

Characters: Mother, Polly, Dream Fairy, Wesley Water Boatman, Shirley Whirligig Beetle, Dana Damselfly Nymph

Prop: Pond Polly—girl puppet with swim mask, snorkel, and paddles for extra arms

Mother

Polly, honey, just where are you going at this time of night?

Polly

Out to the pond, of course. I need a quick swim before bed.

Mother

But Polly, you've been swimming in the pond all day. I think that's enough! Now off to bed you go. Come on, hop to it. *[exits]*

Polly

Hmmm. I'd rather hop right to the pond. I wish I were a frog or a fish or a water bug; then I'd spend my whole life in the pond! Well, the sooner I fall asleep, the sooner I'll be able to go to the pond again! *[lies down; Dream Fairy enters]*

Dream Fairy

As an expert on dreams, I think t'would be good
To make sure Polly knows all that she should.
For life in the pond is not all it may seem
As she shall discover in her very next dream.
[Dream Fairy leaves and dream begins]

Polly

Oh, I'm so happy. Mom says I can live in the pond forever. I won't bother packing a suitcase. I'll just wear my bathing suit. *[Water Boatman enters]*

Wesley Water Boatman

Hold on, Polly. You're going to need more than a bathing suit.

Polly

Who are you?

Water Boatman

I'm Wesley Water Boatman, at your service.

Polly

Oh, I've seen you paddling around in the water. You're so quick. It must take a lot of practice to swim like that.

Water Boatman

It takes more than practice, Polly. We water insects are well equipped for life in the pond.

Polly

Well, I'd like to be well equipped, too. What should I pack?

Water Boatman

Well, you'll need more legs, for one thing.

Polly

More legs? Oh, I guess having six of them must really speed you right along. Don't worry – I'll use both my arms and my legs to help me swim.

Water Boatman

But how will you catch food? We use our two front legs for that.

Polly

Well, let's see. I'll have to use my hands to catch food. I know! I'll tie canoe paddles to my waist for pushing. Then we'll both look like little rowboats with oars sticking out to the sides!

Water Boatman

That might work. But maybe you should meet some more water bugs and see what other kinds of equipment you might need.

Polly

But what more could I possibly need? *[Water Boatman exits; Whirligig Beetle enters]* Hey, where's Wes? And who are you?

Shirley Whirligig Beetle

Why, hello. Let me introduce myself. I'm Shirley, a whirligig beetle.

Polly

Oh, you're one of those little bugs that spin about the pond like little bumper cars. It's amazing you never bump into each other.

Whirligig Beetle

Thanks to our antennae, we steer clear of trouble. They feel the tiny waves in the water and tell us where we can and cannot go.

Polly

Well, it's a good thing you have those antennae! Your eyes are split in half, so they must not work very well.

Whirligig Beetle

They are split, but all the better to see with, my dear. The upper half can see above the water, and the lower half can see under the water. We don't miss a trick!

Polly

Hmm. Maybe I should bring along swim goggles, too!

Whirligig Beetle

Good idea! Well, I've got to dive. See you down under! I'll just grab a bubble of air before I go. It lets me breathe under water. *[exits]*

Polly

Breathe under water! Oh no, I hadn't thought about that. I'd better pack a snorkel, too. Gosh! This is getting complicated! *[Damselfly Nymph enters]*

Dana Damselfly Nymph

You could just breathe the way I do – with gills.

Polly

With gills? You don't look like a fish! Who are you?

Damselfly Nymph

I'm Dana the Damselfly Nymph. I live under the water now, but someday I'll have wings. Then I'll be a dainty damselfly hovering over the pond.

Polly

Sounds exciting. Now, did you say you have gills? I don't see any.

Damselfly Nymph

What did you think these tails at the end of my body were for? Wagging?

Polly

Well, yes. I mean, no. I mean, I just thought they were tails.

Damselfly Nymph

Well, these tails have gills. And I couldn't breathe under water without them. Now I'd better dive, or I'll be a damselfly in distress! *[exits]*

Polly

Oh, now I'm in distress! I don't have tails or gills! *[Water Boatman appears]*

Water Boatman

So, Polly, are you all set for living in the pond?

Polly

Well, I'm not so sure anymore. There are so many things I'll need.

Water Boatman

Don't worry. I made a model for you. If we can just get you looking like this, then you'll live happily ever after in the pond! *[Water Boatman disappears, Pond Polly puppet appears]*

Polly

Ahhhh! *[Polly faints, Pond Polly exits, then Polly wakes up]* What a nightmare I just had! I've had bad dreams with monsters in them, but never one where I was the monster! Swimming in the pond is one thing, but living there is quite another. Good night, everyone!

Reproduced with permission of the publisher: Lingelbach and Purcell, eds. *Hands-On Nature*, 2nd edition. Woodstock: Vermont Institute of Natural Science, 2000.