

Classic Tales



Level 2

# The Ugly Duckling

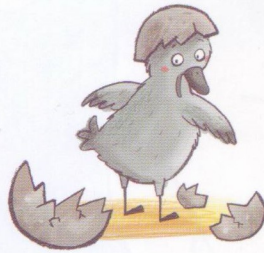


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# The Ugly Duckling

*Retold by Sue Arengo*  
*Illustrated by Mirella Mariani*



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It is summer. A duck sits on her eggs. She sits and she waits. She waits and waits.


At last the eggs open.

'At last!' says the duck.

'My little ducklings!'

But one egg does not open.

'Mm,' says her friend. 'That egg is strange. Leave it.'

A white duck with a yellow beak and large eyes is looking down at a nest. The nest contains several small yellow ducklings and one large, dark grey egg. The duck is standing on a green lawn with various flowers and reeds in the background.

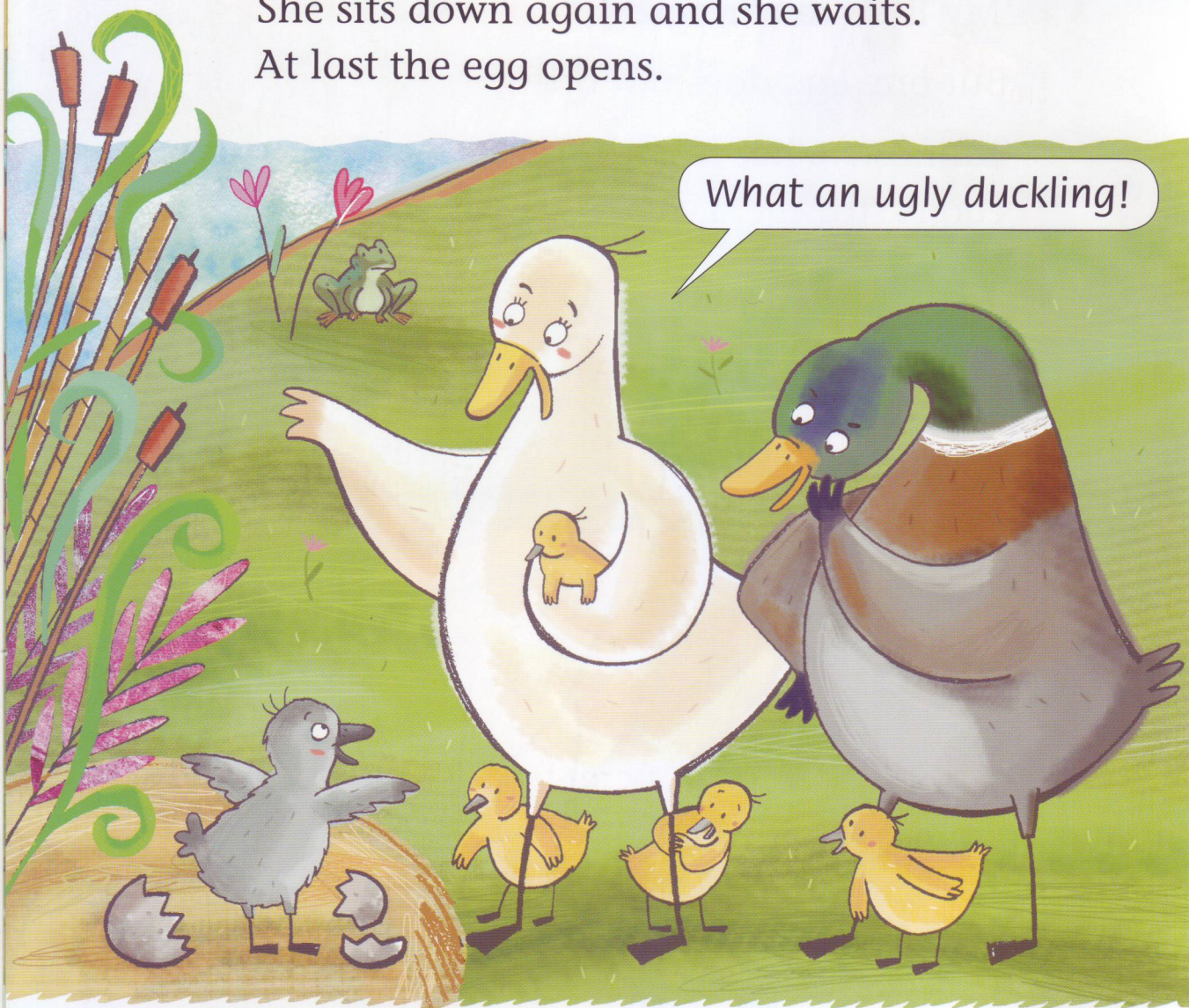
My little ducklings!

