

Squawk!

A funny yet serious musical with many fowl jokes!

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A musical play by Cenarth Fox
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Orchestrations and Backing CD

Squawk! is scored for piano, guitar, bass, drum-kit, flutes, clarinets, saxophones, trumpets and trombones. These band parts are available for hire. There is also a stereo audio-tape and CD with both rehearse and perform versions of the score.

Production Package

Groups staging a FOX PLAYS musical or play receive support in the form of free production notes (*set-design, costumes, lighting, props, etc*) and with musicals, there is a complete set of all the lyrics for the chorus. These may be copied for the members of your company.

To the Director

Whilst hens are female and roosters male, there is no need for any character to be played by a male or female actor. Where *he/him* and *she/her* are used, they may be changed if required.

Reviews of this popular musical staged by primary and middle schools

The children and local community both thoroughly enjoyed *Squawk!* Our school has only 42 children and every student was in the production. With a small stage in a hall with bad acoustics there are some problems. But I am sending you the tape so you can see the enjoyment your shows bring to a small community of 150 people in drought. Thank you for all your assistance

Weethalle PS

Thanks for writing the play and the songs were great. *Squawk!* was a hit from all aspects – the colour, music, dance and dialogue sent a very strong message to all and sundry. We all loved *Squawk!* and felt part of its squawking success! The whole school has expressed how good they felt *Squawk!* was. Our local member of federal parliament wanted to adopt *Fight, Fight, Fight!* for his next campaign. One 15 year-old critic said, “That was the best show ever!” and we received similar comments from different fields. I can see *Squawk!* becoming a real hit.

Seaford Park PS

It went extremely well. The kids loved the music **Patterson Lakes PS**

Squawk! was a great success. The kids really respond to your music and audiences relate well to the songs and follow the story intently. Keep ‘em coming. **Morisset PS**

Thank you for your “fowl” musical. We had a terrific time **Greenhills PS**

Lots of fun. Thanks for coming to see our show. The kids really appreciated it
Timboon P12 School

It was huge! It went really, really well
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart PS Elmore

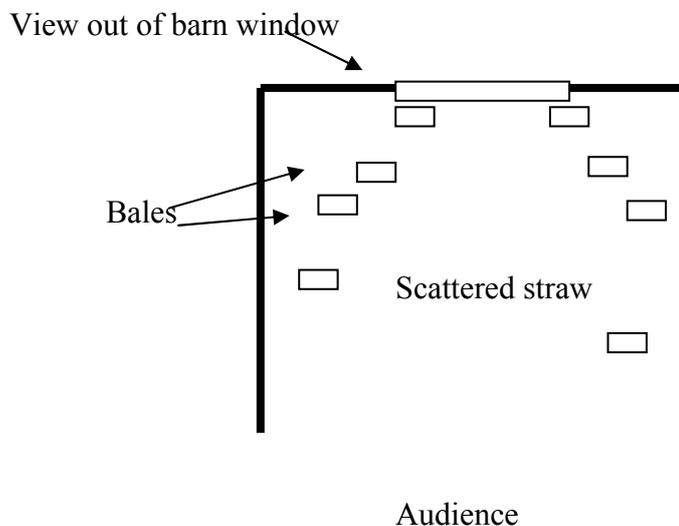


Synopsis

What's it like being chicken? You know, too scared to face up to a challenge? Are you chicken? In a farmer's barn, a group of chickens go about their daily business. Some are clucky, some aggressive, some vain, some adventurous. Their leader (was he ever elected?) has grand plans for their future. A stranger arrives looking almost like a fox. But it can't be. A fox among the chickens? Surely not. The grand plans are announced. Oh no! The dream has become a nightmare. Who will stand up and fight this fowl plan? Are you chicken?

Set Design

We look into one corner of a barn. The chickens have free access within this area. Their roosts, perches and nests are upstage. Bales of hay are stacked on the sides and upstage. There could be rafters above and even a stall for cattle to one side. It's clean but messy and clear downstage for all sorts of activities. More ideas on the set are found in the free *Production Notes*. Here's a hen's-eye view of how your set might look.



Characters

Cossbocky - the unelected leader, a powerful rooster with more bravado than brains

Bantam - vain, selfish, a lover of *haute couture*, fuss-pot

Columbus - free spirit, adventurer, lover of life, brave, enthusiastic

Anabolic - athlete, body-builder, fighter, kick-boxer, stupid

XP - scientist, genetic-engineer, sees the scientific not the moral implications

Shakespeare - an artist, sculptor, lover of things beautiful, creative

Broodwyn - mother with strong maternal instincts, fierce protector of her chicks

Little Al - activist, small in stature, big on courage, freedom fighter

Miss Understood - phys ed adviser for horses and hounds

Chicks - Broodwyn's brood, several small 'n fluffy chickens

Eggs - one or more dancing googies (could be members of the company)

Models - poultry mannequins (could be members of the company)

Carrot - a dancing vegetable

Company - other chickens living in the barn

Musical Numbers

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Overture | Orchestra |
| 2. Chickens | Company |
| 3. Fly Away | Columbus & Company |
| 4. Kids Know More Than Their Folks | Broodwyn & Chicks |
| 5. A Vegie In A Googie | XP & Company |
| 6. Catwalk Chicks | Bantam and Friends |
| 7. Fight! Fight! Fight! | Anabolic & Friends |
| 8. If The Cup Fits | Shakespeare & Eggs |
| 9. There Is A Life | Little Al & Company |
| 10. Misunderstood | Fox and Company |
| 11. Happy Hen House | Company |
| 12. Misunderstood Reprise | Fox and Company |
| 13. There Is A Life Reprise | Company |
| 14. Curtain Calls | Company |
| 15. Payout | Orchestra |

(The OVERTURE is played after which the curtain rises on a busy barn. Chickens of all shapes and sizes, all different colours and costumes flap, bounce and appear to fly about. MUSIC BEGINS immediately and the COMPANY attacks the song with verve)

Chickens

Company *Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick
Chick Chick Chickens
We go back a long, long way.
Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick
Chick Chick Chickens
Eggs a-laying every day.
Omelettes for your breakfast, scrambled googies too
Wake-up call is gratis, a cock-a-doodle-dooo!!
Chick Chick Chick Chick Chick Chick Chick Chick
Chick Chick Chickens
Eggs a-laying every day.*

Group A *Feathers, these lovely feathers
Withstand all weathers, these feathers are fine.*

Group B *Wattles, these lovely wattles
Against our glottals these wattles they shine.*

Group C *Hackles, these lovely hackles
Between the cackles, these hackles refine.*

Three groups *Chickens, these lovely chickens
Oh what the dickens, call chickens divine!*

Company *Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick ... etc
Cock-a-doodle-do!
(Song ends and COMPANY is excited. COSSBOCKY stands on bale of hay RC and commands attention. Flapping of wings, beak back and calls)*

Cossbocky *Squawk! Squawk, squawk, squawk, squawk!
(COMPANY chatting, separate and move to various listening positions)*

Broodwyn *(As she rounds up her chicks) To the nest, to the nest. (CHICKS are herded offstage UL) And see you stay there.*

XP *I say Cossbocky, are these meetings necessary? Some of us have got things to do you know.*

Cossbocky *Absolutely necessary. I have a scheme. (COMPANY groan) A scheme to make Farmer Blair very happy.*

Bantam *He's happy already. And he'll be even happier when I win another ribbon at the show.*

Cossbocky *It's dangerous being complacent. Life is game of fox and chicken. We must always improve. I know farmers and they want improvements.*

Shakespeare *How do you know farmers? You've never travelled. You've never been anywhere. You've only ever met one!*

Cossbocky *I have travelled. I've been outside in the farm yard. (COMPANY scoffs) Look, I know about life. I'm your leader.*

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Little Al *Yeah, by accident of birth. Listen Cossbocky, you've never been elected. What gives you the right to boss us around?*

Cossbocky Now stop all that revolution garbage or you'll be in serious trouble.
Anabolic *(Shadow-boxing DC, speaks out front)* Need any assistance boss? Just squawk the word.

Broodwyn Oh for heaven's sake! Bicker, bicker, bicker. What sort of example is that for the little chicks? Schemes, threats, my rooster can beat your rooster. Let's just ... *(Gives up in disgust)* oh what's the use? *(Storms UL)*
(COMPANY talk amongst themselves. They argue about BROODWYN'S remarks. Is she right or wrong?)

Cossbocky Squawk! Squawk, squawk, squawk! *(Hubbub ceases)* Right, you've all had your say, now it's time to listen. Here's my latest scheme.
(Loud clanging and banging from UC. Everyone turns. Pause. From behind straw COLUMBUS appears wearing hiking outfit - boots, hat with corks, rucksack, walking stick and cans/saucepans tied to his waist. This is what's making the noise. Add sound effects if you like. COLUMBUS finishes DC and looks around at the staring fowls)

Columbus *(Friendly)* Evening all. How's it going?
Cossbocky *(Furious)* What is the meaning of this?
Columbus Meaning? What meaning? Oh sorry. Ah *(Indicates hat)* this is for scaring off insects and *(Indicates stick)* this is for walking long distances and ...

Cossbocky Not the ridiculous costume. What is the meaning of interrupting my meeting?
Columbus Oh, gosh, is this a meeting? I thought you were just having a bit of a squawk.
(COMPANY amused. COLUMBUS amusing. C'BOCKY furious)

Cossbocky *(Climbing down)* Right that's it. I'm going to report you to Farmer Blair.
Columbus Well you'd better hurry 'cos I'm about to leave.
Company Leave!
Cossbocky You can't leave. What about your education, your job? What about your family?

Columbus Ah, family, schmamily. Who cares? *(Shock from COMPANY)*
Company *Who cares?!*
Bantam That's disgraceful.
Shakespeare Bit over the top, mate.
XP Unnecessary.

