

# *A Snake in School*



Gordon Farrell ©

“Great party wasn’t it?”

“That’s a huge house Daniel’s got.”

“I think the bouncy castle was bigger than my whole house.”

“And a real swimming pool.”

“Good music!”

“Don’t forget the food. Daniel’s mother is a fantastic cook.”

Frank tried not to listen in but he couldn’t help it. The knot of boys was already in the yard when he got to school that Monday morning. They were all talking excitedly about Daniel’s birthday party. Everyone in the class, or nearly everyone, had been invited, but not him.

“At least Frank wasn’t there,” he heard one of the boys say loudly.

“He’s such a mouse,” agreed one of the others. “Sort of creepy.”

A third boy looked up and noticed Frank. He nudged the two who had just spoken.

“Hi Frank,” he said brightly. “We were just talking about .....”

There was an awkward silence until it was time to go inside.

“It was always the same,” thought Frank as he sat down at his table and sorted his books. No-one liked him. He didn’t have any friends. He wasn’t sure why. True, he was very shy and he found it difficult to know what to say to people. He was the shortest boy in the class as well.

He was so different from Daniel. Daniel was tall with a bright ready smile. He was very quick with words. He always knew what to say and made everyone laugh. But he had a sharp tongue and most of his jokes were about Frank.

“Don’t step off the curb,” he would yell at Frank as he started to walk home. “You’ll be committing suicide.”

Or it might be “I dropped my pen down the drain. You are rat sized. Go and get it Frank.”

As usual, everyone would laugh and Frank wouldn’t say a word back. He just couldn’t think of anything to say. Now everyone was joining in hoping to be seen to be as funny as Daniel.



“Leprechaun,” they would call him, “Tiny”, or more usually just “Mouse.”

He couldn't understand why they copied Daniel like that. He wasn't mean or rude to them. But he couldn't understand

why Daniel teased him all the time, either. Daniel had everything. He lived in a big house, went to lots of places the other children hadn't even heard of. He was allowed to keep unusual pets like lizards and he got everything he wanted. What's more Daniel was popular and friends with everyone else. It didn't make sense. It was as if Daniel was jealous of him.

There was only one thing that Frank was really good at, better than anyone else. He was very good at Gaelic football. He might have been small but he was fast and accurate. He knew he had great control of the ball and that he was the team defender. Because of him, the team were likely to win the trophy this year. “That should have made him the popular one,” he puzzled to himself crossly. But it just didn't. After the game was over they just forgot about him again.

Surely Daniel couldn't be jealous about his place in the team. Daniel always said that he wasn't interested in football. He didn't often play. He was only a sub.

Then it got worse. It got much worse It wasn't just mean words any more.

Frank was getting ready for the match. This was an important game. They were playing against a school with a team that often won but Frank thought that Granard had a good chance this

time. He reached into his kit bag for his boots and his hand touched something strange. It was smooth, slightly warm and it moved under his fingers. Frank yelled and pulled his hand out of the bag. The bag fell over and out slithered a sinuous bronze coloured snake. Frank wasn't afraid of snakes but he hadn't expected to find one in his bag. It had made him jump. He gasped and ran out of the dressing room. Behind him he could hear laughter.

Back in the dressing room, the rest of the team shared the joke with Daniel.

"You got him", laughed one.

"He won't know it was me that put it there," added Daniel, scooping up the snake and putting it into a small carrying box with holes in the lid. "He doesn't know that I keep snakes as pets as well as lizards. And none of you will tell him, will you?"

The rest of the team agreed with Daniel that it would be a much better joke if they said nothing.

Frank's teacher couldn't understand why his best defender was so nervous all through the game and Frank couldn't tell him. The teacher wouldn't have believed the story anyway. Frank played badly making lots of mistakes. They lost the game and Frank got the blame.

So it went on. Daniel came up with a silly joke just before every game. Once he got hold of Frank's kit bag and tied his football boot laces together in such a knotted mess that Frank had to cut them and re-lace his boots at the last minute. He got into trouble for not being properly prepared.

Another time, Daniel changed put green dye into Frank's hair gel and it wouldn't come out. Every time he would try something. It might be itching powder on his shirt, water all over his shorts, or something else. It didn't matter where he kept his kit, Daniel would get to it. It was no good trying to tell on Daniel either. He couldn't prove anything and the rest of the team thought Daniel was funny.

Throughout each game, he was thinking about what trick Daniel might play far more than he was thinking about the match. He was always nervous and his focus was gone. Every game he played badly and without him, his team lost. They didn't win the trophy and they blamed Frank. Why didn't they blame Daniel for putting him off? It didn't make sense.