'Leave my egg?' says Mother Duck.

'No. I can't leave it.'

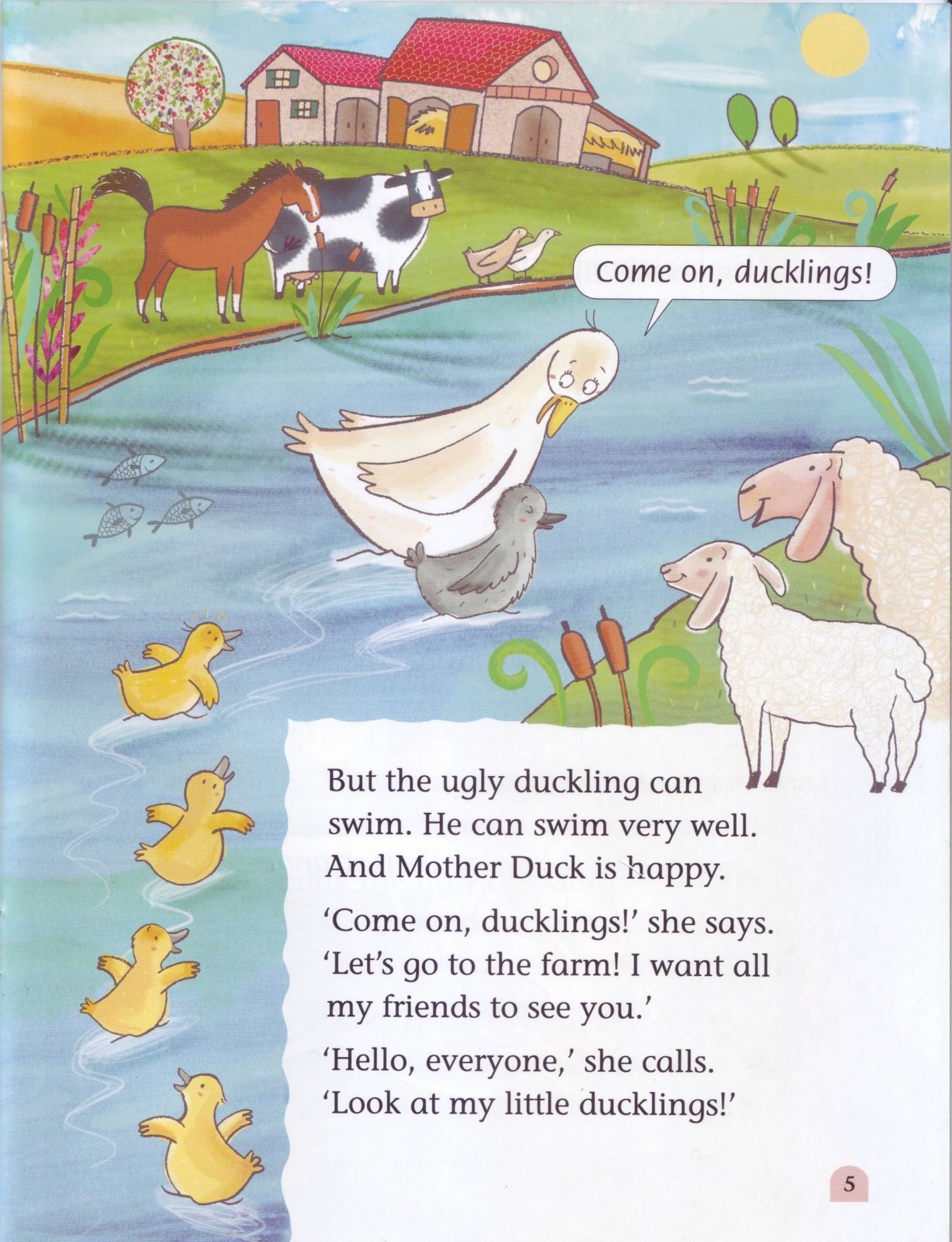
She sits down again and she waits.

At last the egg opens.



'Oh!' says Mother Duck to her friend.

'You're right. He is strange. What an ugly duckling!'



Come on, ducklings!

But the ugly duckling can swim. He can swim very well. And Mother Duck is happy.

'Come on, ducklings!' she says. 'Let's go to the farm! I want all my friends to see you.'

'Hello, everyone,' she calls. 'Look at my little ducklings!'

'This is my family,' says Mother Duck.

'Very nice. Very nice,' say the ducks. 'But that duckling is very big. He's ugly!'

'He is strange,' they say. 'He's an ugly duckling.'

One of the ducks pecks him.





Every day the farm girl comes.  
Every day she kicks him.

