



## The Ugly Duckling

Once upon a time down on an old farm, lived a duck family, and Mother Duck had been sitting on a clutch of new eggs. One nice morning, the eggs



"Did I count the eggs wrongly?" Mother Duck wondered. But before she had time to think about it, the last egg finally hatched. A strange l

The Ugly Duckling "I can't understand how this ugly duckling can be one of mine!" she said to herself, shaking her head as she looked at the clumsy, and all the farmyard folks simply laughed at him. He felt sad and lonely, while Mother Duck did her best to console him.

"Poor little ugly duckling!" she would say. "Why are you so different from the others?" And the ugly duckling felt worse than ever.

"Nobody loves me, they all tease me! Why am I different from my brothers?"

Then one day, at sunrise, he ran away from the farmyard. He stopped at a pond and began to question all the other birds. "Do you know of anyone

"We don't know anyone as ugly as you." The ugly duckling did not lose heart, however, and kept on making inquiries. He went to another pond.

Then one day, his travels took him near an old countrywoman's cottage. Thinking he was a stray goose, she caught him.

"I'll put this in a hutch. I hope it's a female and lays plenty of eggs!" said the old woman, whose eyesight was poor. But the ugly duckling

"Just wait! If you don't lay eggs, the old woman will wring your neck and pop you into the pot!" And the cat chipped in: "I hope the duckling

"Oh, dear me!" moaned the now terrified duckling. "I'll die of fright first! And I did so hope someone would love me!"

Then one night, finding the hutch door ajar, he escaped. Once again he was all alone. He fled as far away as he could, and at dawn, he found himself

"If only I could look like them, just for a day!" said the duckling, admiringly. Winter came and the water in the reed bed froze. The poor

"I'll take him home to my children. They'll look after him. Poor thing, he's frozen!" The duckling was showered with kindly care at the farmer's

However, by springtime, he had grown so big that the farmer decided: "I'll set him free by the pond!" That was when the duckling saw

"Goodness! How I've changed! I hardly recognize myself!" The flight of swans winged north again and glided on to the pond. When the

"We're swans like you!" they said, warmly. "Where have you been hiding?"

"It's a long story," replied the young swan, still astounded. Now, he swam majestically with his fellow swans. One day, he heard children

And he almost burst with happiness.

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