One day Frank found himself alone in the classroom, or so he thought. A voice from the corner made him jump.

"You shouldn't let him walk all over you, you know."

It was Ellie. She was sitting at the computer tidying up some files for the teacher. He didn't know Ellie very well. He knew she was clever, and that she was always on the computer. She seemed to know what to do better than her teacher did. She always seemed fun and bubbly, ready to help anyone with a project, but he hadn't spoken to her much. He didn't talk to anyone much.

Ellie spoke again.

"You shouldn't let Daniel bully you. He's only jealous because you are good at football."

"He can't be," replied Frank. He's popular and funny and good at everything.

"Everything except football," answered Ellie. "He doesn't like that."

"But I can't stop him," said Frank, sadly. I wouldn't know what to say.

"Then don't say anything. Let's find a way to make everyone laugh at him for once." Ellie suggested. "Then he might think twice at getting them to laugh at you. If you let me, I think I can help you."

Ellie explained that they should get hold of a photo of Daniel as a baby.

"Something a bit embarrassing, perhaps, in a baby bath or on a potty."

"How can I get a photo like that?" asked Frank. "I can't just go up to Daniel's mother and say 'Please give me a picture of your son as a baby in the bath', can me?"

“You don’t have to,” soothed Ellie. “I’ll do it. His cousin is my friend. I’ll explain that I’m collecting baby photos of everyone for a school event. His mother is so proud of Daniel she won’t want him left out. I’ll arrange for his cousin to pick out a really embarrassing photo.”



She was as good as her word. A few days later she showed Frank a large A4 picture of Daniel as a baby in a bath. He had bubbles all over his head and his hair stuck up on end. It was very funny.

“How did you get that?” asked

Frank.

“Oh, it was easy, answered Ellie. “I scanned the photo onto my computer and I’ve made several copies. Why don’t we blutack them up around the school?”

They put several copies in the classroom while it was empty, and others went in the corridor while nobody was looking. Frank felt a bit uncomfortable about what they were doing. What if they got into trouble? It might make things worse. What if Daniel found out? What would he do?

They waited and they kept watch. Lots of children were looking at the pictures. Lots of them were laughing. Some of them thought the baby was cute.

When they got back to the classroom, Daniel was standing in front of one of the posters of himself as a baby. Several members of the class were standing with him laughing at the picture. Then Frank realised the plan had gone wrong, very

wrong. The children were laughing because Daniel was telling them funny stories about things he had done when he was a baby. He was making himself sound a very clever baby but they were all enjoying the stories.

“Maybe everybody should bring in a funny picture from when they were babies, said Daniel smiling. We would all have stories to tell.” Their teacher thought this was an excellent idea and all the class joined in, except Frank and Ellie who were just too embarrassed.

For a while, Frank thought he had got away with it and that Daniel did not know who was responsible for putting up the pictures. When they were going outside at lunch break, Daniel gave him a look that made it clear he had guessed what had happened. Frank told Ellie that they had better leave Daniel alone.

Things went on, as they always do, and it didn't really get any worse for Frank. Now he was no longer part of the football team the horrible tricks stopped and, , other than a few rude names, Daniel left him alone. But Frank did miss his football. It was the only thing he had really enjoyed.

Then one day, something happened that changed everything and it was Daniel's snake that brought about the change. Daniel shouldn't have brought the snake to school at all. The Garter snake, with its beautiful diamond markings, had been an expensive gift. Daniel loved the snake. He named it 'Rainbow Leo'. It was delicate and needed a special environment to live in and Daniel should have left it in its proper tank in the warm but he wanted to show off with it.

He couldn't be sure where or when Rainbow



Leo had escaped. He didn't know what to do. If he said anything he would be in trouble with his teacher. If he told his friends soon everyone would know. If he said nothing he would be in trouble with his mother. He needed to find someone who wouldn't talk about the missing snake. He needed to find someone who wouldn't be afraid but who could search quickly and carefully and who would be agile enough to catch the snake if he saw it. He needed someone like.... Frank. Frank? Would Frank want to help him after all he had done? He didn't know.

At break, he found Frank and explained what had happened. "Please help me," he pleaded. I can't find the snake without your help."

*Here are eleven endings for the story. They are all good. Which is your favourite?*

## **Alan Macken**

Frank could see that Daniel was really worried. Daniel had brought in his new snake to school thinking he would not get trouble but he lost his snake somewhere in the school.

