

Whispers from Nature

Two Native American Stories

by Joseph Bruchac

illustrated by David Kanietakeron Fadden and Patrick Rolo



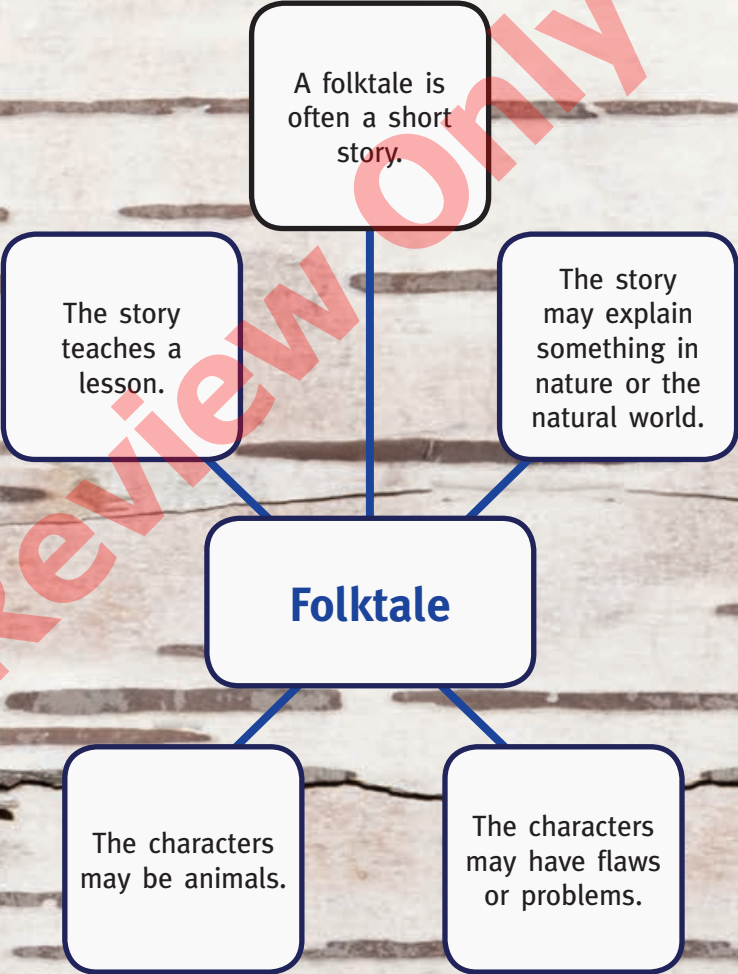
FOLKTALE
LITERATURE

Level	L/24
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The two folktales retold in this book are from the Seneca and the Ojibwe Native American tribes.

Folktale

Look for the genre features noted below as you read this book. Use the features to help you understand the text.



