



Sample Pages from
Chicken. Road. Competition Version

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CHICKEN. ROAD. COMPETITION VERSION

A DRAMA IN ONE ACT BY
Lindsay Price



Chicken. Road. Competition Version
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Characters

15 AG

ONE: The best friend.

TWO: The one who's nervous.

THREE: The mediator.

FOUR: The one who hates this.

FIVE: The one who thought "he" was the perfect boyfriend.

SIX: The one happy to be out of class.

SEVEN: The one who says it's a done thing.

EIGHT: The one who wants to talk.

NINE: The one who doesn't know what to believe.

TEN: The one who was born a chicken.

ELEVEN: The one who wants to know the answer.

TWELVE: The one who saw a break in the pattern.

THIRTEEN: The one who says there is no answer.

FOURTEEN: The one who wonders if they're a bad person.

FIFTEEN: The one who doesn't want to talk. But doesn't want it to end.

Although these characters have no specific names, they are all specific characters with specific reactions to their situation. They all feel a specific way about "him." Read the script carefully to determine those feelings and bring them into the vocal and physical development of each character. Create a pose for each character based on how they feel about the situation.

ALSO, keep in mind that NONE of these characters are depressed. They are sad, mad, confused, annoyed, and so on. Do not act depressed just because the topic is depression.

Notes on the First Production

For the first production of this play, the director took the notion of "chicken" into an extreme theatrical image. The actors were dressed in red, yellow, or white t-shirts. They had exaggerated red and yellow eye makeup. They wore small red beaks on their foreheads. Tufts of feathers in their hair.

The action of the actors was chicken-inspired (bobbing of the head, bobbing at the knee, flapping of wings, scratching and pecking at the ground) at the beginning of the play. The group movement throughout the play was inspired by the movement of groups of chickens. And as the play progressed (especially in the monologues) the actors became more and more human.

Where this interpretation really worked well was in the moments when characters are called on to "Bwak, bwak, bwak" like a chicken. Because

they were dressed and acting like chickens, they went “full chicken” in these moments. It was great to see.

The script sets out a simpler blocking structure with the actors in a line for the majority of the play. But this certainly doesn't have to be the case. Think about tableau possibilities in terms of how we act (and how chickens act) in social groups – the huddle, the semicircle, the line, and the intentional isolation of an individual by forming a separate group. Relate the movement of chickens to the movement of teenagers – how are they similar? The possibilities are endless.

Music Note

For the opening movement moment, select a song with a strong, driving beat that complements the movement and allows your actors to walk with purpose and intention.

Feel free to rearrange and modify elements of the musical opening to better align with the actions. Ensure that the movements match the rhythm and flow of the music. Use the following as your guide:

- » Characters walking across the stage with purpose.
- » Single characters stopping centre stage, turning to see “the road,” and running offstage because of what they see.
- » Everyone on stage walking with purpose. Stopping. Turning to see the road.
- » Everyone moving to form a line downstage.
- » A moment of chaos/the expression of grief.
- » The characters enter, see the road, move downstage to form the line they'll be in for the rest of the play.

Lights up on a bare stage. There is a moment of silence. Then there is the faint sound of something scratching at the floor and clucking. Slowly, shyly, the entire cast enters – as chickens. They move across the stage in staggered waves – bobbing their heads, scratching the floor, clucking, their elbows tucked into their bodies as wings. Once this movement is established, the group starts to notice the audience. They cluck at one another, and as the group moves downstage, they engage in pecking, scratching, flapping their wings, and bobbing their heads.

Once everyone has moved downstage, there is the loud sound of a semi truck blasting its horn. This scares everyone. They scream and run for the exits.

Blackout. Music plays.

Lights up on a bare stage.

MOVEMENT MONTAGE

This is an itemized list of movement suggestions. Do what works best for your production and your choice of music. The idea is that the characters “see” the road and react to what they see.

Now when the actors enter, they are human.

ONE enters with confidence, looking straight ahead. Crosses. Exits.

TWO enters with confidence, looking straight ahead. Crosses. Exits.

THREE enters. Stops centre stage.

FOUR and FIVE enter. Cross. Exit.

SIX, SEVEN, EIGHT enter and cross, very slowly.