He asked Frank to help find it. Frank said that he would help if Daniel would get him back on the team and not tease him anymore. Daniel said that he would stop teasing him but could not get him back on the team.

The boys started to look for the snake. Frank asked Daniel what type of snake it was. Frank started running to the field and tripped in front of Ellie. She started to giggle and asked, "Can I help?"

Frank said "yes."

They found the snake in the grass.

## **Alan Macken**



My name is Alan Macken.  
I am Twelve Years old and I am in 6<sup>th</sup> Class.

Andrew Kelly

Frank could see that Daniel was really worried.

“Okay” said Frank. “But you must promise never to tease me again.” Daniel sighed with relief

They decided to see Ellie and ask where they should look. She said they should look around a tree. They arrived at a huge oak tree just in time to see a crow fly off with the snake in its claws “No,” screamed Daniel and started to sob madly.

Frank simply climbed the tree, killed the bird, and got the snake. Daniel was so happy that he never bothered Frank again. Frank was made the captain of the Gaelic team and they won the cup and they all lived happily ever after.

**Andrew Kelly**



**My name is Andrew Kelly.**

**Im 12 years old and live in Granard.**

**I have a little brother called Jack.**

**My Mam is called Emma and my Dad is called Pat.**

**I have a dog called Dexter and I like video games and soccer.**

## **Bartosz Nowak**

Frank could see that Daniel was really worried. Frank asked Daniel "Could you help me? I have got a little problem."

"It's not my problem you did so many jokes on me," replied Frank.

"If you help me I'll help you to get back on the team.

Ok, I'll help you. What is the problem?"

"I took a snake to the school in my pocket. It is a very expensive Garter snake," said Daniel.

And then a loud roar came somewhere from the staffroom. The boys ran down. Daniel thought that the snake must be in the staffroom that would be the worst!

They met Ellie in the staffroom. She had just dropped a cup. "Could you research for the Garter snake," Frank asked Ellie.

Daniel and Frank went to search for the snake, first in the car-park, then in the hall but they found nothing. And then Ellie remembered that snakes like warm places". All of them ran to the boiler-room but nothing was there. Then they checked beside the fountain in a little gap where the motor was but still nothing except that Daniel nearly fell in the water only Frank caught him. On the way to the hall they found the snake in a trophy. Daniel took him in his pocket then went home.

Frank played for the team again.

**Bartosz Nowak**

My name is Batosz Nowak.

I am 13 years old.

I come from Poland.



## **David Callaghan**

Frank could see that Daniel was worried.

"Um, there is a big problem, I, I, I lost my best and most expensive snake in the school," said Frank, Daniel was still in shock. He soon agreed to help look but for a bargain price. Frank had to help Daniel get back on the football team. They searched high and low, long and wide.

They soon went home and searched the internet and found some things out. They learned that snakes stay in water and eat birds and also they can sleep in water.

They searched the pond but there was no sign of the snake. They checked pipes, drains and around wires. They were too tired and gave up, sitting by the fountain.

Suddenly Daniel shouted "LOOK!" It was the snake.

They returned to Frank's house and they managed to get Daniel back on the team. And they were best mates for years to come.

## **David Callaghan**



**My name is David Callaghan. I am 12 years old.**

**I have five in my family including me.**

**My Mams name is Therese and my Dads name is David but we call him Dave.**

**I have two brothers, Daniel aged 10 and Donagh aged 6.**

**I have 2 dogs one Cal the Irish wolfhound, Strider the Collie. I have a cat called Shadow and a Gerbil called Dart.**

## **Hristo Kaloferov**

Frank could see that Daniel was really worried and he went to see what was wrong. Daniel asked Frank to come over.

“I need your help,” Frank said.

“I will help you find the snake if you help me get back In the team.”

“I will do my best,” replied Daniel.

Frank told the teacher that he felt a bit sick but he didn't go to the bathroom. He went outside. He looked on the grass where the kids play but it is hard to see a snake hidden in the grass. He tried the car park but he thought the car park would be too hard for the snake. He was worrying that he might bump into a teacher or worse around in circles but no results.

Then he thought that it might be inside as he walked up the corridor, he got to the computer room. He saw two teachers hiding behind the desk. The snake was on top on one of the computers “I'll get rid of him for you” shouted Frank and grabbed the snake and quickly ran back to class and gave it to Daniel. “You've saved me from getting into trouble said Daniel.

Now Daniel is saying lots of good things about Frank. He will soon be back in the team.

