

The Tadpole's Promise. By Jean Willis and Tony Ross

Where the willow meets the water a tadpole met a caterpillar. They gazed into each other's tiny eyes and fell in love. He was her beautiful rainbow and he was a shiny black pearl. "I love everything about you," said the tadpole.

"And I love everything about you," said the caterpillar. "Promise you'll never change."

"I promise," he said.

But as sure as the weather changes the tadpole could not keep his promise. Next time they met he had grown two legs. "You've broken your promise," said the caterpillar.

"Forgive me," begged the tadpole. "I couldn't help it, I don't want these legs, all I want is my beautiful rainbow.!"

"All I want is my shiny black pearl. Promise you'll never change," said the caterpillar.

"I promise," he said.

But as sure as the seasons change, the next time they met he had grown arms. "That's twice you've broken your promise," said the caterpillar.

"Forgive me, begged the tadpole, I couldn't help it. I don't want these arms all I want is my beautiful rainbow."

"All I want is my shiny black pearl, I will give you one last chance," said the caterpillar.

But as surely as the world changes, the tadpole could not keep his promise. The next time they met he had no tail. "You have broken your promise three times and now you have broken my heart."

"But you are my beautiful rainbow," said the tadpole.

"Yes but you are not my shiny black pearl," said the caterpillar.
"Goodbye." She crawled up the willow branch and cried herself to sleep.

One warm moonlit night, she woke up. The sky had changed, the trees had changed, everything had changed except her love for the tadpole even though he had broken his promise she decided to forgive him. She dried her wings and fluttered down to look for him.

Where the willow meets the water a frog was sitting on a lily pad.
"Excuse me she said, have you seen my shiny black..." but faster than she could say pearl, the frog leapt up and swallowed her in one great gulp. And there he waits, thinking fondly of his beautiful rainbow, wondering where she went.