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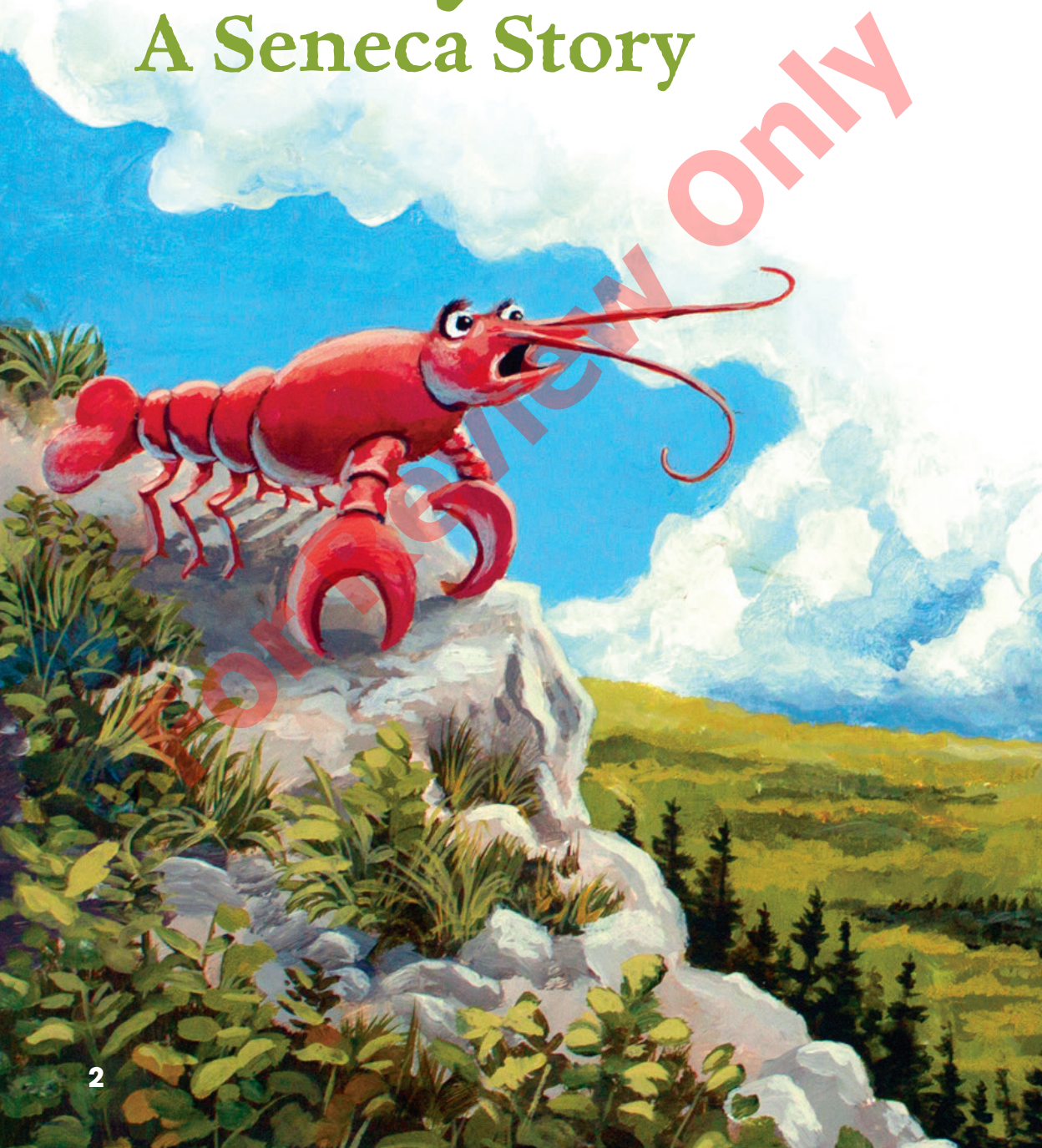
ISBN: 978-1-5322-5643-1

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The Crayfish:

A Seneca Story



Crayfish lived in the river, where he was very happy. He had rocks to hide under and lots of good food to eat.

One day, however, it rained and rained. It rained so much, there was a big flood. Crayfish was swept away by the fast running water. The floodwaters carried him higher and higher.

At last, when the water went down, Crayfish was left on a hill far from his river.



Crayfish tried to look around and see where he was. But the hot sun had dried out his eyes, and he could no longer see.

“What can I do?” Crayfish asked.
“I have to get back to the water or I will die. But how can I find my way back to my river if I can’t see?”

Then Crayfish got an idea.

“I can still walk,” he said. “I can still hear and ask questions. With my ears to listen, mouth to talk, and claws to walk, I have a chance. I’ll use what I can to get back to the river.”



