

UNIT 1

The Ugly Duckling

Near a beautiful river in the heart of the countryside, a mother duck was sitting on her eggs. It was mid-summer. The air was warm and a gentle breeze ruffled the tall grasses on the banks.

Very soon the eggs began to hatch. First one, then another, then another until only one egg was left. It was bigger than the others and it didn't look like them. The mother duck sat and sat until, finally the egg broke. Out popped an ugly, grey duckling.

The mother duck was anxious to teach the ducklings to swim. She jumped into the sparkling river followed by all the ducklings. The ugly, grey duckling was a much better swimmer than his brothers and sisters. He loved swimming and being on the quiet river.

Next, the mother duck took her children to the farmyard. It was a noisy, busy place and the ugly duckling didn't like it. The other animals made such a fuss of the sweet, fluffy ducklings but when they saw the ugly duckling, they made fun of him. The hens pecked at him and the farmer shooed him away. The ugly duckling was so unhappy, he ran away.

He hid in the tall grasses by the riverbank and wondered what to do. He saw a group of beautiful white swans swim by gracefully. They had snow-white feathers and long, elegant necks. How he wished he could swim with them—but he was so ugly, he knew they wouldn't want him around.

Winter came. The gentle breeze of summer became a bitter, cold wind. Ice formed on parts of the river. Snow dropped from the grey sky. The ugly duckling shivered by the riverbank, miserable and lonely.

Finally, spring arrived. The days became warmer and the ice melted. The ugly duckling had survived the winter and was longing to swim on the river again. He went down to the edge of the water and there, gliding gracefully by, were the beautiful white swans. How he wanted to swim with them and not be alone any more.

The ugly duckling peered down into the water. He saw his reflection and couldn't believe his eyes. Staring back at him was not an ugly duckling, but a beautiful white swan!

He jumped into the river and swam after the swans. When he caught up with them, the swans greeted him warmly and invited him to join them.

He was no longer ugly. He was no longer alone. He was a beautiful swan.

Retold by Wendy Wren

Write