NINE chases TEN onstage, they do a loop around THREE and off the other side.

THREE turns head slowly to stare at the audience. THREE runs off.

ONE, TWO, FOUR enter, cross and exit. Once they’ve exited, they turn around and again enter, cross, exit.

FIVE, SIX, SEVEN, enter, cross and exit.

NINE, TEN, enter, cross, and exit.

ELEVEN, THREE, enter, cross and exit.

*TWELVE, THIRTEEN, FOURTEEN, FIFTEEN enter.
Cross.*

*FIFTEEN stops centre stage. TWELVE, THIRTEEN,
FOURTEEN continue and exit.*

*FIFTEEN turns head slowly downstage to stare at the
audience. FIFTEEN runs off.*

*ALL enter. Moving with purpose in straight lines
about the stage. When they turn to move in another
direction they turn 90 degrees.*

One by one, they stop.

The stage is full.

*They all slowly turn their heads downstage to stare at
the audience.*

One by one, they move downstage to form a line.

They look left and right.

*Section of chaos. This section shows varying
expressions of grief. Each actor does one of the
following over and over again.*

*Run as fast as they can upstage and down, stopping
just short of the line.*

*Sink to the floor covering head with hands. Stands up,
sinks to the floor again.*

Move slowly as if under water.

*Crouch in a ball on the floor. Release and then curl up
into a ball again.*

*Stands with back to the audience. Slowly reaches arms
out to the side.*

*Two actors holds one another in comfort. They release
and repeat.*

*One actor puts hand on another's shoulder in comfort.
The actor pushes the hand away. They each turn their*

back on the other. Repeat with the second actor trying to comfort the first and being rejected. Repeat.

At the end of the section, everyone moves slowly to form their line downstage.

NOTE: Don't line up 1 to 15. THREE is in the centre, ONE and FIFTEEN stand side-by-side.

EVERYONE looks left and right. They slowly stare at the audience. Each actor forms a pose specific to their feelings about being there. Everyone, except THREE, looks uncomfortable.

Music fades.

ONE: So.

TWO: *(nervously)* So...

THREE: *(brightly)* So!

FOURTEEN: Are we...

TWELVE: What?

FOURTEEN: *(fast)* Nothing.

There is a pause.

THREE: Did you know chickens have brains? Good brains, I mean. Small. But good. Intelligent. For a bird.

FIVE: Are you a vegetarian?

THREE: No.

FIVE: Oh. I thought...

SIX: What?

FIVE: What?

ELEVEN: You thought what?

FIVE: You thought what, what?

EIGHT: You didn't finish your thought. The sentence. You thought...

FIVE: Oh. *(pause)* I forget.

ALL: Bwak, bwak. Bwak.

There is a pause.

ONE: So.

TWO: (*nervously*) So...

THREE: Did you know there are more chickens in the world than people?

FIFTEEN: What are you doing?

THREE: Looking for a place to start.

FOUR: Why?

THREE: We have to start somewhere.

FOUR: We don't.

FOURTEEN: Do we?

THIRTEEN: It's a done thing.

EIGHT: We should talk about it.

NINE: Why?

FIVE: Chickens! It sounds like you're standing up for the chickens. Intelligent. For a bird. That's why I thought... you know. You know? (*pause*) Vegetarian?

There is a pause.

ONE: So.

TWO: (*nervously*) So...

THREE: (*brightly*) So!

ELEVEN: Are you ready?

TWELVE: No.

FIFTEEN: This is stupid.

EIGHT: Are you ready?

SIX: What's to be ready for?

SEVEN: It's a done thing.

TEN: It is...

EIGHT: We should talk about it.

FOUR: What for?

FOURTEEN: Why?

THREE: Why not?

SIX: What's there to say?

FIFTEEN: Nothing.

ALL: Bwak, bwak. Bwak!!

SEVEN: There is no answer.

ONE: This is stupid.

ELEVEN: You don't want to know the answer.

FIFTEEN: THAT is stupid.

EIGHT: There's always an answer.

TEN: Is there?

FOUR: I hate this.

EIGHT: There's an answer for everything.

TWO: Why is the sky blue?

SIX: What?

TWO: (*nervously*) I've always wanted to know.