Columbus No, no. I don't mean *I don't care*. I mean *nothing stands still*. Must move on. Time for a change. You know, we don't stay little chicks all our life.

Cossbocky Just a minute. Is this some kind of a scheme?
Columbus No scheme, Cossbocky. Just life. *(MUSIC BEGINS)* We pop out of the egg, we grow up, we leave home.

Anabolic Leave home!
Columbus That's it. Farewell nest.

Fly Away

Columbus *When you first pop out you're their pride and joy*

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*They long for someone healthy be it girl or boy
 But you'll soon grow up and long to join the hoi polloi
 Life goes forward.*

When you're young they fuss, keep you nice and clean
 They show you off to strangers, make a dreadful scene
 But it's soon goodbye to childhood you're a know-all teen
 Life goes forward.
 And then comes the fateful day, and then comes the fateful day.
 Fly, fly, fly away
 Go and find your fortune in a thrilling way
 North, south, east or west
 Life is an adventure when you leave the nest.
 "I'll be quite okay, I've got everything."
 These famous words are uttered by a mere offspring
 But they've never been so restless, is it just a fling?
 Life goes forward.
 Now some folk rejoice when their kids shoot through
 They reckon when they're home it's like a crazy zoo
 And because the kids are gone so is the bathroom queue
 Life goes forward.

And then comes the fateful day, and then comes the fateful day.

(COMPANY repeat chorus each time and final refrain is sung with COLUMBUS being pushed on a cart or carried around the barn before being farewelled UR. Most of COMPANY are singing but many will call out "Bye" "Have a great time" etc. As the last few bars are sung, COMPANY also exit in various directions, singing, waving and calling as they go. COSSBOCKY is alone and his meeting has collapsed. COSSBOCKY is not a happy chicken)

Cossbocky Hey! I haven't closed the meeting. Hey! (COMPANY ignore COSSBOCKY. Most if not all have gone. When set is deserted) Right, you can all go. Meeting closed. (Calling after them) You can all go. Meeting closed. (Exiting DR with a flap or two of wings) That showed 'em. Squawk! Squawk!
 (Pause. Suddenly 8 - 12 little CHICKS come racing down from UL. They are full of beans and have just been let out to play. They chase one another, chirping as they go. Cheep! Cheep! BROODWYN then appears calling to them as she comes down)

Broodwyn Squawk! Squawk! (She stops C and puts her wings on her hips. She's angry) I said "Squawk!".
 (Reluctantly CHICKS stop playing and come back to BROODWYN. They sit on the floor in front of Mother)

Chick 1 We want to play.

Chick 2 We want to fly.

Chick 3 We want to leave home!

Chicks (CHICKS excited. This is fun) Wheeee!

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Broodwyn (Flapping her wings) Squawk! Squawk! Squawk! (BROODWYN'S cries and actions cause the CHICKS to settle and be afraid. Mother is angry) Now listen to me you lot. You are *not* to leave the nest unless I say. Is that clear?

Chicks (Softish) Yes.

Broodwyn (Louder) I said, "Is that clear?"

Chicks (Louder but reluctantly) Yes Mother.

Broodwyn Good. Now let's have no more of this fly away business. Today I want to talk about the weather. *(CHICKS groan)* Sometimes it's wet and sometimes it's cold. *(Suddenly upset)* Why did you groan? The weather is important. *(CHICKS not impressed)* It is!

Chick 1 Mother, the weather is boring.

Broodwyn Oh so now I'm boring. Because I care for my chicks, I'm old-fashioned. I suppose you'd rather I let you fly off and play by yourselves. *(CHICKS excited. BROODWYN snaps)* Well you can't! *(CHICKS depressed)* So there.

Chick 2 Could we talk about something else?

Broodwyn Please.

Chick 2 Please.

Broodwyn I see. This is today's so-called *sophisticated* youth. Know it all do we? I suppose you want to talk about where you came from.

Chick 3 Why? We know that already. *(MUSIC BEGINS)*

Broodwyn *(Shocked)* You do? You can't. But how? I haven't told you. *(During music introduction, CHICKS whirl/lead BROODWYN onto a hay bale where she sits and is educated by her children)*

Kids Know More Than Their Folks

Chicks *Today the world is changing, no more are things intact
What once we knew and thought was true is now no longer a fact.
Today the rules are broken, for some it's hardly bliss
And in this world of changes, the greatest change is this.
The kids know more than their parents
The braves know more than the chief.
The language they use, the friends who they choose
The range of their views is beyond belief.
The chicks know more than the rooster
And pull some incredible strokes
While grown-ups are stewing, their young are out doing
The kids know more than their folks.
While grown-ups are stewing, their young are out doing
The kids know more than their folks.
(Dialogue during song)*

Broodwyn Now don't be ridiculous. You know absolutely nothing about the chicken and the egg.

Chicks *(Joyful carol)* Oh yes we do!

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Broodwyn *(Shocked)* But you're far too young. At least you've never heard any strong language.

Chicks *(Gleeful sing-song)* Oh yes we have!

Broodwyn *(Stunned)* This is dreadful. I'm shocked. But just be grateful you've never even heard of nasty substances.

Chicks *(Cheeky blighters)* Oh yes we have!

Broodwyn *(Bowed over)* But this is unbelievable. You're so young. I think I feel ... overcome.

(CHICKS guide Mother to bale of hay then dance. Song ends, CHICKS abuzz. Before BROODWYN can attack this new situation, COLUMBUS enters DR)

Broodwyn Columbus. I thought you'd flown the coop. *(Smug. Sarcastic)* No, don't tell me. There's no place like home.

Columbus Hello Broodwyn. Hi there, Chicks. *(CHICKS like COLUMBUS)*

Broodwyn *(Indicating COLUMBUS)* You see this, chicks. Just like you, Columbus thought he knew it all. And look. Now he's back.

Columbus Not for good though. It's just that I forgot to ask directions.

Broodwyn *(Suddenly upset)* What directions? You're not still going?

Columbus You betcha. We all have to fly away some time. But at the farm gate do I turn left or right?

Chick 1 Are you going to fly away?

Chick 2 Can we come too?

Chick 3 What's the farm gate?

Broodwyn *(Flapping her wings)* Squawk, squawk, squawk! *(CHICKS move close to mum)* Right, time for bed. *(CHICKS complain)* Off to the nest and no more complaints. *(CHICKS exit UL going "Cheep cheep" as their method of complaining)* Go on. Flap, flap! Shoo! Shoo!

Columbus Nice bunch of chicks, Broodwyn.

Broodwyn No thanks to you, you ... brain-washing, long-feathered layabout.

Columbus *(Shocked at this attack)* W W What did I do?

Broodwyn Filling their heads with nonsense about leaving home. *(Wags admonishing finger)* You wait till you have chicks of your own. It's hard being a parent. Very hard. I'll thank you to leave my chicks alone. *(Exiting UL)*

Columbus *(Calling)* I'm sorry. I didn't mean any harm

Broodwyn And keep your farm gate to yourself. *(Exits. COLUMBUS non-plussed)*

Columbus *(Out front)* I only wanted to know which way to turn.

Cossbocky *(Enters DR)* Ah ha, the intrepid traveller returns. This makes me very, very rich.

Columbus Cossbocky. I need your help.

Cossbocky I had a little bet about you. Actually a rather big one. I bet you wouldn't last ten minutes.

Columbus Look, I'm not staying.

Cossbocky Fifty to one. That means I'll earn ... *(Briefly starts counting then does a double flip)* You're what?

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Columbus I just popped back to ask directions. *(COMPANY begin to re-enter at different times from different directions. Not the CHICKS)* At the farm gate, do I turn left or right?

Cossbocky *(Pleading)* But you *can't* go. I'll lose a bundle. Oh please stay, Columbus. I need you. My bank manager needs you.

Columbus Sorry chief. Now which way do I turn?

Cossbocky *(Sad)* It's not fair. It's *not right*.

Columbus Sorry? Did you say, "*not right*"?

Cossbocky Yes. Can't you see. (*Emphatic*) It's *not* right.

Columbus Oh thanks, Cossbocky. (*Out front. Thinking*) It's not right. Therefore it's left. (*To COMPANY*) Bye, everyone. Bye!
(*COLUMBUS pushes his way past other birds on way out UR. Others wave, call "Bye". COSSBOCKY wanders DL a sad and bitter gambler*)

Little Al (*Going after COSSBOCKY*) Well, well. What's happened to our great and mighty leader?
(*COSSBOCKY turns and sees the COMPANY staring at him. Immediately he changes character and becomes bossy and aggressive*)

Cossbocky Great. Now that all you're here, I've got news about my new scheme.

XP Why was Columbus here? I thought he'd flown the coop.

Cossbocky Forget Columbus. I'm talking serious development. All I need is one tenth of your income. (*Everyone protests*) Look, it's in your best interests.

Little Al Rubbish. We're sick of your schemes. Why can't you leave us alone?

Company Yeah.

Cossbocky You stupid chickens. Can't you see it's an ever-changing world. Those who stand still are swept aside.

Shakespeare Is it possible to find a part of the world where life is a touch slower?

Anabolic Yeah. It's called the abattoirs. (*Raucous laughter*) Ha, ha, ha.

Cossbocky You wimpy chickens make me sick. Profit is *not* a dirty word. Progress isn't *evil*. All I'm trying to do is make your lives more interesting, more comfortable.

Broodwyn But what if we're satisfied as we are? What if we don't *want* your get-rich schemes and anything-goes morality?

Cossbocky I don't know why I bother. I bust my beak to help you. I put my neck on the chopping-block and what do I get? Abuse and complaints.

Little Al Perhaps if you consulted first, things might be better.

