Farmer Otis, his wife, Abby, and their two children, Willie and Belle, own chickens and a rooster. They love their animals and they even have names for each of their chickens. Willie and Belle read to the chickens when they are let out of the pen. One day, Willie and Belle find a note written in the dirt written by one of the chickens. The next day, there is another message. The chickens keep writing messages in the dirt, telling the farmer and his family things that they want, like, or dislike. They even leave a message for the mailman. The mailman doesn’t believe them, so the farmer invites him to spend the night in a tent. The chickens leave him a message in the morning. The mailman is so impressed that he lets the whole town know. Everyone starts to come to get eggs from the chickens.

Patricia MacLachlan is a masterful storyteller. This story flows well and moves at a good pace. The chickens in the story start to have character and personality, which the reader finds out about through the messages they leave. The farmer’s children are relatable. When they first find the message, they don’t want to tell anyone because they’re worried that their parents will think they are crazy. This story is fun for young readers because they can use their imagination as they read. The illustrations are fun to look at and show the messages from the chickens. Colorful illustrations help the reader visualize what is going on in the story. Overall, this story is a wonderful read. It makes you think about why chickens might talk and what they might say.