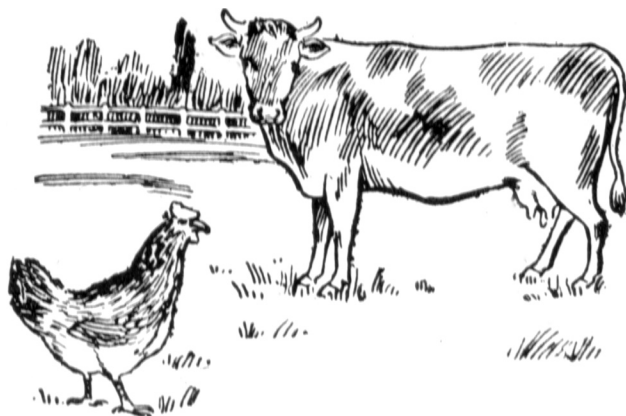


SEVEN O'CLOCK STORIES



Second Night: The Playmates of the Three Happy Children



The three happy children have many playmates, who live in the barnyard. Some have four feet and some only two, but these have two wings besides to make up for the missing feet.

Jehosophat, Marmaduke, and Hepzebiah like the dogs best. And just as there are three children so there are three dogs. Let's shake hands with them, one by one.

The great big dog is named Rover, the middle-sized one Brownie, and the little yellow curly one Wienerwurst.

A wise fellow is Rover. From a cold country called Newfoundland his great grandfather came. And he seems to think life is a very serious matter. His coat is black with snow-white patches. His hair curls a little. It feels very soft when you lay your head against it.

He doesn't play as much as the other two doggies. But once when Hepzebiah fell in the pond after her doll, Rover swam in and caught her dress in his mouth and brought her to shore. Not long after that Mr. Green gave him a new shiny collar.

Brownie is a terrier and is coloured like his name. He is a frisky dog and often chases the horses and buggies that go up and down the road in front of

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the house. Sometimes the drivers lash at him with their long whips but he is too quick for them and scampers out of their reach.

The funniest doggie in all the world is little yellow Wienerwurst. He is even more full of mischief than Brownie and loves to run after all the other animals in the barnyard.

When the pigeons fly down from their little house on the top of the barn to take an afternoon walk and perhaps pick up a few extra grains of corn, this little yellow doggie spoils all their fun. He soon sends them flying back to their house on the roof, where they chatter and coo in great excitement. But they do not lose their tempers like "Mr. Stuckup," the turkey, or old "Miss Crosspatch," the guinea-hen with the ugly voice.

Once little Wienerwurst caught a pretty pigeon by its tail and bit it. Then Mr. Green took him over his knee, just as he did Jehosophat when he threw a stone at the window, and spanked little Wienerwurst.

Each dog has a house. One is big, one middle-sized, and one small, and each has a door to fit the doggie who lives there. Their houses are called kennels, and they are something like the pigeon's home way up on the roof.

The pigeons are very pretty, grey and white and pink coloured. When the sun shines brightly their necks shine too, like the rainbow silk dress which Mrs. Green wears whenever there is a wedding.

One pair of the pigeons sit a great deal of the time on the ridge-pole of the barn and swell out their chests like proud, fat policemen. Farmer Green calls them pouter pigeons.

They do not have harsh voices like the guinea-hen or the old black crows which steal the corn from the field when Mr. Scarecrow gets tired and goes to sleep. (We will introduce you to Mr. Scarecrow some evening very soon.) But the voices of the pigeons are soft and low like mother's, especially when Hepzebiah is sick and she sings her to sleep.

They will not have much to do with the chickens, these pigeons. Perhaps they are like the people who live on the top floor of tall city houses and do not go down often to talk with the people in the streets.

What a lot of chickens Farmer Green has! Almost two hundred, if they would ever stay still long enough for Jehosophat to count them. They are called White Wyandottes and they are very white and plump, with combs as red as geraniums.

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You know there are many kinds of chickens just as there are many kinds of people, English, French, and Americans. Rhode Island Reds, Plymouth Rocks, Cochins, and Leghorns are some of the chicken family names, but Jehosophat’s father does not believe in mixing families, he says, so only the White Wyandottes live on the Green farm.

Jehosophat and Marmaduke love the big rooster best. The red comb on the top of his head has teeth like a carpenter’s saw, and is so large it will not stand up straight. His white tail curves beautifully like the plumes on the hats of the circus ladies. When he throws back his head, puffs out his throat, and calls to the Sun, he is indeed a wonderful creature.

The little chicks are the ones Hepzebiah loves best. She can hold them in her two hands like little soft yellow balls or the powder puffs which Nurse uses on new little babies. The little chicks have such tiny voices, crying “cheep, cheep, cheep,” almost the way the crickets do all through the night.

The chickens have cousins who—but there goes the clock—so that is tomorrow night’s story.