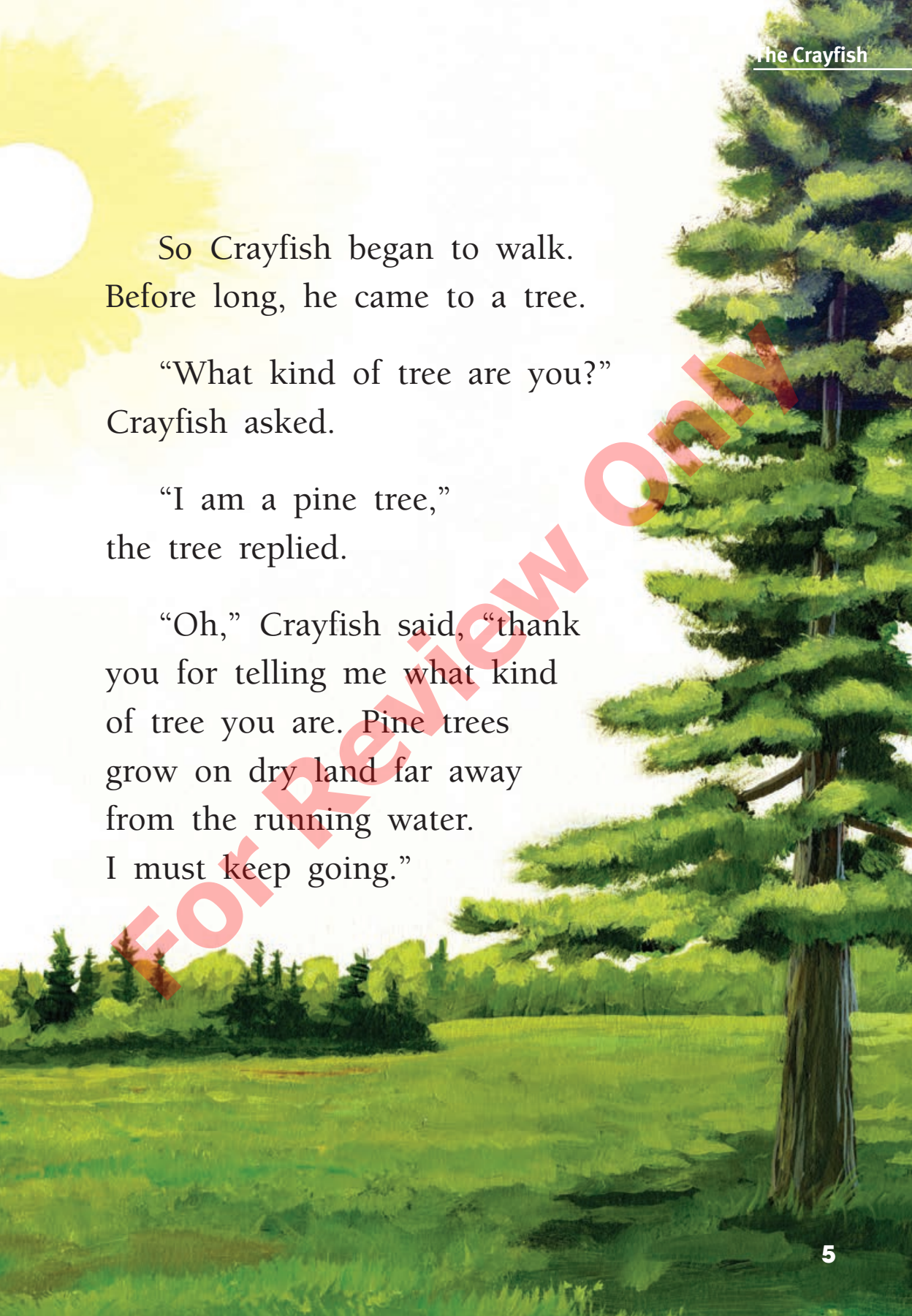


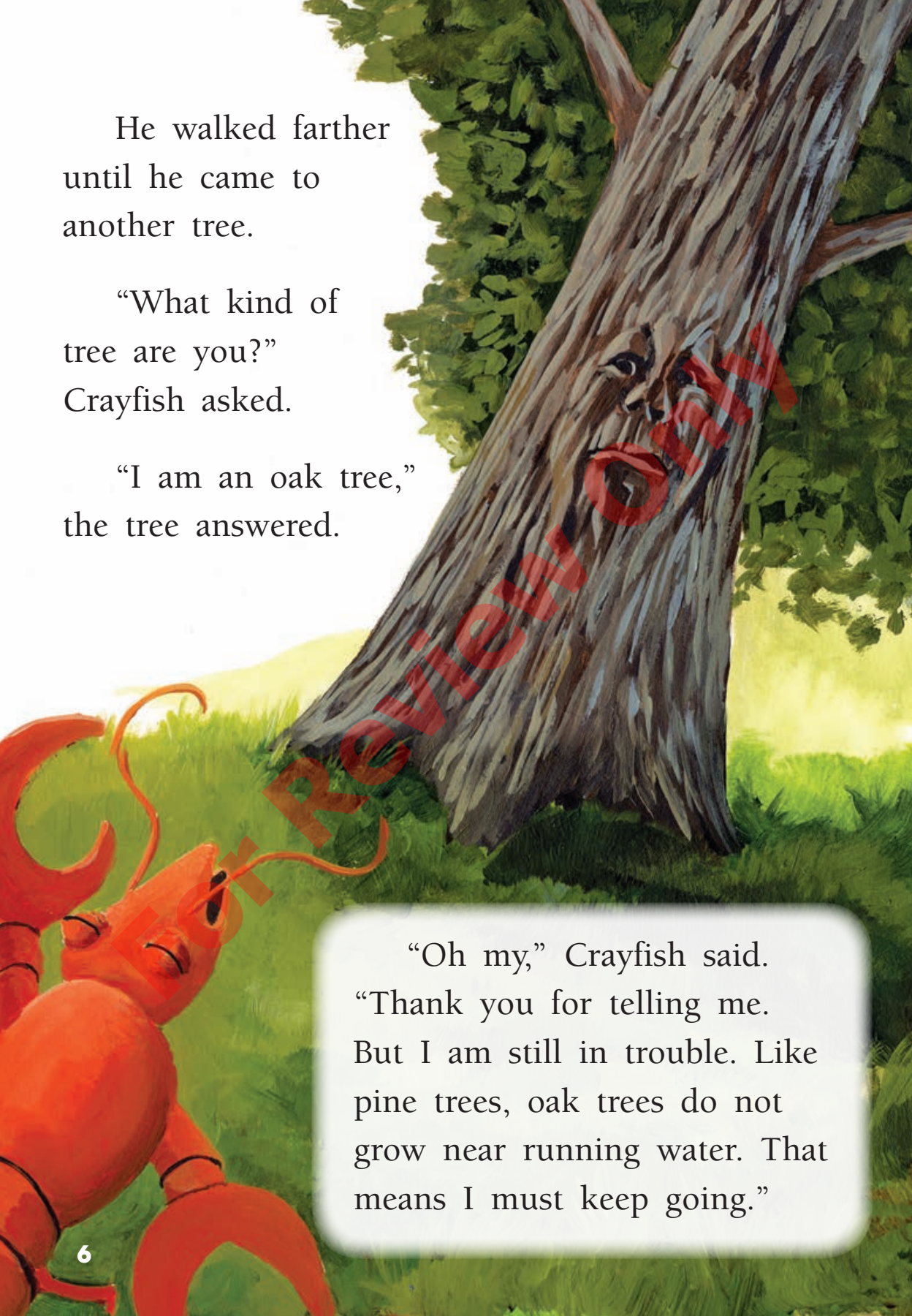
So Crayfish began to walk.
Before long, he came to a tree.

“What kind of tree are you?”
Crayfish asked.

“I am a pine tree,”
the tree replied.

“Oh,” Crayfish said, “thank
you for telling me what kind
of tree you are. Pine trees
grow on dry land far away
from the running water.
I must keep going.”



A vibrant illustration of a bright red crayfish in the bottom left corner, looking towards a large, textured oak tree trunk that dominates the right side of the frame. The background is a soft-focus green landscape with rolling hills under a bright sky. A large, semi-transparent red watermark with the text 'K Review Only' is oriented diagonally across the center of the image.

He walked farther
until he came to
another tree.

“What kind of
tree are you?”
Crayfish asked.

“I am an oak tree,”
the tree answered.

“Oh my,” Crayfish said.
“Thank you for telling me.
But I am still in trouble. Like
pine trees, oak trees do not
grow near running water. That
means I must keep going.”

Crayfish kept walking. He still could not see, but he could feel his way with his claws. He walked and walked until he reached a third tree.

“What kind of tree are you?” he asked.

“I am a cottonwood tree.”

“Thank you,” Crayfish said. “I am happy to hear that you are a cottonwood tree. Cottonwoods grow closer to running water than oak trees. I’m getting closer to the river!”





Crayfish was very tired by now.
He was so dry, it was hard for him to
walk, but he knew he could not give up.
He walked until he came to a fourth tree.

“What kind of tree are you?”
Crayfish asked.

“I am a willow,” the tree answered.

“Yes!” Crayfish said. “Thank you so
much. Willows grow right next to running
water, so I must be almost there.”

Crayfish began to walk again. He was excited because he could hear the running water now. He took a few more steps and *SPLASH!* He fell right into the river. As soon as he was in the river he could see again.

So Crayfish was able to save himself. He asked questions, listened to the answers that nature gave him, and never, never ever gave up.

