

WILLIE

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Willie was very happy in his pond. He was born there, and up until now, he had spent all 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 big house. Sometimes the children would come out to swim in the pond. The children always made so much noise when they were in the pond that it frightened 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. Willie liked it better when the pond was quiet, especially at night. When this happened, all of them would hide.

Willie spent all his time in the water. Sometimes he would go deep and swim in the mud. Sometimes, at night, 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. Soon 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.

Unexpectedly, 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 in 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. He turned around and tried to swim back into the water, 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."

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. He took a big breath of air.

At night when the sky was clear, he enjoyed sitting in the shallow water with his head out of the 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 others began to laugh and tease Willie.

"Willie is 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. He was afraid, but somehow, he knew this was what he was supposed to do. He crawled slowly 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.

He was excited and scared 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.

He was hungry, but he did not know what to eat. He heard a noise under a rock. He slowly moved 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. He 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 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 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, 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 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 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, unexpected |
| 9. log ____ | i. top of the water |
| 10. cricket ____ | j. discovering, searching |

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 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 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 the 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 scared Willie and his friends when they went swimming?

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?
