

The Little Red Hen

by Florence White Williams adapted by EveryReader

Adapted to Lexile Level 600





A Little Red Hen lived in a barnyard.
She spent most of her time walking around,
pecking and scratching for worms.



She loved fat, tasty worms.
She thought they were important for her
chicks' health.
When she found a worm, she clucked, "Chuck-
chuck-chuck!" and called her chicks.



When they came, she shared the worm with them.

She was a busy little hen.



A cat usually napped by the barn door.
She did not bother to chase the rat who ran
wherever he wanted.
The pig in the pigpen did not care about
anything as long as he could eat and grow fat.



One day the Little Red Hen found a seed.

It was a wheat seed.

She was used to bugs and worms, so at first she thought it might be a new kind of food.



She gave it a gentle peck and learned that it did not taste like a worm at all.

It was long and thin, but it was not meat.



She asked the other animals what it was.
She learned that it was a wheat seed.
If planted, it would grow.
When it was ripe, it could be ground into
flour and then made into bread.



She knew the seed should be planted.
But she was busy finding food for herself
and her chicks.
She thought someone else could do it.
She asked the pig, the cat, and the rat, "Who
will plant the seed?"



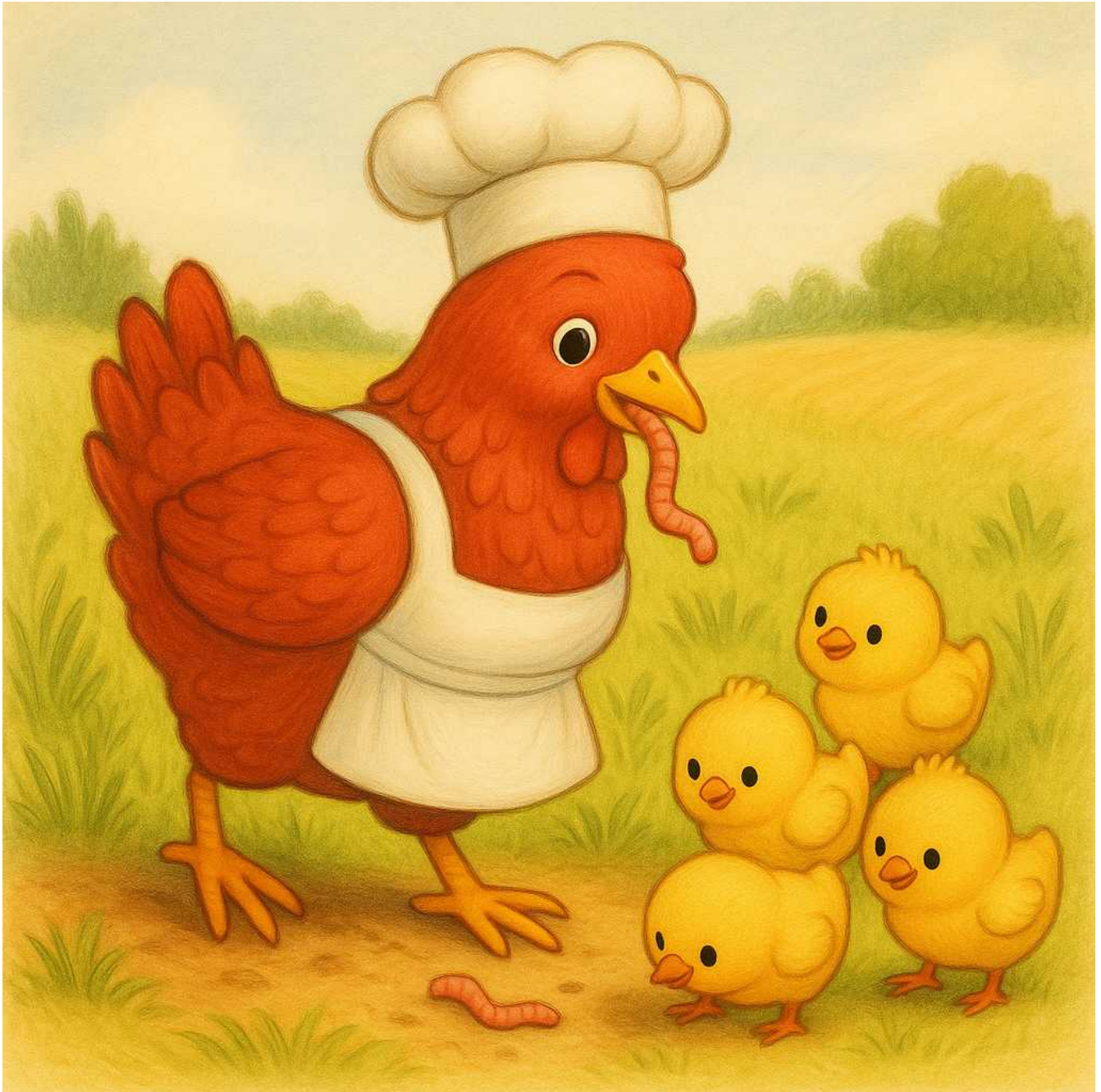
"Not I," said the pig.

