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# Freddie Fernortner

FEARLESS FIRST GRADER®

Freddie

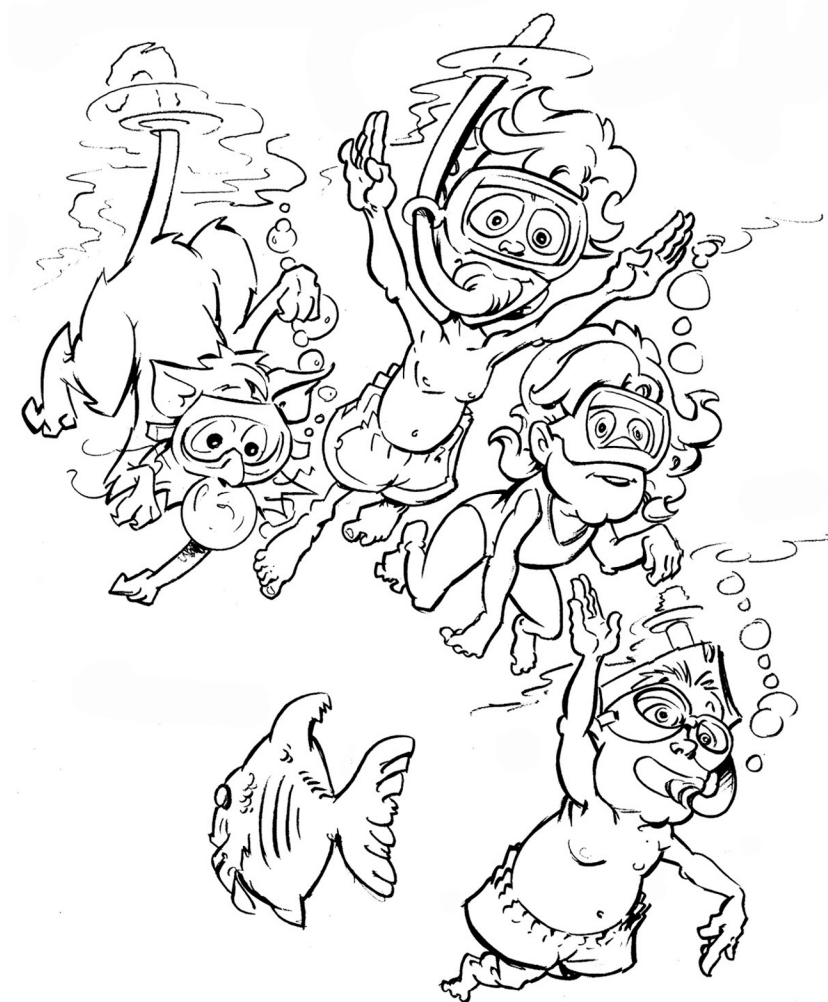
Darla

Chipper

Mr. Chewy



**THE MAGICAL WADING POOL**  
BY JOHNATHAN RAND



# 1

The day Freddie Fernortner's father brought home the magical wading pool was an exciting day, indeed. You see, Freddie, along with his best friends Darla and Chipper, had already had one big adventure: they had to save Freddie's cat, Mr. Chewy, from being carried away by a kite! Mr. Chewy got his name because, as a kitten, he learned how to chew gum and blow bubbles. And if you ever saw a cat chew gum and blow bubbles, you know just how funny it is!

The three first graders (and Freddie's cat, of course) were always looking for exciting things to do. Freddie Fernortner was very smart, and very fearless . . . which sometimes got the three friends in a lot of trouble.

And, once again, trouble wasn't far away.

Freddie, Darla, Chipper, and Mr. Chewy had been sitting on Freddie's porch when Mr. Fernortner came home carrying a box with bold letters that read:

**CONTAINS ONE  
MAGICAL WADING POOL**

The three friends wasted no time tearing into the box to see what it was all about.

"A magical wading pool!" Freddie exclaimed. "I wonder what it does!"

"I don't know," Chipper said as he helped open the box. "But I bet it'll be fun!"



Inside the box was a blue inflatable pool, swim masks, and some strange looking, colorful rubber tubes. Darla picked one up and looked at it.

“What’s this?” she wondered aloud.

“That’s a snorkel,” Freddie replied. “You use it to breathe while you float on the surface of the water. That way, you can look down through your mask and not have to take your face out of the water.”

