

WILLIE

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Willie was born in a pond and was happy playing with his friends. Up until now, he had spent all his life swimming and playing. He was the fastest tadpole, and everyone knew it. He loved to swim, and he would swim from here to there and back again.

The pond where he grew up was next to a big house. The children who lived there would come out to swim. They always made so much noise that it would frighten Willie and his friends. The children would splash and jump up and down. Willie did not like the children. They were so noisy and scary that he would hide. Willie liked it better when the pond was quiet, especially at night.

Willie spent all his time in the water. He loved to go deep and swim in the mud at night, and then 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 realized that he was no longer the fastest tadpole. Even though he tried and tried, he could not win. He looked down at himself, and he noticed something funny. He was getting fat, and he also had something new. There were strange things growing out from his body. What was happening to him?

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

He moved the things that were growing out of his body. When he moved them, 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.

To his surprise, he began to feel something funny. He needed to go to the top of the water. When he got there, he took a deep breath. For some reason, he had to breathe. He could not stay under the water all the time anymore.

One day, he was swimming around the pond so fast that he popped out of the water and onto the ground at the edge of the pond. He was so surprised. When he turned around to try to swim back into the water, 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.”

He was so scared that he jumped into the water. He dove to the bottom of the pond. He stayed there for a while, but then he had to go to the surface again to take a big breath of air.

At night, when the sky was clear, he enjoyed sitting in the shallow water looking up at the moon. 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,” Willie responded.

One of the frogs looked at Willie, and asked, “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 frogs began to laugh and tease Willie.

“Willie’s brown, and we are green! Boy does Willie look funny!” they would sing.

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

Willie got upset, so he swam away to be by himself.

He decided to go exploring. This is what he knew he was supposed to do, but he was

afraid.

Slowly, he crawled out of the water, hopped up into the tall wet grass, and stretched his legs. As he looked around, he saw a dead tree lying on the ground. He jumped up onto it, so he could see more. It was exciting and scary at the same time. This was all so new to him.

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

Willie was hungry, but he did not know what to eat. Then he heard a noise under a rock. Moving closer and closer to see what it was, he saw a black bug making noise with its back legs. Suddenly, Willie's 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 rock and took a nap.

When he woke up, he left the hole and climbed up onto the top of the log again. Something happened he was not expecting. His throat puffed up like a balloon. Then he made a 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 are 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.

Wanda laughed, “You’re not a frog.”

“I’m not?” Willie asked.

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

“A TOAD?! What’s a toad?” Willie answered, 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 had teased him. He was not a frog at all. He was a toad!

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

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. pond ____ | a. moved from side to side |
| 2. tadpole ____ | b. fallen tree |
| 3. splash ____ | c. small noisy black bug |
| 4. surface ____ | d. small lake |
| 5. accidentally ____ | e. to spray with water |
| 6. wagged ____ | f. shore, side, where water meets ground |
| 7. exploring ____ | g. baby frog or toad |
| 8. edge ____ | h. not planned, not on purpose |
| 9. log ____ | i. top of the water |
| 10. cricket ____ | j. discovering, looking for new things |

TRUE / FALSE:

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. Willie loved to swim when he was a tadpole. | 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 was named Wanda. | T / F |
| 7. Willie took a nap 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 tadpole. | 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 used to be the fastest tadpole? ____

- a) Wanda
- b) Willie
- c) green frog
- d) brown toad

3. What did Willie eat that he found under a rock? ____

- a) grass
- b) Wanda
- c) the log
- d) crickets

4. What sound did Willie make when he was sitting on top of the log? ____

- a) CREAK, CREAK
- b) CROAK, CROAK
- c) SCREECH, SCREECH
- d) BROKE, BROKE

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

1. Who frightened Willie and his friends when they went swimming in the pond?

2. Who was the fastest tadpole?

3. Where did Willie take a nap?

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 crickets?

10. What happened to Willie's tail?
