

Scales

Marta was nervous. Shelley had invited her to go to her lake house for the weekend. Mom and Dad had said yes! But a lake meant swimming, and Marta had never gone swimming before.

The car pulled up to the house. Marta thought it looked beautiful. There was a big porch with flowers in front. There were lots of green, leafy trees. And there, in the distance, Marta could see the lake.

Shelley jumped out of the car. “Come on, Marta!” she called. She ran upstairs with her backpack. She opened it and took out a swimsuit. “First swim of the weekend!”

Marta followed her slowly. She unzipped her bag. She took out the green swimsuit that Mom had bought her only yesterday. She thought maybe she could just bob around holding on to the pier. That way Shelley wouldn’t notice that she couldn’t swim.

Shelley flew down the stairs in her pink suit. Marta plodded down after her in her green one. She was sure that every other 4th grader on the planet knew how to swim. It was so embarrassing.

At the lake Shelley walked out to the end of the pier. Marta followed. Shelley jumped in with a giant splash. “Wheee!” She flipped onto her back and floated. Then she dove deep and shot up out of the water.

“Come in, Marta!” Shelley called. “It’s so refreshing!”

Marta dipped her toe in the water. She couldn’t delay any longer. She sat on the edge of the pier and dangled her legs in. And that’s when she noticed it. Something was shimmering on her ankle.

Marta bent down to take a closer look. The shimmery stuff was spreading. As they crept up her leg she could see they were scales! They were green and sparkly in the sunshine. What was happening?!

Marta lowered herself into the water. The scales spread higher. They stopped when they reached her waist. She looked down. Through the clear lake water she could see it. A beautiful, green, mermaid tail!

“Shelley!” Marta screamed. “Look!”

Shelley swam over to see. “Oh my goodness, Marta!” she exclaimed. “Why didn’t you tell me you were a mermaid too?”

“Too?” asked Marta. She looked down at Shelley’s legs. Sure enough, below her waist was a shimmering, pink tail.

“Let’s go!” said Shelley. She swam off towards the center of the lake. Marta followed. To her surprise, her tail made it easy for her to swim. It felt amazing!

“Where are we going?” she called.

“The mermaid grotto,” Shelley answered. “You’re going to love it!”



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

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 - a. She wouldn't go to the lake
 - b. She would pretend to be sick
 - c. She would hang on to the pier
 - d. She would float on a raft

2. What did Marta discover at the lake?
 - a. She was a mermaid
 - b. Shelley was a mermaid
 - c. She could swim
 - d. All of the above

3. Why did Marta follow Shelley slowly upstairs?
 - a. Because she was tired from the drive
 - b. Because she was angry at Shelley
 - c. Because she didn't want to go swimming
 - d. Because her foot hurt

4. What does the author mean by "Shelley flew down the stairs"?
 - a. Shelley walked down quickly
 - b. Shelley flew through the air
 - c. Shelley slid down the banister
 - d. Shelley acted like a bird

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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