

# Squawk!

***A funny yet serious musical with many fowl jokes!***

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A musical play by Cenarth Fox  
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ISBN 0 949175 44 7

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Published by **FOX PLAYS**  
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## **Orchestrations and Backing Tape/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**

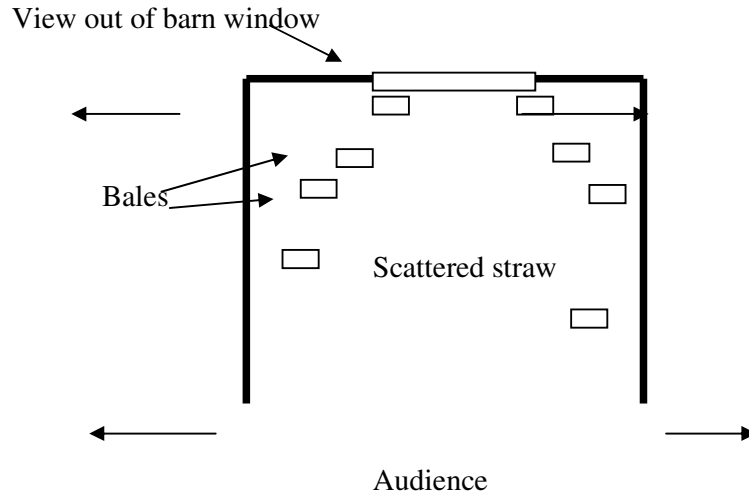
It was huge! It went really, really well  
**Our Lady of the Sacred Heart PS Elmore**

## 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 statue, 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           |

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*[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 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?

**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]*

**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*]

*[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 eggscellent 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 eggscellent 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]*

**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 grinners, 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]*

**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.

**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]*

**XP** *Anabolic, you can't go through with this. It's crazy.*

**Anabolic** *Hey. Who's the champion of the world?*

**Squawk! 15**

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**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.

**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?

**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?

**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 Cossbocky. 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 Cossbocky? 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 Cossbocky 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]*

**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.

**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**  
**Little Al**

*Cossbocky!  
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 just 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, etc and carries a 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?

**Bantam** *[Huge groan of disappointment from COMPANY]*  
*[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 signing on card 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.

**PREVIEW ENDS**

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