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Billy Bull's Lesson

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Billy Bull was just a young frog without much experience in the world and lacking judgment to compensate for his lack of experience. He had never ventured beyond the shores of the pond where he was born. But one day, while sunning himself on a lily pad, he spotted a duck with her ducklings swimming toward him and called out to her to come closer.

As she paused in her swimming, she asked, "You called me. What do you want? I am busy teaching my ducklings how to swim."

"Teaching them to swim? I didn't know there was anyone in the world so ignorant that they didn't know how to swim. I could swim as soon as I was born. But, well, not many creatures are as wise as a frog," Billy Bull boasted, puffing himself up.

"Is that all you wanted to say?" asked the duck.

"No, not all," replied the frog. "I wanted to know the direction to the nearest town. I've decided to leave this place and explore the world."

"Traveling, huh? With your short hops and round belly, you won't go very far on land," remarked the duck.

"Oh, I can hop quite far when I want to. I once leaped over a tree, and that wasn't even my best attempt," claimed the frog, although he knew it was untrue. He wanted to impress the duck and appear smarter than he actually was.

"Alright," said the duck, "if you're so eager to travel, I suggest you don't go farther than Farmer Wilson's, where I live. Even that is quite a distance, and I walk there without hopping."

"Alright," agreed the frog. "I'll meet you at Farmer Wilson's tomorrow morning. I'll bid farewell to this pond at daybreak."

"I'll be watching for you. Have a safe journey," replied the duck, swimming away with her ducklings.

The next morning, at daybreak, Billy Bull hopped onto the pond's shore. He took one last glance at the familiar waters where he had spent his entire life and started hopping towards Farmer Wilson's. As he journeyed, he thought to himself, "I wonder what the other frogs will think when I return and tell them about the amazing things I've seen. They'll surely be envious."



The sun rose higher, and the road became dry and dusty. "We could use some rain," Billy Bull muttered, wiping the dust from his eyes. He briefly rested in the shade of a tree but reminded himself not to linger, for Madam Duck was awaiting his arrival at Farmer Wilson's.

However, the farther he hopped, the dustier and thirstier he became. He yearned to jump into cool water, to cleanse and refresh himself. He imagined how cool and comfortable the frogs he had left behind in the pond were at that moment.

Suddenly, he noticed a boy approaching with a long rod in his hand, a string attached to it, and a sharp hook at the end. Billy Bull had seen such things before and had heard stories of curious fish that had swum near the hook, only to vanish forever.

As the boy neared the frog, he swiftly dove with his hand and captured Billy Bull.

"I wonder what he's going to do with me," pondered Billy, as he was carried back towards the pond at a speed he had never experienced before. The boy, eager to start fishing, ran as fast as he could. Billy overheard the boy say, "That bullfrog will make great bait. I should get a bite in no time."

Curiosity filled Billy's mind, but he didn't have to wait long to find out. As soon as they reached the pond, the boy attached Billy to the hook and cast him into the water. Billy swam for a short while but couldn't go any farther due to the taut line. The boy raised and lowered the fishing rod, and Billy had no choice but to follow the movements dictated by the line. It wasn't a pleasant experience.

Eventually, Billy reached a log in the water and swam beneath it. There, the line caught on the log, reducing the tension. Billy felt the line being yanked in different directions, but he struggled and swam hard to keep it beneath the log. Suddenly, he heard a snap, and he was free, though a fragment of the line still clung to him.

"What a close call," Billy remarked to himself. "I hope I never get caught like that again."

"You won't," a voice replied. "If you stay where you belong." Billy looked up and saw Madam Duck in the water, just above him. "Many creatures are wise in some aspects and foolish in others," Madam Duck continued. "Although you were born with the ability to swim, you didn't know enough to stay in the water. I didn't waste time waiting for you this morning, as I knew you wouldn't make it to Farmer Wilson's. To ensure that you don't leave the pond again, I'm going to tether you to this lily pad." Madam Duck securely tied the piece of string attached to Billy to a lily leaf.

If you ever find yourself rowing on a lake and spot a lily pad drifting, it might be the one to which Billy Bull, taught a valuable lesson, was fastened by Madam Duck. He learned that a frog should never stray far from the water.

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