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The Rooster That Crowed Too Soon

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Red Rooster felt it was time he showed the new drake that had come to live in the barnyard that he was a very brave rooster, as well as the ruler of the barnyard.

So the next time he saw the drake he said: "I suppose you have been in many battles, and no doubt the home you have just come from will miss your protection as well as your company."

"No," replied the drake; "I never was in a battle. I do not quarrel with any one. I believe in living in peace with all around me."

"Oh, well, that is all very well for you, perhaps," said the rooster; "but for me, it is a different matter. I have to protect all the hens and chickens and I also protect myself. I can whip any rooster around here, and no one dares come into my yard."

The drake did not reply, for just then a strange rooster came into the yard, and Red Rooster ran at him with sweeping wings.

He pecked at the intruder and spurred him until he was glad to run away.

"There, what did I tell you?" said Red Rooster, coming back to the drake. "I am the greatest fighter around this part of the country. I am not afraid of anything."

"Oh, don't talk so much about it," said the dog from his house near-by. "I think there are a few things even you are afraid of, Mr. Rooster. I guess you would run from a fox."

"I am not afraid of a fox," said Red Rooster. "I can scare him by crowing loudly. Master knows when I make a great noise it is time for him to find the cause. Oh, I am very brave and can take care of myself."

Red Rooster felt so brave that he thought the highest place he could get on the wall would be a good place to talk about his bravery, so he flew up on the wall by the gate, and then to the top of the hen-house.



Madam Pig was in her pen on the other side. "Madam Pig," he said, "did you see me whip that impudent rooster that came through our yard?"

Madam Pig grunted that she did not, as she could not see over the wall.

"You surely missed a great sight," said the rooster, stretching his neck and strutting along the roof. "I am a brave fellow. I never allow any one to come around here that does not belong here. I have just been telling the new drake about my prowess and bravery.

"Mr. Drake," he called, as the new drake and his family waddled past the hen-house, "if you need protection at any time do not hesitate to call upon me."

A robin perched upon the roof not far from him, and Red Rooster flew at him. "Go away," he said. "I am very fierce and brave, and if you were as large as a cow I should attack you just the same. I am not afraid of anything."

Red Rooster strutted up and down, crowing and thinking how brave he was, and so intent was he upon his greatness that he did not heed the warning cries that came from the fowls in the yard below him.

In a moment more a big hawk swooped down and held Red Rooster in his claws. He started to fly just as the shot from a gun sounded, and Red Rooster fell to the ground.

He jumped up and shook himself, and looked in time to see his master pick up the dead hawk.

"I guess that hawk won't show himself around here again," he said. "That was a very hard fight, but I won, even if I did get a tumble."

"Well, if you are not a conceited fellow!" laughed the dog; "but I was not the only one that saw the hawk start off with you, and we all know that if master had not shot it you would not be here to crow to-morrow morning."

"No," piped the robin from a tree; "you were telling me how brave you were, and the hawk was not half as large as a cow. You were not very brave when he came upon you. You did not do a thing. Oh, dear! it was so funny to hear you crowing about your bravery and then to see you caught up so soon by a hawk that is only a little larger than you."

The drake and all his family were listening, and Madam Pig had put her head over the wall to listen. Poor Red Rooster felt that it was no time to crow about his bravery, so he walked away with all the dignity he could muster.

"He crowed too soon," said the drake.

"He crowed too much," said the dog.

"He crowed too loud," said the robin, "or he would have heard the warning cries from the hens and chickens."

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