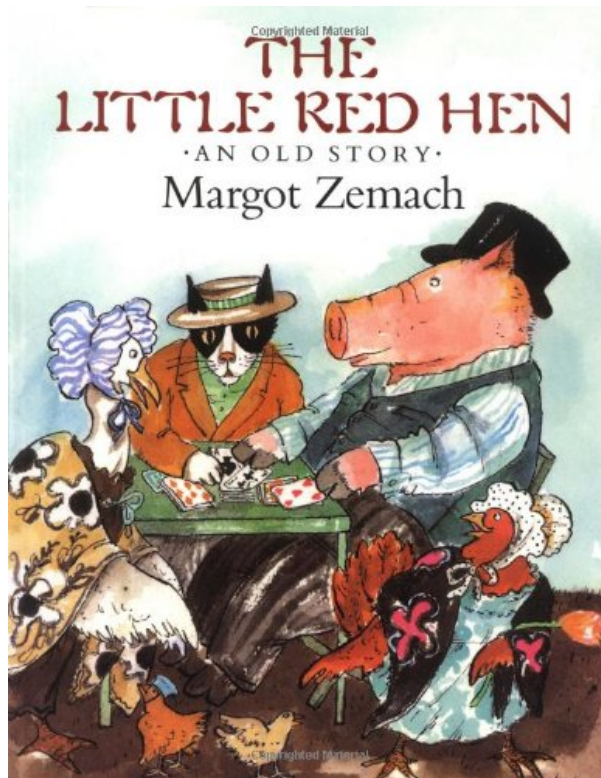
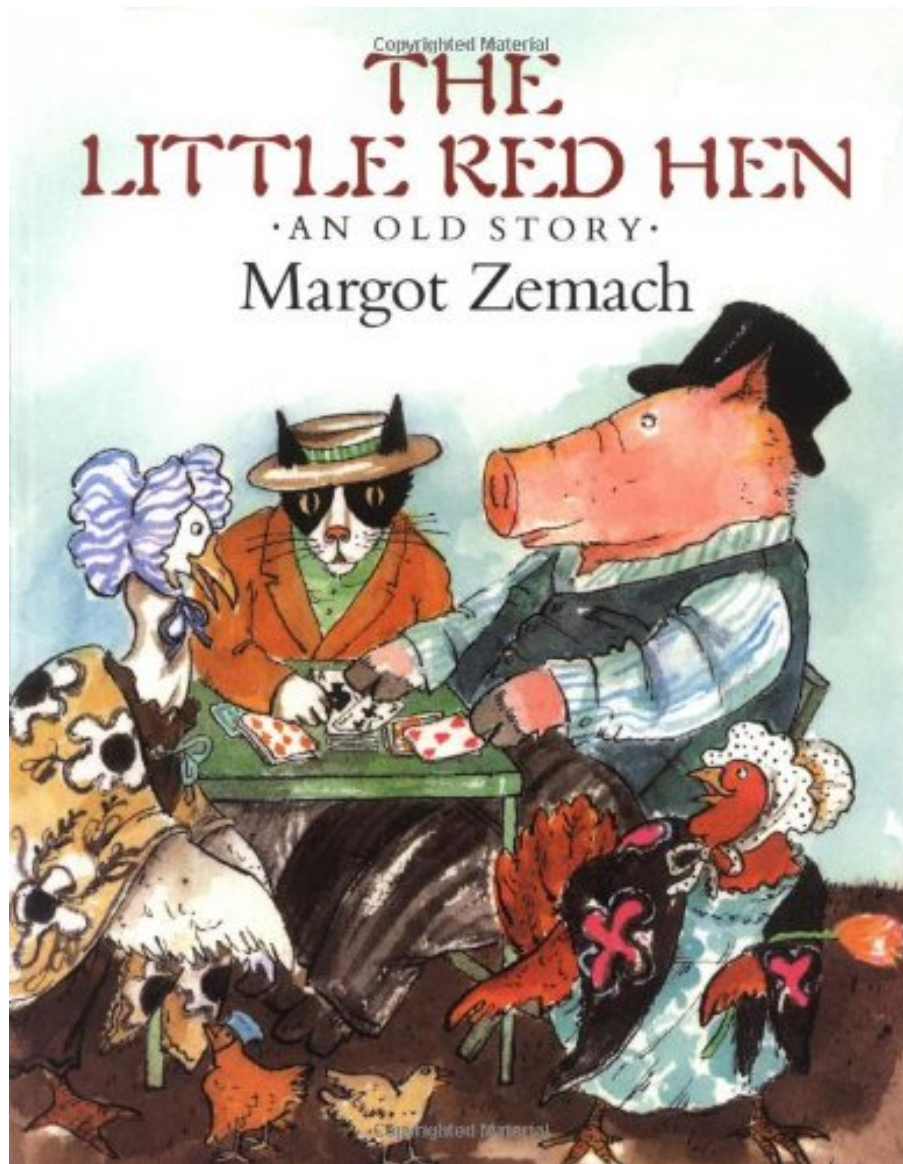