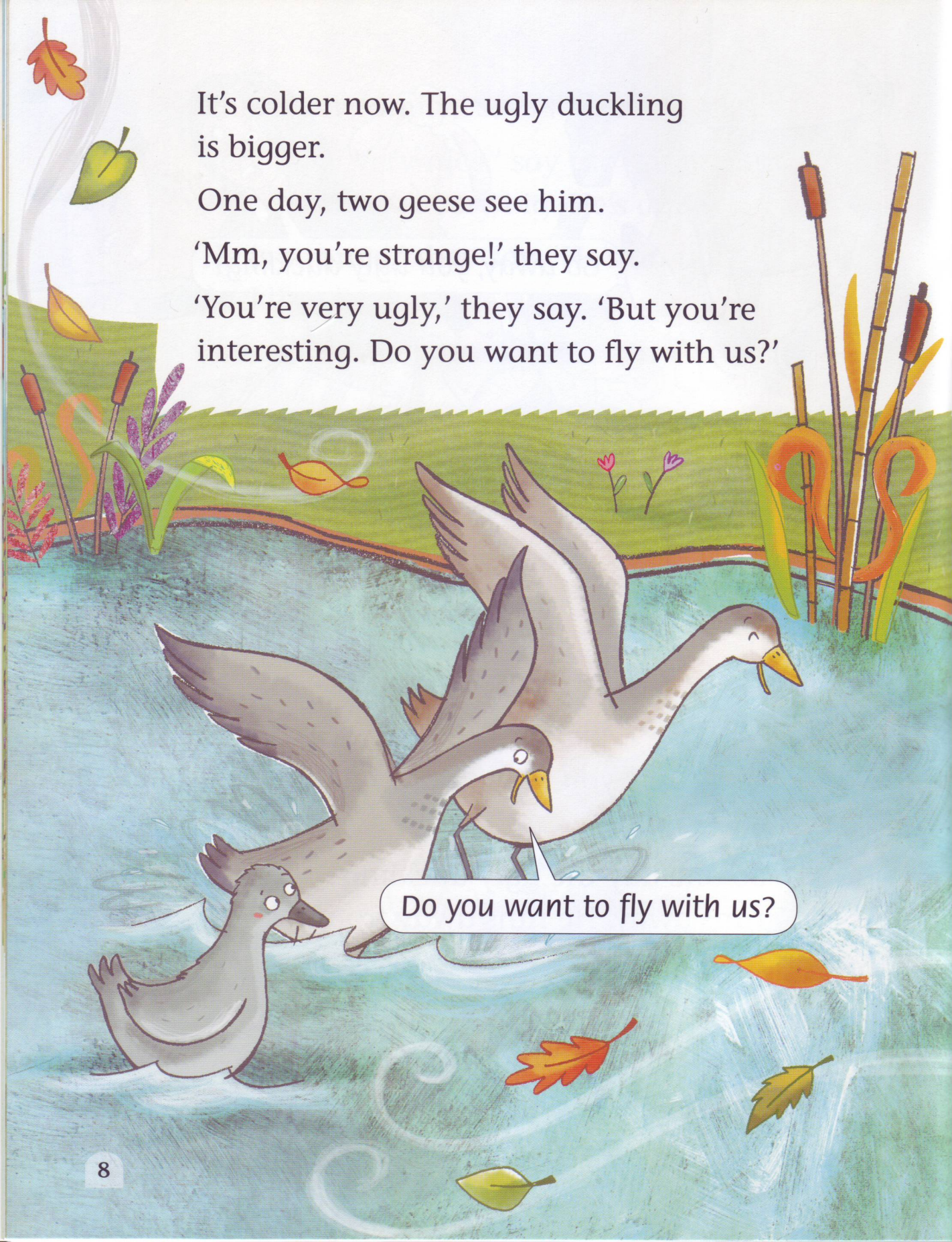
‘Go away, you ugly duckling!’  
she says.

So one day the ugly duckling  
runs away. He runs away from  
the farm.

‘Go! Yes, go!’ say his brothers  
and sisters. ‘You’re strange!  
You’re ugly!’





An illustration of a pond scene. In the foreground, a small, grey, ugly duckling is swimming. Two larger, white geese with brown speckles on their wings are swimming towards it. The pond is surrounded by green grass and reeds. Several autumn leaves in shades of yellow, orange, and red are scattered around the pond. The sky is light blue with a few more leaves falling.

It's colder now. The ugly duckling is bigger.

One day, two geese see him.

'Mm, you're strange!' they say.

'You're very ugly,' they say. 'But you're interesting. Do you want to fly with us?'

Do you want to fly with us?



But suddenly there is a bang. Bang!  
Bang! And the geese are dead.  
There are some men. Men with guns  
and dogs. The ugly duckling is afraid.



A big dog comes. He sees the ugly duckling. And he looks at him. Then the dog swims away.

‘I am ugly,’ says the ugly duckling.  
‘So he doesn’t want to eat me.’

