



The Ugly Duckling: (abridged version)

Mother Duck sat waiting for her eggs to hatch.
She waited, and she waited.

One day the eggs began to crack, and out came five yellow ducklings. There was one egg left, and Mother Duck had to sit on it for much, much longer.

Finally, the egg began to crack and out came the last duckling. He was grey and large, and as he stood up, the other ducklings gasped and then laughed at him.

One day Mother Duck took all the ducklings to the pond to teach them to swim. "Let's go to the pond," said Mother Duck. "Follow me."

At the pond, some wild ducks flew by. They saw Mother Duck and the five yellow ducklings, then they noticed the big grey duckling. "Look how ugly he is!" they said laughing.

"Let's go to the farmyard," said Mother Duck. "Follow me." Some hens saw Mother Duck and the five yellow ducklings, then they noticed the big grey duckling. "Look how ugly he is!" they said and laughed at him.

"Let's go home!" said Mother Duck. "Follow me." Some wood pigeons saw Mother Duck and the five yellow ducklings, then they noticed the big grey duckling. "Look how ugly he is!" they said and laughed at him.

The Ugly Duckling was so upset he went to bed and refused to come out. "I will run away," thought the Ugly Duckling. "I'm not wanted here."

The Ugly Duckling came across a big lake; he hid in the tall reeds. As Spring arrived, the lake looked so inviting that the Ugly Duckling climbed out of the reeds and stepped into the water. Some swans flew past. They saw the Ugly Duckling and landed beside him. "I know what you're going to say. I'm ugly. Ugly, ugly, ugly. There, I said it for you."

"What are you talking about?" said one of the swans. Suddenly the Ugly Duckling caught sight of himself in the water. He wasn't an Ugly Duckling. He had turned into a beautiful swan. "I'm a swan!" said the Ugly Duckling happily.

The other swans nodded and swam around him.