

THE LITTLE RED HEN

INTRODUCTION

by Tracy Hanson

“The Little Red Hen” is an American [fable](#). Do you know the [difference](#) between a fable and a fairy tale? One of the basic functions of a fable is to teach some moral lesson and is based on a myth. The main characters are often animals but they may also be things, beings and elements of nature.

The story was first published in 1874 in a popular childrens’ magazine, St Nicholas Magazine, for which Mary Mapes Dodge was editor. In fact, many famous authors started here by publishing some of their short stories. It might have been used in a “primer” for young readers who in those days, primarily used religious stories for learning to read while also being taught morals and values.

Here is the story which includes pictures, rather than words to read. This is an example of a [Rebus story](#). “Once upon a time, there was a little red hen



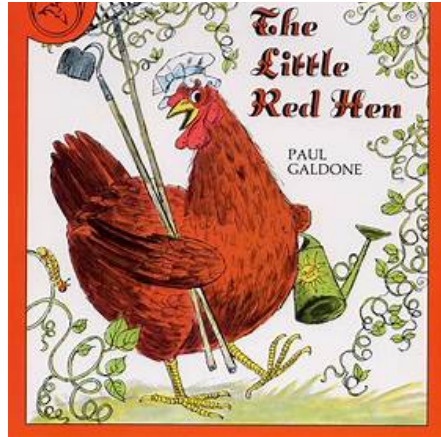
who lived on a farm



“ Can you finish reading the rest?”

The story was adapted into an animated version, [“The Wise Little Hen”](#) in 1934 by Walt Disney. I have been looking for a video which follows our script but there are many variations by many authors. Can you find one which matches? Or maybe you found a favorite one to share. I did find this version which is read in [Spanish](#).

So, how does [wheat get made into bread](#)? Here is an animated video that describes the process.



THE LITTLE RED HEN

Collected by Mary Mapes Dodge

Script by Tracy Hanson

Narrator 1	Narrator 2	Hen	Pig	Duck	Cat
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NARRATOR 1: Once upon a time, a pig, a duck, a cat and a little red hen all lived together in a cozy little house on a pretty green hill.

NARRATOR 2: All day long, the pig wallowed happily in its juicy mud puddle, the duck swam happily on her little pond, and the cat slept happily in the sun.

NARRATOR1: That left all the work of the house for the little red hen to do. One day, as the little red hen was scratching about in the yard looking for a nice beetle dinner, she came upon a grain of wheat. It gave her an idea.

HEN: Who will plant this grain of wheat?

NARRATOR 2: She asked of the pig, the duck, and the cat.

PIG: Not I.

NARRATOR 2: Said the pig.

DUCK: Not I.

NARRATOR 2: Said they duck.

CAT: Not I.

NARRATOR 2: Said the cat. So, she did.

NARRATOR 1: The grain of wheat sprouted, and it grew and grew until it was tall and golden and ready to cut.

HEN: Who will cut the wheat?

NARRATOR 1: She asked of the pig, the duck, and the cat:

PIG: Not I.

NARRATOR 1: Said the pig.

DUCK: Not I.

NARRATOR 1: Said the duck.

CAT: Not I.

NARRATOR 1: Said the cat. So she did it herself.

NARRATOR 2: Finally, the wheat was cut and ready to be ground into flour.

HEN: Who will take the wheat to the mill?

NARRATOR 2: She asked of the pig, the duck, and the cat.

PIG: Not I.

NARRATOR 2: Said the pig.

DUCK: Not I.

NARRATOR 2: Said the duck.

CAT: Not I.



NARRATOR 2: Said the cat.

HEN: Then I will.

NARRATOR 2: And she did!

NARRATOR 1: Soon a little sack of fine flour came back from the mill.

HEN: Who will make the flour into bread?

NARRATOR 1: She asked of the pig, the duck and the cat.

PIG: Not I.

NARRATOR 1: Said the pig.

DUCK: Not I.

NARRATOR 1: Said the duck.

CAT: Not I.

NARRATOR 1: Said the cat.

HEN: Then I will do it myself.

NARRATOR 1: And she did.

NARRATOR 2: When the bread was baked, the little red hen took it from the oven.

NARRATOR 1: It was the most beautiful, crusty brown loaf she had ever seen.

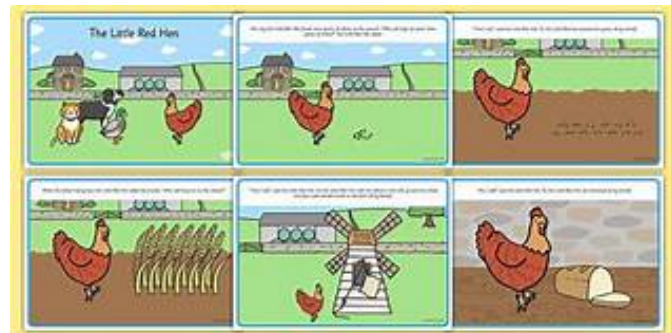
HEN: Who will eat the bread?

NARRATOR 2: She asked of the pig, the duck, and the cat.

PIG: I Will!

NARRATOR 1: Said the pig.

DUCK: I will!



NARRATOR 2: Said the duck.

CAT: I will!

NARRATOR 1: Said the cat.

HEN: Oh, no you won't. I found the grain of wheat. I planted the wheat. I reaped the ripe grain. I took it to the mill. I baked the bread. I shall eat it myself.

NARRATOR 1 and NARRATOR 2: And that's just what she did!



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