The ugly duckling runs away. He comes to an old hut and he goes in.

In the hut there is a woman, a cat, and a hen. The woman is old and she can't see.

'What's this?' she says. 'A duck? Ah! You can give me some eggs.'

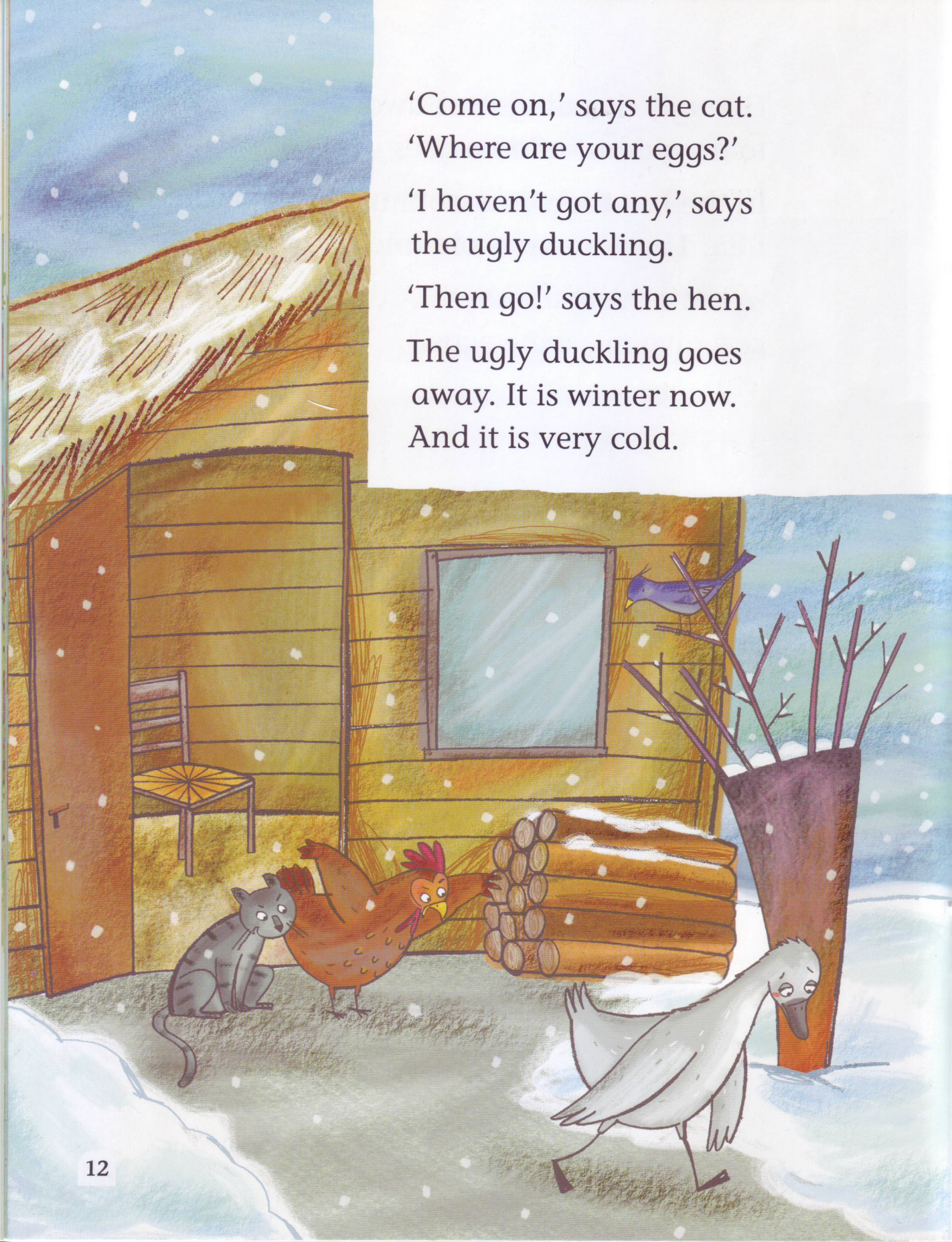


'Come on,' says the cat.  
'Where are your eggs?'

'I haven't got any,' says  
the ugly duckling.

'Then go!' says the hen.

The ugly duckling goes  
away. It is winter now.  
And it is very cold.

