

The Greatest Story Never Told

Stories from the Black experience to help you live your best life.



Hello Beloved,

Is there anyone you love enough to die for?

It's a serious question. So, think about it for a minute.

Many folks **say** they love someone... but they definitely wouldn't die for them.

But John 15:13 says this,

Greater love hath no one than this... that they lay down their life for their friends.

In **Part 4 of The Poet, the Frog, and the People's Champ...** you'll read about someone who had this kind of love.

It may cause you to think about **who really loves you...** and **who you really love.**

If you've not read **Parts 1, 2 and 3**... you'll want to do so before reading Part 4. You can get to them by clicking on the links below.

[The Poet, the Frog and the People's Champ, Part 1](#)

[The Poet, the Frog and the People's Champ, Part 2](#)

[The Poet, the Frog and the People's Champ, Part 3](#)

If you have read Parts 1, 2 and 3, read on my friend.

The Battle on Jefferson County Bridge



Outwitted

“ I heard Frog bellowing... we got your ass now.

But at first, I could only see his machine.

He had apparently sent some of his gang to block the logical route to the Black neighborhood.

But he was cunning enough to suspect that I might try to go over the Jefferson County Bridge and into Indiana.

So, he had come to seal it off.

Greater Love Hath No Man than This

Comparing our relatively slow bikes with his... and judging the distance to the bridge... it was obvious **Frog would be on our backs** by the time we made the top.

Ronnie leaned over...

His face, like mine, was wet... more from sweat than rain.

They want you the most, not me.

You go up ahead. I'll be behind. You dig?

I dug it.

We hit the bridge, and I began weaving from side to side.

Ronnie **dropped behind me** and slightly to my right.

I glanced over my shoulder to see **another Harley** directly behind Frog.

Kentucky Slim!

But Ronnie was right.

Frog, who was now almost even with him... completely ignored Ronnie and concentrated on me.

Whirling his chain like a cowboy ready to lasso a steer, he screamed...

Hey, Olympic nigger! So, you supposed to be a fighter?

He may have said more.

But with perfect timing, and in a coordinated move at full speed, **Ronnie leaped off his bike!**

With all his strength, **he hurled it** underneath Frog's front wheel.

Crash and Smash

Frog saw it... but too late.

He made a frantic jerk, cut to the left, and skidded up against the cement siding... **smashing himself and his woman** into the bridge column.

The woman let out a painful scream.

Badly hurt and bleeding, her blouse ripped, she scrambled over to help Frog, who hung dazed against the railing.

Chain Whipped

Kentucky Slim was coming up behind them... **whirling the same kind of chain** as Frog.

He was aiming it at my head.

Then occurred one of two **split-second moves** in my life, without which, my career would have been **forever altered.**

The second happened during **my first championship fight** with Sonny Liston.

In the fifth round, my eyes were blinded and burning from something on Liston's glove.

Angelo Dundee **pushed me back in the ring** only a split-second before the referee awarded the fight to Liston.

The first was on the Jefferson County Bridge.

Slim whipped his doubled-up chain **at my head**.

Instead of smashing my face though... the chain **wrapped around my shoulders**.

Instinctively, **I shot my hand out** and gripped the chain.

I jerked with all my might.

The force snatched Slim off his bike and **hurled us together** in a violent impact.

His head struck mine and stunned me. But not enough to stop me from smashing my fist into his face.

His body hit the ground. Blood spurted from his nose... and his empty Harley **careened into the railing**.

If We Die... He Dies

Frog's girlfriend was screaming.

They gonna kill Frog. They gonna kill Frog!

I looked over and saw that Ronnie had his forearm around Frog's neck, **choking him**.

Frog's blotchy face was even more distorted by the **veins popping** from his temples.

Ronnie's switchblade was pressed **against his throat**.

Get back, Ronnie snarled.

Get back... or I'll **cut his god-damned neck!**

Get back!

He started **slicing through Frog's leather jacket**... as though it were tissue paper.

Frog's girl dropped down on her knees, sobbing and pleading.

Reinforcements

Other gang members started arriving.

One, I remember, wore a flaming red, polka-dot neck piece. He also wore a German helmet from World War II.

