



# *It is Quite True*

Laure Claire Foucher

Danish

---

*Easy*  
*5 min read*

“That is a terrible story!” said a Hen in a quarter of the town where the affair had not happened. “That is a terrible story from a poultry-yard. I dare not sleep alone to-night! It is quite fortunate that there are so many of us on the roost together!” And she told a tale, which made the feathers of the other hens stand on end, and the cock’s comb fall down flat. It is quite true!

But we will begin at the beginning; and that took place in a poultry-yard in another part of the town. The sun went down, and the fowls jumped up on their perch to roost. There was a Hen, with white feathers and short legs, who laid eggs regularly and was a respectable hen in every way; as she flew up on to the roost she pecked herself with her beak, and a little feather fell from her.

“There it goes!” said she; “the more I peck myself the handsomer I grow!” And she said it quite merrily, for she was a joker among the hens, though, as I have said, she was very respectable; and then she went to sleep.

It was dark all around; the hens sat side by side on the roost, but the one that sat next to the merry Hen did not sleep: she heard and she didn’t hear, as one should do in this world if one wishes to live in peace; but she could not help telling it to her neighbor.

“Did you hear what was said here just now? I name no names; but here is a hen who wants to peck her feathers

out to look well. If I were a cock I should despise her.”

And just above the hens sat the Owl, with her husband and her children; the family had sharp ears, and they all heard every word that the neighboring Hen had spoken. They rolled their eyes, and the Mother-Owl clapped her wings and said, “Don’t listen to it! But I suppose you heard what was said there? I heard it with my own ears, and one must hear much before one’s ears fall off. There is one among the fowls who has so completely forgotten what is becoming conduct in a hen that she pulls out all her feathers, while the cock sits looking at her.”

“*Prenez garde aux enfants,*” said the Father-Owl. “That’s not a story for the children to hear.”

“I’ll tell it to the neighbor owl; she’s a very proper owl to associate with.” And she flew away.

“Hoo! hoo! to-who!” they both screeched in front of the neighbor’s dove-cote to the doves within. “Have you heard it? Have you heard it? Hoo! hoo! there’s a hen who has pulled out all her feathers for the sake of the cock. She’ll die with cold, if she’s not dead already.”

“Coo! coo! Where, where?” cried the Pigeons.

“In the neighbor’s poultry-yard. I’ve as good as seen it myself. It’s hardly proper to repeat the story, but it’s quite true!”

“Believe it! believe every single word of it!” cooed the Pigeons, and they cooed down into their own poultry-yard. “There’s a hen, and some say that there are two of them that have plucked out all their feathers, that they may not look like the rest, and that they may attract the cock’s attention. That’s a dangerous thing to do, for one may catch cold and die of a fever, and they are both dead.”

“Wake up! wake up!” crowed the Cock, and he flew up on to the plank; his eyes were still heavy with sleep, but yet he crowed. “Three hens have died of a broken heart. They have plucked out all their feathers. That’s a terrible story. I won’t keep it to myself; pass it on.”

“Pass it on!” piped the Bats; and the fowls clucked and the cocks crowed, “Pass it on! Pass it on!” And so the story traveled from poultry-yard to poultry-yard, and at last came back to the place from which it had gone forth.

“Five fowls,” it was told, “have plucked out all their feathers to show which of them had become thinnest out of love to the cock; and then they have pecked each other, and fallen down dead, to the shame and disgrace of their families, and to the great loss of their master.”

And the Hen who had lost the little loose feather, of course did not know her own story again; and as she was a very respectable Hen, she said,—

“I despise those hens; but there are many of that sort. One ought not to hush up such a thing, and I shall do what I can that the story may get into the papers, and then it will be spread over all the country, and that will serve those hens right, and their families too.”

It was put into the newspaper; it was printed; and it’s quite true—*that one little feather may easily become five hens.*

Read more fairy tales on [Fairytalez.com](http://Fairytalez.com)