**THE UGLY DUCKLING**

It was summer in the county. All the hay had been stacked, and the fields of wheat were ***yellow***. Tall dock leaves grew on the banks of the canals.

Among the dock leaves, on her nest, sat a duck waiting for her eggs to hatch. She had been waiting for a long time. At last the eggs began to crack and, one by one, the ducklings poked their heads out.

Before long, all the eggs had hatched except the biggest one. The duck sat a little longer, until out tumbled the last of her chicks.

But when she looked at him, she said, *“Oh, dear! You’re so big and ugly.”*

THE NEXT DAY was warm and sunny, so the duck took her new family down to the canal. She splashed into the water and, one by one, her ducklings followed her. Soon all of them were swimming beautifully, even the ugly grey one.

Next the ducklings went into the duck yard. *“Stay close to me,”* warned their mother. The other ducks thought the ducklings were beautiful all except the big ugly one.

The ducklings stayed in the duck yard. But the ugly duckling was very unhappy there. The other ducks pecked at him and **laughed**. He had nowhere to hide, so one day he ran away.

He ran and until he came to the great marsh where the wild ducks lived. There he lay in the rushes for two ***whole weeks.***