

HERO OF THE LAKE

by Kevin Hilbrand

Willie Walleye was born in Lake Superior where he lived as a normal little fish, but one thing was unique about Willie. See, Willie could not be caught by anyone. He always managed to escape in some way. Even large commercial fishing nets could not hold young Willie; his teeth were so sharp that he simply bit through the rope and swam away.

As many years went by, Willie was still never caught and because of this he grew and grew and grew. He became so big and strong that he could swim to anywhere in almost no time at all, without ever getting tired. In fact, he was bigger than most of the fish in the ocean, so he decided he wanted to go travel around other rivers and lakes in the country.

Willie figured that he would start with the rest of the Great Lakes, but when he got there, the fish were scared of him and wouldn't talk to him because he was so big. So, he moved on to the Mississippi River thinking that river fish might be nicer to him. But wherever he went the fish wouldn't talk to him. They would just swim away and hide in small holes where Willie couldn't see them. Besides, these other rivers and small lakes were just too small for him; he barely even fit under the water.

Willie just kept swimming from lake, to river, to stream, farther and farther north, feeling that no one would ever like him. He swam so far north that he realized he was almost in Canada; he was in Lake of the Woods. He thought to himself, this is the only place left so the fish here must be nice to him. But as before the fish swam away, scared of Willie. Willie was by far the biggest fish any of them had ever seen. In fact, he was even bigger than most of the fishing boats on the lake.

This made Willie so sad that he just swam sadly around for weeks until one day a commercial fishing boat with huge nets showed up on the lake and was catching all of the other fish. Once in the net, the poor fish were too small and weak to get out. They all thought this would surely be the end, but then out of nowhere came Willie swimming as fast as he could to save them. Willie jumped into the air over the boat to scare the fishermen. Then with one huge bite he cut the entire net free from the boat, releasing all of the other fish. After that, he chased the boat all of the way back to shore. The fishermen were so scared of Willie that the boat never went on the water again.

When he swam back to the middle of the lake, all of the fish greeted him as an instant hero, and he would forever be remembered as Willie Walleye, Hero of the Lake.