Cossbocky Are you saying I don't know what's good for you? Listen *Little Al*, I ruffle your feathers because I'm a doer. I get things done. And as we speak, I'm on the verge of signing a multi-million egg deal. (*Big murmur from COMPANY*) One that'll change your life *forever*.

Little Al But what if we don't like it? What if we don't *need* it?

Cossbocky Then you can stay here and die. (*Storms off UC. Buzz from COMPANY. COSSBOCKY turns at UC and calls*) There are two types of chickens in this world. Winners and losers. Have a think about it ... *losers!*
(*COSSBOCKY turns, is gone. Hubbub. COMPANY stunned/fearful*)

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Little Al Don't mind him. He's got tickets on himself.

Bantam As opposed to prize-winning ribbons.

XP Perhaps he means well. I mean, he does *seem* to care about us.

Shakespeare I think Cossbocky's right.

Broodwyn Shakespeare! How can you say that?

Bantam So do I. Cossbocky speaks the truth. The world is changing. This farm is changing.

Anabolic What do you mean?

Bantam Look out that hole over there. (*Points LC and two or three chickens move and look*) There are new sheds, new equipment, new crops, new sprays. *Changes.*

Little Al So what? Some things never change. Consultation. Consideration. Caring.
Bantam Cleanliness never changes.
Shakespeare But what if Cossbocky *is* right? What if Farmer Blair made some major changes to this barn? We might all be made redundant. (*COMPANY jittery*)
Little Al Brilliant Shakespeare. Now look what you've done. They're scared.
Broodwyn I will always protect my chicks. No matter what, I'll be there for my family.
XP The question is, will Farmer Blair be there for us?
Bantam Perhaps we should accept Cossbocky's scheme. It might save our lives.
Little Al But we don't know what it is.
XP Perhaps we should adopt some schemes of our own. I think it's called insurance.
Broodwyn You mean if something terrible happened, we'd be prepared?
XP It may never happen but (*Shrugs*) ... who knows?
Bantam I agree.
Shakespeare Yes but what schemes? What are you talking about?
Anabolic I've got a scheme.
Little Al You?
Anabolic Don't look so surprised. I'm not a complete turkey.
Bantam I know a way to maintain Farmer Blair's blessing on our barn
XP And I've got an idea to actually make us incredibly desirable.
Broodwyn Good. If it means keeping my chicks at home and safe in their nest, I'll support anything.,
Little Al Hang on. We don't have any details. What are these ideas? (*Pause. Who will go first?*) Well come on XP. You made some big promises.
XP Yes, but mine's a bit technical. It's called *genetic engineering*.
Anabolic I like the sound of that.
XP It's my love for things scientific.
Bantam Yes but what does it mean?
XP Could I have some special lighting?
Little Al Of course. Now come on. Let's hear it. (*MUSIC BEGINS*)

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(Immediately lights change. COMPANY move to V shape formation either side of stage with the arrowhead UC. The following "ideas" are presented in a concert style. Presenters lit with a solo spot and COMPANY form the backing-group and are lit when they join in. XP explains his idea)

A Vegie in a Googie

XP *Lots of new inventions happen every day
Some go on and make it, some just fade away
There's a special problem, to solve so long I've tried
Listen and I'll tell you with scientific pride.*

*A vegie in a googie is an eggcellent idea
A vegie in a googie is a healthy meal it's clear
Cholesterol out, in vitamin C
You even may lose a calorie
A vegie in a googie is a an eggcellent idea.*

(Dialogue during song)

XP Chicks and Chickens, may I introduce our good friend, Egg. *(An EGG steps into the light beside XP and polite applause is heard)* And from the garden, the very healthy Carrot. *(A CARROT enters from darkness and stands on the other side of XP. Again polite applause but XP keeps the dialogue flowing. Indicating EGG)* Here we have a little cholesterol. *(Indicating CARROT)* Here, no cholesterol. *(Indicating EGG)* Here no Vitamin C. *(Indicating CARROT)* Here, Vitamin C. Now my scientific proposal is that we genetically engineer their dancing. Agreed? *(Applause as XP leads the dancing characters DC where they dance. The TRIO then repeat the refrain after which the COMPANY joins in. Song ends with EGG and CARROT skipping off together. COMPANY happy)*

Broodwyn Are you sure about this, XP? I mean is this genetic engineering safe?

XP I'm not sure. I just had this brainwave and well, ... that was it.

Shakespeare I don't like tampering with nature. If we're happy and well-fed, we'll *always* produce beautiful eggs.

Bantam Hear hear. Sorry XP but I can't support unnatural processes.

Little Al What do the vegies think? Does it just work with carrots?

XP I've only asked two others. The cabbages and the peas.

Little Al And?

XP One said they were too big and the other said ...

Company *(Joins in with XP)* ... they were too small.

XP Something like that.

Broodwyn Well, thank you for trying, XP. I'm sure your motives were honourable even if your idea is a can of worms.

Company Worms?

Anabolic Where? I'm starvin'. Let me at 'em

Broodwyn It was a figure of speech. *(ANABOLIC has the bad news explained in full)*

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Bantam And speaking of figures, my idea concerns the fabulous figure of a beautiful bantam. *(Groan from COMPANY)*

Little Al You're not serious?!

Bantam I most certainly am. A feathered festival is a magnificent event.

Little Al You mean the animal exhibitions at a country fair.

Broodwyn It's just a chance for Farmer Blair to win some ribbons. How does that help us?

Shakespeare And isn't beauty simply in the eye of the beholder?

Anabolic Beauty! What we need is brawn! *(COMPANY buzz)*

Bantam *(Upset)* Well if no-one wants to hear my idea, I'll be off.

Company *(MUSIC BEGINS. Stopping BANTAM)* No ... Don't go ... Wait ... *etc*

Little Al Come on, Bantam. Tell us your tale.

(Again lights change immediately lighting C to DC. A low flat box, boxes could be smoothly pushed into position creating a catwalk from C to DC. COMPANY again into position as audience - this time at a fashion parade)

The Catwalk Chicks

Bantam *Become a catwalk chick, be very smooth and slick
Be dressed to kill as star of the show
Rake in the dough,
Become a catwalk chick.
They dress like winners, stand out a mile
They sure are gridders, you can't beat style.
They look tremendous and have a ball
They are stupendous, they've got it all.*

(Dialogue during song)

Bantam *(First chicken enters C and struts down catwalk. BANTAM could speak with a French accent. "the" becomes "ze", "house" is "'ouse" etc) Our first model today is wearing the latest Parisian feathers from the shed of Golden Arches. Note the gorgeous plumage created by Monsieur McDonald.
(Gasps and polite applause from audience who should be in the dark. Spotlight the catwalk. Furthermore, don't let us see each model entering upstage. They should simply step onto the catwalk from the darkness. Model 1 steps off catwalk DC and exits into darkness or, if the catwalk is wide enough, MODEL 1 moves back upstage and waits in the darkness.*

NOTE: You don't need a catwalk. You could use the bare stage or throw a runner carpet from DC to C or even use a ramp with a slight fall from C down to DC. This parade should be funny in that the models imitate a chicken. However, the models are not trying to be funny. This is serious. They are out to impress. Don't take the mickey! Model 2 enters and parades)

Bantam *Next we have a plump and tender bird from the barn of Colonel Sanders. A sweet creation with a perfume of secret herbs and spices.
(More gasps, polite applause. A camera flash/es could pop as the each MODEL spins at the end of the catwalk)*

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Bantam *And finally the piece de resistance. Rooster Red from the Hut of Burger. Underneath that exquisite outfit is a lining of breadcrumbs by Madame Stuffing. **Magnifique!**
(More gasps, applause and camera flashes as all three models perform a simple walk routine as the song is repeated. Song ends. gradually with models making their staggered exit during the last 8 bars. The music finishes just as the final model exits. Pause. Lights up with BANTAM DL.*

NOTE: If you have many performers, you could turn this number into a ZIEGFELD FOLLIES routine. Have a number of model chickens each wearing some amazing plumage. Dress the stage)

Little Al *I can't believe it. I had no idea chickens could look so so stunning.*

Bantam *We're used to it. Scoff, snigger, snide remarks. Happens all the time.*

Shakespeare *And if you win a ribbon, Farmer Blair thinks you're wonderful.*

Bantam Of course. You should see his mantelpiece. He's got more trophies and ribbons than you've laid yolks!
(COMPANY buzz. It's true. I've seen them. etc)

XP And if we all dressed up like that, we'd be very popular and be treated like royalty.

Bantam I rest my case.

Broodwyn In theory, Bantam, I think it's wonderful. In reality, it just won't work.

Bantam Another sceptic. It's all right. I'm used to it.

Broodwyn Well some of us aren't cut up to be like that. You've got to be thin, with a certain bone structure and have shiny feathers. Some of us don't fit the bill.

Little Al You mean we'd be mutton dressed up as lamb?

Broodwyn And some of us are quite happy the way we are.

Anabolic I'll tell ya something. If I had to dress up like that lot I'd look like a real goose.

Bantam How can you be a goose when you're already a turkey?
(ANABOLIC offended and moves towards BANTAM. Is restrained)

XP Hey, hey, hey. None of that. Settle down.

Anabolic *(Angry)* Nobody calls me a turkey and gets away with it.

Shakespeare Say Anabolic. Didn't you say you had an idea?

Broodwyn Yes, you did. Come on, Anabolic. What's *your* secret scheme?
(Pause. Everyone turns to ANABOLIC. He looks around, struts DC, takes in a big breath, puffs out his chest and proclaims)

Anabolic I'm gunna be world champion!
(Great buzz from COMPANY. They are impressed)

Bantam World champion what? Most number of fouls?

Anabolic *(Puffs chest out further)* Heavyweight fighter!