"Not I," said the cat.

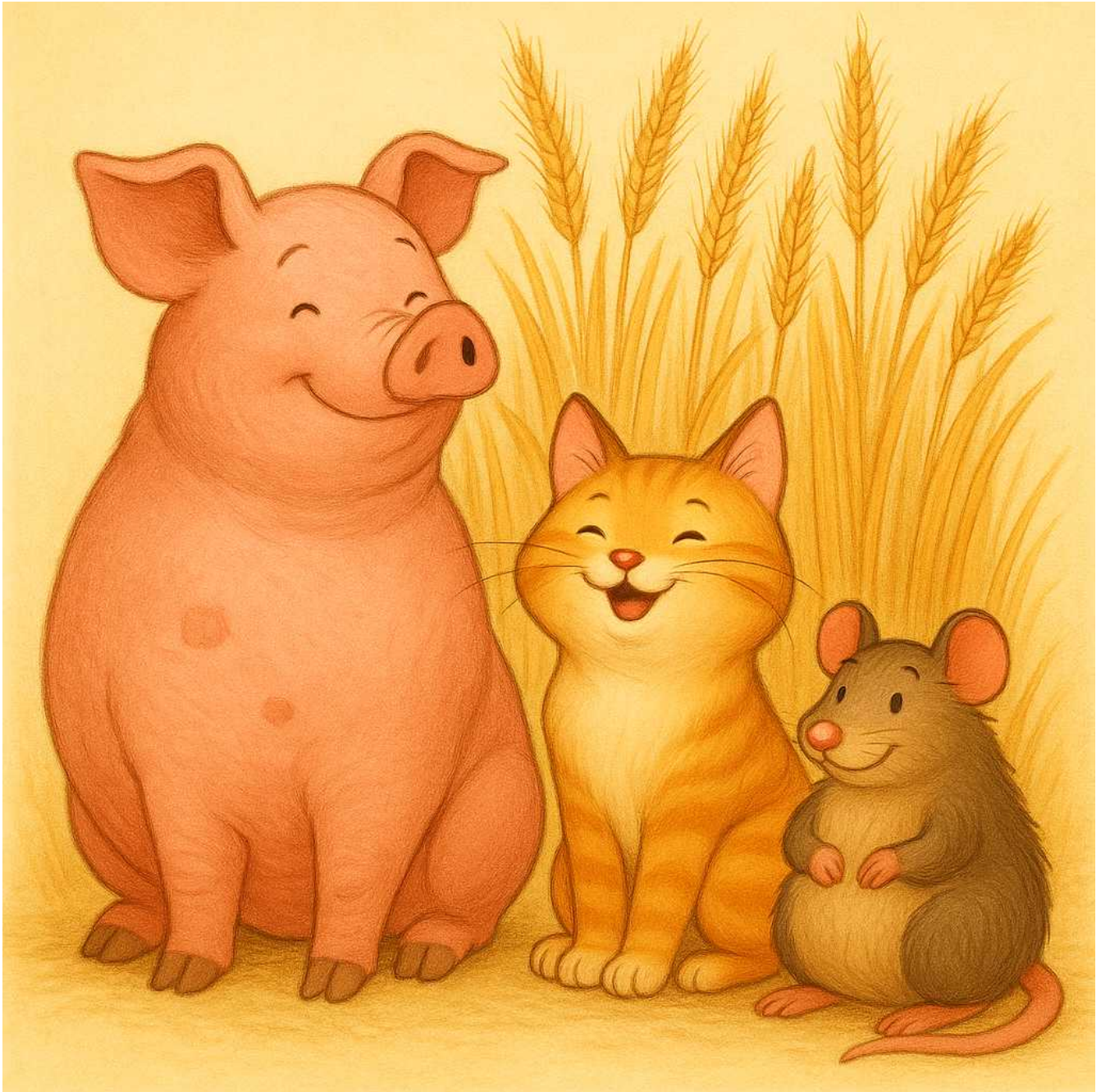
"Not I," said the rat.

