The Swan and the Duck

Jane MEADOW

The Swan and the Duck

Jane MEADOW

Once upon a time, a beautiful swan with pure white feathers and a long, graceful neck lived on a sparkling pond. The water was clear and cool, and the sun made little diamonds dance on the surface. In the reeds at the edge, a cheerful duck with bright yellow feathers and a round, plump body paddled happily. The swan and the duck were the best of friends, and they loved their pond home more than anything.

Every morning, the swan glided across the pond like a soft white cloud, her curved neck bending to look at the water. The duck bobbed beside her, quacking a happy song and splashing his orange webbed feet. They shared the pond with many friends: a wise turtle with a green patterned shell, a playful frog in a little leaf hat, and other animals who called the pond their home. It was a peaceful, happy place.

One sunny day, the swan and the duck were floating near the shore when something strange bobbed by. It was a crumpled paper bag, soggy and sad. The swan lowered her head and her dark eyes grew worried. 'Oh no,' she said softly. 'Look at this.' The duck paddled closer, his shiny black eyes wide. 'Where did that come from?' he quacked. They looked around and saw more trash floating on the water.

The swan felt a heavy feeling in her heart. 'Our beautiful pond is getting dirty,' she said. The duck's cheerful face drooped. 'The water looks sad,' he said. They saw plastic bottles, old wrappers, and bits of string tangled in the reeds. The swan's pure white feathers seemed to dim. 'We can't let this happen,' she said. 'This is our home.' The duck nodded. 'But what can we do?' he asked.

The swan thought for a moment. Her long curved neck straightened with an idea. 'We can become pond guardians,' she said. 'We can keep our home clean and beautiful.' The duck's black eyes sparkled. 'Yes! And we can ask our friends to help!' he quacked happily. The swan smiled and tied a small blue ribbon around her neck as a badge. The duck put on a little red scarf. 'We are the pond guardians!' they said together.

First, they swam to the wise turtle, who was resting on a warm rock. The turtle's green patterned shell shone in the sun. 'Will you help us clean the pond?' asked the swan gently. The turtle nodded slowly. 'I am old and slow,' he said, 'but I can carry a basket and pick up what I can.' He tied a tiny woven basket to his shell. 'I will do my part,' he said with a warm smile.

Next, they hopped over to the playful frog, who was sitting on a lily pad. The frog's bright green skin and big golden eyes sparkled with curiosity. 'We're cleaning the pond!' said the duck. 'Will you help?' The frog jumped up and down. 'Of course!' he croaked. 'I can hop ahead and spot the floating trash. My long back legs are good for jumping!' He put on his little leaf hat and was ready to go.

The swan and the duck called all their animal friends together. 'Our pond is our home,' said the swan. 'Let's work as a team to make it clean again.' The duck quacked happily. 'The more helpers, the better!' Everyone agreed. The turtle brought his basket. The frog wore his leaf hat and smiled. Other friends came too: a family of minnows, a shy heron, and a busy beaver. They all wanted to help.

The cleanup began! The swan glided gracefully, using her long neck to reach trash near the banks. The duck paddled quickly, grabbing floating wrappers with his flat beak. The turtle moved slowly but steadily, filling his basket with bits of plastic. The frog hopped from lily pad to lily pad, spotting litter and calling out, 'Over here! I found some!' Everyone worked together with happy hearts.

The duck quacked cheerful jokes to keep everyone smiling. 'This bottle looks like it wants to swim away!' he said, and the frog giggled. The swan encouraged the others. 'Great job, everyone! We're making a difference.' The turtle never stopped, even when his legs felt tired. 'Slow and steady,' he said. The frog brought tiny pieces to shore. The pond began to look better already, and their friendship grew with every piece of trash they picked up.

After hours of hard work, the last piece of litter was lifted from the water. The swan looked around and smiled. 'Look!' she said. The pond sparkled like a mirror, and the sun danced on the clean water. 'We did it!' the duck quacked, splashing happily. The turtle set down his full basket. 'Teamwork makes a big difference,' he said wisely. The frog hopped onto a lily pad. 'Hooray for the pond guardians!' he cheered.

All the animals gathered together. The swan's blue ribbon and the duck's red scarf fluttered in the breeze. 'Thank you, friends,' said the swan. 'Because we worked together, our home is beautiful again.' The duck nodded. 'And we promise to keep it clean every day!' The turtle agreed. 'We must all do our part,' he said. The frog jumped with joy. 'No more trash! Only clean water and happy friends!' Everyone clapped and cheered.

The swan and the duck looked at each other and smiled. Their friendship had grown even stronger. 'Being pond guardians is the best job ever,' said the duck. The swan nodded. 'And we couldn't do it without our friends.' The turtle, the frog, and all the others felt proud. They had learned that when everyone works together, even big problems can be solved. The pond was not just clean again; it was a place of teamwork and joy.

From that day on, the swan and the duck kept their promise. They became the official pond guardians, with the blue ribbon and red scarf as their badges. Every morning, they checked the water, and every evening, they reminded their friends to keep it clean. The turtle carried his basket, and the frog wore his leaf hat, always ready to help. The pond stayed sparkling and happy, a shining example of what friends can do together.

The animals of the pond lived happily together, sharing stories and games. The swan glided peacefully, and the duck quacked cheerfully. The turtle rested on his rock, and the frog leaped from pad to pad. They all knew that their clean, beautiful home was the result of teamwork and friendship. And they promised to keep it that way, every single day, because cooperation benefits everyone.

And so, the swan and the duck, the turtle, the frog, and all their friends kept their pond sparkling. They learned that when friends work together with kindness and care, they can make their world a better place. Every day, they celebrated their teamwork with happy quacks, gentle smiles, and joyful leaps. And the pond, clear and bright, reflected the love and friendship of all who called it home. THE END.