

It was summer, a time when everything was cheerful and sunny in the countryside. Mother Duck was also happy. She had been **anxiously** sitting on her eggs, waiting for them to hatch.

“Oh, what lovely, fluffy, yellow little babies I’m going to have,” she thought to herself cheerfully.

anxiously – very eager for something

Soon enough, all the eggs hatched, except the largest one. “Peep, peep,” quacked the newborns. “Quack, quack,” responded the proud mother.

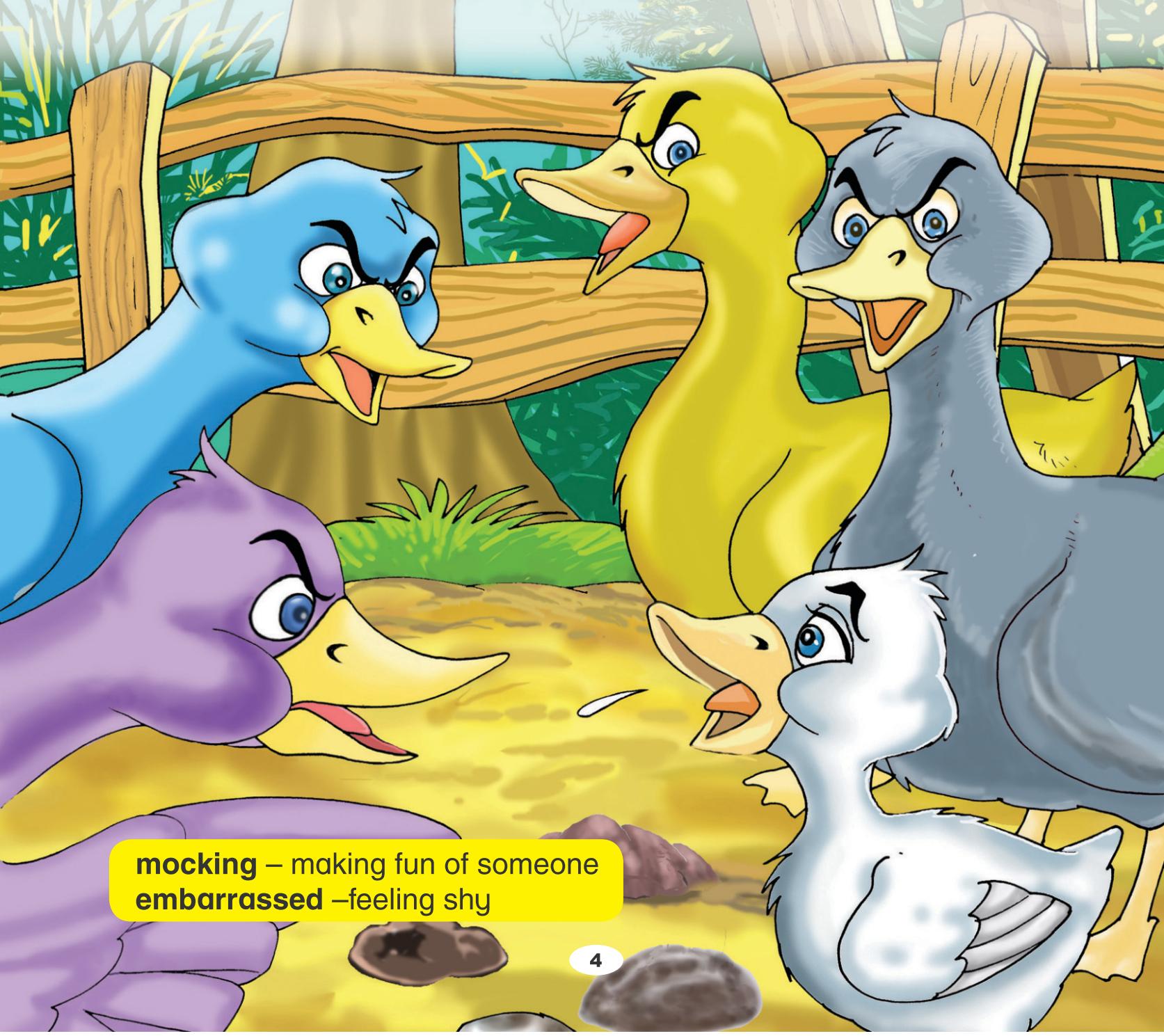
However, when the final egg hatched, Mother Duck and the ducklings were shocked when a big, ugly grey duckling **emerged**.

