There are three friends in our story: a duck, a fox and a seagull.

One sunny morning, the fox, who was called Foxy, and the duck, who was called Ducky, were on their way to a pond; the duck wanted to swim and feast on some mollusks and aquatic plants.

The fox wanted to fish: he was carrying an empty basket (which he was hoping to fill with fish), and a fishing net.

As they were walking towards the pond, they were singing happily:

Hey – o – hey, it’s a wonderful day!

Hey – o – hey, it’s a wonderful day!

The duck said:

I can’t wait to get to the pond. I long for a swim. And I’m hungry, too. I’m going to eat my fill of mollusks.

The fox said:

Oooh, when I think of all the fish I’m going to catch! You will help me, Ducky, won’t you?

Ducky answered:

You know I always do! What are friends for?

Suddenly, the fox said:

Look at that strange bird! I think there’s something wrong with it! It can’t fly! It‘s going to fall!

The strange bird fell, rather than landed, barely breathing and unable to move.

The fox said:

What a strange bird! Nothing like I’ve ever seen!

The two friends looked at her and did not know what to make of the situation: the duck thought that she might be a distant cousin (the strange bird had webbed feet, just like hers):

She’s got webbed feet. She could be my cousin Gemima Puddleduck’s daughter.

The fox said:

Maybe she was attacked by a predator. Poor thing!

Not knowing what to do for the strange bird, the two friends decided to let it rest and they went about their business: the duck swam happily and gorged on mollusks; the fox proved to be a successful fisher – true enough, his friend the duck did her best to direct the fish towards her net.

After a while, the strange bird began to move and opened his eyes. In a low voice she addressed the three friends:

Hello!

To which Ducky and Foxy both answered:

Hello yourself.

The duck, who thought she might be her distant cousin, asked:

Could you, by chance, be my cousin Gemima Puddleduck’s daughter?

No, said the strange, bird, I’m not. I’m not a duck, I am a seagull. My name is Siggy.

Nice to meet you, Siggy!

Nice to meet you, too.

But neither the fox, who was known for his shrewdness, nor the duck had ever heard of such a bird.

So, they started asking questions:

Where do seagulls live?

What do they eat?

Are they friendly?

This last question brought tears to the eyes of the seagull and this made the two friends very uncomfortable.

Wiping her tears with her right wing, the seagull told them the sad story of her life:

I come from Greece, and that’s a country far away. I flew and I swam and I fed on fish and I’m tired. And I’m so terribly sad and so terribly lonely. And I don’t know what to do and where to go.

And, yes, seagulls are friendly. But friendship is not for everybody. I had a friend once, a dolphin. His name was Finny.

What was he like? Asked the fox.

He was the kindest, the most devoted and trustworthy friend. We used to spend a lot of time together. We went fishing, just like you two do, we shared thoughts, secrets and hopes. Answered the seagull

Just like us! Said Ducky

Yes, we fish together, too, but Ducky doesn’t eat fish, said Foxy

No, I only like mollusks, aquatic plants and grass, of course. And the occasional earthworm. But we have our meals together anyway. Said Ducky.

So, where is your friend now? Is he coming here, too? We’d like to meet him. Said Foxy.

No, he isn’t. And I don’t know where he is now.

But why ? asked Ducky

Everybody thought our friendship was odd, especially our families.

*Odd*? What is *odd*? Asked Ducky and Foxy together.

You know, strange, unusual, not like anything else or anybody else.

And how is everybody else? Asked Ducky.

Well, my folks said that birds of a feather flock together. So I shouldn’t make friends with a creature that doesn’t have feathers.

I don’t have feathers, said Foxy, but Ducky doesn’t mind that. Do you Ducky?

Oh, no, feathers are not important at all.

His family also said that we had nothing in common. That oil and water don’t mix. That I cannot swim underwater. Not like him, anyway.

But I can’t swim at all and Ducky is still my friend. My very best friend, said Foxy

No, this cannot continue, you must end it, right now, said our families.

So we were both sent our different ways: I flew north and my friend swam south. God only knows where he is now! And I miss him so much!

Ducky and Foxy were very uncomfortable. But, being so kind-hearted, they said:

We’ll be your friends! You can stay here with us.

Can I? You don’t mind my being different?

Of course not! You’re not *that* different! You’ve got feathers and webbed feet just like me. And you like fish, just like Foxy here. My friend is your friend and your friend is my friend!

So, a beautiful new friendship began. They fished and played together. They ate and talked. They learned so much about each other and from each other. But, still, Siggy missed Dolphy and she often sighed and said it out loud.

Seeing her sadness, Foxy and Ducky said:

Perhaps you should fly south and try to find him. Maybe he, too will swim north and you could meet somewhere.

But Siggy hesitated.

One day Siggy and Ducky were swimming happily and diving to guide the fish towards Foxy’s fishing net. All of a sudden, Siggy came out of the water with a strange object in its beak. She brought it to shore and the three looked at it curiously.

What could it be? I’ve never seen anything like this before.

Foxy, who was known for his shrewdness, had an idea.

It’s from under water, isn’t it? Well, then, the only one who would know what it is and what it’s use could be is your friend Finny. After all, he knows the underwater kingdom like nobody else.

Yes, said Ducky, Foxy is right. This is a sign that you must go and find your friend.

You think so?

We *know* so! And you should waste no time at all.

Very well, friends. I will leave right now. But thank you for being my friends and for teaching me to be strong. I’ll never forget you. And who knows, maybe one day the four of us will be together. Farewell!

Fare thee well! Said Foxy and Ducky who looked after the seagull until she disappeared into the horizon.