“It will be cool to have our very own pool to swim in!” Chipper said.

“Let’s set it up in my back yard,” Freddie said. “Come on. Let’s put all this stuff back in the box and carry it around back.”

The three first graders returned the masks and snorkels to the box. Then, they carefully placed the limp plastic pool inside, too. (Actually, it didn’t look anything at all like

a pool . . . not yet, anyway.)

All the while, Mr. Chewy watched from the porch, chewing gum and blowing bubbles.

The box wasn't very heavy, and the three friends had no trouble at all carrying it into the back yard. Now, all they had to do was find the perfect spot.

"I say we set it up over there," Freddie said as he pointed, "near the bird bath. That's a good, sunny spot."

"Sounds good to me," Chipper said.

"Me, too," chimed Darla.

They carried the big box into the yard next to the bird bath. The day was sunny and bright. The wind had been blowing earlier, and it had been quite gusty. Now, however, there was hardly any wind at all.

Chipper looked around. "Hey, Freddie," he said, "remember when we built that big box



fort? That was a lot of fun!”

Freddie laughed. “Yeah,” he said. “We should do that again sometime!”

Suddenly, Mrs. Fernortner’s voice called out from the house. “Freddie! Time for dinner!”

“Okay, Mom,” he replied. He was hungry . . . but he was a little disappointed. After all . . . he wanted to get right to work, setting up the magical wading pool.

“I guess we’ll have to wait until tomorrow to set up our magical wading pool,” he said. “Let’s meet in the morning. Don’t forget to wear your swim suit!”

“I don’t get it,” Darla said as she gazed at the pool. She had a puzzled look on her face. “What’s so magical about it?”

It was a good question. Just what was so magical about the pool? Was it even magical at

all?

Oh, you can bet it was . . . and Freddie,  
Darla, and Chipper would find out for  
themselves the very next day!

## 2

The next day was sunny, bright, and warm. The sky was a beautiful blue, and there were no clouds. The flowers in Mrs. Fernortner's garden soaked up the sunshine, while bumblebees flitted among the colorful petals.

Freddie, Chipper, and Darla met in Freddie's back yard. Mr. Chewy was there, too, and he sat by the bird bath, watching the three first graders. And, as usual, the cat was

chewing gum and blowing bubbles.

“I was so excited last night I could hardly sleep!” Freddie said.

“Me, too!” Chipper said. “I’ve never been in a magical wading pool!”

The three first graders began to assemble the pool . . . which was pretty easy. All they had to do was take it out of the box (it looked like a big, blue bag that was folded) and blow it up. Freddie, Chipper, and Darla each took turns. Soon, the wading pool was ready. There was just one more thing they needed to do.

“Chipper, go get the hose from my mom’s flower garden,” Freddie said. “All we have to do is fill the pool with water, and we’ll be ready.”

Chipper hustled over to Mrs. Fernortner’s garden and found the bright green water hose. He picked it up and carried

it to the empty pool. While he did, Freddie ran to the house and turned the water on. Then, he ran back to the pool, where Darla and Chipper waited.

Water began running from the hose, and Freddie placed the end of it inside the wading pool. The water swirled and splashed as it filled the small wading pool.

But there was one small problem, and Darla was the first to notice it.

“The pool is very small, Freddie,” she said. “If we try to swim, there won’t be hardly any room.”

Chipper scratched his head. “Gee, Freddie,” he said. “Darla is right. The pool *is* really small.”

Freddie agreed. “Yeah, it’s small,” he said. “But it will still be a lot of fun. And besides . . . the box says that it’s magical.”



“I haven’t seen anything magical, yet,” Darla said.

“Me neither,” Chipper said.

True, the pool didn’t look magical. There were no colorful decorations of fish or shells or anything. It was just a bright, plain blue.

In a few minutes, the pool was filled with water. Freddie ran back to the side of the house and turned the water off. Then he ran back to the pool. Darla and Chipper were staring down into the clean, clear water.

“It still doesn’t look very magical,” Darla said.

“Well, we have to give it a chance,” Freddie said. And with that, he placed his foot in the water.

“Yipes!” he said, pulling his foot out quickly. “It’s ice cold!”

Darla tried with her foot, and she, too,

pulled it out really fast. “You’re right, Freddie,” she said with a shiver. “It’s freezing!”

