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Kuratko, the Terrible Chick

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Once upon a time, there was an old couple who had no children. "If only we had our own child or a little chick," Grandmother always said. "Think of how we could pet and care for it!" But Grandfather always replied, "It's not necessary! We're fine as we are."

Finally, after a long time, the old black hen on the farm got a chick. Grandmother was overjoyed. "Look, Grandfather," she said, "now we have our own little chick!"

But Grandfather shook his head doubtfully. "I don't like the look of this chick. There's something strange about it." But Grandmother wouldn't listen. To her, the chick seemed everything it should be. She named it Kuratko and petted and spoiled it as if it were her own child. Kuratko grew quickly and soon developed an enormous appetite.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo, cock-a-doodle-doo, I'm hungry! Give me something to eat!" he cried all day. "You shouldn't feed that chick so much," grumbled Grandfather. "He eats everything inside and out, soon there won't be anything left for us."

But Grandmother wouldn't listen. She gave Kuratko so much food that eventually there was nothing left for herself and the old man. It wasn't so pleasant in the house anymore. Grandmother sat at her spinning wheel, trying to forget she was hungry, and Grandfather sat on his stool, too angry to talk to her. And then, as if nothing was wrong, Kuratko walked into the room, flapping his wings and crowing, "Cock-a-doodle-doo, cock-a-doodle-doo! I'm hungry! Give me something to eat!"

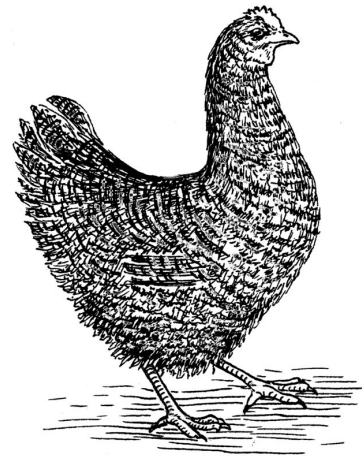
"I'll never give you anything to eat again, you greedy chick!" shouted Grandfather in anger. "Cock-a-doodle-doo, cock-a-doodle-doo!" Kuratko replied. "Then I'll just eat you!" And with that, he pecked at Grandfather's head and... swallowed him up, stool and all! "Oh, Kuratko," cried Grandmother. "Where's Grandfather?"

"Cock-a-doodle-doo, cock-a-doodle-doo," said Kuratko. "I'm still hungry. I think I'll eat you too!" And with that, he pecked at Grandmother and swallowed her up, spinning wheel and all!

So the Terrible Chick continued on his way, crowing happily. Along the way, he

met a washerwoman who was working over her tub. "Goodness gracious, Kuratko!" exclaimed the woman. "What a great harvest you've had, you're so fat."

"Cock-a-doodle-doo, cock-a-doodle-doo!" said Kuratko. "You would think my harvest was great, for I just ate Grandmother with her spinning wheel, Grandfather with his stool, and a washerwoman with her tub! But I'm still hungry, so now I'll eat you too!" Before the poor woman knew what was happening, Kuratko pecked at her and swallowed her up, tub and all. Then the Terrible Chick continued on his way, crowing happily.



Soon, he came across a group of soldiers. "Good heavens, Kuratko!" exclaimed the soldiers. "What a great harvest you have gathered! You are so fat!" "Cock-a-doodle-doo, cock-a-doodle-doo!" replied Kuratko. "You would think my harvest was great, for I have just eaten a washerwoman with her tub, grandmother with her spinning wheel, and grandfather with his cane. But I am still hungry, so now I will eat you too!"

Before the soldiers knew what was happening, Kuratko pecked them one by one and ate them, even their bayonets, as if they were grains of wheat. The Terrible Little Chicken continued on his way, crowing happily. Soon he met Kotsor, the cat. Kotsor blinked his eyes and stroked his whiskers in surprise. "Good heavens, Kuratko, what a great harvest you have gathered! You are so fat!"

"Cock-a-doodle-doo, cock-a-doodle-doo!" said Kuratko. "You would think my harvest was great, for I have just eaten a company of soldiers with bayonets, a washerwoman with her tub, grandmother with her spinning wheel, and grandfather with his cane. But I am still hungry, so now I will eat you too!"

Before Kotsor the cat knew what was happening, Kuratko pecked him once and swallowed him whole. But Kotsor was not someone who would easily submit to such humiliation. When he found himself in Kuratko's belly, he stretched out his claws and began scratching and tearing open the stomach. He worked until he had made a big hole in Kuratko's belly. And when Kuratko tried to crow again, the Terrible Little Chicken fell dead to the ground!

Then Kotsor the cat jumped out of Kuratko's belly. Behind him marched the company of soldiers from the belly, then the washerwoman with her tub, followed by grandmother with her spinning wheel, and finally grandfather with his cane. They all went back to their tasks.

Kotsor the cat followed grandmother and grandfather to their house and begged them to give him Kuratko as his dinner. "You may have him," said grandfather. "But ask grandmother. He was her little pet, not mine."

"Of course you may have him," said grandmother. "I now see that grandfather was right. Kuratko was a strange, ungrateful, and Terrible Little Chicken, and I never want to hear his name again."

So Kotsor the cat had a delicious dinner, and to this day, he still licks his whiskers when he thinks about it.

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