

11. Raggedy Ann and the Chickens

Before Reading:

1. What does a mother chicken do to help her eggs become chickens?
2. In this story, Raggedy Ann fell into the place where the chickens lived. What do you think will happen to her?
3. Look at the last picture. What is Raggedy Ann doing? Why do you think she is doing it?



When Marcella had to run into the house, she left Raggedy sitting on the fence by the chickens. “Please sit quietly and do not move,” Marcella told Raggedy Ann. “If you move, you might fall and get hurt!”

So, Raggedy Ann sat quietly, just like Marcella told her. She smiled. She knew that she had fallen many times before and it had never hurt her. It was because she was filled with nice soft cotton!

Raggedy Ann sat there for a while. Then a little bird came. It flew to the flowers nearby. It came very close to Raggedy Ann’s head.

Raggedy Ann turned her head to see the bird and lost her **balance**. *Plump!* She fell down among the chickens.

The chickens ran away in all directions, but a **rooster** named Old Ironsides stayed.

He was not happy. He put his head down close to the ground and made a strange noise as he looked angrily at Raggedy Ann.

Raggedy Ann only smiled at Old Ironsides, the rooster. She touched her hair with her hand and did not look at him. She was not afraid of him.

Then something strange happened. The old rooster jumped up in the air and kicked out his feet. He knocked Raggedy Ann over and over.



Raggedy Ann shouted, “Shoo!” at the rooster to make him go away. Old Ironsides didn’t run away. He kicked her again.

Two old **hens** had been watching the rooster kick Raggedy. Now, they ran to help her. One old hen stood in front of the rooster. The other old hen held Raggedy’s dress and pulled her into the **chicken coop**.

It was dark inside. Raggedy felt the two friendly chickens pull her up over the nests.

Finally, when the old hens stopped pulling her, Raggedy could sit up. Her button eyes were very good, so she could see the old hen in front of her.

“Wow, that’s the hardest work I’ve done in a long time!” said the old hen. “I was afraid Mr. Rooster would tear your dress!”

“That was a strange game he was playing, Mrs. Hen,” said Raggedy Ann.

The old hen laughed, “He wasn’t playing a game, he was fighting you!”

“Fighting!” Raggedy Ann was surprised.

“Oh yes!” the old hen answered. “Old Ironsides, the rooster, thought you were going to hurt some of the young chickens. So, he was fighting you!”

“I am sorry that I fell inside, I wouldn’t hurt anyone,” Raggedy Ann said.



“If we tell you a secret, you must **promise** not to tell Marcella!” said the old hens.

“I promise! **Cross my candy heart!**” said Raggedy Ann.

Then the two old hens took Raggedy Ann to the farthest corner of the chicken coop. There, behind a box, they had built two nests. Each old hen had ten eggs in her nest.

“If the people in the house knew about the eggs, they would take them all!” said the hens. “And then we could not have our babies!”

Raggedy Ann felt the eggs. They were nice and warm. “Now we will have to sit on the eggs and warm them up again!”

The two old hens opened their wings and sat down on the nests.

“But how can the eggs grow if you sit on them?” asked Raggedy. “If Fido sits on any plants in the garden, the plants will not grow, Marcella says!”

“Eggs are different!” one of the old hens explained. “In order to make the eggs **hatch**, we must sit on them for three weeks so they don’t get cold!”

“And at the end of the three weeks do the eggs grow into a plant?” asked Raggedy Ann.

“You must be thinking of **eggplant!**” cried one old hen. “These are chicken eggs. They don’t grow into a plant. After they hatch, we will have a lovely family of soft, cute little **chicks**. We can hold them under our wings and love them dearly!”

“Have you been sitting on the eggs very long?” Raggedy asked.

“We don’t know!” said one hen. “You see, we leave the nests only once in a while to eat and drink.”

“We were going out to get a drink when you fell in the pen!” said one of the old hens.

“I’m happy to sit on the eggs to keep them warm while you get something to eat and drink!” said Raggedy.

So the two old hens walked out of the coop to finish their meal. While they were gone, Raggedy Ann sat quietly on the warm eggs.



Suddenly, underneath her she heard something, “Pick, pick!”

Then she felt something move. “I hope it isn’t a mouse!” Raggedy Ann said to herself. “I wish the old hens would come back.”

When they came back and saw Raggedy Ann’s face, they said, “What is it?”

Raggedy Ann stood up on her feet. She looked down. There were several little baby chicks, round and **fluffy**.

“Cheep! Cheep! Cheep!” they cried when Raggedy stepped out of the nest.

“Baby chicks!” Raggedy cried. She picked up one of the little fluffy balls up. “They want to be held!”

The two old hens’ eyes were bright with happiness. They got on the nests and opened their soft warm wings. “The other eggs will hatch soon!” they said.

So, for several days, Raggedy helped the two hens hatch the rest of the chicks. Just as they finished, Marcella came inside and looked around.

“How did you get in here, Raggedy Ann?” she cried. “I have been looking everywhere for you! Did the chickens pull you in here?”

Behind the box, both old hens talked softly to the chicks under their wings. Marcella heard them.

She lifted the box away and gave a little cry of surprise and happiness.

“Oh, dear old Hennypennies!” she cried, lifting both old hens from their nests. “You have hidden your nests! Now you have one, two, three, four—twenty chicks!” As she counted them, Marcella put them in her **apron**. Then she lifted Raggedy up and placed her over the new little chicks.

“Come on, Hennypennies!” she said, and went out of the coop. The two old hens followed right behind her.

Marcella called Daddy and told him about the new chicks. Daddy made two nice houses for the hens and their babies.

All the dolls were happy when they heard of Raggedy’s adventure. They did not have to wait long before Marcella took them out to see the new chicks.

After Reading:

1. What happened when Raggedy Ann fell into the chicken coop?
2. What was the hens’ secret?
3. Do you think Raggedy Ann was right to tell the hens’ secret? When is it important to keep a secret and when is it important not to keep a secret?