

Charlie *the* Tramp

Russell Hoban

pictures by Lillian Hoban



authors of **Bread and Jam for Frances**

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Published by Plough Publishing House
Walden, New York
Robertsbridge, England
Elsmore, Australia
www.plough.com

This 2016 Plough edition published by arrangement with
the estates of Russell Hoban and Lillian Hoban.
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ISBN: 978-0-87486-780-0
2 0 1 9 1 8 1 7 1 6 1 2 3 4 5 6

Other children's books by Russell Hoban and Lillian Hoban:

Bread and Jam for Frances
A Baby Sister for Frances
A Birthday for Frances
A Bargain for Frances
Best Friends for Frances
Egg Thoughts and Other Frances Songs
Emmet Otter's Jugband Christmas
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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data pending

Printed in the U.S.A.

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“Well, well,” said Grandfather Beaver one day when he came to visit, “Charlie is getting to be a big boy.”

“Yes, he is,” said Father. “He is coming right along.”

Grandfather smiled at Charlie and took a quarter out of his vest pocket.

“What are you going to be when you grow up, Charlie?” asked Grandfather.

“I am going to be a tramp,”
said Charlie.





“A tramp!” said Mother.

“A tramp!” said Father.

“A tramp!” said Grandfather, and he put the quarter back in his vest pocket.

“Yes,” said Charlie, “I am going to be a tramp.”

“I am surprised to hear that,” said Father. “Your grandfather has been doing beaver work for many years, and I too am a beaver, but you want to be a tramp.”

“That is how it is nowadays,” said Grandfather, shaking his head. “When I was young, children did not want to be tramps.”





“I don’t think Charlie really wants to be a tramp,” said Mother.

“Yes, I do,” said Charlie. “Tramps don’t have to learn how to chop down trees and how to roll logs and how to build dams.



“Tramps don’t have to practice swimming and diving and holding their breath under water.

“Nobody looks to see if their teeth are sharp. Nobody looks to see if their fur is oiled.

“Tramps carry sticks with little bundles tied to them. They sleep in a field when the weather is nice, and when it rains they sleep in a barn.

“Tramps just tramp around and have a good time. And when they want something to eat, they do little jobs for anybody that wants little jobs done.”





“I have lots of little jobs for you to do,” said Father. “You can help me cut saplings for our winter food. You can help me dig extra tunnels for our lodge. And of course, the dam always needs repairs.”



“That is not little jobs,” said Charlie.
“That’s hard work.”

“When I was young,” said Grandfather,
“children did hard work. Nowadays all
they want to do is little jobs.”



“Well,” said Father, “if Charlie wants to be a tramp, then I think he should be a tramp. I think we should not stand in his way.”



“The weather is nice and warm now,”
said Charlie. “May I start sleeping in the
fields?”

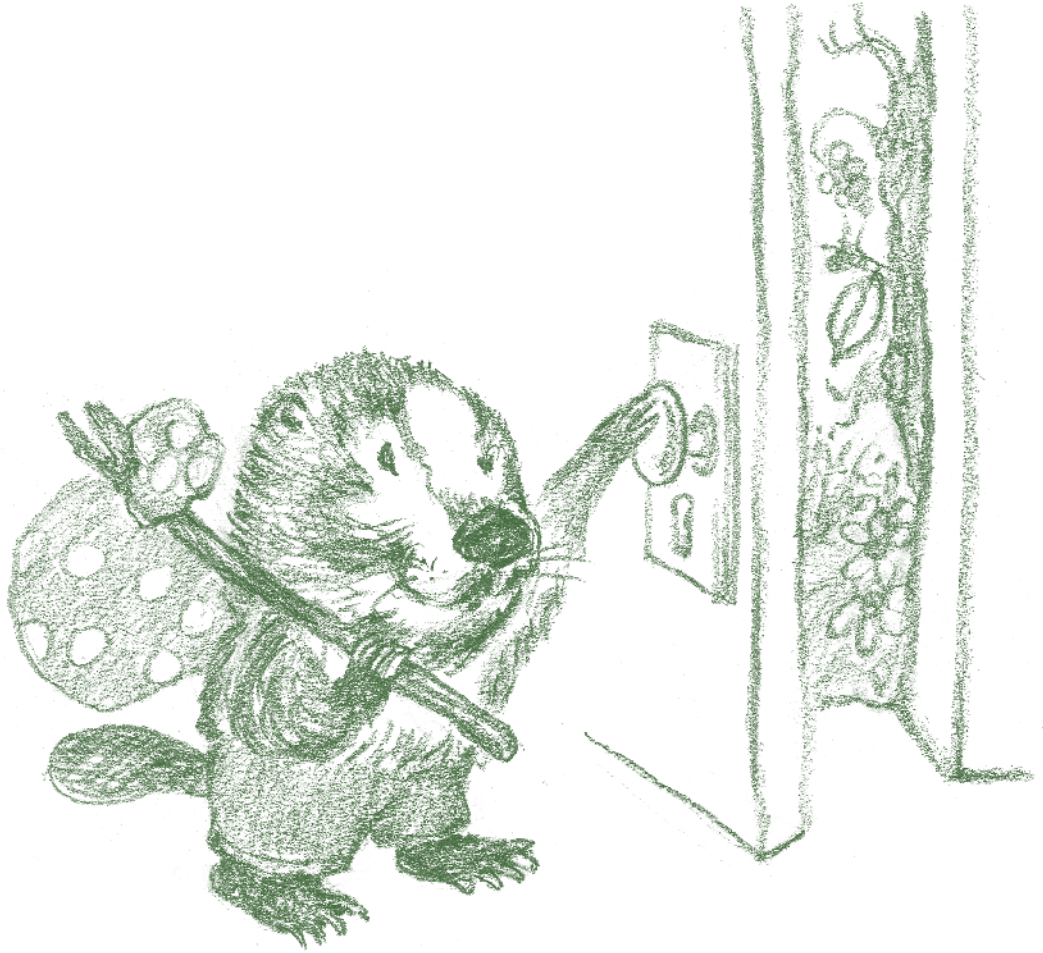
“All right,” said Mother.

Charlie tied up some fig newtons and some Good-and-Plenties in a handkerchief. Then he tied the handkerchief to a stick and he was ready to go.

“Now it is time for me to be on the road and away,” said Charlie.

“Goodbye, Mr. Tramp,” said Father and Grandfather.

“Goodbye, Mr. Tramp,” said Mother.
“Come home in time for breakfast, and don’t forget to brush your teeth tonight.”



“Goodbye,” said Charlie. “Tramps
don’t brush their teeth.”



He got into his little boat, rowed
across the pond, and tramped off down
the road, while Mother and Father and
Grandfather waved to him.

“Now that I think of it,” said Grandfather, “I wanted to be a tramp when I was little, just like Charlie.”

“So did I,” said Father.

“That is how men are,” said Mother.
“They all want to be tramps.”



Shucks.

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you can get the complete book at
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