Shakespeare *(Upset)* You don't mean ... *cock-fighting?*
(Audible gasp from COMPANY. This is a great shock)

Anabolic You've heard of *(Record's stuck)* *Rocky 1, Rocky 2, Rocky 3, Rocky 4 ...*

Broodwyn` Yes, yes, we get the picture.

Squawk! 14

Anabolic Well watch out for a new series. *(Proudly boasts)* *Cocky 1, Cocky 2, Cocky 3, Cocky 4 ...*

XP *(Frightened)* Anabolic, are you crazy? Do you know the odds? Cock-fighting's a short cut to oblivion!

Anabolic If you wanna impress a farmer, any human, just become champion of the world. *(Indicates leg)* See this spur. I've got a secret weapon. It's a razor-sharp piece of metal. *(COMPANY gasp. There is no metal of course)* So when I strike, I don't hurt, I don't maim. *I kill!* *(MUSIC BEGINS)*
(Immediately lights/music respond. Light DC and chickens drag on boxing ring which is a hollow square. The side facing the real audience is missing. Dressing gown placed on ANABOLIC. He parades across front of stage to wild cheering from COMPANY who form audience around three roped sides of ring. ANABOLIC has one/two trainers who fan him. ANABOLIC enters ring and salutes cheering masses. He sings a la Elvis 1960s)

Fight, Fight, Fight

Anabolic *Gotta train for years, blood, sweat and tears, to fight*
Company *Fight, fight, fight, fight!*
Anabolic *Gotta sacrifice, gotta pay the price to fight*
Company *Fight, fight, fight, fight! Ahhh!*
Anabolic *Learn the trade and learn it well, give the other sucker hell*
Gotta lose the weight, gotta learn to hate to fight.
Gotta crush his jaw, make him hit the floor tonight
Company *Fight, fight, fight, fight!*
Anabolic *Gotta belt his chin and be sure I win tonight*
Company *Fight, fight, fight, fight! Ahhhh!*
Anabolic *Throwing leather, blow by blow, even land a punch that's low*
Gotta feint and lead, you palooka bleed tonight.
I (He) will be champion, I (He) will be champ
I'll (He'll) kill off challenges from every camp
I'll (He'll) fight fanatically, punch, kick or stamp
I (He) will be champion, I (He) will be champ!
The champ, the champ, the champ, the champ
I am (He is) the champ!
(During the repeat of the chorus by the COMPANY, another fighter enters the ring and the preliminaries begin. The referee brings the two pugilists together, mimes giving them instructions. The singing stops, the FIGHT MUSIC begins. It's brief. The fighters circle, a few kicks and punches are aimed then suddenly ANABOLIC lands one blow and his opponent collapses. The COMPANY erupts and the song is repeated. The vanquished and ring are removed during the singing and ANABOLIC receives the winner's belt. Song ends with ANABOLIC the hero. Much cheering, applause and back-slapping)
Anabolic *(Acknowledging fans) Thank you fans. Thank you. Hey! I loves you all!*
(More applause and cheering from COMPANY)

Squawk! 15

XP *Anabolic, you can't go through with this. It's crazy.*
Anabolic *Hey. Who's the champion of the world?*
Bantam *Disgusting exhibition appealing to the basest instincts.*
Broodwyn *I don't like the violence. And what happened to that other chicken? Is he all right?*
Anabolic *Put it this way. He won't be crowing ever again.*
(ANABOLIC laughs alone. COMPANY suddenly less enthusiastic. The horror of the fight seems ugly, more realistic)
Shakespeare *But this scheme won't impress Farmer Blair. He won't condone fighting.*
Anabolic *He'll love it. He's got the best fighter in the world. You're all safe now. I can look after everyone.*
XP *Anabolic, you're wrong. Cock-fighting's the shortest career on record. Today you win, tomorrow you lose.*
Little Al *Yeah and look what happens to the loser.*
Broodwyn *You won't be protecting anyone if some smarter rooster gets in the first blow.*
Anabolic *But that's just it. They won't. I'm gunna win a few fights, make a fortune then retire.*

Bantam Isn't that funny? I heard your opponent say those very words just before his final fight.

XP Anabolic, listen to me. The people who own fighting birds will tell you this themselves. If, *if* you last three fights, you're a champ.

Anabolic So, only two to go.

XP (*Angry, concerned*) You crazy klutz, can't you see? Cock-fighting's a one-way ticket to the barbie! Keep this up and come Sunday you'll be charcoal grilled! (*COMPANY cringe. The thought is not pleasant*)

Little Al (*Agrees with XP*) You're not a champion, mate. You're a bet.

Broodwyn They're right, Anabolic. People who let you fight don't love you. They *use* you. They want you to win so *they* can win. And using bits of metal on your leg, well, how would *you* like that stuck in your guts?

Anabolic (*Annoyed*) Fantastic. Thanks for nothing. I offer you lot a bit of security and all I get is a crappy load of cobblers. Next time you're in trouble, *don't call me!* (*Storms off upstage and exits in foul mood. The belt is removed offstage*)

Shakespeare (*Calling*) Anabolic. Come back. (*COMPANY upset and fall quiet. Pause*)

Bantam So which genius suggested we use ideas? Fat lot of good they were.

Broodwyn Genetic engineering, fashion parades and cock-fighting.

Little Al They're not for us. I think the term is *politically incorrect*.

XP (*To LITTLE AL*) Yeah well I notice *you* haven't come up with any ideas. Perhaps you could tell us what *is* politically correct?

Shakespeare I've got an idea.

Bantam Just keep it to yourself, Shakespeare. You've seen what happened to anything constructive. (*Sneers*) We can't possibly have anything *politically incorrect*.

Little Al If you'd stop being so selfish and self-centred, maybe the ideas would take care of themselves.

Squawk! 16

Shakespeare You're right. My idea's all wrong.

Bantam (*At LITTLE AL*) See what you've done. You've stifled enthusiasm. You've killed what might be a damn good idea. One that might even save our bacon.

Little Al Yeah okay. I'm sorry, Shakespeare. Please, tell us your idea.

Shakespeare Well it's pretty boring really. It's just something to help our eggs.

Bantam That definitely sounds boring. Chickens are attractive, eggs are dull.

Broodwyn Oh shut your beak, Bantam. Anything which helps our eggs is great. Now Shakespeare, what's the plan?

Shakespeare Cups.

Company Cups?

XP What drinking cups? Eat your egg with a cup of tea?

Shakespeare No.

Bantam I know. It's trophy cups. Best egg wins the cup.

Shakespeare Not quite. Look I told you it was boring.

Broodwyn Well what sort of cup are you talking about?

Little Al Oh for Pete's sake, Shakespeare, don't keep us in suspense.

Shakespeare All right. Egg cups.

Company Egg cups?!

Bantam *(Sarcastic)* Wow, that sounds terribly important.

XP So what's your plan?

Shakespeare It's not a plan so much as a creation. You see I reckon we should express ourselves in a more colourful way.

Broodwyn Not swearing I hope.

Shakespeare Our eggs seem kind of ... plain and ordinary.

Bantam They're supposed to be. We're the ones dressed to kill.

Shakespeare Oh I don't want to change them. Just add a bit.

XP Add a bit of what?

Shakespeare Well if I had an egg or two, I could demonstrate.

Bantam *(Calling upstage)* Hey, is there an egg over there?
(An egg - up to four if you can manage it - come bouncing out and stand DC. An EGG is just that. A large white oval with legs, arms and a head poking out. SHAKESPEARE collects his gear from behind a bale of hay)

Shakespeare I've invented this(*these*) outfit(s). If I could have some egg co-operation.
(An outfit is passed to each egg. They need a bit of help from chickens. The outfit is a pair of trousers with the top of a shoe sewn onto the bottom of each leg and a cup at the crotch. A cup in the shape of an egg cup. This is made of wire which is covered with material with braces over the egg's shoulders becomes the bottom half of the egg's costume. When each egg pulls on the pants, they are then in a cup. Buzz of admiration from COMPANY)

Broodwyn They look terrific. Shakespeare, you're an artist.

XP *(Full of admiration)* Great idea. You've dressed these eggs superbly.

Bantam Well let's not get carried away.

Little Al So what's the point? How does this help us?

Squawk! 17

Shakespeare Well I thought if our eggs came complete with their own individual cup, Farmer Blair would have a unique product. We'd be protected and pampered forever.

Broodwyn Sounds great but what about the eggs? Do *they* like it?

Shakespeare That's the snag. I haven't asked them. But I've thought of a slogan to try and win their approval.

Little Al What slogan?

Shakespeare Ah it goes something like this. *(MUSIC BEGINS)*
(Immediately EGGS move to a bale of hay and have the deal pitched at them by SHAKESPEARE)

If The Cup Fits

Shakespeare *If the cup fits, wear it, first impressions mean a lot
 If the cup fits, wear it, first impressions ain't forgot.
 When you look the part, kinda spick and span
 You're out of the fire and the frying pan
 If the cup fits, wear it, first impressions mean a lot.
 Every day keep smiling, see the runny side of life
 When they say to you, crack a yolk or two*

Show your sunnyside the knife.

Every day keep trying, though the frying hurts like hell

Put the poachers in a scramble and present your splendid shell.

(Song includes dance break starring dancing egg/s. Everyone delighted with cups and song ends on a high. COMPANY freezes. Before the applause has died, a crashing banging noise is heard. EGGS scamper off and COMPANY turns to look UR as they back LC and DL. Pause. Suddenly COLUMBUS appears and comes down. COMPANY move in behind/beside him)

Columbus Hello everyone. It's only me.

Bantam Ah, the weary traveller returns.

XP So how was the trip, Columbus? Did you discover any new farms?

Shakespeare Got any photos or souvenirs?

Columbus Hold it, give me a break. *(Pause)* I haven't finished my trip yet.

