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What the Ladybug Heard Next

Leah Christopher

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With the fat red hen’s eggs disappearing, the heroic ladybug is back to defend the barnyard. The ladybug overhears the plan of robbers Lanky Len and Hefty Hugh to sneak onto the farm to steal the hen and get rich by selling her eggs. Working together, the animals hatch a plan to trick them. The hen persuades the dimwitted duo to search for the downy duck instead, toting the duck’s larger size and eggs as bait. Eventually the trail leads to goose who claims that the imaginary Snuggly Snerd, hiding in the compost heap, has the hugest eggs of all. By the time Lanky Len and Hefty Hugh emerge from the slimy pit, they know they’ve been hoodwinked, but it’s too late—the noisy animals have alarmed the farmer.

The sequel to What the Ladybug Heard, this book animates the theme of teamwork. With each animal doing its part to contribute to a surprising solution, the bad guys are caught. Unfortunately, for a few reasons, this book has a more limited audience of just primary readers. The fun rhymes throughout the entire story and the action-packed, semi-textured illustrations make it a great read-aloud book, but the length of the story may lose some younger readers’ attention. And while the mystery requires more sophisticated skills of prediction, older readers may find the rhyming and barnyard animal setting a little too juvenile.