

# DINGHY DUCKFORD

A story of gifting and purpose

Water trickled through the pond, then out and over some stones, wending its' way to who knows where in delightful watery tones. It tinkled and gurgled, splishing and splashing over the rocky creek bed, reflecting life round it, never concerned or afraid of what might lie ahead.

The clear, cool creek carried the critters on a sparkling, mirrored slide; they giggled and dunked, bobbed then sunk on this marvelous watery ride.

Hartlie sat on the bank and waved to each one as they frolicked on their way by, laughing and wishing he'd brought swimming trunks so he wouldn't have had to stay dry.

It had been quite a while since he'd taken the time to enjoy such a leisurely float, after all, it's not every day one decides on such fun by becoming your very own boat.

However...

His attention was caught by a gaggle of critters enjoying another's hard luck, then a frantic flurry of feathers splashed by, the Bogs' only non-swimming duck.

Dinghy Duckford was an amiable bird that always tried hard to please, the last-born son in a 12-egg brood who'd shot out of his egg with a sneeze.

His mom took her time when checking each chick, making sure that none were ill, but on getting to Dinghy there was cause for alarm as he suffered a red swollen bill.

His mother, his sisters and brothers, had tried hard to teach him to swim, but his terrible sneezing and wheezing, finally forced them to give up on him.

An allergy to water would cause him to cough, then sneeze and finally hiccup, fight though he would when he got in the water, he just couldn't stay right side up.

Meanwhile...

Dinghy was now in danger and Hartlie more than somewhat concerned, that the poor little duck who tried so hard to swim may permanently stay overturned.

Grabbing a stick, Hartlie reached out to Dinghy, who took hold then was pulled to the bank, but before he could take hold of Hartlie's hand, he sneezed real loud and then sank.

Jumping into the creek, Hartlie caught the poor duck, who was grateful to still be alive, *"You'd best stay out of the water,"* said Hartlie, *"if you don't, you might not survive."*

*"Hartlie...a duck can't stay out of the water...that's like asking a pig to loose weight, that's like saying bats can't live in a cave or that bears mustn't hibernate.*

*Fish gotta swim like birds gotta fly; I was born to do both, so I just gotta try!"*

*"I know it's a hard pill to swallow,"* said Hartlie, drying off the disheveled duck, *"but, until your set free from this severe allergy, well I'm afraid you're just kind of stuck."*

*"I can't bear the thought of not swimming,"* moaned Dinghy, *"it's a vital part of my life, it's essential like family, food and feathers and without it I'll not find a wife!"*

*"Dinghy...just because we don't understand doesn't mean there's no purpose or reason. Life's like a marvelous vegetable garden that we harvest only at the right season.*

*I think the best thing for us both to do now, is to keep this situation in prayer...God knows what is needed in all our lives, so there's never a need for despair.*

***If** we truly trust Him, He'll work everything out in His time, in His way, in His will...and it will be far better than we ever dreamed, so we pray, we trust and be still."*

Dinghy hung his head and walked slowly away, gently kicking small rocks as he went, confused and befuddled as to what he should do and exactly what it all meant.

Hartlie watched little Dinghy as he waddled away, wondering how he could help him to see, that someday, somehow, God would turn this around, helping him be all he could possibly be.

But, he'd have to trust God and be faithful; believing the best was to come, even though right now it looked pretty grim, vexing and troublesome.

On his way home, Dinghy talked to himself, deciding he just couldn't quit, what good is a duck without water he thought, why that'd make me a total misfit.

Each day his family headed down to the creek, with Dinghy leading the way, full of resolve and will power, determined this indeed was the day, when he'd put all the sneezing behind him, start enjoying life in the creek, swimming round rocks with his siblings, playing watery hide and go seek.

But... the minute his toe hit the water, the itching and sneezing started; a painful reminder of his problems with water, a fact leaving him broken-hearted.

His bill so red, sore and swollen grew worse with each passing day, and now when he snorted, quacked, or honked, you could hear him a mile away.

Then...

One day as he sat by himself all depressed on the side of the crystal clear creek, the most gorgeous girl duck he'd ever seen swam by, so he quickly covered his beak.

Her hair and eyelashes were like gold, cotton candy that sparkled in the dappled sunlight and white, silken down covered all but her smile, indeed an angelic sight.

Dinghy tried covering his swollen, red beak in hopes that she couldn't see, thinking... *"She 's so pretty, I don 't stand a chance...she 'll never even look at me!"*

But to his surprise, not believing his eyes, he was utterly and completely struck dumb, as this dazzling bird slowly swam over and said *"Hi, my name 's Chrysanthemum."*

She smiled as she swam in a circle, batting her eyelashes at him.

*"Would you like to go for a dip?"* she asked shyly, *"it's the perfect day for a swim."*

*"Why...I'd love to!"* cried Dinghy as he ran to the water, forgetting his red swollen nose, then dove in head first, the wrong thing to do and that's when trouble arose.

In seconds there was an awful eruption, as water spewed into the air, then Dinghy rose gagging to the surface, as Chrysanthemum looked on in despair.

