

The Swan, the Pike and the Crayfish

One day a Swan was swimming in the water near the riverbank, bending his neck as he gazed into its depths. A Pike swam near him and stopped and asked, “Please be so kind as to tell me where you go when the river freezes over?”

“And why do you want to know?”

“Because I’d like to go somewhere for the winter. It is hard for me to breathe without fresh air under the ice,” replied the Pike.

“In winter I fly from here to warmer climes and live there until spring.”

“Take me with you,” pleaded the Pike.

“And why not? It’s all the same to me. If you wish we can go together—it will be more fun.”

A Crayfish overheard the conversation and interrupted, “Please take me, too.”

“Well why not? If you wish you may leave with us. We’ll be merrier as a group. We’ll wait till autumn and I’ll let you know when it’s time to fly off,” said the Swan. The Swan, you see, thought that since the Pike and the Crayfish swam in the water they could also fly in the air.

Summer passed by and autumn set in. One day the Swan said to the Pike, “Well, it’s time to fly off to warmer climes. Get ready to leave tomorrow. After lunch we’ll set off on the road.”

The Pike informed the Crayfish, who thought for awhile then said, “But Sister: how are we to live on dry land without food? Let’s take some provisions with us for the road, to last us until we reach our destination.”

“And how are we to take it with us?” asked the Pike.

“We’ll stow a cart with provisions, harness ourselves to it and take off. We’ll ask the Swan for company. He’ll help us and the three of us will pull the cart behind us.”

The Crayfish and Pike obtained a cart, wove a rope from grass and awaited the Swan. Next day the Swan flew by and said, "Well, I hope you are ready because I'm flying off."

"We're ready, we're ready, only please be so kind as to help us pull this cart. Let the three of us harness ourselves and set off."

"Okay. Fasten the trace around my leg." The Crayfish tied the Swan by the leg. His trace he clamped with his claws while the Pike grasped the third trace with her teeth.

"Well, all together now! Let's get going!"

The Crayfish jerked back with his tail fluttering, the Pike like a shot dived into the depths of the water and the Swan beating his wings sprang up into the air. All the ropes broke so the cart wasn't able to move. Who was to blame for this disaster no one knew and there was no one to judge. Only the frogs had a good laugh and were astonished that the Crayfish and Pike didn't know any better.