NINE: Me too.

SEVEN: (*answering EIGHT*) Not true.

THIRTEEN: (*answering EIGHT*) There is no answer.

ELEVEN: You can't think like that.

SIX: Why not?

ELEVEN: There is an answer.

TWO: I don't know...

ELEVEN: There has to be.

SEVEN: That's what they say.

TWELVE: That's what they want you to believe.

TEN: That's how they get you to eat your vegetables.

FIVE: They do?

TEN: That's a joke.

ONE: (*deadpan*) Ha.

THREE: Ah ha!

FOUR: What?

THREE: A starting point. Why did the chicken cross the road?

There is a pause.

FOURTEEN: (*looking for more*) And...

FIVE: I don't get it.

THREE: (*simply*) It's a place to start.

SEVEN: I'm telling you...

THIRTEEN: There is no answer.

EIGHT: There's something.

NINE: Is there?

TWO: (*nervously*) I didn't know him.

NINE: I don't know what to believe.

TEN: It's unexpected.

FIFTEEN: Stupid.

THREE: It's a start. Why did the chicken cross the road?

ONE: Who cares?

EIGHT: Don't you want to know?

SIX: No.

ELEVEN: Why did the chicken cross the road?

THREE: Don't you want to understand?

TWELVE: No.

ELEVEN: No?

TWELVE: (*backtracking*) I don't know.

ONE: This is stupid.

THREE: Maybe it doesn't mean what you think it means.

SEVEN: I knew him. It's a done thing.

FIFTEEN: A chicken is a chicken. Period.

ALL: Bwak, bwak. Bwak.

EIGHT: Are you sure?

SEVEN: Yes.

TWO: No...?

TEN: Chicken. Road.

SIX: Here. There.

SEVEN: It's not rocket science.

THIRTEEN: Exactly.

FOUR: Can chickens do rocket science?

FIFTEEN: I don't want to talk about this. You can't make me. It's stupid.
It's a chicken.

TEN: Aren't we touchy.

FIFTEEN: Shut up.

TEN: Shutting up.

EIGHT: Are you ready?

EVERYONE turns upstage with precision. They walk upstage with precision, counting as they go.

ALL: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

EVERYONE turns downstage with precision. They stare with focus. They take a deep breath. They run as fast as they can downstage, bellowing as they run, stopping short of the road, when they hear the loud sound of a truck horn. They freeze, gasping for breath, gasping for air. Fighting for control.

TEN: Everything in me says, that would hurt. A lot.

FIFTEEN slams out of the line in disgust, crossing across the front as if to exit. THREE speaks only when FIFTEEN has passed in front.

THREE: Where you going?

FIFTEEN: (*stopping*) Somewhere.

THREE: Can't.

FIFTEEN: Why?

THREE: We're not done. (*FIFTEEN doesn't move*) Come on back. Come on.

FIFTEEN: (*not looking at anyone*) When are we going to be done?

THREE: Soon. I promise. (*FIFTEEN slowly returns to the line*)

FIVE: It's a joke. The chicken. Isn't it?

SEVEN: Of course.

EIGHT: Are you sure?

NINE: I'm not sure of anything.

ONE, EIGHT, ELEVEN, TWELVE, FOURTEEN: Bwak, bwak. Bwak.

FOUR: It's a joke.

TWO: Right?

ONE: THIS is a joke.

EIGHT: You're not trying.

ONE: Why should I?

THREE, FOUR, NINE, THIRTEEN, FIFTEEN: Bwak, bwak. Bwak.

ELEVEN: Maybe it's not about a chicken.

TWELVE: So?

FOURTEEN: What's it about?

TWO, FIVE, SIX, SEVEN, TEN : Bwak, bwak. Bwak.

NINE: I didn't know him.

FOUR: I can't do this.

THREE: Soon...

FOURTEEN: I didn't know him.

EVERYONE but FOURTEEN takes a large step back with precision. FOURTEEN is alone.

EIGHT: And?

FOURTEEN: I don't feel –

TWELVE: What?

FOURTEEN: I don't know. Anything.

ELEVEN: No?

FOURTEEN: Should I? I should. Right?

FIFTEEN: *(dryly)* Huh.