"Then I will," said the Little Red Hen.

And she did.



All summer she did her chores.
She scratched for worms and fed her chicks.



The pig grew fat.
The cat grew fat.
The rat grew fat.
The wheat grew tall and ready to harvest.



One day the Little Red Hen saw that the wheat was ripe.

She called, "Who will cut the wheat?"



"Not I," said the pig.

"Not I," said the cat.

"Not I," said the rat.

"Then I will," said the Little Red Hen.

And she did.



She got a sharp tool from the barn and cut down the wheat.

The wheat lay on the ground, ready to be gathered and threshed.

But the youngest, softest chicks began to peep loudly.

They told the whole barnyard, and their mother, that they needed her.



The Little Red Hen felt pulled in two directions.

She had to care for her chicks.

She also felt responsible for the wheat.



She called again, "Who will thresh the wheat?"

"Not I," grunted the pig.

"Not I," meowed the cat.

"Not I," squeaked the rat.



"Then I will," said the Little Red Hen.
And she did.



First she fed her babies and put them down for their nap.

Then she went out and threshed the wheat. After that she called, "Who will carry the wheat to the mill to be ground?"



The pig turned away and said, "Not I."
The cat turned away and said, "Not I."
The rat turned away and said, "Not I."
"I will, then," said the good Little Red Hen.
And she did.



She put the wheat in a sack and walked to the mill.

She asked the miller to grind the wheat into white flour.

When he finished, she carried the flour back to the barnyard, taking quick little steps.



Even with the heavy load, she caught a juicy worm now and then.

She saved one for her babies.

They were so happy to see their mother.

For the first time, they truly saw how hard she worked.



That night the Little Red Hen went to bed early, before the sun began to set. She wanted to sleep late in the morning, but her chicks woke early and joined the henyard chorus.



As she opened one eye, she remembered: today the wheat must be made into bread. She was not used to making bread. But she knew she could follow a recipe and do it.



After she fed and cleaned her chicks, she went to find the pig, the cat, and the rat. She asked, "Who will make the bread?"



"Not I," said the pig.

"Not I," said the cat.

"Not I," said the rat.

"Then I will," said the Little Red Hen.

And she did.



She put on a clean apron and a cook's cap.
She mixed the dough.
When it was ready, she shaped the loaves and
put them in pans.
Then she put the pans in the oven to bake.



The cat sat nearby, giggling.
The vain rat powdered his nose and looked at
himself in a mirror.
Far away, the pig snored and snored.



At last a wonderful smell floated on the autumn breeze.

Everyone in the barnyard sniffed the air with delight.