## **Hristo Kaloferov**



**My name is Hristo Kaloferov.**

**I am 12 years old and I am from Bulgaria.**

**I love soccer.**

**My school is Sacred Heart PS**

## **Kacper Jedrol**

Frank could see that Daniel was really worried but Frank walked away, Daniel started to cry and that made Frank to feel sorry for him so he agreed to help him.

First they had to do something to miss class, so, when everyone went for the football practice they sneaked out. They checked on the corridor, they checked on the street, but they didn't find it.

When they walked in to the computer room Ellie was there on the computer. She knew what they were looking for and she knew how to help them. She told them her plan but she added that she couldn't come with them because she was helping the teacher.

They spend the rest of the day looking for the snake. They got tired and Frank told Daniel that they would look for it tomorrow Daniel thought he might check one more room, the rest room. Frank told him that he would come with him.

They entered the rest room and saw the snake beside the mirror. Frank jumped with excitement and Daniel started to cry again, but this time, with tears of happiness.

## **Kacper Jedrol**

**My name is Kacper Jedrol.**

**I am 13 years old.**

**I attend Sacred Heart Primary School.**



## **Keith Kelly**

Frank could see that Daniel was really worried.

“Alright,” Frank said I will only help if you do a favour for me. You will have to ask the team manager to let me back in the school team.”

With that, the two boys set off looking for the snake without the classmates or teachers knowing. They searched the classrooms and Ellie, who was on the computer in one room, knew that something was up. They told her about the missing garter snake called Leo. She decided to help and she looked it up on the internet to find out where it was likely to go.

On their way outside, they could see something shining in the distance. It was the snake under the wheel of the Principal’s car.

Daniel was delighted to see that Leo was safe and sound. Frank was happy that he was back on the school team again.

**Keith Kelly** My name is Keith Kelly. I am 12 years old.

I go to sacred heart primary school Granard.

I have 5 people in my family.

There are my two sisters, 1 Brother and my Mother and Father.

My favourite sports are soccer and gaelic.



## **Kris Karpov**

Frank could see that Daniel was worried, and as well as that, he saw a chance to hit him.

“Ok, I will help you, but you will promise not to tease me and not to make fun of me, and put me back in the team”.

Daniel hesitated. He knew that he couldn't make fun of him anymore, and since everyone was his friend, (except Frank) he could he could not tease anyone anymore. But anything was better than what was about to happen to him when his mother found out, so he had no other choice but to say “Yes”.

Frank asked him where did he lose it and what type of a snake it was. Daniel told him it was a greenish-orange Garter snake but where he lost it he wasn't sure.

He remembered that he passed through the school yard before going into class, and in class it was that he found he lost it.

“So it must be in the school yard”, Daniel said to Frank.

They started searching. They searched behind the goal posts, under the fences, the grass, behind the scrap cardboards stacked behind the school. They searched everywhere, but couldn't find it.

They were standing beside the corner of the soccer pitch thinking where they hadn't searched, Daniel started panicking.

“We have searched everywhere, where else could it possibly be?”

Just then Frank turned, and on the snakes and ladders section, he saw something greenish-orange moving.

“I see it, I see it”, he shouted.

And both of them started running, the snake panicked and started making its way to the grid.

Frank was just about to catch it but the snake was too fast and went in. Daniel nearly started crying.

Frank said “Well I guess your snake fell in the sewers, and I am supposed to get it”.

Both of them started laughing. So Frank stuck his thin hand in trying to catch it, once or twice the snake nearly bit him, but in the end Frank managed to grab hold of its neck and take it out. The snake was all wet and smelly but it was in their hands and safe. Daniel said thank you and ran home.

On the next day Frank got a text “Game on Saturday against Abbeylara everyone to be there at 2pm”. Frank was really happy.

When he went to school Daniel ran to him and said “How are you my friend? Will you be able to come to my party on Sunday?”

Frank was really happy. Now he has a friend (well lots of friends), and nobody was going to tease him anymore. Everything was going to get better and better.

**Kris Karpov**            My name is **Kris Karpov**,  
I am from Bulgaria and I like soccer.



## **Maciek Imioliek**

Frank could see that Daniel was really worried. When Frank and Daniel finished those conversations, Frank was wondering where the snake could be but he didn't find out anything.

Later they went to the school. When they were in school, the boys heard loud screaming. In this moment, they knew that snake was somewhere in school and if they don't find it they will have big problems.

Daniel went up the stairs. He searched all the classes but he didn't find snake. Frank checked the parking place but he didn't found it there.

