Ready, Steady, Hatch!

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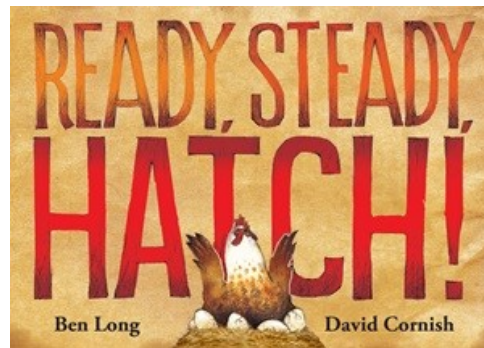Publisher: Ford Street Publishing
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Round and bright, and creamy white, amid the pumpkin patch, a clutch of eggs was sprouting legs. READY, STEADY, HATCH!

Ten chicks are excited to discover the world outside their eggshells, but the smallest is soon separated from the rest. Where can she be? A rollicking adventure about curiosity and, above all, play time!

Themes:
- Chickens
- Curiosity
- Playing
- Looking after each other

Discussion Questions:
- How many chickens were there at the start of the story, when the eggs all hatched?
- How and why did the last chicken get separated from the rest of them?
- 'They marched in line through lead and vine, a dashing little troop, and flapped along in jolly song, searching for their coop.' Do you know what a 'coop' is?
- As a class, research what is unique about a chicken coop and what you would need to make one.
- What activities did the other chickens do on their travels when they were trying to find the lost one?
- Do you think they had fun while they were searching for her?
- How would you describe the attitude of the other chickens to the lost one?
- How and why do you think the lost chicken found herself in the cherry? Why do you think the other chickens didn't find the cherry as they were marching along?
- Describe how you think the lost chicken was feeling.
- The family celebrated at the end of the story with scones and cherry jam. Make a list of some of the other things that you can make with cherries.

Activities:
- Arrange to have a 'chicken hatching' program for your class or school, to give the children a true sense of *Ready, Steady, Hatch*! There are a number of different programs available in the different states, and this can lead to many other activities and projects that the children can undertake.
- All the chickens had unique and distinctive colours and patterns. Create a pastel drawing of your favourite one.
- Using the list that you made earlier, have a class 'cherry' party.