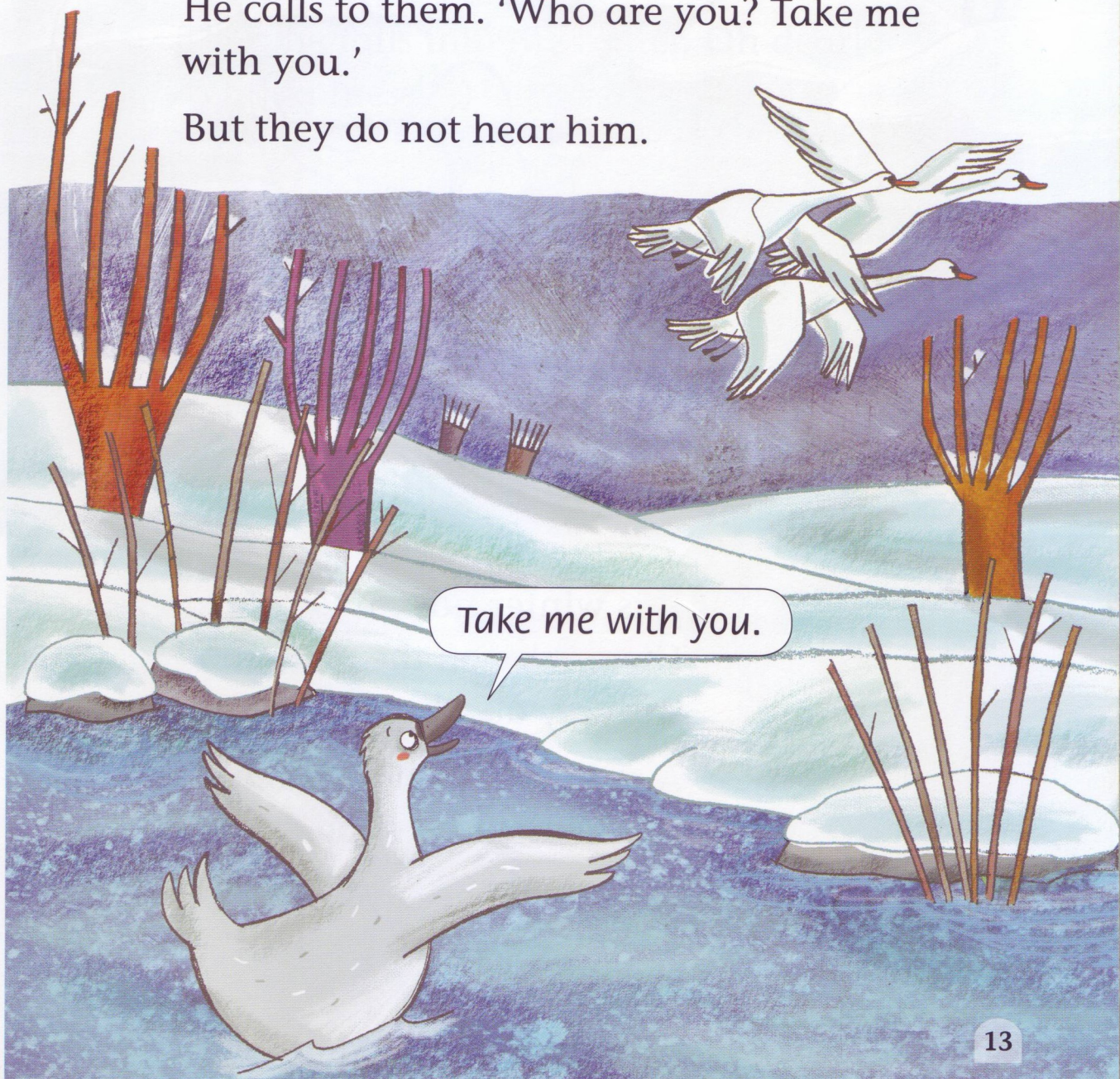


One evening the ugly duckling sees something wonderful and strange. Three swans! Three big, beautiful swans.

'Oh,' he cries. 'What beautiful birds! Big, beautiful, and free.'

He calls to them. 'Who are you? Take me with you.'

But they do not hear him.





It is winter now. It is cold.  
There is ice on the water. So  
the ugly duckling can't swim.

A man sees him. He breaks  
the ice with his shoe.

'Poor bird!' he says. 'Come  
home with me.'

The man's children want to play.

'Come here!' they say.

But the ugly duckling runs away. He falls into the milk. The children laugh.

'Come here!' they say.

Then he falls into the butter. Oh dear!  
What a mess!





Then he falls into the flour.

'Get out!' cries the man's wife.

'Get out of my house!'

The ugly duckling runs. Suddenly he starts to fly.

The door is open. He flies up into the sky.





He can fly! He can fly!

'I can fly!' says the ugly duckling.