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## **Amazon.com Review**

This little red hen is a hard-working single mother who gets no help from the goose, the cat, and the pig. When she asks who will help her, the refrain "Not I" rings out loud and clear. (Is this a little too close to home?) So she harvests and threshes the wheat herself and hauls it to the mill with her chicks trailing behind. She bakes a fine loaf of bread and when it's ready to eat, she doesn't choose to share it with the lazy goose, cat, and pig. Ha! This tale is a fun way for children to learn about the importance of helping others, and sharing, too. Margot Zemach's detailed, vivacious illustrations make this edition an all-time favorite. She is the author and illustrator of *It Could Always Be Worse*, a Caldecott Honor Book, and was awarded the Caldecott Medal in 1974 for her illustrations in *Duffy and the Devil*, written by her husband Harve Zemach. (Ages 3 to 6)

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The legendary, lovable little red hen, famous for her industriousness and independent spirit, returns with more verve than ever in Margot Zemach's interpretation of the classic story. Though small in stature, the little red hen comes through loud and clear when she asks her friends the goose, the cat, and the pig: "Who will plant this wheat?" When they reply "Not I!" our sturdy heroine, assisted by her brood of chicks, sets about planting the wheat herself.

At each step along the way--harvesting, threshing, taking the grain to the mill--the little red hen's lazy friends refuse to lift hoof, paw, or wing to help. But when her efforts yield a warm, fragrant loaf of bread, the little red hen is glad to say: "Now I'm going to eat it myself!"

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- Published on: 1993-04-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.86" h x .16" w x 7.36" l, .20 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 32 pages

## **Amazon.com Review**

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Most helpful customer reviews

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Who will degrade this stunning piece of work? Not I.

By E. R. Bird

In this post-modern day and age, it's sometimes difficult to go back and read old classic fairy tales without looking at them with an overly-critical eye. Take, for example, the case of the little red hen. When I think of the little red hen my mind instantly jumps, for better or for worse, to Jon Scieszka's, "The Stinky Cheese Man: And Other Fairly Stupid Tales". If you've read it then you'll know which passage instantly jumps to mind. In the book, the little red hen launches an overwrought diatribe about how she and she alone has done all the work in baking some bread. Her voice rises to a self-righteous shriek, the like of which has remained embedded in my little brain ever since. It takes a real work of art to unlodge such a shriek. Fortunately, author/illustrator Margot Zemach is such an artist.

The book displays the original tale without so much as a word awry. A little red hen wishes to make some bread. For each task in the making she asks for help from a goose, a cat, and a pig. When such help is not forthcoming, she makes do on her own. Then, at the end, when she utters those magical words, "Who will help me EAT the bread?", her friends miraculously find that this is just the kind of task they'd like to aid in. However, the hen denies them this pleasure, pointing out (not unfairly) that she did all the work. She then shares the food with her brood, who did help all along.

If you need a version to tell your kids that is the universally recognized version, this is a good book to consult. But Zemach avoids a potential pitfall that could've swamped her effort. In some versions of this tale, the hen's final speech is delivered in this self-righteous glow of satisfaction (the kind of thing Scieszka would make fun of in the aforementioned, "Stinky Cheese Man"). Here, Zemach has tempered that emotion. In her illustrations, the hen is a cheerful matron with her offspring helping when they can. The goose, cat, and pig are nattily dressed. The goose sports a pattered shawl and bonnet. The cat wears a boatsman's straw hat, sometimes a vest, and sometimes suspenders. The pig also wears a vest, but on his head he doffs a silk top hat. Together, the three engage in a variety of occupations (most of which involve cards at a card table). I've noticed that in other versions of this tale (versions that were almost certainly inspired by Zemach), the lazy animals almost always play cards. It must be some universal symbol of idleness. And at the end, when the hen delivers her final words, she speaks to the three bumpkins with a sweet cheery expression on her face. She's not above enjoying her moment of triumph, but neither does she rub it in.

Versions of this book published today sometimes end with the hen sharing her food with the three lagabouts anyway, thereby squashing the point of the story (but helping the goose, cat, and pig's self-esteem). Oog. Give me Zemach's original tale any day over such modern "improvements". It's very satisfying for kids to see a character struggle, overcome her problems, and then deny her false friends any reward. Does it speak to our baser instincts? Of course! That's the joy of it! So if you'd like to get your kid grounded in one of the best fairy tales ever concocted, seriously consider the Margot Zemach edition of that fine and fabulous, "Little Red Hen".

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

appropriate for young children, great pictures!

By A Customer

A fun folksy story about a little hen who has to do all the work.

Typical of today's moms. My three year old was fascinated by the detailed illustrations.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Five Stars

By Randy Mendoza

Great books the my son's love when it's time for reading great literature.

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