

DRAGON GIRLS

Willa the Silver Glitter Dragon

by Maddy Mara

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***For Madeleine and Asmara—and every
other girl working on her roar***



Willa stood at the edge of the local indoor pool, her towel wrapped around her shoulders. Beams of sunlight fell through the windows above and danced on the water's surface.

The other kids from Willa's swimming lesson had all hurried off to the changing rooms. But Willa stood gazing into the rippling water,

thinking about all the amazing things that had happened to her recently. Only a few days ago, Willa's life had been perfectly normal. She had been a regular girl who loved swimming, diving, and hanging out with her friends.

But that was before she had discovered the Magic Forest. When Willa was in the Magic Forest, she was anything but a typical girl. There, she and her friends turned into Dragon Girls! As Dragon Girls, they could fly, had incredible strength, and best of all, they could roar the most powerful and glittering roars!



Through the open window, Willa heard the wind pick up. She listened carefully. To anyone else, it might just sound like a breeze rustling the leaves. But Willa heard something more. The wind carried a special message, just for her. This was a message

she had been waiting for ever since she got back from the Magic Forest.

Magic Forest, Magic Forest, come explore . . .

“Willa, are you coming to get changed?” called Nancy, the swim coach. “The lesson is over, you know!”

Willa smiled. “Yes, I know. Can I just do one more dive?”

“Sure,” Nancy agreed. “But be quick. The next class starts soon!”

Just then, Nancy’s phone rang. Willa’s heart thumped. This was her chance! She knew time moved differently in the Magic Forest.

She could spend an entire day there, but when she returned, only a second would have passed.

While Nancy was distracted, Willa dropped her towel and returned to the water's edge. A beam of sunlight suddenly appeared, illuminating a small white seashell sitting on the bottom of the pool. The shell was shaped like a fan and was flecked with silver.

Willa felt drawn to the shell like a magnet. She had seen it the first time she was called to the Magic Forest. She knew it was no ordinary shell—it was her travel charm. She loved the way it fit perfectly into the palm of her hand, and how it was always warm to the touch.

Now its reappearance must mean it was time to return to the forest.

Magic Forest, Magic Forest, come explore ...

The magical words were getting louder now. Willa knew she had to hurry. She curled her toes around the edge of the pool and stood up straight. She loved the way her body felt like an arrow, arcing through the sky before slicing into the water.

True, her dives were still a bit wonky sometimes, but she was getting better and better. Willa raised her arms above her head.

Magic Forest, Magic Forest, come explore.

“Magic Forest, Magic Forest, hear my roar!”
Willa finished, her voice echoing around the pool area.

Taking a huge gulp of air, Willa dove into the water.

On land, Willa wasn't all that fast or agile. But when she was underwater...well, that was a different story! When she was swimming, Willa could move at top speed and hold her breath longer than anyone. She could also do all kinds of somersaults and tumbles and handstands.



But there was no time for tricks right now. Willa focused on the shell lying below her on the pool's floor. The sunlight made the shell glimmer like it was on fire. As she got closer, Willa stretched out her hand and wrapped her fingers around the shell. Warmth spread up