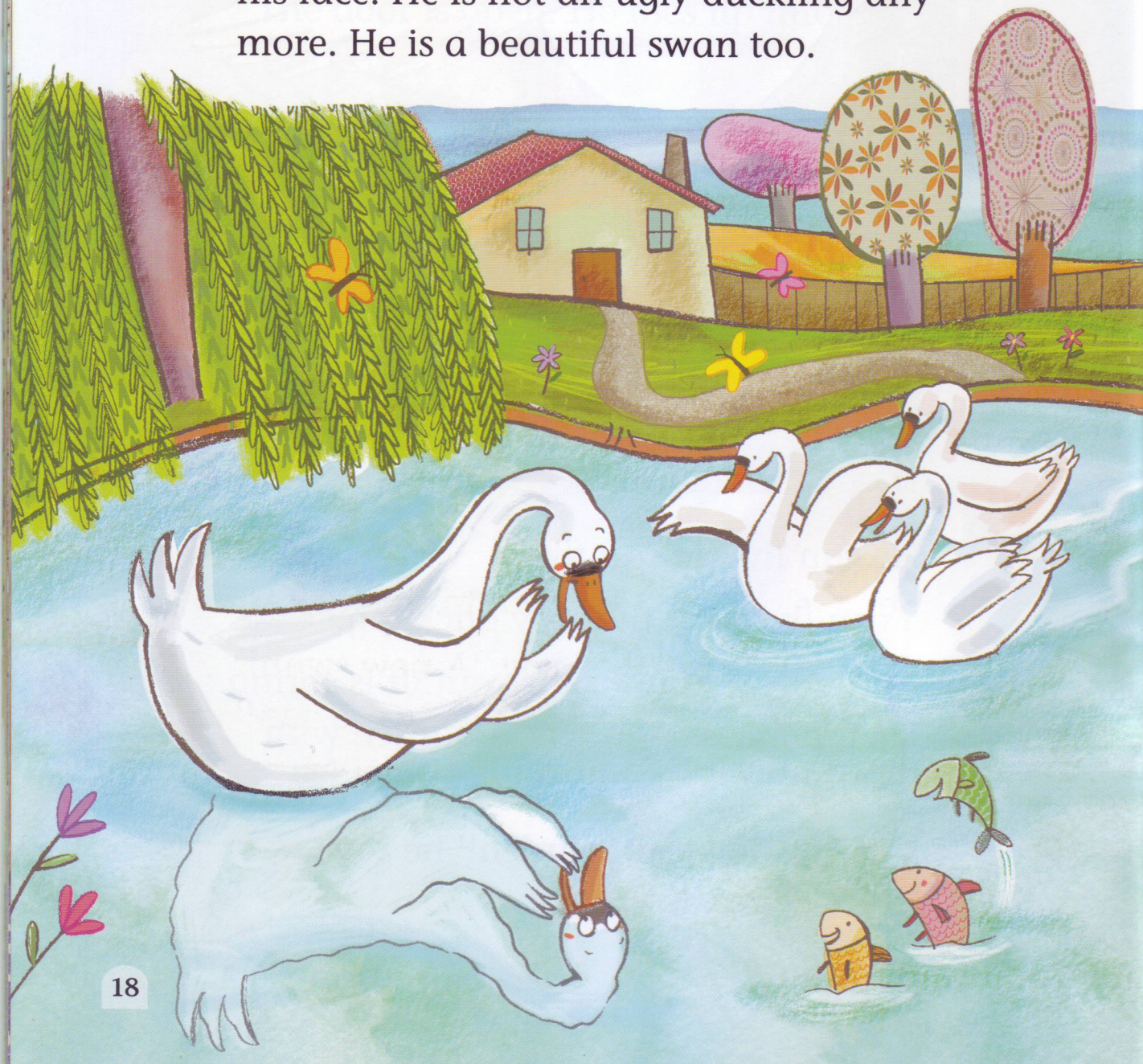
And now the sun comes out. It is spring.  
Then he sees a garden. A garden with  
a river.

'What a beautiful garden!' he says.  
And he flies down.

He sees something. He sees the swans.  
He sees the three swans.

'Oh! They are beautiful!' he says. 'I must  
speak to them.' But he is afraid.

He looks down at the water and he sees  
his face. He is not an ugly duckling any  
more. He is a beautiful swan too.



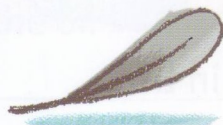


It's true. It's true! He's not a duckling.  
He's not a duck. He's a swan. He's a  
swan too.

Some children run down to the river.

