

THE MYSTERIOUS TADPOLE

The Mysterious Tadpole

by Steven Kellogg (Dial)

Themes: Animals As Pets/Humor

Grade Level: K-4

Running Time: 9 minutes, animated

Summary

THE MYSTERIOUS TADPOLE concerns a boy who receives a birthday gift from his uncle in Scotland each year. This particular year he receives a tadpole. As the tadpole grows larger and larger, the boy enjoys teaching it to retrieve objects.

Eventually, the tadpole grows so large that the boy decides to keep it in the swimming pool of the local junior high school for the summer. When school resumes, the boy must find a new home for his enormous pet.

The boy pleads with the librarian to help him raise money to buy the parking lot near his home where a pool can be constructed for the creature. The librarian recalls that a pirate treasure ship was sunk long ago in the local harbor. Since the boy's pet had become so good at retrieving things, it just might be able to uncover the treasure.

Sure enough, the creature retrieves the treasure and a pool is constructed for him in the parking lot. The story ends with the boy's uncle arriving at his home with a new birthday present---a stone that actually proves to be an egg. Can you guess what's in that egg?!

Objectives

- Children will learn about the stages of development of frogs
- Children will explore ways of caring for pets
- Children will investigate the world of fantasy and reality

Before Viewing Activities

Share the book *The Mysterious Tadpole* with children.

Talk with the children about their favorite birthday gifts?

Ask: Who gave you this gift? Why were you so happy with it? What did you do with it? Where is it now? What kinds of things would you like for your next birthday? What kinds of things would make good birthday gifts for your special friends?

Discuss the ways children care for their pets. Ask: What do you feed your pet? How do you care for your pet when it is ill? Where do you keep your pet? What kinds of things do you like to do with your pet?

After Viewing Activities

Talk with children about the stages of development of frogs. Explain that they lay their eggs in the water. When the eggs are hatched, tadpoles, baby frogs with gills and a tail, leave the eggs and feed on plants found underwater. As the tadpoles grow, the gills disappear and are substituted with lungs, limbs grow, and the adult appears as a frog which can survive on land. Provide photographs of tadpoles and frogs so that children can see the differences between them.

Discuss the Loch Ness monster. Ask children: Do you think monsters are real or make-believe? Why? Why do you think people long ago might have believed in something like a Loch Ness monster? What other kinds of things do people believe in that may not be real? If you could write a new ending to the story, one in which the tadpole was not found to be a monster, how would you explain the tadpole's growth?

Supply children with art supplies which they can use to create their own imaginary pet creatures. Have children share as much information as they can about their pet creatures with their classmates.

Other book based films and videos about pets are available from Weston Woods. These include:

THE DAY JIMMY'S BOA ATE THE WASH written by Trinka Hakes Noble and illustrated by Steven Kellogg

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