I shouted to Frog's girl.

Tell them to **stay off the bridge!**

Get em' off the bridge!

She sprang up and flew down to the end of the bridge.

Waving her arms, she screamed... **y'all go back!** Go back!

They gonna kill Frog!

The gang slowed down but **kept creeping up** cautiously.

Let Frog tell them, I shouted to Ronnie.

Loosen up so Frog can tell them.

Ronnie eased his grip.

Frog... sucking in all the breath he could... and with more force than I expected, cried out.

Y'all go on home.

Go on home!

Lives Hanging in the Balance

For a second, his gang just paused at the bottom of the bridge, confused.

They shouted... **what do you want us to do Frog?**

Frog's girlfriend shouted back.

Do what Frog tells you, you hear?

Do what he tells you!

The rider with the German helmet pulled out what looked to be **a 45-caliber gun.**

I kept my eyes on his face for the **slightest flicker** of what he might do.

They could have overwhelmed us for certain, but just as certain, they knew Ronnie would **rip Frog's jugular vein.**

Lighten up, I whispered to Ronnie.

Frog is **our only hope**. Let him talk.

Ronnie loosened his grip... and Frog screamed out again.

His voice was a throaty, desperate gurgle.

I done told y'all, get back!

Go on back home.

You too Slim. Go on!

Catching a Tiger

Slim pulled himself together like a drunken man and rolled his bike back to the gang.

They consulted briefly, looked up at us, then slowly retreated down the street.

I didn't move.

I just watched until I heard the girl crying.

They're gone now, she said. **What y'all gonna do to us?**

Ronnie released Frog and let him crawl over to his bike.

He looked like a hunter who had chased what he thought was a bunny rabbit... only to discover **it was a tiger**.

His only thought now was **escape**.

His girlfriend struggled to help him mount the Harley, but **he kept falling off.**

I stood there looking at him, **feeling no anger, pity, or hatred.**

Just tension.

Amazing Grace

Neither of them could make the bike go **without our help.**

So, I moved over to the girl.

She cringed as though **she expected me to hit her.**

Please help us get going, she said. Please.

Her voice was very low... and very desperate.

We ain't coming back.

We'll keep going. I promise.

So, I straightened Frog's bent fenders to keep them from rubbing against the wheels.

Then I wrapped his fingers around the handlebars.

He was weak, unsteady, and coughing as though his throat was still in Ronnie's grip.

His blood was oozing through the shredded slits that Ronnie's knife had cut into his jacket.

As I helped him on his bike, there was **so much blood** that it soaked all the way through my T-shirt.

Ronnie and I **held the Harley up** on each side.

Then, we ran it down the incline and gave it a mighty push.

The electric starter was shot, but the Harley's engine finally sputtered and roared to life.

Is It Over?

The bike slowly moved off... swaying a little.

We waited anxiously to see if Frog would **regroup the gang**.

But what the girl said was true.

Frog rode right by them... and they all **fell in behind** him.

We stood there until they disappeared.

Then... all we could hear was the rain...

And the rattle of trains on the Kentucky side of the river.



The lynching attempt was finally over... but the **crucial lesson** it would teach lay just ahead.

But let's put a bookmark here beloved... and pick back up on our story next week.

In it, we'll see **how a people's champ was born...**

And perhaps how **we can be reborn too.**

Reborn into the best version of ourselves.

So, join us next Sunday for "**All That Glitters**"... or **Part 5** of **The Poet, the Frog and the People's Champ.**

Are You a Sharer?

*It ain't no fun if the homies can't have none.
~ Snoop Dog*

If you are and **would like to share** "**The Poet, the Frog, and the People's Champ**" **with a friend**, you can by clicking on the link below and copying and pasting the URL.

[The Poet, the Frog, and the People's Champ](#)

Once again, thank you for taking this journey with your fellow readers.

It's just one lesson from the greatest story never told.

If you have a story of your own that you'd like to share, send it to me at the email address below. I'd love to hear it.

Or, if you have comments, expressions, or feedback... feel free to hit me up at b.johnson@ethnicexpressions.com

Until next time,

Brian