“Let’s wait for a while until the sun warms it up,” Freddie said. “We’ll freeze if we try and swim right now!”

The three first graders agreed to meet after lunch, in Freddie’s back yard. That would give the sun plenty of time to warm the water in the magical wading pool.

“Very strange,” Freddie said as he looked at the pool after Chipper and Darla had left. Mr. Chewy was still near the bird bath, chewing gum and blowing bubbles, but now he scampered up to the edge of the pool and looked into the water.

“It says it’s a magical wading pool, Mr. Chewy,” he said to his cat, “but it looks just like an ordinary wading pool.”



But he was still excited about trying it out. That is, of course, when the water warmed up.

So, he went inside, where it was soon time for lunch. His mother made him a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. She also gave him an apple, several carrot sticks, and a glass of milk. She placed the meal on a tray, and Freddie carried it outside to the back yard patio, where he sat at the picnic table and ate. When he was finished, he took the tray back to the kitchen, thanked his mother, and went back outside. He sat down beneath a tree and waited for Darla and Chipper to arrive.

And, although Freddie didn't know it yet, the tiny wading pool was hard at work, becoming more and more magical by the moment.

# 3

“Freddie! Hey Freddie! Are you ready?”

It was Chipper. He was running across the grass, barefoot. Darla wasn’t far behind him. Both children carried colorful beach towels.

Freddie stood. “Yeah!” he exclaimed. “Let’s go!”

He got up, and the three first graders walked to the edge of the pool. Mr. Chewy

had been sitting by Mrs. Fernortner's flower garden, watching bumblebees, and he, too, joined the children at the wading pool.

"Let's not forget the masks and snorkels," Chipper said.

Freddie went to the box and turned it upside down. Out came four masks and four snorkels.

"That's funny," Darla said. "There's a mask and snorkel for each of us, and one extra."

"Maybe Mr. Chewy would like to go," Chipper snickered.

"Hey, maybe he would!" Freddie said. Then he turned to Mr. Chewy. "Do you want to swim in the magical wading pool?" he asked.

"But Freddie," Darla interrupted, "Mr. Chewy can't swim."

“The pool is only a few inches deep,” Freddie said. “He won’t need to swim. He can just wade around with us.”

Mr. Chewy seemed to like this idea. He scampered over to Mrs. Fernortner’s garden, where he quickly dug a small hole in the dirt. He placed his wad of gum in the hole, then covered it up. (If Mrs. Fernortner knew he was doing this, she would not be very happy.) Then he ambled back to the waiting first graders.

“Let’s see if this mask will fit you, Mr. Chewy,” Freddie said. He slipped the mask over the cat’s head. It was a perfect fit!

Darla laughed. “He looks funny!” she said as Freddie affixed the snorkel to Mr. Chewy’s mask.

Then, the three first graders each put on a mask and clipped a snorkel to the strap.

“See, you put this end of the snorkel in your mouth, like this,” Freddie said, showing Chipper and Darla. When he put it in his mouth it was hard for him to talk, but he managed. “That’s how we can breathe while we look down in the water.”

Chipper and Darla each put their snorkels into their mouths.

“I’m ready!” Chipper said, and his voice sounded hollow in the snorkel.

“I’m ready, too!” Darla said.

“We sound funny,” Chipper said with a laugh. Mr. Chewy meowed in the snorkel, and he, too, sounded funny.

“Then, let’s go!” Freddie said, placing a foot in the wading pool. The water was only deep enough to come up to his shin.

Then, he stepped all the way inside, and stood.



Darla stepped into the pool, and Chipper followed. Then, Mr. Chewy made a single, short leap . . . and landed in the pool. The water came up to his neck, but he didn't mind at all.

"So, where's the magic?" Chipper asked.

"I'm not feeling very magical," Darla said. "Maybe we got a broken wading pool."

"Maybe we have to swim around," Freddie said.

"Gee, there's not much room, with the three of us and Mr. Chewy," Chipper said.

"Well, let's give it a try," Freddie said, and he knelt down into the cool water.

Darla and Chipper knelt down, too.

"Just put your face in the water and breathe through your snorkel," Freddie said.

At the exact same time, the three first graders and Mr. Chewy leaned forward and

placed their face masks into the water—and  
what they saw was *incredible*.



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