Frank said to Daniel "sorry but I have to go home."

Daniel went home too. When Daniel was going home he was thinking what he would say to his mum. When Daniel stepped into his room mum asked him thousands of questions.

"Did he finish his homework? And where is snake?"

Daniel told that her snake was in the garden and he would bring it in a second. Daniel went down but he knew that the snake was not in the garden. When he went up without the snake his mum asked him where it was. Daniel had to tell her that he lost the snake and is somewhere in school.

Daniel promised to his mum that he would find the snake with his friend Frank. But Daniel's mum thought it was hopeless. She knew that snake was gone and that they would never find it again.

Daniel went to bed. When he woke up he quickly went to school. No one in class knew about the snake. Only Frank could help Daniel.

After school Daniel and Frank re-searched the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Daniel said to Frank that they would never found snake. Daniel said not to waste time in school. They had better to go home .When they

were going home they heard loud screaming. That was teacher ruining away. Daniel asked him what happened. He said that they have a snake in the class.

When they went in to the class they saw the snake under table he was going straight at open window. Frank quickly closed the window and Daniel caught the snake. They quickly started to run away.

Later Daniel and Frank went to Daniel's house. They told the story to David's mum and she said that David was not allowed to bring his snake to school again.

After two weeks Frank joined the team again and they won the championship .

**Maciek Imioliek**

**A Bit About the Author:**

**Maciek Imioliek**



**My name is Maciek Imiolek and I am from Poland.**

**Im 13 years old.**

**My favourite sport is soccer.**

## **Megan Sheridan**

Frank could see that Daniel was really upset. Daniel had told him he had lost his snake somewhere in the school and he needed Frank's help to find it. He thought about it for a while and he knew he should help.

"But what about all the things he did to me?" he said to himself, but before he could say yes or no, Daniel interrupted, "I'm sorry for all the things I did to you I was jealous of you."

Frank really knew that Daniel was truly sorry so he agreed.

They thought of somewhere the snake could be.

"They like warm and dark places," said Daniel.

They looked everywhere. They saw Ellie and asked her to help. So the three of them looked for a warm dry place where the snake might be

"The Janitors Office," said Ellie and ran straight away. They looked through every little nook and cranny to find it.

Through all the things in the office, they found the snake in a toilet roll holder! They all let out a sigh of relief.

It was great. They had found Leo. Daniel was so grateful to Ellie and Frank He said sorry to everyone in the class and they were all friends. Everyone appreciated Frank and Ellie for everything now.

## **Megan Sheridan**



**Hi, Im Megan Sheridan Im in 6<sup>th</sup> class and Im 12 years old.**

**I live in Granard with my parents.**

**I enjoy art because you can be very creative.**

## **Michelle McAndrew**

Frank could see that Daniel was really worried. So Frank asked Daniel why was he was worried.

Daniel said, "I lost my snake."

He asked Frank to help him find it

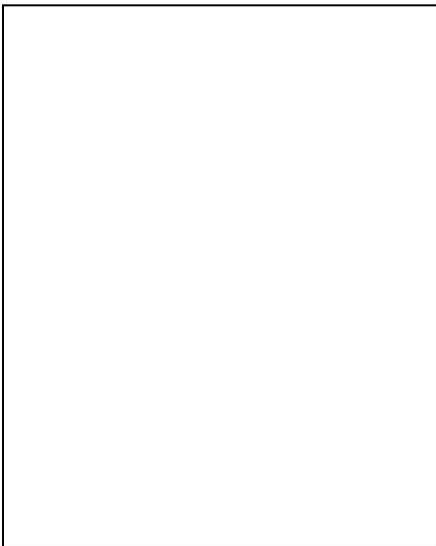
Frank said, "I will help you if you get me back on the team."

Daniel said, "I will try."

They both went to Ellie for help. Ellie did help and she looked up on the internet and found out lots of stuff about the snake. They looked everywhere in the school. They looked in the staff room. They looked outside and in the classrooms. They almost got caught but they told the teacher Frank was feeling sick so she let them go for a walk outside. They couldn't find the snake so Ellie came to help them Daniel was worried that he wouldn't find the snake and he would have got in trouble by his mammy

Daniel suddenly felt something going up his leg it was the snake. Daniel was delighted and he treated Ellie and Frank good all the time now ...

## **Michelle McAndrew**



**Hi I am Michelle McAndrew. I am 12 years old.**

**I live in Granard. I am in 6<sup>th</sup> class.**

**I like to draw and be creative.**

**I go to school in sacred heart primary school.**