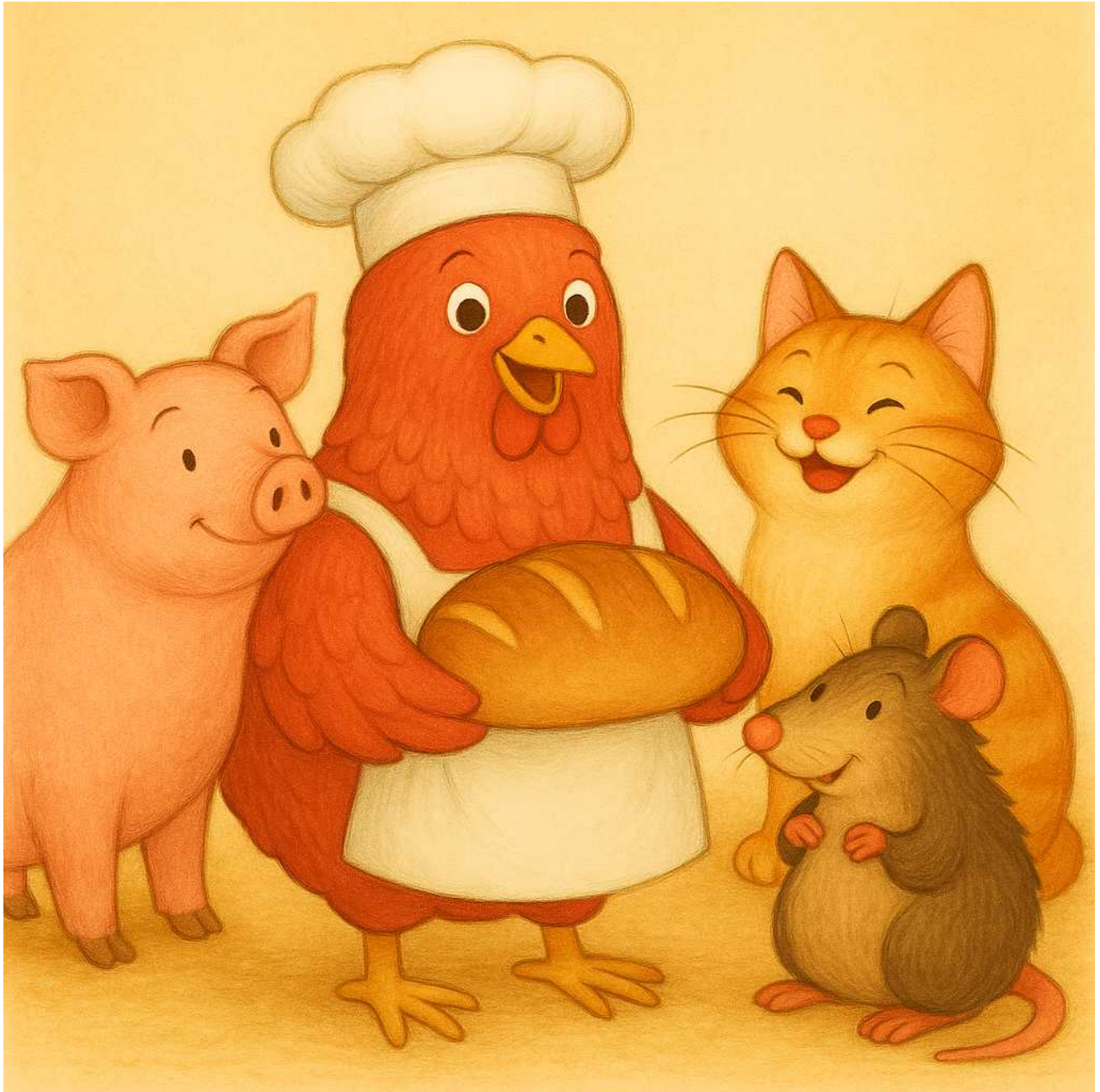


The Little Red Hen walked toward the oven.
She seemed calm, but inside she wanted to
dance and sing.
After all, she had done all the work.



She did not know if the bread would taste good.

But when the lovely brown loaves came out, they were perfect.



Out of habit, she called, "Who will eat the bread?"

"I will," said the pig.

"I will," said the cat.

"I will," said the rat.



"No, you will not," said the Little Red Hen.
"I will."
And she did.