

WILLIE

by
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Willie was very happy in his pond. He was born there, and he had spent all of his life swimming and playing. He was the fastest tadpole, and everyone knew it. He would swim from here to there and back again. He loved to swim.

The pond where he grew up was next to a large house. Sometimes the children would come out to swim in the pond. When this happened, Willie and his friends would hide. The children made so much noise when they were in the pond that it made them frightened. The children would splash and jump up and down. Willie did not like the children. They were very scary. Willie liked it better when the pond was quiet, especially at night.

Willie spent all of his time in the water. He looked for food. Sometimes he would go very deep and swim in the mud. Sometimes he would go to the surface and look at the moon. It was a fun time in his life, but soon things were going to change.

One day Willie noticed that he was no longer the fastest tadpole. Even though he tried and tried, he could not win. He looked down, and he noticed something funny. He was getting fat. He also had something new. There were strange things growing out of his body. What was happening to him?

As the days passed, Willie kept changing. He was getting fatter and fatter. Those things on his body were getting longer. When he wagged his tail to swim, he did not go anywhere. Soon he had no tail at all. It had disappeared.

He moved the things that were growing out of his body. When he moved his legs, he moved very quickly through the water. He did it again, and he went even faster. This was new for him.

He liked this new way of swimming. He began to feel something funny. He needed to go to the top of the pond. When he got there, he took a deep breath. For some reason he had to breathe. He could not stay in the water all the time anymore. He went to the top. He took a big breath of air, and it felt so good!

He looked around. He could see across the pond to the house where the children lived. He was swimming around the pond when he accidentally swam so fast that he popped out of the water. He was so surprised. He turned around and tried to swim back to the pond, but it did not work. He sat for a long time trying to figure out how he could get back into the pond.

Just then, he heard a sound. It went “hoo, hoo.”

It frightened him, and he jumped into the water. He dove to the bottom of the pond. He stayed there for a while. He then had to go to the surface. He took a big breath of air, and it felt so good!

During the next few days, Willie went to the edge of the pond. He liked to sit in the shallow water and look up at the big house and the moon at night. He liked his new body and how it worked.

The next day, two of his old friends swam over to where Willie was sitting.

They said to him, “Hey Willie, what are you doing?”

“I’m resting,” He replied.

“Why are you so tired?” they asked.

“I don’t know. I get tired of swimming all the time. I think I want to explore, but I’m afraid,” Willie replied.

One of the frogs looked at Willie, and said, “Willie, why are you brown? All of us are green. What happened to you?”

Willie looked down at himself. Sure enough, he was brown, and they were green.

“I don’t know,” replied Willie. “I’ve never noticed this before.”

The others began to laugh and tease Willie. “Willie is brown and we are green! Boy does Willie look funny!” they would sing.

Willie did not like the teasing. He did not want to be different. He wanted to be just like everyone else.

Willie got upset. He decided to go exploring. He was afraid, but somehow he knew this was what he was supposed to do. He crawled slowly out of the water. He hopped up into the long wet grass and stretched his legs. He looked around. He saw a big log. He jumped up onto the log so he could see more.

He was excited and scared at the same time. This was all so new to him.

He hopped off the log and moved through the damp grass. He heard many strange new sounds. He was exploring and he was enjoying it.

He was hungry, but he did not know what to eat. He heard a noise under a log. He slowly moved closer and closer to the log. He saw a black bug making a noise with its back legs. Suddenly his tongue snapped at the insect. He caught it, and then he had the bug in his mouth. It tasted so good. He looked for more of those noisy bugs to eat.

After hunting for crickets, he got tired. He made a hole under the log and took a nap.

When he woke up, he left the hole. He crawled on top of the log again. Something happened he was not expecting. His throat puffed up like a balloon. Then he made a really loud sound.

“Croak, croak!” was the sound he made. He liked the sound. He did it over and over again.

Just then, he heard a voice.

“What’re you doing?” the voice asked.

“I’m not really sure. Why do you ask?” Willie answered.

Then a brown frog hopped out of the grass. It looked just like Willie!

“Who are you?” Willie asked.

“I’m Wanda. Who are you?” She replied.

“I’m Willie the frog,” he responded.

“You’re not a frog,” Wanda laughed.

“I’m not?” Willie asked.

“No, you’re a toad,” Wanda informed him.

“A TOAD?! What’s a toad?” Willie answered very surprised.

Wanda explained to him that toads like to be on the ground in the tall grass. Frogs like to be in the water.

Now Willie knew why the frogs teased him. He was not a frog at all. He was a toad!



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VOCABULARY: (*Match the word to its definition*)

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. pond _____ | a. wiggle |
| 2. tadpole _____ | b. fallen tree |
| 3. splash _____ | c. small black bug |
| 4. surface _____ | d. small lake |
| 5. accidentally _____ | e. water spray |
| 6. wag _____ | f. brink, rim |
| 7. exploring _____ | g. baby frog or toad |
| 8. edge _____ | h. not on purpose |
| 9. log _____ | i. top |
| 10. cricket _____ | j. discovering, searching |

TRUE / FALSE:

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. Willie liked to swim. | T / F |
| 2. Willie lived in the house with the children. | T / F |
| 3. The pond was very deep. | T / F |
| 4. Willie liked to look at the moon. | T / F |
| 5. Willie was a frog. | T / F |
| 6. His new friend's name was Wanda. | T / F |
| 7. Willie slept under a log. | T / F |
| 8. The children played in the pond. | T / F |
| 9. Willie ate flies. | T / F |
| 10. Willie used to be the fastest swimmer. | T / F |

MULTIPLE CHOICE:

1. Where was Willie born? _____
 - a) in a pond
 - b) in a stream
 - c) in an aquarium
 - d) in the house

2. Who was the fastest tadpole? _____
 - a) Wanda
 - b) Willie
 - c) green frog
 - d) brown toad

3. What did Willie eat that he found under the log? _____
 - a) grass
 - b) Wanda
 - c) the log
 - d) a cricket

4. What sound did Willie make when he was sitting on the log? _____
 - a) CREAK
 - b) CROAK
 - c) SCREECH
 - d) BROKE

COMPREHENSION: *(Write a complete sentence to answer the question.)*

1. Who scared Willie and his friends when they went swimming?

2. Who was the fastest tadpole?

3. Where did Willie fall sleep?

4. What happened when Willie saw the cricket?

5. What did Willie see when he swam at night?

6. What color was Willie?

7. Who teased Willie?

8. What was the name of the other toad?

9. Where did Willie find the cricket?

10. What happened to Willie's tail?