Disappointed, Mother Duck cried, “Oh, no! This can’t be mine! It must be someone else’s egg!” However, like all mothers, she loved them equally, including the **odd** one.



emerged – came up
odd – ugly

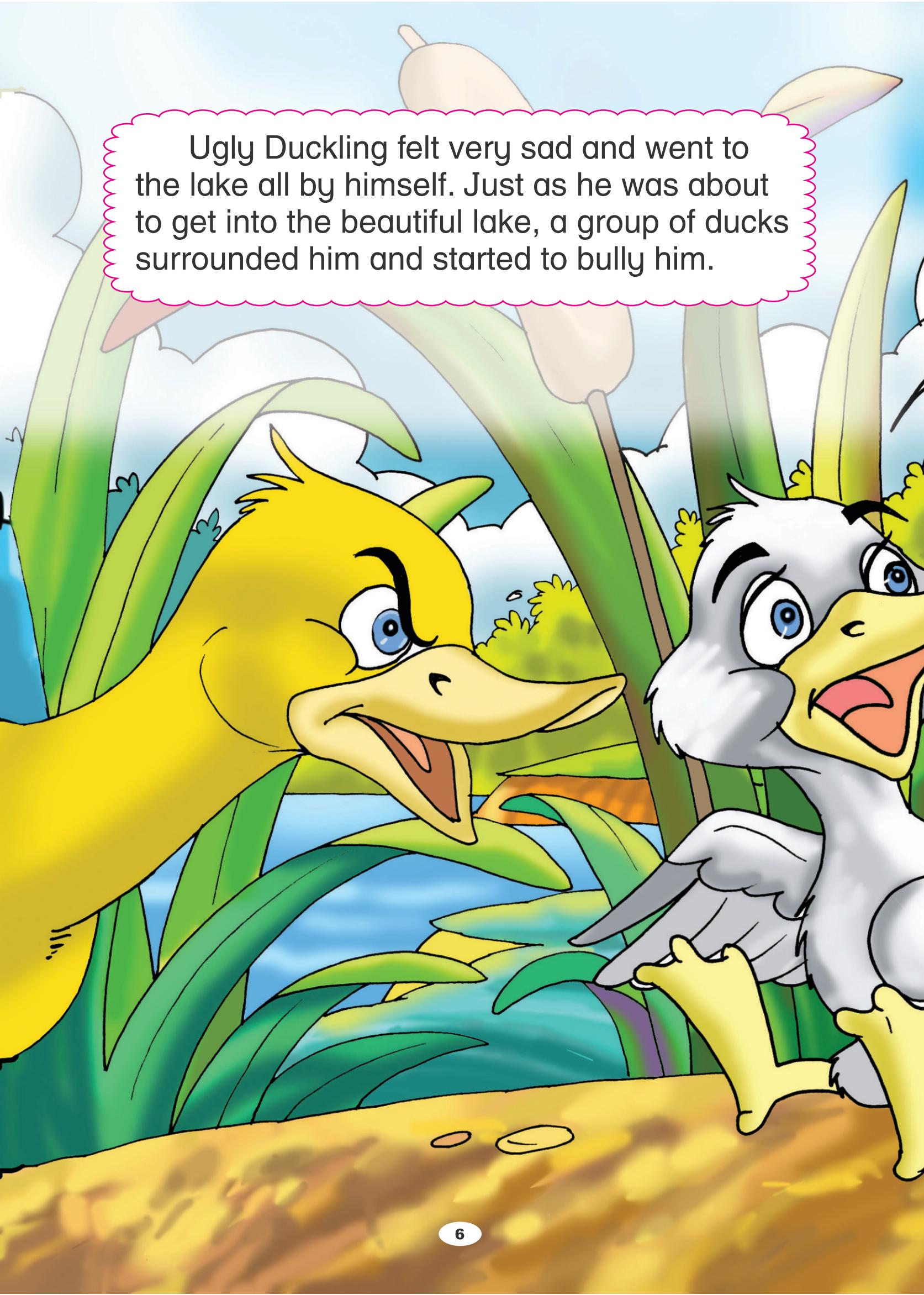
Sadly the other ducks began **mocking** Ugly Duckling, saying, "You are not one of us. Go away! We can't play with you". Ugly Duckling felt sad and spent its day alone. Although he knew his mama loved him, he sometimes felt that even she was **embarrassed** of him.



