THE COCK, THE MOUSE

AND THE LITTLE RED HEN

Once upon a time there was
a hill, and on the hill there
was a pretty little house.
   It had one little green
doors, and four little windows
with green shutters,
and in it there lived
A Cock
and A Mouse
and
   A Little
      Red
         Hen
On another hill close by
there was another little
house. It was very ugly.
It had a door
that wouldn’t shut,

   and two broken windows,
       and all the paint
          was off the shutters
     And in this house
         there lived
A BOLD BAD FOX
and FOUR BAD
LITTLE FOXES
One morning these
four bad little foxes
came to the
big bad Fox
and said:

“Oh, Father, we’re so
hungry!”
“We had nothing to eat
yesterday,” said one.
“And scarcely anything
the day before,” said another.
“And only half a chicken
the day before that,” said
the third.
“And only two little
ducks the day before that,”
said the fourth.

The big bad Fox shook
his head for a long time,
for he was thinking.
At last he said in a big gruff voice:

“On that hill over there I see a house. And in that house there lives a Cock.”

“And a Mouse,” screamed two of the little foxes.

“And a little Red Hen,” screamed the other two.

“And they are nice and fat,” went on the big bad Fox.

“This very day, I’ll take my great sack, and I will go up that hill, and in at that door, and into my sack I will put the Cock, and the Mouse, and the little Red Hen.”

“I’ll make a fire to roast the Cock,” said one little fox.

“I’ll put on the saucepan to boil the Hen,” said the second.

“And I’ll get the frying pan to fry the Mouse,” said the third.

“And I’ll have the biggest
helping when
ty they are all cooked,”
said the fourth, who
was the greediest of all.
So the four little foxes
jumped for joy, and the
big bad Fox went to get
his sack ready to start
upon his journey.

But what was happening
to the Cock and the Mouse,
and the little Red Hen, all
this time?
Well, sad to say, the Cock and
the Mouse had both got out of
bed on the wrong side that
morning.

The Cock said the day was
too hot, and the Mouse grumbled
because it was too cold.
They came grumbling down
to the kitchen, where the good
little Red Hen, looking as bright
as a sunbeam, was bustling about.
“Who’ll get some sticks to
light the fire with?” she asked.
“I shan’t,” said the Cock.
“I shan’t,” said the Mouse.
“Then I’ll do it myself,” said the little Red Hen.
So off she ran to get the sticks.
“And now, who’ll fill the kettle from the spring?” she asked.
“I shan’t,” said the Cock.

“I shan’t,” said the Mouse.
“Then I’ll do it myself,” said the little Red Hen.
And off she ran to fill the kettle.
“And who’ll get the breakfast ready?” she asked, as she put the kettle on to boil.

“I shan’t,” said the Cock.
“I shan’t,”
said the Mouse.
“I’ll do it myself,”
said the little Red Hen.
All breakfast time the
Cock and the Mouse quarrelled
and grumbled. The
Cock upset the milk jug,
and the Mouse scattered
crumbs upon the floor
“Who’ll clear away the
breakfast?” asked the poor
little Red Hen, hoping
they would soon leave
off being cross.
“I shan’t,” said the Cock.
“I shan’t,” said the Mouse.
“Then I’ll do it myself,”
said the little Red Hen.
So she cleared everything
away, swept up the crumbs,
and brushed up the fireplace.
“And now, who’ll help
me to make the beds?”
“I shan’t,” said the Cock.
“I shan’t,” said the Mouse.
“Then I’ll do it myself,”
said the little Red Hen.
And she tripped away upstairs.
But the lazy Cock and Mouse each sat down in a comfortable arm-chair by the fire and soon fell fast asleep.

Now the bad Fox had crept up the hill, and into the garden, and if the Cock and Mouse hadn’t been asleep, they would have seen his sharp eyes peeping in at the window.
“Rat tat tat, Rat tat tat”, the Fox knocked at the door.

“Who can that be?” said the Mouse, half opening his eyes.
“Go and look for yourself, if you want to know,” said the rude Cock
“It’s the postman perhaps,” thought the Mouse to himself, “and he may have a letter for me.” So without waiting to
see who it was, he lifted the latch and opened the door. As soon as he opened it in jumped the big Fox, with a cruel smile upon his face! “Oh! oh! oh!” squeaked the Mouse as he tried to run up the chimney. “Doodle doodle do!” screamed the Cock, as he jumped on the back of the biggest arm-chair. But the Fox only laughed, and without more ado he took the little Mouse by the tail, and popped him into the sack, and seized the Cock by the neck and popped him in too. Then the poor little Red Hen came running down-stairs to see what all the noise was about, and the Fox caught her and put her into the sack with the others. Then he took a long piece of string out of his pocket, wound
it round and round and round the mouth of the sack, and tied it very tight indeed. After that he threw the sack over his back and set off down the hill.

“Oh! I wish I hadn’t been so cross,” said the Cock, as they went bumping about.
“Oh! I wish I hadn’t been so lazy,” said the Mouse, wiping his eyes with the tip of his tail.
“It’s never too late to mend,” said the little Red Hen. “And don’t be too sad.
See, here I have my little work-bag, and in it there is a pair of scissors, and a little thimble, and a needle and thread. Very soon you will see what I am going to do.”
Now the sun was very hot, and soon Mr. Fox began to feel his sack was heavy, and at last he thought he
would lie down under a tree and go to sleep for a little while. So he threw the sack down with a big bump, and very soon fell fast asleep.

Snore, snore, snore, went the Fox.

As soon as the little Red Hen heard this, she took out her scissors, and began to snip a hole in the sack, just large enough for the Mouse to creep through.

“Quick,” she whispered to the Mouse, “run as fast as you can and bring back a stone just as large as yourself.”

Out scampered the Mouse, and soon came back, dragging the stone after him.

“Push it in here,” said the little Red Hen, and he pushed it in in a twinkling.

Then the little Red Hen snipped away the hole, till
it was large enough for the Cock to get through.
   “Quick,” she said, “run and get a stone as big as yourself.”
Out flew the Cock, and soon came back quite out of breath, with a big stone, which he pushed into the sack too.
Then the little Red Hen popped out,
   got a stone as big as herself, and pushed it in.
Next she put on her thimble, took out her needle and thread, and sewed up the hole as quickly as ever she could.
When it was done, the Cock and the Mouse and the little Red Hen ran home very fast, shut the door after them, drew the bolts, shut the shutters, and drew down the blinds and felt quite safe.
The bad Fox lay fast asleep under the tree for some time, but at last he woke up.
“Dear, dear,” he said, rubbing his eyes and then looking at the long shadows on the grass, “how late it is getting. I must hurry home.”
So the bad Fox went grumbling and groaning down the hill
And then the fishes carried him off to their fairy caves and kept him a prisoner there, so he was never seen again.
And the four greedy little foxes had to go
to bed without any supper.

But the Cock and the Mouse never grumbled again. They lit the fire, filled the kettle, laid the breakfast, and did all the work, while the good little Red Hen had a holiday, and sat resting in the big arm-chair.

No foxes ever troubled them again, and for all I know they are still living happily in the little house with the green door and green shutters, which stands on the hill.