

MY WILLIE WALLEYE TALE

by Roscille Boomgaarden

One cold autumn day, two Norwegian bachelors, Ole and his younger brother Lars, decided to go fishing. They took their fishing poles, a can of worms and, in their small wooden rowboat, rowed out to the middle of Rainy River down by Wheeler's Point.

Lars said, "I feel lucky today. Maybe ve can catch dat big von, dat Villie Valleye, you know, dat every von talking about."

"I dunno," replied Ole. "Me tink he maybe hard to catch, him plenty smart, dat von."

Just then Willie Walleye came swimming along, looking for an adventure. When he spied the rowboat and heard their conversation, he thought, 'This is going to be fun,' and chortled to himself as he swam around the boat. Now and then he nibbled at their bait and gave an occasional tug of their lines.

At the sight of that gigantic fish, those two gabby Norwegians were rendered absolutely speechless. They could hardly believe their eyes. Willie, chuckling to himself, thought, 'You haven't seen nothing yet.'

Then, pretending to be caught, he very carefully took the hook in his mouth and swam rapidly up the river, pulling the boat and astonished fishermen behind him.

Lars cried "Ole, Ole, vat ve doo now?"

"Ve yost hol on til he get tuckered oot, den ve pull him in," replied Ole.

That sounded like a plan, so they both held on to that pole while, mile after mile, Willie Walleye took them on a merry ride up the Rainy River.

Occasionally he would slow down, pretending to be all tired out, but when they had him almost in the boat, with a lunge, he would take off again. Gleefully, he continued this game for hours.

Suddenly, they were terrified with fright as the Clementson Rapids loomed in sight. Then Willie carefully released the hook from his mouth and, leaping high in the air, with a wink of his eye and a flip of his tail, he waved goodbye, turned and with a big splash swam back down river.

Lars screamed, “Ole, Ole, vat ve doo now?”

“Ve pray, ve pray hard!” Ole shouted as the boat hit the rocks with a jolt, sending them sailing through the air to land beyond the rapids in the swirling current.

When they finally reached the shore, shivering with cold and exhaustion, they watched as pieces of their boat went drifting by.

With a sigh, Ole exclaimed, “Shur vas gud ting ve be such gud svimmers.”

“But Ole, yost look at our boat. It be all busted oop,” Lars lamented.

“Yas, Lars, dat is soo, but yost tink bout da story ve vill haf to tell now.”