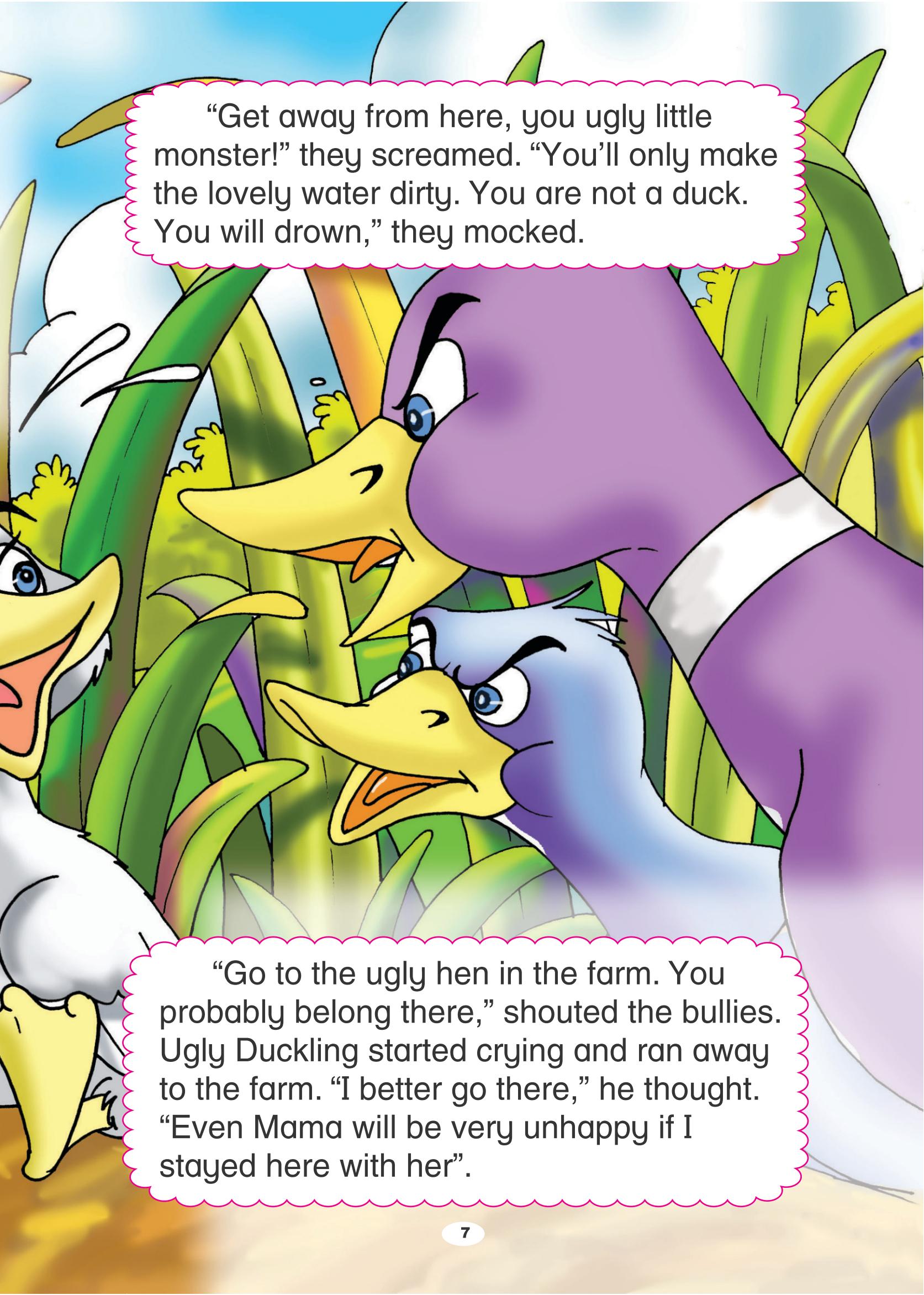
mocking – making fun of someone
embarrassed –feeling shy

The ducklings were soon ready to learn how to swim and so Mother Duck took all her cute ducklings to the lake. However, she left out Ugly Duckling, feeling certain he would not be able to swim.



