



**T**his is the story of an underwater duck, a duck who wanted to know the world under the surface, which reflected his image. The story started on the day the duck ducked for the very first time. Shoals of small fish swam away in front of him and vanished into the green bottom of a cave.

"Where are they going to?" Asked the duck, but nobody could give him an answer.

He ducked again and again. Deeper and deeper. Longer and longer. After much practice, he managed to imitate the frogs that jump and dive, jump and dive, as if they aren't happy anywhere. But the underwater duck felt better with his head under the water than out of it.

Once, when the underwater duck was about to duck, he met a trout, who was jumping up. They weren't going in the same direction, but as the river is a street of good neighbours, they started a conversation:

"Always the same water, always the same seaweeds." Sighed the trout. "I wish I had wings..."

The duck was amazed:

"I can't believe it! Don't you enjoy swimming, my friend?"

"Not a bit. I run away from the river the more I can. I'm now practicing jumps, higher and higher, longer and longer leaps. Would you like to see?" Very agile, the trout jumped over the branch of a willow, which was leaning over the water.

"Good! Good!" Applauded the duck.

"It'll get much better. I'll be able to jump over the bridge, you'll see!"

They went about their living, each of them. The duck went back to his deeper and deeper ducks... The trout went on with his higher and higher jumps...

Let's make here a pause in our story to go somewhere else. From the river we'll go to the bank. There's a man there with a straw hat, who, very patiently, unrolls a line and plunges it into the water. He holds the fishing rod very firmly and waits. What can possibly happen?

From the bottom of the river, the underwater duck spots a bit of bread hanging high, magnificently hanging above. He went close, but the bit of bread or whatever, sneaked further away. The underwater duck throws himself onto it and gives it a good bite.

On the bank, the fisherman shuddered from his feet to his hat.

"This is no small fish." He exclaims.

No, it wasn't! It was a duck, and a big one!... After a hard struggle, when he saw what the line was bringing him, the man with the straw hat opened his mouth wide. He was so amazed that he didn't hear the shot that, in the surroundings, some hidden hunter had possibly aimed at some careless bird.

"It's amazing!" Said the fisherman, taking the duck out of the hook. "When I tell this story, nobody will believe me..."

"I will." Said a voice right behind him.

The fisherman turned his head, and what did he see? A hunter holding a trout.

"I was crossing the bridge, when a fish jumped right before my eyes, almost brushing my rifle. I instinctively shot." He explained.

"Fish fly and birds swim. The world is upside down." Said the fisherman.

They stared at each other, not knowing what to say, till the hunter suggested:

"We could swap. Yes, because, above all, I'm a hunter."

"And I'm a fisherman." Added, very quickly, the man with the straw hat.

In affliction, the trout struggled in the hunter's hand. The shots had hardly grazed him. Also the duck was pulling himself together and shook his wings.

The hunter and the fisherman were about to swap. And it was at the exact moment of the exchange, at that very moment that... that... can you guess what?

The duck flew away and the trout dived. To different places and as quickly as they could.

"Shoot him!" The fisherman shouted to the hunter.

"Which of them?" He asked, at a loss.

Our heroes saved themselves and the story was saved, too. The duck flew high up in the air and the fish swam to the bottom of the river. They had had enough adventures. They had something to tell. And so do we...

THE END