Broodwyn Well if you're back here, you haven't started. *(Laughter from COMPANY)*

Columbus *(Looks around, beckons, speaks softly)* Listen, can you keep a secret?

Bantam It's all right, Columbus. We know you're really a chicken.

Columbus *(Offended)* A chicken yes, but chicken? Never!

XP Columbus, what's the secret?

Columbus *(Back into secret-sharing mood)* Oh yeah. *(Whispers)* I reckon Cossbocky's a fraud. *(Buzz from COMPANY)*

Little Al Tell us something we don't know.

Broodwyn What do you mean?

Columbus Well he's our boss, right? He keeps the barn safe, decides how many chicks we hatch, everything. He's il supremo.

XP So?

Squawk! 18

Columbus No long ago I asked him directions and he said, "It's not right". So when I got to the farm gate I turned left. I did exactly what Cossbocky said.

Shakespeare And what happened?

Columbus I turned left and finished up in the pig-pen. *(Stunned reaction from COMPANY)* So I asked the pigs if this was the way to the big wide world and you know what they said?

XP No. Tell us.

Columbus They just grunted.

Broodwyn Grunted?

Columbus I told them our leader Cossbocky said this was the way and you know what they said? *(Pause)* They just grunted. *(COMPANY react)*

Bantam So we're not the only ones who think Cossbocky's a fraud. Big deal.

Columbus Now if Cossbocky's the boss, how come he doesn't know the way to the outside world? How come the pigs just grunt at the mention of his name?

Little Al I told you this ages ago. I told you Cossbocky's selfish and arrogant. But no, you wouldn't listen

Columbus *(Preparing to leave)* Just thought I'd let you know before I leave.

Company Leave!?

XP *(Shocked)* You're not going? You can't! Not after what you've just told us?

Columbus Of course I'm going. But this time I'm turning right. This time *I'll* be right. *(Starts to exit upstage)* Take care everyone and look out for Cossbucky. Bye. *(He exits UR waving and the COMPANY call out "Bye" Good luck" etc as they wave back. COMPANY drift off in various directions all talking about COLUMBUS and his secret. Only LITTLE AL, BROODWYN, SHAKESPEARE and XP remain. They spread out and relax. Pause. The mood is sombre. The lights could dim)*

Broodwyn He's mad you know. He'll never make it.

Shakespeare We're all mad, Broodwyn. It's just that some of us are more mad than others.

Bantam Oh very droll. I bet you pinched that from someone.

XP What I want to know is, where's Cossbucky? And what's he up to?

Little Al We'll find out - sooner or later. *(Stretches)* In the meantime, I think I'll turn in. See ya. *(Wanders off LC)* Oh and tell Cossbucky to crow a little later tomorrow. *(The others stretch, yawn etc and take their leave in different directions)*

Broodwyn Yes, I'd better check on my monsters. Bye. *(She exits UL)*

Bantam *(Heading DR)* Time I washed my feathers. Au revoir.

XP Oh blimey. I've got a meeting with the tomatoes. *(Rushes off)* I'm late.

Shakespeare Yeah, fair enough. Must away and make some more cups. *(SHAKESPEARE is the last to leave and wanders UR. He is gone. The barn is empty. Pause. A groan is heard. It's soft. Pause. Another groan. Louder. SHAKESPEARE enters and comes down. The lighting is dim and we can't see anyone other than SHAKESPEARE)*

Squawk! 19

Shakespeare Hello? Anyone there? Hello? *(Pause. Silence)* Must be hearing things. *(SHAKESPEARE starts to exit again when another groan is heard. SHAKESPEARE comes DC looking offstage LC/UL)*

Shakespeare Is anyone there? *(Pause. SHAKESPEARE moves to bales of hay. Suddenly someone rolls off and crashes to the floor onto SHAKESPEARE)*

Shakespeare Hey! Watch it! Ow! *(SHAKESPEARE quickly gets up and helps the fallen chicken)*

Shakespeare Blimey, you nearly killed me. Listen ... *(Shocked)* Anabolic! *(ANABOLIC groans)* What's happened? You okay? *(Another groan)* Hang on, I'll get some help. *(SHAKESPEARE dashes off DR. Pause BROODWYN comes down from UL)*

Broodwyn What's going on? Who's making all that ... *(Sees ANABOLIC and bends to help)* Anabolic. What happened? *(SHAKESPEARE re-enters with BANTAM. LITTLE AL enters, joins group)*

Little Al I might have known. You idiot, Anabolic. I warned you about this.

Broodwyn *(Angry)* Don't be so cruel. Can't you see he's injured.

Shakespeare He fell off that bale of hay.

Bantam Drunk I shouldn't wonder. Punch drunk.

Broodwyn Sit up, Anabolic. *(They help him onto a bale of hay)* Easy, don't rush.

Little Al What was it this time? More of those poisonous pills? *(OTHERS shocked. ANABOLIC groans, appears to be sick. He is helped)*

Broodwyn *(At LITTLE AL)* Will you stop it? I tell you he's sick?

Bantam They're self-inflicted wounds. Why should we feel sorry for him?

Shakespeare Who cares? We've got to help.
Anabolic *(Coughs)* No. They're right. I don't deserve to live.
Little Al What have you taken? *(Pause)* Tell us you stupid bird.
Anabolic *(Struggling)* I wanted to make my chest bigger, get stronger muscles. I tried exercise but this old rooster sold me some pills.
Broodwyn *(Dismayed)* Oh Anabolic. How could you?
Anabolic He said they'd would make me bigger and stronger - real quick like. He said I'd win more fights.
Little Al And what about the side effects? I bet he didn't tell you about them.
Anabolic They're quite safe. Really. They use them on hens to make their eggs more beautiful.
Bantam More beautiful! We're already beautiful!
Anabolic It's true. Hens who use this stuff lay eggs with really bright yellow yolks. It's what the customers want. They tell the people that bright yellow eggs are the best.
Little Al Garbage. A nutritious egg doesn't need a canary coloured yolk.
Shakespeare But what happens to the hens? The ones on the drugs?
Anabolic Nothing. The pills are harmless. *(Coughs badly)*
Broodwyn So it seems. Listen Anabolic, you're sick. And no more of those pills. Okay?
Anabolic *(Coughing)* Yeah, okay.

Squawk! 20

Little Al That's it. I'm getting the Charter.
(Heads LC and disappears. COMPANY return in dribs and drabs. It's still dark. The CHICKS wear pyjamas, night-caps, slippers, etc. One or two could carry a teddy bear. They murmur amongst themselves as they look at the others helping a sick ANABOLIC)

Bantam *(Angry at ANABOLIC)* Nice one, Anabolic. Great example. Now we'll have Tall these young chickens poppin' pills.

Broodwyn *(Hops up and guides her family to one side)* Squawk! Squawk, squawk, squawk!

Shakespeare I guess Broodwyn's right. It must be tough being a parent today. I mean these things exist, but how and when do you tell your chicks?

XP *(Pushing through)* I've just heard. Anabolic, how are you?

Anabolic I'm fine. It's nothing. Nothing. *(Collapses with another coughing fit)*

Bantam As you can see, it's a strange version of nothing.

Little Al *(Enters UL and is lit by a single light)* Your attention please. *(Murmurs as COMPANY shuffle about and face upstage)* I have here a document which I would ask you all to read.

Bantam Can't it wait? We've got a medical crisis down here.

Shakespeare And what about the young ones? It's bad enough already.

Little Al This is *for* the young ones. For everyone. I say it's time we made a stand. *(Brandishing document)* Behold the *Chicken Charter*.
(COMPANY buzz. What does this mean? What's going on? LITTLE AL comes DC/C and is in a fiery mood)

XP I think we've had enough ideas, Little Al. Most of them just didn't work.

Little Al This is not an idea. This is a way of life. *(More reaction from COMPANY)* If we can agree on the wording, this document will establish once and for all, the rights of all domestic fowls.

Bantam What do you mean - rights? We're free. We're well-fed. We're safe. What more do we want?

Little Al *(Indicating ANABOLIC)* Well to get rid of that for a start. Everyone has the right to certain things. Farmer Blair has the right to grow crops, collect eggs, raise animals in a proper and friendly way. But we too have rights. *(MUSIC BEGINS)*

Broodwyn Do you mind? I've got a family who should be in bed?

Little Al Well keep them up just this once, Broodwyn. There's something I'd like them to hear.

