

# THE STORY MUSEUM

## Tiddalik

Long, long ago, there lived a giant frog called Tiddalik. One morning Tiddalik woke from a long sleep and found he was thirsty. And not just a little bit thirsty—enormously thirsty!

'I'm so thirsty I could drink a lake!' he said. And that is exactly what he did. He sat on the edge of a lake and he drank it all, every drop. He sat back and sighed deeply, but he was still thirsty. He hopped to the bank of a stream and drank all of it, every drop. He found a water hole and drank all of that too. All day he drank and drank, streams and rivers and lakes and water holes. All through the day he drank every drop of water he could find, and as he drank he swelled and swelled until finally he was no longer thirsty.

'Now I can sleep,' he said. And he did.

The next morning the sun rose hot and strong, and beat down on a land without water. Every lake was empty. The river beds were empty. The streams, watering holes, even the puddles were empty. All through the day the flowers and grass withered. The leaves on the trees turned brown and began to fall. Everywhere the birds and animals searched desperately for water.

Finally, they gathered together. 'Tiddalik has drunk all the water,' they said. 'Every drop. What can we do? Without water we will die!'

Tiddalik sat swollen and satisfied, and smiled at the animals. They begged and they pleaded, and he sat and he smiled. Finally, wise Wombat had an idea.

'We must make him laugh,' he said.

The animals tried everything. They pulled faces, but Tiddalik didn't laugh. They told jokes, but Tiddalik didn't laugh. They sang silly songs and they danced silly dances, but Tiddalik didn't laugh. They took it in turns to try. They wore themselves out trying. But Tiddalik didn't laugh.

Finally it was the eel's turn. He slithered along the dry river bed, pulled himself out onto the bank and he began to dance. He turned and twisted and tied himself in knots. He swayed and he shimmied, and finally Tiddalik's mouth twitched. He began to grin and then to giggle and finally he opened his wide mouth and he laughed out



loud. He laughed and he laughed until his sides were hurting and his eyes were streaming. And as he laughed all the water came flooding out of his wide open mouth until the lakes and the water holes were full, and the streams and the rivers flowed again, and the animals drank and drank and drank.

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