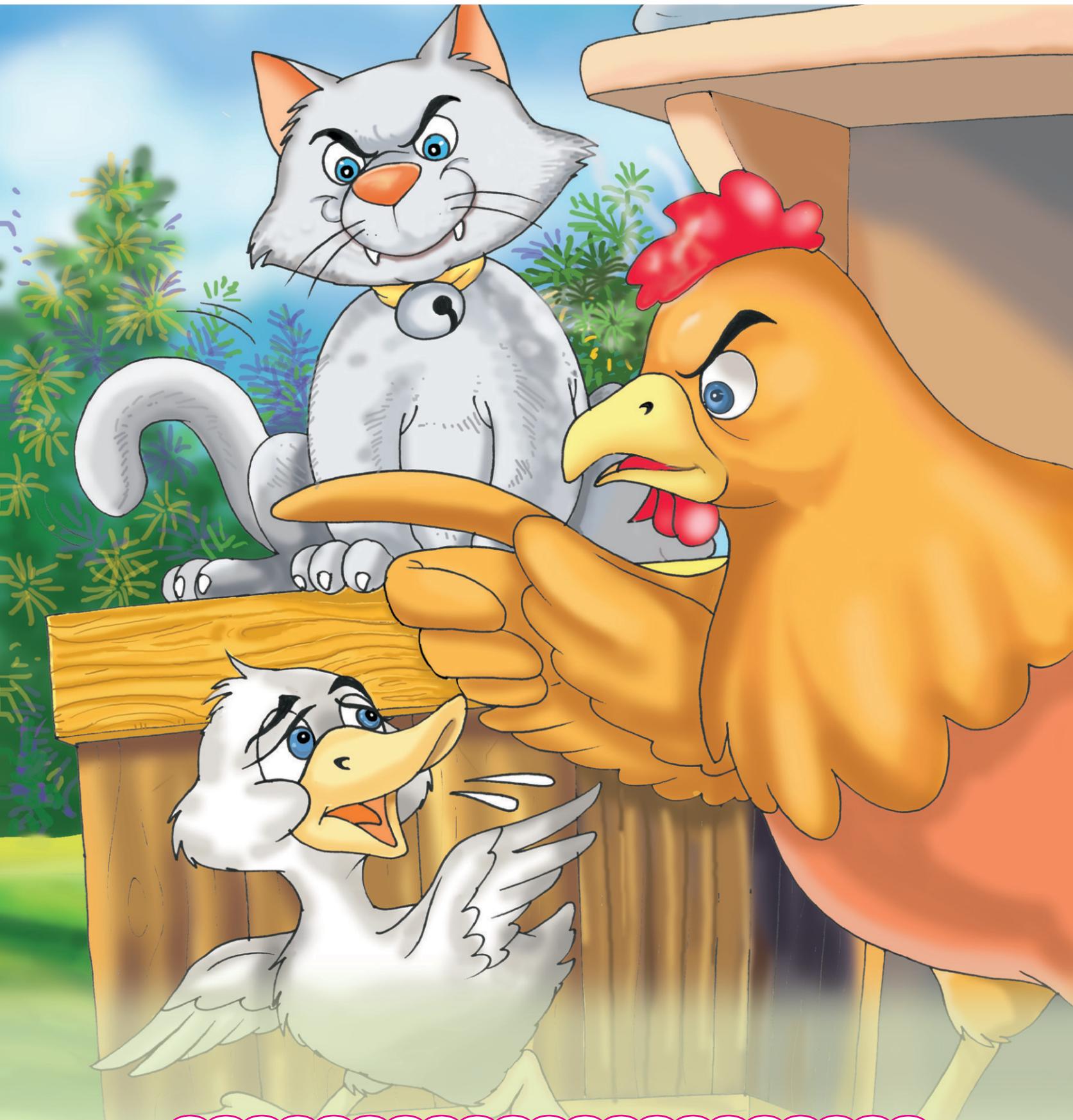


Ugly Duckling felt very sad and went to the lake all by himself. Just as he was about to get into the beautiful lake, a group of ducks surrounded him and started to bully him.



“Get away from here, you ugly little monster!” they screamed. “You’ll only make the lovely water dirty. You are not a duck. You will drown,” they mocked.

“Go to the ugly hen in the farm. You probably belong there,” shouted the bullies. Ugly Duckling started crying and ran away to the farm. “I better go there,” he thought. “Even Mama will be very unhappy if I stayed here with her”.



When he reached the farm, a big, fat cat tried to jump on him. Ugly Duckling quickly entered the hen's house, hoping that she was his real mama. But he was wrong. The mother hen did not like him and chased him away.