

The Ugly Duckling

Once upon a time, a Mama Duck sat on her nest. As the ducklings came from the eggs one by one, Mama Duck was happy. They were all so cute! She counted them, “One, two, three, four, five.” However, there was still one big egg in the nest that had not hatched.

The next day, the big egg hatched, and out came a baby boy duckling. He was much bigger than the others. He was dark grey and not yellow. And he had longer legs than the others.

“He doesn’t look like one of us!” a duckling said.

“Such an ugly duckling!” said another.

“That is not a nice thing to say,” scolded Mama Duck, “You are all my sweet babies.” But the others didn’t like him and called him “Ugly Duckling.”

The Ugly Duckling tried to play with his brothers and sisters. But they yelled, “Go away, you are ugly and grey!”

The Ugly Duckling was sad. “Maybe I should just go,” he thought.

That night, the Ugly Duckling flew away and found a new pond. He looked up and saw a flock of big white birds flying by. They were the most beautiful birds he had ever seen! He stayed at that pond all by himself for a long time. Then winter came and the cold wind and the dark clouds made the poor Ugly Duckling sad and lonely.

He had to go into the cold pond to catch fish, but it was getting harder to swim. The lake turned to ice, and the water froze around him, trapping him in the water. “Oh, I’m so tired!” he thought. The ice got thicker and thicker.

Suddenly, two big hands picked him up. “You poor little thing!” said a farmer. He took the Ugly Duckling back to his warm house. For the rest of that winter, the kind farmer looked after the Ugly Duckling.

Then spring came. “Time for you to go to the pond to swim again,” said the farmer. He took the young bird back to the pond where he had found him and set him down on the water.

“I feel so strong now!” the Ugly Duckling said to himself. Just then, a flock of those same beautiful birds he had seen before landed on the water. “I know I’m ugly,” he said to them, “so I will go away.” A great big tear rolled down his cheek.

But to his surprise, he saw a reflection of a beautiful white bird. Then he realized what had happened! He wasn't an ugly grey bird anymore. He was a beautiful swan! "We wish you would stay," said one of the beautiful birds.

"Yes, stay with us!" said another, "We can all be great friends."

So he flapped his beautiful white wings and joined his new friends. The Ugly Duckling grew up and became a beautiful swan, living happily ever after with his new family.