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Opening extract from

What the Ladybird Heard Next

Written by

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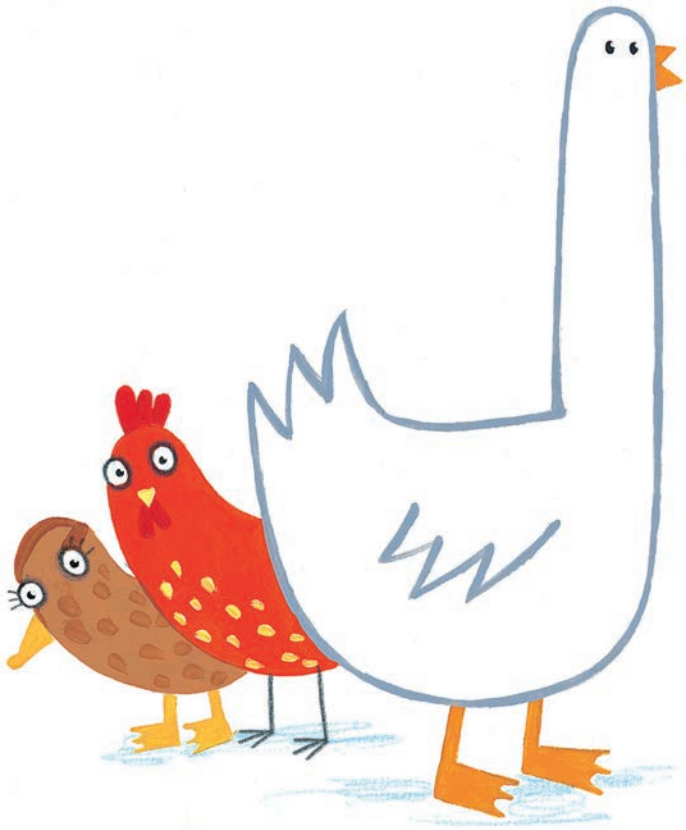
What the Ladybird Heard NEXT



MACMILLAN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Once upon a farm lived a ladybird,
And these are the things that she saw and heard:

The cow in her shed, the horse in his stall,
The cats who purred on the garden wall,
The barn full of straw, the field full of sheep,
The kennel where the dog lay fast asleep,
The fish in the pond, the drake and the duck,
The hive of bees and the heap of muck,
The hog in his sty, the goose in her pen,
And the coop which was home to the fat red hen.

Now the fat red hen with her thin brown legs
Laid lots and lots of speckled eggs
But then – oh help, oh no, oh dear –
Those eggs began to disappear.
Each morning all the eggs had gone.
And the animals asked, "What's going on?"

"I'll find out," said the ladybird.
So she flew and she flew, and she saw and she heard.

She saw two men in a big black van
With a torch and a sack and a cunning plan.
(They were Hefty Hugh and Lanky Len,
Who had been to jail but were out again.)
Said Lanky Len to Hefty Hugh, "Let's steal another egg or two."

But Hefty Hugh said, "Listen, Len:
I vote we steal the fat red hen.
We'll make our way to the chicken coop
And scoop her up in one fell swoop.
Just think of all those eggs she'll lay us,
And all the money folk will pay us!"

And Len replied, "We'll soon be rich.
It makes my fingers start to itch."