

Picture 1

This is a story first told by aboriginal people in what we now call Australia. Over many years, it spread around the world as good stories do.

When I learn a story, I think that something of the people who created it lives on in me. If you remember the story, it will live on in you too and you can tell it to others.

Picture 2

Long, long ago, a big frog called Tiddalick woke up with a deep thirst. He hopped to the nearest water hole and drank it dry. But he was still thirsty. He drank the water from ALL the water holes, then from all the rivers and all the lakes.

He drank and drank until there was no water left anywhere in the land. Tiddalick was so bloated he couldn't open his mouth for fear the water would spurt out like a fountain. He kept his mouth tight shut.

Everywhere, the land was dry, the trees and plants wilted in the hot sun and all the other animals were as thirsty as could be.

Picture 3

They pleaded with the bloated frog: 'Please, Tiddalick, please give us some water. Don't keep it all for yourself!' Tiddalick shook his head. His cheeks wobbled with the water trapped inside, the water that the animals needed to stay alive. Three times they asked Tiddalick to share the water and three times he shook his head.

The animals held a meeting to discuss this serious problem. They decided that each animal in turn would give the best reasons it could to persuade Tiddalick to release the water back to the land.

Picture 4

This is how the story ended. After all their arguments failed, the animals decided to make Tiddalick laugh so that all the water would flow out of his bloated body and back into the water holes, the rivers and the lakes.

'Let the laughter begin!' they shouted. The kangaroos bounced around in the silliest ways, the emus went cross-eyed, the platypus tried to sing like a dove and the kookaburra laughed and laughed, in a way that sounded just like a human being. But nothing worked. Tiddalick didn't laugh. He didn't even smile. Not a drop of water left his mouth.

Picture 5

The last animal to have a go was the eel. She danced and giggled. She twisted and turned with such energy that she tied herself in a knot. She struggled and strained. She shouted and screamed. But she couldn't untie herself. The bouncing kangaroos couldn't help her, the singing platypus couldn't help her, the cross-eyed emus couldn't help her and the kookaburra just kept on laughing.

Tiddalick started to wobble and shake. He could feel a big laugh growing inside him. He tried to keep it in, but it had to come out.

Picture 6

Suddenly, Tiddalick burst out laughing and as he laughed all the water gushed out of his mouth. The flood of water filled up the dry holes and the rivers and the lakes. The great drought caused by Tiddalick the frog was over.