

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Mysterious Egg

By Jennifer Mann  
2015

*Jennifer Mann has written for Highlights Magazine for Kids. In this poem, a group of farm animals waits for a mysterious egg to hatch. As you read, take notes on what the animals say and think about the egg.*

- [1] The farm slept through the gusty<sup>1</sup> storm  
all tucked away inside and warm,  
while rafters shook and hinges squeaked,  
shutters banged and branches creaked.
- [5] The night was dark. The wind blew strong.  
A little egg was blown along.  
Small and silent, round and white, it rolled up

to the barn that night.

Bright sky, pink clouds, the rising sun —

- [10] Rooster called, "The morning's come."  
But then he noticed things amiss.<sup>2</sup>  
He crowed, surprised, "Whose egg is this?"

The chickens cackled from their pens,  
"If there's an egg, it's from us hens."

- [15] "Don't be so quick," said Goose and Duck.  
"Perhaps that egg is mine," they clucked.

Cow yawned and stretched and rolled from bed.

"I might have lost an egg," she said.

Then Rooster crowed, "Whose egg are you?"

- [20] The little egg gave not a clue.

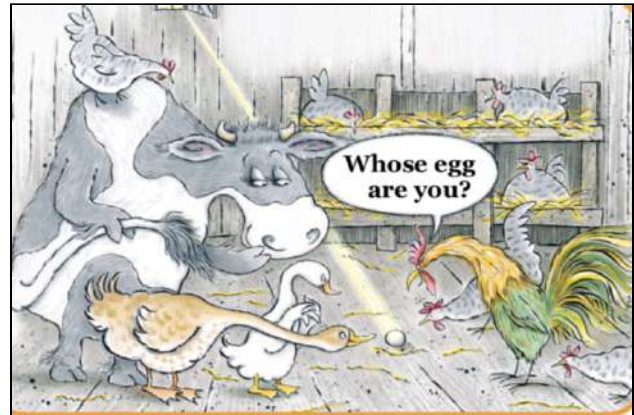
The chickens ran to clean the roost.<sup>3</sup>

"I'll dig up tasty slugs," said Goose,

while Duck fixed up a bed of reeds.

Cow polished, vacuumed, dusted, sneezed.

- [25] Then all raced back to wait and see, each wondering, "Will it look like me?"  
Small and silent, round and white, the egg held  
to its secret tight.



*"Whose egg are you?" by Liisa Chauncy Guida is used with permission.*

1. related to strong, blowing winds  
2. not quite right  
3. a place where birds rest

"I think the egg looks very goosey,"  
Goose declared.<sup>4</sup> "I'll name it Lucy."

[30] But Duck believed the shape so neat  
was just the space for two webbed feet.

The chickens fluttered in a snit.<sup>5</sup>  
"That egg says hen all over it."

[35] Cow, unsure of what to do,  
said she thought she heard it moo.

They huddled up all close together.  
No one moved beak, hoof, or feather.  
Small and silent, round and white, that egg was

watched all through the night.

[40] Then *clunk*, then *crunch*, then *crackle-crack*. Then *wiggle, waggle, woggle, whack*.  
And then a *snap* — the eggshell spread.  
Out popped a baby turtle's head.

They clapped and hugged and named her Sue.  
She loved her roost, and learned to moo.

[45] She found those slugs the best to eat, and thought  
her bed of reeds a treat.

The mystery's solved; the story's done.  
The egg belonged to everyone!

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4. **Declare (verb):** to make something known  
5. a state of irritation

## Text-Dependent Questions

**Directions:** For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: What is the main theme of the poem?
  - A. Animals often love and support each other.
  - B. Nature is full of delightful surprises.
  - C. All creatures desire to have a family.
  - D. Mistakes have a way of working out.
  
2. PART B: Which detail from the poem best supports the answer to Part A?
  - A. "But then he noticed things amiss. / He crowed, surprised, 'Whose egg is this?'" (Lines 11-12)
  - B. "Then all raced back to wait and see, each wondering, 'Will it look like me?'" (Line 25)
  - C. "And then a snap — the eggshell spread. / Out popped a baby turtle's head." (Lines 41-42)
  - D. "the story's done. / The egg belonged to everyone!" (Lines 47-48)
  
3. Why is it important to the story that the storm takes place in lines 1-7?
  - A. The storm introduces the egg into the animals' lives.
  - B. The frightening storm teaches the animals to value life.
  - C. The storm brings the animals closer together.
  - D. The storm puts the mysterious egg in danger.
  
4. How do the animals feel when the egg hatches into a turtle?

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## Discussion Questions

**Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.**

1. Before the egg hatches, all of the animals excitedly prepare for the baby to be born. What do you do to prepare when something exciting is coming? Have you ever prepared for a new family member? What did you do to prepare for that?
2. In the poem, the farm animals raise the turtle together. Would you consider them a family? Why or why not? What traits do you think make a family?