There Is A Life

Little Al *There is a life we all can live where there is peace
There is a life we all can live where there is love
There is a life where we can cope, where we grow and have scope
There's a life where we have hope, there is a life.
There is a life we all can live where there is trust
There is a life we all can live where there is joy
There is a life where we can team, where we plan, where we scheme*

*There is a life where we dream, there is a life.
Life, life is for everyone, life, life is for all.
Life, life is for everyone, life, life is for all.
No greater gift, no greater prize, no greater love, no greater ties.
Life, life is for everyone, bird, beast, man massive or small
Life, life is for everyone, there is a life for all.
(Song builds with the refrain and everyone joins in. It's a moving moment highlighted by the ethereal lighting - a touch eerie. Song ends with everyone looking straight out front and upwards - as if to the heavens. They are frozen. Applause dies. Pause. Suddenly COSSBOCKY enters DR and calls)*

Cossbocky *What's all this then? A prayer meeting?
(Lights come up, back to normal, and COMPANY quickly break formation and move around the set. If required, BROODWYN could quickly usher the CHICKS UL and offstage)*

Company *Cossbocky!*

Little Al *Ah, just the chicken we want. Here Cossbocky, take a look at this.
(Offers Charter)*

Cossbocky *(Brushes it aside) Not now, Sunshine. (Announcing) My friends, I promised you the earth. I promised you the deal of the decade. Well make that the deal of the century. (Big voice) And here it is!
(Big sweeping gesture upstage where spot picks FOX in striking pose UC on bale of hay. COMPANY poleaxed. The word "Fox" rushes around the barn. This is done by one actor saying it immediately followed by another. Practise till you get it right. It can mean starting just before the other has finished. Keep it a whisper and make it fly. But this is no ordinary fox. It is dressed in full riding outfit - cap, jodhpurs, jacket, boots and carries riding whip. MUSIC BEGINS)*

Misunderstood

Fox *I'm misunderstood by most folk in society
I'm misunderstood, they say I lack propriety.
I do some things you never would
They say that I'm up to no good
And must vacate the neighbourhood
I'm misunderstood. I'm misunderstood*

Company *She's Miss Understood*

Fox *By most folk in society*

Company *She's Miss Understood*

Fox *They say I lack propriety.
I do some things you never would
They say that I'm up to no good
And must vacate the neighbourhood*

Company *She's Miss Understood.*

Fox *A nasty reputation will land you in the poo*

*A nasty reputation will stick to you like glue
When folks decide you're guilty, no matter if it's true
A nasty reputation will always tell on you.
She's Miss - She's Miss - She's Miss Understood
Miss Understood!*

(The FOX sings with feeling and the COMPANY are won over. Song ends with several chickens around the FOX seeking to know more. LITTLE AL and BROODWYN take COSSBOCKY DL)

Company *She's Miss - She's Miss - She's Miss Understood
Miss Understood!*

Little Al Cossbocky, do you know who that is?

Cossbocky Yes. A friend. A *real* friend.

Little Al A friend? It doesn't look like a friend.

Broodwyn Unless I'm mistaken, that's a problem.

Cossbocky It's not Miss Taken. It's Miss Understood.

Little Al Oh yeah? We'll see about that. *(Back to FOX) Excuse me?
(COMPANY open up and FOX comes down)*

Fox Greetings my friend. *(Extends gloved hand)* And you are?

Little Al Never mind me. Who are you?

Shakespeare Fair go, Little Al. You heard our visitor. It's Miss Understood.

Little Al Yeah, well you look suspicious.

Broodwyn *Very* suspicious.

Fox Oh. In what way?

Cossbocky Don't mind them. They're only stirrers.

Little Al Just exactly what do you do for a living?

Bantam Forgive my colleague, Miss Understood. We're not all rude and impolite. First of all, welcome. And as a connoisseur of fashion, may I say how delightful you look.

Fox Why thank you. Actually these are my working clothes?

Little Al Oh yeah? Working at what?

Fox I have a rather strange job. I organise cross-country outings for horses and hounds.
(Buzz from COMPANY. It sounds impressive)

Cossbocky Just one of your many talents.

Fox Yes I decide where the doggies and gee-gees go for their weekly workout.

Shakespeare Goodness that sounds exciting. But isn't it risky?

Fox No, it's perfectly safe. Just a bit of fun. And the best part's when the dogs get lost. Oh dear, talk about a laugh. *(COMPANY intrigued)*

XP But aren't dogs dangerous? Some of them can kill.
(Reaction from COMPANY)

Fox Nooooo. Just a myth. Those little puppies wouldn't hurt a fly.

Cossbocky Okay, enough of this idle chat. I promised action and believe me, this is the biggest and best deal you'll ever see. Come on, Miss Understood, give us the good news.

Fox Right you are. *(Calling to wings)* Could we have the unit out front please?
(Lights dim, drum roll begins as large/ish flat covered in cloth is wheeled out facing front and stands across the stage about C. Lights focus on the covered item. COMPANY move back either side and watch in awe)

Cossbocky *(Issues order)* Now stand back. Keep well clear. That's it.

Fox You are about to witness the greatest development in the history of poultry farming. Never before will chickens be the same. Cossbocky, if you'd do the honours. Oh and ... ah ...

Bantam *(Gushing)* Bantam.

Fox Bantam, you're obviously acquainted with style. If you'd be so kind.

Bantam *(Joining COSSBOCKY at the side of the item)* Delighted. Delighted.

Fox And now *(Big voice)* the *Happy Hen House!*
(Cymbals crash as the cloth is whisked away - it could even fly into the roof - and coloured lights flash on the flat. It's a truck with a cage. The front only of the cage appears. There is a door in the centre, also made of bars, and the cage is as low to the ground as possible. The smaller the cage the better but it must be almost the height of the actors playing the chickens. COMPANY are impressed by the structure, the coloured lights, music etc and spontaneously break into applause. The lights stop flashing but concentrate on the cage. FOX takes control)

Bantam Oh it's beautiful!

Fox Say goodbye to boredom, say farewell to drudgery and hard labour. This is the answer to your prayers.

Little Al What's it do?

Cossbocky Everything.

Fox Let me demonstrate this fabulous invention. *(Moves to cage and indicates its features)* First the special floor, kind to your feet and ideal for a great little scratch. Like it? *(COMPANY buzz)* There's more. At the flick of a switch *(FOX flicks switch - this could be mimed - and lights on/in the cage change to a pretty colour. COMPANY enthralled)* your *Happy Hen House* is bathed in soft and gorgeous light. It's day-light saving forever! But there's more. A sparkling feed and water tray serves you the latest French cuisine and beverages. Never again will you have to fossick in the dirty old dirt for some skinny worm. Like it?

Company *(They are well and truly hooked)* Yes.

Fox Well there's more. Banish infections from those nasty little droppings. A special whoopsie tray wipes it away leaving you flushed with cleanliness. Like it?

Shakespeare I love it. How can I get one?

Fox But there's more. Are you tired of those screeching roosters first thing in the morning, those cheep cheep chicks all day? You are? Then say "So long" to horrible noises as you swoon to our chicken chart busters - the top twenty tunes wafting through your home.

XP You mean we get our own hi-fi?

Cossbocky I told you this was good.

Fox Now for the first twenty customers we'll even throw in a free visit to the beautician.

Bantam I'll take that.

Fox Have your beak trimmed for free! We'll shape your schnozzer with our painless hot trimmer. *(Great excitement from COMPANY)* And the crazy price includes free delivery, installation and set of instructions. But wait - there's more. Your *Happy Hen House* comes complete with room for all your guests. That's right. Call your neighbours, friends, relatives, anyone. They'll all be welcome as there's tons of room in your own *Happy Hen House*.

Little Al Just a minute. I've got a question.

Fox *(Ignoring LITTLE AL)* Now don't miss out on these sensational units. Stocks are limited and you'd be crazy to let them go at this price.

Little Al Look, I've got some questions. Where do they come from? Who made them? Have they been used anywhere else?

Cossbocky Somebody grab that chicken.
(LITTLE AL is collared by two or three chickens and bundled off protesting)

Little Al What are the safety standards? Where are the consumer reports? Who sent you? *(Calling loudly)* Who do you work for?
(The last question could be yelled from offstage. The COMPANY don't care about LITTLE AL. They are all fired up about the fabulous new product)

Fox Now the best till last. I want you all to try this marvellous new home. *(MUSIC BEGINS. COMPANY delighted)*. On the house, free! No questions asked. *(Louder)* Come on and try it! *(Big cheer from COMPANY)*

Happy Hen House

Company *A happy little hen house, a hen house so twee
A happy little hen house will fill us with glee
A happy little hen house, we all want the key
A happy little hen house for you and for me.
We all want our own special place
A home to call our own
A house with nests and quarters to groom
A house with charm and acres of room
We all want our own special place
With food that's all home grown
We want the best, a comfortable nest
A house to call our own.
Happy little hen house, happy, happy little house!*
*(During the song, most if not all the COMPANY take the time to enter the cage via the door and briefly try out the spacious surroundings.
They do this one at a time. The one waiting to get in is impatient. Come on - it's my turn. You've had long enough ... sort of thing. The song ends with everyone delighted, over the moon. The Happy Hen House is a hit)*

Fox Okay, now, who wants to own the first *Happy Hen House* in this beautiful barn.

Company *(Almost out of control. Jumping, hands raised, calling)* Me! Me! ... I'll pay anything! ... Here's my money! ... etc

Cossbocky *(Waving them down)* Squawk! Squawk, squawk, squawk! *(Slowly they settle)*
That's better. Now I told you this was great. Keep calm and everyone will get fixed up. Right Miss Understood?

Fox You betcha. Okay, how about you Bantam?
(Huge groan of disappointment from COMPANY)

Bantam *(Puffed up with pride)* Oh, thank you. I've already worked out where my ribbons and trophies will go. I'm a prize-winning bird, you know?

Fox *(Hustling BANTAM to the cage)* And rightly so. Now just sign this purchase order - *(BANTAM mimes quick card signing which FOX pockets)* - and the unit is yours.
(Sudden silence. COMPANY in awe watch BANTAM slowly inspect, touch then step inside the cage. BANTAM moves to one end then back to the other then back to the door. BANTAM reaches out and brings the door in - closes it. As soon as the door closes all hell breaks loose. The COMPANY jump up and down and protest. 'Not fair! ... Let us in! ... We want a house! ... etc. Again COSSBOCKY has to regain control)

Cossbocky Squawk! Squawk, squawk, squawk! *(COMPANY reluctantly settle)*

XP That's not fair. Miss Understood said guests were allowed.

Company Yes ... That's right.

Fox Please, please. *(They settle)* I'm sure Bantam would like to have some guests. Wouldn't you Bantam?

Bantam *(Pause. BANTAM wouldn't like to have any guests)* Well, maybe. But the proper thing is to issue invitations.

Shakespeare *(Calling to COMPANY)* We accept, don't we?

Company Yes!

Bantam *(Protesting)* But I haven't written them yet.

Broodwyn Oh don't be such a snob, Bantam.

XP Yes, let us in.

