

Farmyard Tales from Far and Wide

Wendy Cooling Rosslyn Moran Illus.

Barefoot Beginners Barefoot Books (August 1998)

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Don't be deceived by the adjective "farmyard." This is a sophisticated collection of short stories for children, ages 4 and older. Cooling has retold in plain language five uncommon, and uncommonly clever, folk tales—plus two old favorites—that will captivate the young audience as well as the reader.

Favorites will likely include the eastern European story of "The Straw Ox," which shows us a poor, tired husband, a poor, frustrated but ingenious wife and the very sticky solution that brings them magical wealth. In "Why Geese Don't Wear Boots," the moral of the story is delivered in the best Germanic tradition of a gaping jaw and puff of feathers. The "Right Thing to Do" is a wise and priceless fable from India and can be repeatedly made use of as a teaching vehicle. And the last story, "One by One" from Slovenia, is provocative and creepy because of its lack of an ending, but its prose and subject matter make it a perfect bedtime story. Moran's illustrations are charming, varied and follow the stories carefully. This is a book that will get read again and again, story by story, to all the children in your family. Includes an interesting source reference.

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