All through the night, the sound of the wind in the trees kept the swan awake. She had been watching over her nest as the eggs were about to hatch but the storm had made her scared. The dark pond lapped around her feathers and she could see the patterns of the pond rippling away from her body as she moved around. The sun was beginning to come up and it would soon be warm again but … when the sun shone in this lovely place, it filled with noisy children and parents all running around. They would throw great chunks of bread onto the water and frighten the tiny fish that lived beneath the surface, and the screams of the children would scare her little cygnets when they hatched.

As the dawn broke, the first little crack appeared in one of her eggs and she slowly glided over to the nest to take a closer look. A small hole appeared in the top and there was much struggling and wrestling inside. The swan knew that she must not help her baby, but she wanted to be nearby. After a short time, a tiny black beak pressed against the shell and a new, tiny, fluffy chick appeared into the world. Her cygnet made a lot of noise for something so tiny! After a while, the rest of the eggs began to wiggle and crack and by the time the sun was high in the sky, the cygnets were all out of their shells and calling out for food. Their father returned to the nest and fed the hungry birds, but they still made a lot of noise!

A small child saw the young birds from across the pond and pointed – jumping up and down and shrieking! “Baby swans! Baby swans!” The mother swan realised that it was just a matter of time before the child would race around the edge of the pond and disturb her babies so there was nothing else to do. She paddled herself towards the nest and called to each of her cygnets, who waddled and struggled but climbed onto her back and were safely on board as she slowly glided to the other side of the bridge, safe from the noise and fuss of children. “You can see the cygnets when they are bigger and braver, you will just have to wait a few weeks” she said.