

Junior Division (16-20), Prose
Ava Sinclair, Mount Pearl
Amphibians (an excerpt)

Frog knew he was an amphibian. That much was true. But he was more than that. He was a Green Frog. He thrived on hunting small invertebrates, he enjoyed hopping between shrubs, he felt spiritually fulfilled when deeply ensconced in the heavy mud at the bottom of the swamp.

But the others had a nature that was natural to the heavenly order of things. They weren't slimy bottom dwellers. In their eyes, Frog was a walking idiosyncrasy.

And so Frog began to forgo his instinctive urges, exiling his habits that his friends found weird. He ate small fish like Bird, gathered sticks for Beaver to forge dams, and even hopped around with a rock on his back for a day, attempting to imitate Turtle. But all that he succeeded in was humiliating himself when the creatures saw him that morning. "You've got a pebble strapped to your back!" Bird had guffawed.

Frog tried everything to present himself in a new, sophisticated way. But the creatures still only saw him as Frog: slimy, small, and bizarre.

It wasn't until one day, when he was foraging deep in the brush for stray twigs, that he stumbled upon his reflection.

Toad, although a distinct creature from Frog, was very much like him. His proportions and roundness of body, while covered in bumps of a brownish hue, mimicked that of Frog's almost identically. Even his mannerisms were slightly similar, or if not, equal and opposite. For example, Frog had a tendency to blink very quickly, and Toad more gradually. But the fact that they both possessed a tendency in the area was what intrigued Frog.

"Are you an amphibian?" Frog asked first.

"A what?" Replied Toad.

Frog immediately liked him.