

As Rare as Hen's Teeth

by Elizabeth Trach

Saturdays were Millie's favorite day of the week. That's the day she got to visit Grandma and Grandpa's farm. Millie loved to pick wildflowers and play with the piglets. She also liked to help choose vegetables for the lunch salad.

There was one part of the farm that Millie did not enjoy. She always ran past the chicken coop as fast as she could to avoid the mean hens. They pecked the ground with their sharp beaks. Their small, yellow eyes were always looking for food. Millie was afraid they would bite her with their sharp teeth.

After arranging wildflowers and eating lunch with her grandparents, it was almost time to head home. "Before you go," said Grandpa, "Will you please feed the chickens? I'm running behind on my chores today. I could use your help, Millie."

Millie had never told anyone she was afraid of the chickens before. She tried to speak, but Grandpa had already handed her a bag of cracked corn. "This is their favorite snack," he said.

Millie slowly walked out the back door towards the chicken coop. The hens saw her coming and ran to the door of the coop. They were very excited.

Millie stood outside the coop and began to cry. She didn't think she could

ever open the door and let the hens bite her hands and legs trying to get the corn. They were so greedy!

Grandpa heard Millie sobbing and walked over to the coop. "What's wrong?" he asked.

"I don't want the hens to bite me!" Millie cried.

"Oh,

Millie," said Grandpa kindly. "Chickens can't bite you. Haven't you heard how Grandma always says how things are as rare as hen's teeth?"

"Doesn't rare mean big and sharp?" sniffled Millie.

Grandpa

smiled. "No. Rare means uncommon. She says that because hens don't have teeth at all!" Grandpa laughed. "They are very greedy, but they couldn't bite you even if they wanted to."

Millie looked at the hens. Now they just seemed silly, not scary. Millie opened the door to feed the chickens their lunch.

"I

guess being scared of chickens is as rare as hen's teeth, too," she said and laughed along with Grandpa. Millie was glad because she knew she would never be afraid of the chickens again.

Questions

1. According to the story, what does the word *rare* mean?
2. What kind of person is Millie?
3. What are two things Millie likes to do on the farm?
4. What animal do you think is scary? Why?