Company *(Begin a chant. Gradually all join in)* Let us in! Let us in! Let us in! *etc*

Fox *(Calling for calm)* My friends, please, please. *(They settle)* May I suggest a compromise? Bantam, why don't you have a general house warming now, after which it's strictly R.S.V.P.?

Bantam Well, only if they wipe their feet and don't drop crumbs on the carpet.

Company *(As they clamber to enter)* Yeah!!
(Careful movement required here. It's a small cage but everyone must climb in. That's the point. Overcrowding)
Now there are no sides and no back to the cage. This is imagined. COMPANY chickens enter first. Have a set order so whilst there is pushing, jostling, etc., everyone knows when they enter. Once inside, the COMPANY chickens move to the rear of the cage, stand on a fixed spot and look around, chat amongst themselves. It's like lining up for a school photo or in lines for an assembly.
Remember the imaginary side and back walls are represented by the chickens in straight lines. Shoulder to shoulder. Rehearse so it's just right. Whilst all this is going on, BANTAM is trying to save the porcelain in the imaginary crystal cabinet and FOX and COSSBOCKY are trying to keep a bit of decorum. The dialogue below is ad lib and overlaps)

Bantam Wipe your feet! ... Mind my crystal cabinet! ... No you can't have the good cups! ... Leave that vase alone! ... Careful of my trophies! ... *etc*

Fox Take your time. ... Yes, you can have your very own *Hen House* ... It's a bargain, my friend, a real bargain. ... *etc.*

Cossbocky Don't push! ... Hey, easy, easy! ... After her! ... Yes, you'll be next! ... Wait! ... *etc*
(Eventually everyone is inside except FOX and COSSBOCKY. PRINCIPALS are along the front of the cage. You may not use entire COMPANY if you have a huge cast. You must use all on stage. Mark area behind cage then rehearse seeing how many actors can fit into this space. It needs to be a tight but not ridiculously tight fit. Consider too the time factor. You don't want to take fifteen minutes squeezing in the entire cast. Think about it)

Fox What's it like?

XP Wonderful. It's so exciting.

Broodwyn I think my chicks will love it.

Shakespeare Bring out the eggs. Let's have everyone. *(Laughter from COMPANY)*

Cossbocky Now I think you'd like me to publicly thank Miss Understood for bringing such joy and happiness to our barn.
(COMPANY applaud enthusiastically. Most do so above their heads as they are packed in like sardines)

Fox Thank you, thank you. But believe me, the pleasure's all mine. To see you chickens so happy gives me a warm inner glow, right down here in my tummy.
(More applause from COMPANY)

Bantam Is the house-warming over now?

Fox Nearly. First we've got to get Cossbocky inside.

Cossbocky *(Being helped inside)* Oh really. Oh my.

Fox In you go. That's the way.
(FOX guides COSSBOCKY to the gate/door and has to push to get him in. It's pretty tight. The gate opens outwards and FOX closes it with COSSBOCKY right up against the bars of the gate)

Cossbocky This is fantastic.

Fox *(Locking the cage)* Now I'll just help you with this little lock and ... there you are. *(FOX moves DL and admires the creation)*

Cossbocky Brilliant, Miss Understood. *(To COMPANY)* Isn't this just brilliant?

Company Oh yes ... It's brilliant. ... Fabulous. ... *etc*

Fox Right, I'll just slip off and see about some more *Happy Hen Houses*. You all want your own don't you?

Company Oh yes. ... Please. ... I do. *etc.*

Cossbocky *(Calling)* Mine's the blue one with the spa! Deluxe model!

Fox *(Exits DL)* Bye!

Company *(Waving)* Bye! ... See ya! Hurry back! ... *etc ...*
(Pause. COMPANY is crammed in tight. Still they think this is wonderful. It's different. It's new)

Bantam Well thank you all for coming. I'm sorry you've got to leave.

Broodwyn Where's the afternoon tea?

Squawk! 27

Shakespeare Yeah, I'll bet it's cucumber sandwiches.
Company *(Stirring BANTAM)* Oooooo!

Bantam Look, I've just moved in. I need time to unpack.
Anabolic Hey, mind my foot. I earn my living with that.
XP Could you just step back a little. I'm a little squashed.
Broodwyn *You* move back. This is *my* space.
Bantam Cossbocky, take control please. Tell them the house warming's over.
Cossbocky Yeah, fair enough. (*Protests from COMPANY*) Right pay attention. All uninvited guests are now asked to leave. Thank you.
Bantam By the back door.
Chicken 1 (*Near the back*) What back door?
Chicken 2 (*Also near the back*) There *isn't* a back door.
Bantam Well all right, if you must. Use the front door but *please leave quietly*.
Shakespeare It's you Cossbocky. You're the closest.
Cossbocky Me? What do you mean?
Broodwyn (*Angry*) Oh come on. Open the bloody door!
(Everyone freezes at BROODWYN'S language. She's under pressure)
Bantam (*Shocked*) Broodwyn! Your language. Think of your chicks.
Broodwyn I *am* thinking of them. They're out there unprotected and I'm stuck in here. Now let me out!
Cossbocky All right, all right. Just stop pushing.
Anabolic Hey! (*Turns head to those nearby*) Someone pecked me! Who was it?
Bantam (*Angry*) Cossbocky, open the door! (*COSSBOCKY fiddles with lock*)
Shakespeare (*Angry and frightened*) Will you stop pushing?!
(General disturbance builds. Carefully choreographed ruckus. Start small and build)
Cossbocky I'm trying. Give me a break.
Broodwyn My chicks are in danger.
Anabolic (*Threatens a chicken*) You touch me and I'll fix you, pal - *permanently!*
Shakespeare I need air. I can't breathe!
Bantam Be careful of my trophies!
Cossbocky I can't open it! It's locked!
Company (*Fearful*) Locked!
XP But that means we're stuck in here. We're trapped.
(General panic as COMPANY push, protest and struggle in vain)
Cossbocky (*Trying to regain control*) Squawk! Squawk, squawk, squawk!
(An uneasy peace settles)
Bantam This is your fault, Cossbocky. This is not a *Happy Hen House*. It's a *hell* house!
Anabolic (*Fierce threat to COSSBOCKY*) Get us out, Buster or you've had it.
Cossbocky (*Despairing*) I can't. I haven't got the key.
Broodwyn Well get your mate Miss Understood. And make it snappy.
Cossbocky (*Pathetic cries*) Ah, hello? Miss Understood? Are you there?
XP That's no good. We need much more volume.

Squawk! 28

Anabolic (*Loud*) Help! Let us out! Help!
Company (*Gradually join in*) Help! Let us out! Help!
(This line is repeated several times. It's loud at first but after four repeats it starts to drop off. The COMPANY is tired. They're squashed, exhausted, their voices become weak. As their volume drops, the lights go dim. Bring the chant down as the lights

dim. BLACKOUT. Pause. Slowly the lights come up. This represents a time lapse. The COMPANY has been cooped up for hours. They're very tired, some are close to collapsing)

Cossbocky *(Hoarse)* I think I heard something.
XP *(Fading)* You're delirious. We've been in here for hours.
Broodwyn *(Shattered)* My chicks will all be dead. *(Slight metal banging sound heard)*
Cossbocky No, there it is. Listen. *(Silence. Pause)*
Bantam *(Heartbroken)* My trophies have all been smashed.
Shakespeare Be quiet. There *is* someone there. *(Calling)* Hello? Is anyone there?
(Pause. Silence. Suddenly COLUMBUS comes staggering in from DR. He is a mess. His clothes are torn, his hat ripped, his equipment ruined, his body covered in scratches and patches. He lurches DC in front of the cage, turns and faces front, his back to the stunned occupants)
Anabolic *(Can't believe it)* Columbus? Is that you?
(COLUMBUS collapses in a crumpled heap. The COMPANY is distraught)
Broodwyn Columbus! Get up! *Please* get up!
Shakespeare We need you! We're trapped! *We're dying!*
(Pause. Slowly COLUMBUS struggles to his knees. He faces front speaking with difficulty)
Columbus Don't turn right.
Cossbocky What's that? We can't hear you.
Columbus The farm next door has *Happy Hen Houses*.
Company *(Stunned. Petrified)* *Happy Hen Houses!*
Bantam This is a *Happy Hen House*. Here!
Columbus They put me in one and this ... this is what happens.
(Huge gasp of fear from COMPANY. They have had it)
Cossbocky Columbus, you can save us. Please, unlock the door.
Columbus I was saved by an old lady. She bought me for fifty cents.
Anabolic Fifty cents! That's ridiculous.
Columbus Look at me. That's all I'm worth.
Broodwyn But how did you escape?
Columbus The old lady let me go. She buys dehydrated and dying chickens, then lets them go.
XP Well go and find her. She can save a million in here.
Columbus I can't. I'm too ... too tired.
(COLUMBUS collapses in a heap again. This time he doesn't move. The COMPANY is desolated)
Bantam Oh Columbus, please. Don't die. Ahhhhh!
(BANTAM'S wail stuns the COMPANY. At this point they give up. All is lost)
Broodwyn Please God, take care of my chicks.

Squawk! 29

(BROODWYN collapses against cage. No-one can fall down because they're packed in so tightly. Pause. Silence. The chickens are dying. Suddenly FOX enters UR and bounds down DR. COMPANY take no notice)

Fox Excellent. Lots of lovely chickens. *(Sees COLUMBUS)* Oh dear. What's this?
(Moves closer to examine COLUMBUS. Prods the crumpled chicken with a foot)
Ooo, yuk! How revolting.

Voice *(Speaks from off-stage LC through a megaphone)* You there! Don't move! *(FOX freezes)* This is the Master of the Hounds.

Fox *(Stunned)* Master of the Hounds!

Voice I've got fifty ferocious fidos out here and boy are they hungry.