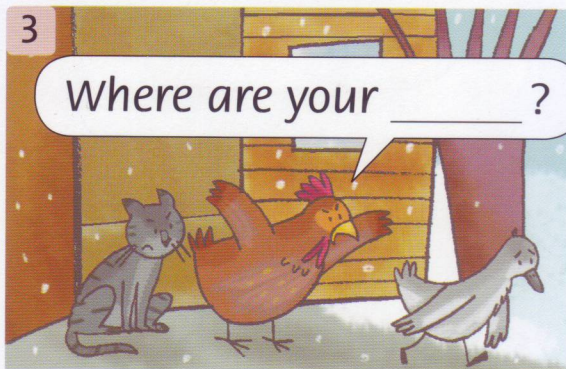
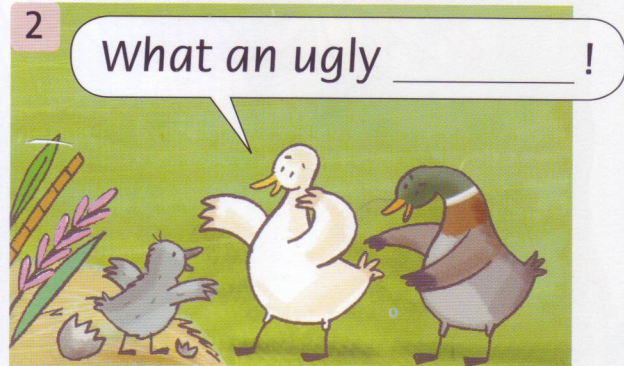
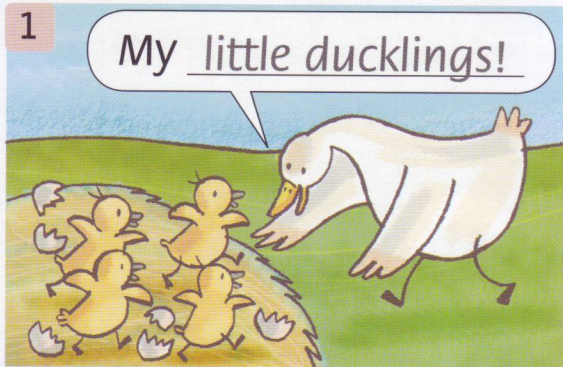
'Look, Mother!' they say. 'A new swan!  
Look! Oh, look! Look at the new swan!'

'Yes,' she says. 'Isn't he beautiful!'

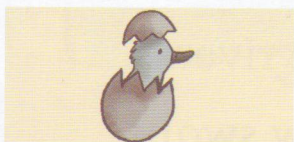


# Exercises

1 What do they say? Write the words.



2 Where is the ugly duckling? Write the words.



1 in the egg



2 in the \_\_\_\_\_



3 in the \_\_\_\_\_



4 in the \_\_\_\_\_



5 in the \_\_\_\_\_



6 in the \_\_\_\_\_

**3 Make sentences about the story.**  
Then write them in the correct order.

He looks down in a river ...

A man takes him home ...

The ugly duckling runs ...

One day the ugly duckling runs away ...

He comes to an old woman's hut ...

The ducks say, ...

but the man's wife says, 'Get out!'

'That duckling is ugly!'

but the old woman's hen says, 'Go!'

and he sees a beautiful swan.

and suddenly he starts to fly.

from his brothers and sisters.

1 The ducks say, 'That duckling is ugly!'

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_

6 \_\_\_\_\_

**4 Put the words in the correct order.**

1 me eggs You give can some.

You can give me some eggs.

2 falls Then butter into the he.

3 more ugly any He not duckling an is.

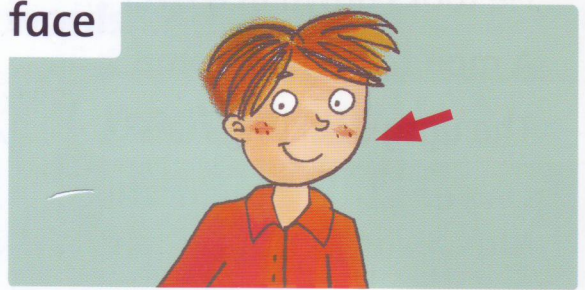
4 ducks him One pecks the of.

