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The Impudent Rooster

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Rascol, Sabina I. *The Impudent Rooster*. Illustrated by Holly Berry. Dutton Children's Books, 2004. ISBN 0525471790. \$16.99.

Reviewer: Sandra L. Tidwell

Reading Level: Primary

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Folklore;

Subject: Folklore - Romania; Roosters - Folklore; Book-Reviews;

The Impudent Rooster is a Romanian folktale adapted by Rascol from the story by Ion Creanga entitled "Punguta cu doi bani," "The Pouch with Two Coins." The story was originally published in 1876 in *Convorbiri Literare* (Literary Conversations), a Romanian literary journal. The Rooster, the chief character in the story, is the only friend of an old, very poor and hungry man. The man's neighbor, an old woman, advises the old man to beat his rooster, for that is the way she was able to get her hen to lay eggs. Although he can't think of physically hurting his beloved rooster, the old man angrily "snapped at the rooster, 'I wish you were a hen and could lay eggs! I'm tired of being hungry!'" Dejected, the rooster leaves the old man. Soon, while pecking in the dirt, the rooster finds a little purse containing a few pennies. Before he can return to the old man with the money, a rich and greedy nobleman steals the purse from the rooster. From that day on, the rooster follows the nobleman shouting "Cucurigu, my great lord! Give back the pennies you stole!" To the nobleman, the rooster is impudent, bold and disrespectful even though the rooster is only telling the truth. The nobleman tries to drown, burn, starve, and trample the rooster, but the undaunted rooster performs amazing feats to overcome the obstacles. The rooster returns to the old man, bringing a full complement of farm animals to fill the man's fields, stables, and pens and more money than the old man has every seen.

Rascol was born in Romania and knew this folktale from her youth. She wanted English-speaking children to also know the story of this amazing rooster. This is a story of courage in spite of danger, determination in spite of repeated challenges, and forgiveness in spite of unkindness. The water-color folk-like illustrations by Holly Berry have brilliant colors, and simple lines. Children will enjoy the repetition of the rooster's nagging chant to the nobleman and the recurring "What could the rooster do?" as this story is read aloud.