

# For the Classroom

## Mister Grieder and the Wild Duck

— Carol Grieder-Brandenberger

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** *The Mister Grieder stories, often shared at the nursery snack table, are based on my husband's memories of working and growing up on his parents' farm in Switzerland.*

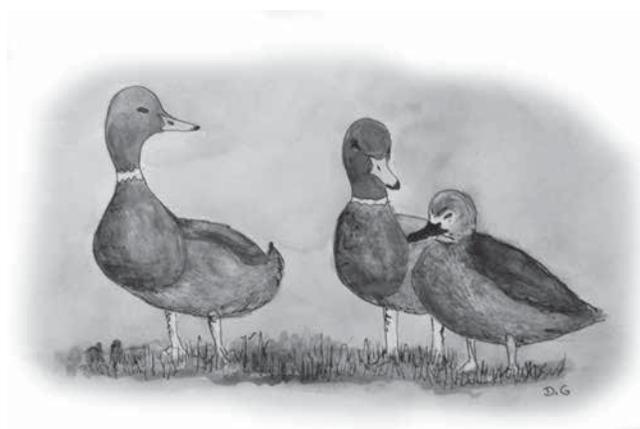
In Mister Grieder's barnyard all was peaceful. The animals were all friends and they enjoyed their days out in the meadow or in the barnyard. But one day all that changed. A wild duck had flown into the barnyard, and he was eating up all the food and even chasing the other ducks and pulling out their feathers! Oh, what a commotion there was in the barnyard! For several days, Mister Grieder watched this and he was not happy. "This fighting will not do in my barnyard," he said. "I must find a way to stop it."

So, the next morning he placed a cage on the ground in the barnyard. He walked very carefully up behind the wild duck, so the wild duck would not see him. Then slowly, slowly, he put out his hands, picked up the duck and placed him in the cage. The duck looked out of the cage in surprise. What was happening to him? Mister Grieder took the cage and tied it firmly onto his bicycle. He stepped onto his bicycle and rode all the way down to the lake. He rode past many farms and through several villages, as the lake was very far away from the barnyard. When he reached the lake, he was happy; the waves glistened in the sunlight and all around was peaceful. "Surely the duck will be happy here," he thought to himself.

Mister Grieder opened the cage door and out flew the duck. He landed on the waters of the lake and paddled out to the center of the lake, looking back at Mister Grieder. Mister Grieder waved good-bye to the duck and stepped back on his bicycle. Up the hill he went, through the villages and past the farms. It was a long way to his barnyard but Mister Grieder was happy, for he thought that now the fighting in his barnyard would be over. But when he returned to the barnyard, can you imagine who had already returned? It was the wild duck! He had spread his wings and flown back to the barnyard. And there he was again, eating all the

food and plucking out the feathers of the other ducks. Mister Grieder was surprised, and he said to the duck, "You must really like it here in my barnyard. Perhaps this is where you belong."

As time passed, the wild duck learned his barnyard manners. He started to share the food and rarely plucked out any feathers. And it wasn't long before you could not even tell which one of the ducks was the wild duck, for they had all become the dearest of friends. ♦



*Illustration by Deborah Grieder*

**Carol Grieder-Brandenberger**, a native of Switzerland, is a nursery teacher at Green Meadow Waldorf School in Chestnut Ridge, New York. This story is an excerpt from *Tell Me a Story: Stories from the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America* (WECAN, 2013).