



The ugly duckling

In a peaceful country village, surrounded by green fields and woods, stood a farm where Mother Duck lived. She was an elegant, proud duck, known for raising the prettiest ducklings in the farmyard.

Each summer, she sat on her eggs with great excitement. The other ducks eagerly awaited the little ones, certain they would be as pretty as ever.

At last the great moment arrived. The eggs opened one by one and the first ducklings appeared. Everyone was delighted, until they noticed that the largest egg was still closed.

They gathered round, looking for a sign of movement. When it finally cracked, a different-looking chick emerged. He was bigger and more awkward than his brothers and sisters. Without getting to know him, the others called him ugly.

Mother Duck felt confused and failed to treat his difference with kindness. She nudged him aside with her beak and gave her attention to the other six ducklings.

The little one noticed their rejection and felt sad and lonely. He left the farm, searching for somewhere he would be accepted as he was.



Days passed as his journey continued. He had to find food in unfamiliar places and keep away from animals that might hunt him. His path was full of difficulties.

One winter night, when he thought he was completely lost, he reached a partly frozen pond. Some magnificent swans rested near a stretch of open water. Although he felt uncertain, he approached carefully and asked whether he could swim beside them.

The swans welcomed him kindly. They said he could stay. Overwhelmed with happiness, he entered the water and saw his reflection for the first time in ages.

What a surprise! The young bird had grown and his feathers were changing. Over the following weeks, he discovered that he had become a beautiful swan, just like his new companions.

They explained that he had always been a swan, even though he had hatched among ducks. At last he had found somewhere he belonged. He also understood that his worth had never depended on his appearance or on what others said about him.

He left loneliness behind and began a new life among friends, with confidence in himself and the happiness of feeling part of the group.