# Picture Dictionary

afraid *He's afraid.*



face



birds



farm



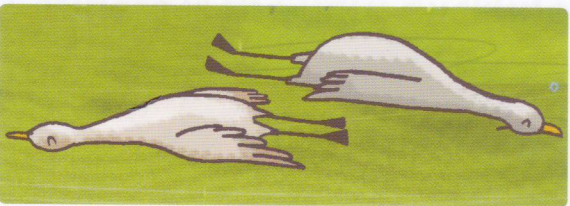
cold *He's cold.*



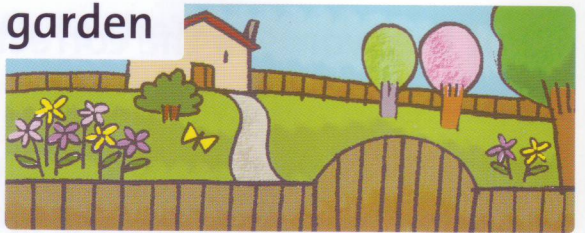
fly



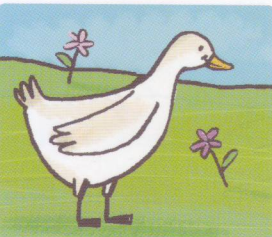
dead *They're dead.*



garden



duck



duckling



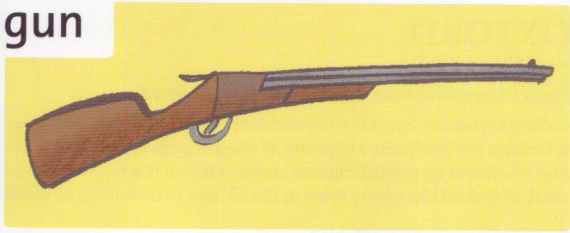
goose



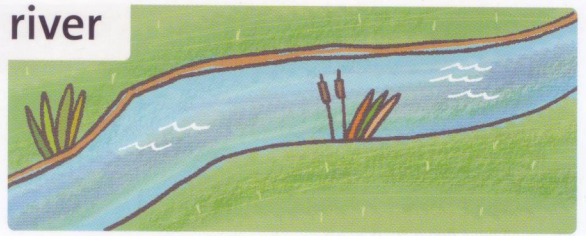
geese



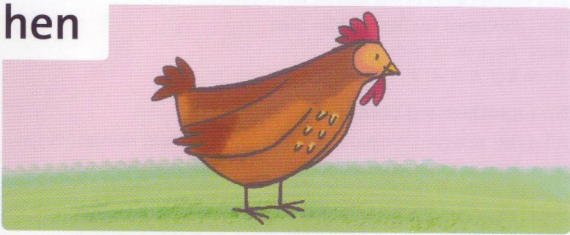
gun



river



hen



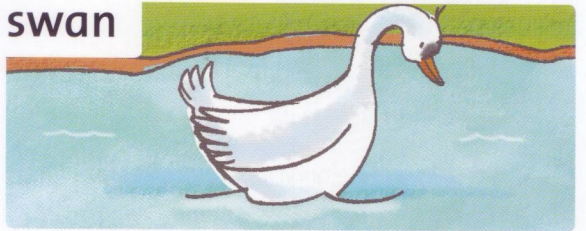
spring *It's spring.*



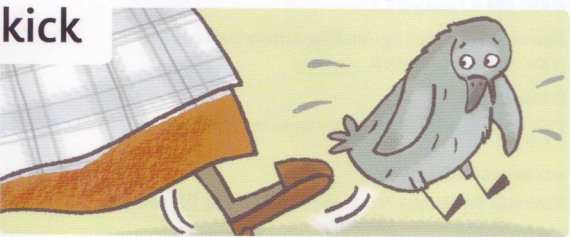
ice



swan



kick



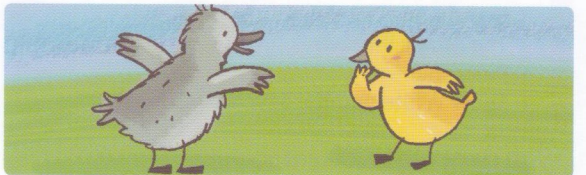
swim



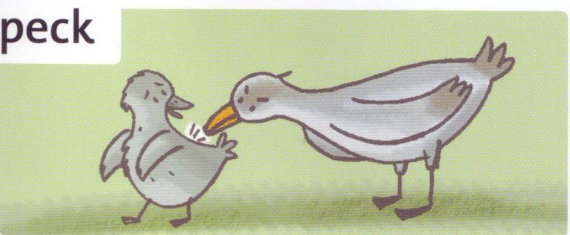
laugh



ugly *He's ugly.*



peck



winter *It's winter.*





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## Level 1: 100 headwords

- The Enormous Turnip
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- Lownu Mends the Sky
- The Magic Cooking Pot
- Mansour and the Donkey
- Peach Boy
- The Princess and the Pea
- Rumpelstiltskin
- The Shoemaker and the Elves
- Three Billy-Goats

## Level 2: 150 headwords

- Amrita and the Trees
- Big Baby Finn
- The Fisherman and his Wife
- The Gingerbread Man
- Jack and the Beanstalk
- Thumbelina
- The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse
- The Ugly Duckling

## Level 3: 200 headwords

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- Goldilocks and the Three Bears
- The Little Mermaid
- Little Red Riding Hood

## Level 4: 300 headwords

- Cinderella
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Level 2

# The Ugly Duckling

Follow the adventures of the famous duckling.  
Why is he big, strange, and ugly?

A retelling of the classic story for learners of English

Retold by Sue Arengo  
Illustrated by Mirella Mariani

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- |  |                               |  |                        |
|--|-------------------------------|--|------------------------|
|  | Level 1: 100 headwords        |  | Level 4: 300 headwords |
|  | <b>Level 2: 150 headwords</b> |  | Level 5: 400 headwords |
|  | Level 3: 200 headwords        |  |                        |

**Word count for this story: 689**

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