Fox *(Petrified)* No, there's been a mistake. I'm misunderstood.

Voice And if you don't do as I say, you're dog-meat!

Fox I'll do it. Anything, anything.

Voice Unlock the cage.

Fox No, I can't. It's part of the contract.

Voice *(Calling to dogs)* Rover! Fang! Mongrel! Here boy!

Fox *(Pleading)* No! Stop! I'll do it! I'll do it!

Voice Good thinking. Now unlock the cage and help the chickens out. *Move!*

Fox *(Moving to cage)* I'm moving. I'm moving.
(FOX unlocks cage and helps COMPANY out. They are too distressed to realise. They stagger out and move aside collapsing on the ground or straw To facilitate exit, COMPANY chickens could simply peel off upstage i.e. only principals and a few chorus members actually come out the gate. As soon as the cage is empty, FOX turns to face the VOICE)

Voice Now hop inside.

Fox No! Not me!

Voice *(Calling)* Ferocious! Heel!

Fox *(Hurries inside cage)* I'm inside, I'm inside!

Voice Lock the door and throw the key over here. *(Pause. Louder)* Do it!
(FOX does as instructed. Still the others take little notice. Pause. Slowly the VOICE enters from LC and walks up to the cage)

Fox You. You're only a chicken!

Little Al *(Waves the megaphone away from face)* Woof, woof!

Fox *(Shaking the bars. Furious)* I'll eat you! Let me out! *Let me out!*
(FOX continues to protest in mime. All this shouting/activity causes the others to snap out of their lethargy)

Anabolic Hey! Wake up! Look!

Broodwyn We're free!

Cossbocky Squawk! Squawk, squawk, squawk!
(The COMPANY wakes up, comes alive. They have a new sense of living)

XP What's going on? What happened?

Bantam *(Pointing to cage)* Look! It's Miss Understood!

Shakespeare *(Angry at FOX)* Hey, you locked us in! You tricked us!

Cossbocky But how did we escape? How did Miss Understood get ...

Squawk! 30

(EVERYONE turns to stare at LITTLE AL who is smiling and tossing and catching the keys)

Broodwyn *(Rushing to LITTLE AL and hugging him)* Oh Little Al, you saved us. Tell me, are my chicks okay?

Little Al They're fine. Tonight we had takeaway pizza. *(BROODWYN delighted)*

Bantam Well done, Little Al, you're a true champion!
(OTHERS move to LITTLE AL to thank and congratulate him)

Shakespeare Hey! We're forgetting Columbus.

(Everyone turns to the crumpled mess on the floor)

Anabolic Quickly, get him some smelling salts.
(Action. COLUMBUS has smelling salts thrust in his face. It's mimed. Nothing. Suddenly he pulls his face away in disgust)

Cossbocky He's alive!
(Cheers from COMPANY as COLUMBUS is helped to one side and rested on a bale of hay)

Bantam What do we do with Miss Understood?

Anabolic Keep her in the cage. Give her a taste of her own medicine.

XP But it's not crowded now. She's not cramped or being pecked or being kept awake by artificial lighting.

Shakespeare You lied to us, Miss Understood. You tricked us.

Cossbocky We don't like cheats and liars. You deserve to be punished.

Fox Please, you've got to believe me, I *had* to do it.

Broodwyn Had to? You deliberately conned us. You chose to make us suffer.

Fox Because that's what happens to me.

Anabolic Enough of your puny excuses. You tried to kill us.

Fox Yes and that's what dogs do to me. Ask Little Al. That's how he tricked me. You fear foxes and I fear dogs.

XP Columbus said these *Happy Houses* are really *Hell Houses*.

Fox (Ashamed. Admits it) Yes, that's true. (COMPANY murmur disgust) They're great for making money but incredibly cruel to chickens. (COMPANY furious)

Bantam An admission! Let's punish the perpetrator!
(COMPANY are ready to attack. MUSIC BEGINS)

Fox But I'm only cruel because others are cruel to me. The humans said if I sold you lot on a *Hell House*, they'd keep the hounds away.

Shakespeare That's despicable.

Fox I'm truly sorry. I'm only nasty because they're nasty to me.

Misunderstood Reprise

Fox *I'm misunderstood by most folk in society
I'm misunderstood, they say I lack propriety.
I do some things you never would
They say that I'm up to no good
And must vacate the neighbourhood
I'm misunderstood.*

Squawk! 31

(Dialogue during song)

Fox Did you know foxes are chased by dogs and can be torn to pieces?

Shakespeare No animal deserves that.

Fox And they call it sport. (COMPANY disgusted, angry)

XP I reckon some humans are pretty cruel.

Anabolic It's humans who strap metal blades on our legs and make us fight for their money.

Columbus It's humans who cut our beaks and force us into tiny cages.

Broodwyn And all for money. The dollar be praised and animals be damned.

Fox But we can tell the world about this cruelty. Please understand. I don't want to be cruel.

Company *She's misunderstood*

Fox *By most folk in society*

Company *She's misunderstood*

Fox *They say I lack propriety.*
I do some things you never would
They say that I'm up to no good
And must vacate the neighbourhood

Company *She's Misunderstood.*
(Once COMPANY start singing, FOX released and cage is removed. Song finishes with everyone now stronger and determined. Applause.
Immediately MUSIC BEGINS for the finale. The COMPANY sings softly as the dialogue and particularly LITTLE AL'S speech is heard over the first verse. Time it to perfection. Main speech finishes just as second verse begins)

Little Al *(Over MUSIC) I've been thinking. The Charter needs to be changed.*

Broodwyn No. You were right. The Charter must be spread to every land.

Little Al Agreed but I propose one amendment. These rights must apply to *all* animals. To those who hunt and kill, to those on farms or in the wild. We may not be as talented as humans, we may have to kill to survive, we may even be bred to serve and feed the humans. But all animals have feelings. We all experience hunger, fear and pain and as such we deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

Principals Dignity and respect!
(2nd verse sung with more fervour. Dialogue has finished. During reprise, (the finale), the entire COMPANY to solid formation under direct overhead lighting. Sing with feeling. A powerful, moving conclusion)

There Is A Life Reprise

Company *(Softly under dialogue) There is a life we all can live where there is peace*
There is a life we all can live where there is love
There is a life where we can cope, where we grow and have scope
There's a life where we have hope, there is a life.
There is a life we all can live where there is trust
There is a life we all can live where there is joy
There is a life where we can team, where we plan, where we scheme
There's a life where we dream, there is a life.

Squawk! 32

Life, life is for everyone, life, life is for all.
Life, life is for everyone, life, life is for all.
No greater gift, no greater prize, no greater love, no greater ties.
Life, life is for everyone, bird, beast, man, massive or small
Life, life is for everyone, there is a life for all.

Curtain Calls

Company *Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick*

Chick Chick Chickens

We go back a long, long way.

Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick

Chick Chick Chickens

Eggs a-laying every day.

Omelettes for your breakfast, scrambled googies too

Wake-up call is gratis, a cock-a-doodle-dooo!!

Chick Chick Chick Chick Chick Chick Chick Chick

Chick Chick Chickens

Eggs a-laying every day.

I (He) will be champion, I (He) will be champ

I'll (He'll) kill off challenges from every camp

I'll (He'll) fight fanatically, punch, kick or stamp

I (He) will be champion, I (He) will be champ!

Fly, fly, fly away

Go and find your fortune in a thrilling way

North, south, east or west

Life is an adventure when you leave the nest.

Life, life is for everyone, life, life is for all.

Life, life is for everyone, life, life is for all.

No greater gift, no greater prize, no greater love, no greater ties.

Life, life is for everyone, bird, beast, man massive or small

Life, life is for everyone, there is a life for all.

Playout

Curtain



Some More Musicals from FOX PLAYS

Germs

Set inside a human. One fantastic set. Your cast is a troupe of germs (what do they look like?) intent on infecting the human. He fights back uses all sorts of medicine. It's a fight to the finish. But the germs have their own problems. There's a mutiny being planned – a bloodless coup. Some germs think their leader has a secret, is not coming clean. The human swallows a giant pill which works its deadly spell. But the moving service suddenly becomes a farce. The mutiny succeeds. Suddenly the human is dying. But then the leader's secret is revealed. Panic. A gripping finale to a fabulous musical performed by children, teenagers and adults. Genderless roles. Outstanding reviews.

Rat Race

A grim, grubby set. It's a pile of rubbish inhabited by your cast of rats. Times are tough. No food, disease and the threat of the council street-sweeper. Oh and the local cat is on the prowl. Enter Snortle Tozer. Is Snortle a politician, an evangelist or a fraud? Snortle claims to have the answers to all the problems faced by the rats. It's simple. Convince the world that rats have good points, that rats can be useful, helpful. How? Make a movie. The set is transformed. It becomes a bright movie set with ticker-tape finale, balloons and a chorus of tap-dancing rats. Snortle has brought happiness and peace to the woes of the world. Or has s/he? A moving musical staged in many countries by thousands of performers.

JUNGLE

What a set. It's eerie. Vines, lush plants, a waterfall, mist oozing from the steam and a cast of wonderful animals. Hippo wants a return to the world of dignity and good manners, Croc is con-croc selling stition. It's super. Zebra is a politician seeking personal glory. Chimp wants to start a movie school to get top actors (Tarzan and Jane) back making films in the jungle. Lion has a grandpa who enjoyed missionaries for supper. Every denomination. Then there is a grpoup od unemployed young people, the local monkeys getting up to monkey business. But things really hot up when a circus comes to town. The circus has performing humans! It's a big finale. The whole jungle turns out to see the circus. Suddenly the vicious performing humans escape from their cage. Bedlam is the main act until peace is restored and the animals sing their stirring anthem. A wonderful musical with stunning set and costumes.

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Miss Understood