She watched as the sneezing started, ducked when the feathers flew, took cover behind some large river rocks, as the demented cacophony grew.

Then peering gingerly round the rock, she just barely escaped being hit, as Dinghy rocketed past her head from the blast of his sneezing fit.

He flew through the air, landing smack on the bank, nearly knocking the little guy out, then lay gasping, flipping and flopping, like some frantic, beached river trout.

Aghast, appalled, astounded...dismayed, distraught and distressed, *"I think I'm sneezing my brains out,"* he moaned, heading for home more that somewhat depressed.

He got to his house, dried himself off, then climbed straight into his bed, *"That's it! I'm finished, it's over!"* he declared, pulling the covers up over his head.

He lay in the bed for seven days straight, refusing all help, food or aid, *"If this keeps up he'll end up real sick,"* said his mother upset and afraid.

*"I'm going to fetch Dr. Brandnew and see what we need to do, he'll get to the bottom of just what is wrong or if it's nothing more than the flu."*

The doctor examined every inch of poor Dinghy, including his bothersome nose; he was so thorough he even took time to inspect in-between Dinghy's toes.

*"I can find nothing wrong but hurt feelings,"* he said, *"that have mixed with his old allergy, so I'm fixing an excellent tonic of herbs that I'll mix with some Willow Bark Tea."*

Dinghy was faithful to sip on the tonic, feeling better with each drop he took, and before very long his beak lost it's redness, giving Dinghy a whole new look.

Pleased that he looked and felt so much better, he decided to go out for a walk, perhaps even look for Chrysanthemum and see if the two could talk.

He found her sitting alone by the creek, watching the other ducks play, embarrassed he mumbled, *"How ya doin Chrysanthemum...isn't this a beautiful day?!"*

*"Why...yes it is," she smiled sweetly, "especially now that you're here."*

*"My goodness...how kind," he grinned sheepishly, "that's the best news I've heard all year!"*

He suddenly got so excited, growing giddy and weak in the knees, feeling fuzzy, warm and all floaty, as if blown by a summer breeze.

*"Say...would you like to walk into town with me...maybe get a bite to eat?" "I'd enjoy that a whole lot," she beamed getting up; "it would be a delightful treat."*

On the way into town, they chatted and laughed, enjoying their time together, with so much in common they came to realize, they truly were birds of a feather.

After a treat of some cream tarts and tea, they started back to the creek, but along the way the sky turned dark gray and it was shelter they'd now have to seek.

As the clouds grew blacker, Dinghy's bill grew redder, throbbing with each gust that blew, then his feathers stuck up all over his head and he looked like some crazed cockatoo.

They ran to the Bog church to try and take cover, finding Hartlie just inside the door, he was sorting through donated clothing and food that he'd gathered to help out the poor.

*"Hartlie...you've got to get down in the basement," Dinghy hollered, holding his red swelling bill, "this storms gonna get a whole lot worse, I can feel the air taking a chill.*

*I'll climb to the top of the steeple...ring the bell and warn of this gale, you and Chrysanthemum better take cover, I can hear what sounds like large hail!"*

Dinghy climbed to the top of the steeple, holding on for dear life to its' cross, determined to warn the Bog critters, so they'd not have to suffer great loss.

He honked, he quacked and he hollered, the wind waving him like a white flag, it plucked out some of his feathers, making him look like a rung out dishrag.

But...

he never let go of that old steeple cross, or his friends whom he sought to defend, and that's when the Bog critters all realized it was Dinghy they'd all recommend, for one of the most crucial jobs in the Bog, that being the Bog weatherman, a position left vacant for far too long and this would end up an ideal plan, as Dinghy's nose always gave warning when water was close at hand, and his sneezing, honking and hacking, signaled storms they'd need to withstand.

Why there wasn't a better weather alarm throughout the entire land, and who would have thought that an allergic duck could end up in such high demand.

As Dinghy climbed down from the steeple, the Bog critters clamored about, waving, cheering and clapping, erupting in one grateful shout.

Chrysanthemum made her way through the crowd, with Hartlie not far behind, pleased that the storm had brought such a change to both Dinghy's heart and mind.

*"Ya know Hartlie...*

*I was upset with God for a while, cuz I wasn't able to swim, then all of my prayers and problems, never seemed to get through to Him, but... now it is all very different and I'm so grateful I can finally see, that God has a purpose for everyone, including a purpose for me."*

The end, or could it be...

**THE BEGINNING**



# THE BEGINNING

Scriptures from the Holy Bible that helps us understand God has a purpose for everyone.

Psalm 20:4 may He give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed.

1 Peter 4:10 God has given each one of you a gift from His great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.

James 1:17 whatever is good and perfect, comes down to us from God our Father who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a changing shadow.

Ecclesiastes 2:26 God gives wisdom, knowledge and joy to those who please Him.

Ephesians 2:10 for we are Gods' masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago.

John 3:16 for God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

This series was written in an effort to help children understand that nothing can overcome us if we are walking close to Jesus, trusting in His love and obeying His commandments