "Clean windows AND spring cleaning all in one. And on top of that I've got me a crib that's wonderfully wet. That's because I'm a first-class tinker. Didn't I say it?"

## Staying Cool

Sometimes there will be a few hours in spring that feel just like summer. Then the sun will smile down from the cloudless sky – and that was much too warm for Hieronymus. After all, it didn't take much for his sensitive frog skin to dry out... and itch.

Sitting on the edge of his zinc tub, his legs dangling in the cool water, Hieronymus looked at the sparkling water surface.

“How's anyone supposed to stand this heat, I wonder?” he grumbled. “That's absolutely impossible.” But when he moved his long legs back and forth, he made an exciting discovery. They were not only NOT WARM but they were even PLEASANTLY COOL. And that could only mean one thing: that you didn't sweat if you sat in cold water.

What an incredible discovery! A scientific sensation! Of course Hieronymus would have to do some in-depth research about the matter before he could disclose his findings.

So he slipped into the water and... was froggy cool right away. Very pleasant indeed. The only thing that was still warm was his head since it was sticking out of the water. As a test run Hieronymus dipped his head under water. Yes, that was better. Actually it was even **wonderful**. Water fleas paddled past him. And the duckweed – the one with the small leaves and tiny roots – looked like little UFOs.

Hieronymus would have loved to have always just stayed underwater. But he had to resurface because he needed fresh air. On a regular basis, if possible.

Yet as soon as he stuck his head out of the water, he felt as warm as in summer again. Actually it was even hot by now.

There had to be something he could do about it!

“Think hard, frog,” Hieronymus told himself. “Come on, think!”

Of course he could have built a diving bell. That was as easy as your ABCs. All you had to do was put a glass upside down into the water and sit inside the glass. Then you could relax and do whatever you want, like read a book at the bottom of the zinc tub. And because the air caught in the glass pushed away the water, you even stayed dry.

“**Oh, darn,**” Hieronymus said to himself. “Then I still won't be IN the water even though I would be UNDER water.”

Hieronymus did not want to use a snorkel or straw to get air under water. Sooner or later somebody might think it would be hilarious to shut off the air supply by putting a finger on the opening. Or a mosquito could get caught in it. Then he would get panicky in no time. And that was something you really didn't need under water!

Yet there had to be a possibility to be covered with cool water from head to toe! Hieronymus just could not think of it.

Instead he remembered that today was Tuesday and that he and Mrs. Butterfinger met in the strawberry field every Tuesday. Because as soon as the old lady checked on her plants, Hieronymus would jump out of the strawberries. And then Mrs. Butterfinger always pretended to be shocked. They played that game every Tuesday. So Hieronymus could not miss that date, no matter what. Even in this heat.

“Think hard, frog,” he told himself again. “Come on, think!”

Nobody can carry a tub filled with cold water around. But what you could do is... And then Hieronymus finally had **the idea that saved the day!** An ingenious thermal solution. A milestone in the field of air conditioning! And probably a scientific sensation. Bursting with energy, Hieronymus jumped out of the water, disappeared in his workshop, and a few minutes later you could hear hammering and drilling sounds, the familiar sounds of twisting screws and filing metal his neighbors knew all too well. And which let them make concerned faces. Because, to be honest, these sounds did not always mean that everything would turn out well.

Apparently that was how it was now, too. Because at first you could hear loud curses coming from the open window of the workshop. Which showed that Hieronymus was missing some part he could not do without. Then there was a squeal. That meant that the tinker had obviously hit his finger with the hammer. And finally there was an ear-splitting rattling and clonking. Usually Hieronymus started all over again after that. But as long as there was no smoke coming out of the window, there was no reason to get nervous.

Finally Hieronymus stepped out of his house. He was extremely satisfied with the results. He was carrying a small water tank on his back. It looked something like a backpack with a bent pipe sticking out of its top end. A shower head was attached to the pipe. And froggy cool water was raining out of the shower head and down on Hieronymus, as soon as he pulled on a small chain.

“What have you got there?” the four little Hobscotches wondered, and Emmy could hardly keep from giggling.

“This,” Hieronymus explained, his chest swelled with pride, “is my **semi-automatic individual rain-making machine**. It works from head to toe. Because as I discovered, you won’t sweat...”

“...if you sit in cold water,” Emmy interrupted him.

“Why, is that a known fact?” Hieronymus wondered.

“Well, *I* knew it,” Emmy said, and her four mice babies cried, “Mommy, we want one of those, too!”

“Well, however that may be,” Hieronymus said, “it’s still an ingenious idea. Certainly the members of the Science Club wouldn’t think of that.” Well, obviously that was true.

And as to Mrs. Butterfinger: this time she did not have to pretend she was shocked when Hieronymus jumped out of her strawberries. This time she had the shock of a lifetime. After all you don’t get to see a frog with a shower on his back in your strawberry field every day. Even on Ivy Road you don’t.