SIX: Why?

FOURTEEN: *(moving centre stage)* I should, I should. It makes me sound bad. Heartless. I'm not. I have heart. I'm a great person.

ONE: Ha.

FOURTEEN: *(little defensive)* I wouldn't lie.

NINE, TEN, ELEVEN, TWELVE: Bwak, bwak. Bwak.

FOURTEEN: *(with gathering speed, trying to make people feel support)* I didn't know him. So. There's nothing really to say. I should have something... that sounds bad. But I don't. I didn't know him. A couple of classes. Maybe? I didn't – I'm not sure I could tell you what he looks like. Hardly. This sounds bad. I mean, and it's not completely true, now I could. Now I know what he looks like, I mean. Because of the pictures. There are pictures everywhere, all over the school. His face is burned into my brain. Permanently. In a good way. Not really.

TWELVE: Who chose that picture?

FOURTEEN: There are pictures of him in the bathroom. Doesn't that seem weird? I'm not sure. No, I'm totally sure. It's not necessary to post memorial information in the bathroom. There are many, many other appropriate places for that kind of information. On that point, I am totally clear and all I'm really saying is I didn't know him and I don't know him and, and, and, *(blurting out)* I wouldn't do that.

EVERYONE steps forward to join FOURTEEN.

TWELVE: What?

FOURTEEN: You know. You know? That.

FIVE: That...

FIFTEEN: Huh.

TEN: That.

FOURTEEN: I understand he's, he was, there was something bad but, it's just, I don't know, it's kind of... (*mumbles something very quietly*)

THIRTEEN: What?

SIX: Speak up!

FOURTEEN: It sounds bad, it sounds bad, I know it does. You know. You know? Cowardly. It's a cowardly thing to do.

TEN: The coward's way.

ALL: Bwak!

SEVEN: Chicken.

FOURTEEN: I didn't say that.

ALL BUT FOURTEEN: Bwak, bwak. Bwak.

FOURTEEN: I didn't say it like that.

SEVEN: No?

FOURTEEN: I'm going to stop. Talking. Now. (*scuttles back to place*)

EIGHT: Are you ready?

EVERYONE turns upstage with precision. They walk upstage with precision, counting as they go.

ALL: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

EVERYONE turns downstage with precision. They stare with focus. They take a deep breath. They run as fast as they can downstage, bellowing as they run, stopping short of the road, when they hear the loud sound of a truck horn. They freeze, gasping for breath, gasping for air. Fighting for control.

FOUR: I don't get it.

TWO: I wouldn't...

NINE: I...

FIVE: What?

NINE: (*fast*) Nothing.

TEN: I couldn't.

THIRTEEN: Couldn't?

TEN: Nope.

ONE: Chicken.

TEN: Absolutely.

EVERYONE but TEN takes a large step back with precision. TEN is alone.

TEN: (*moving centre*) I am a chicken. Full on. Yellow as they come. Always have been. Go ahead, laugh, you think I care? (*calling out*) "What are you, a chicken?" The grand supreme insult for the second grade:

Everyone cat calls as seven-year-olds.

ALL: Chicken! Big fat chicken! Bwak, bwak. Bwak.

TEN: I don't care. I listened to my mother. "You get in trouble, run. You run the other way as fast as you can, baby, understand? You run. They can't catch you, they can't hurt you." Mom was a self-taught expert in the top 100 ways to avoid the hurt. "Don't be stupid. What do you want to fight for?" Hurt was a thing you could see. Hurt was a thing that bruised and bled. "They can call you every name in the book but you'll be fine. You'll survive." It never occurred to her, or me, to think about the hurt in any other way. Inside hurt. Hurt without bruises. How do you run away from yourself? You can't run away from the hole that grows inside. The big black hole that eats your light. I didn't know him, but I know him. I understand what it's like to have something inside that grows and grows until there's nothing left to do but go out to the highway and throw yourself in front of a semi. I get it. Sometimes I want it. I want to be released from the black hole so bad... but I was raised a chicken.

EVERYONE steps forward with precision.

EIGHT: Why did the chicken cross the road?

TWELVE: The nothing.

FOUR: I couldn't do it.

FIFTEEN: Never.

THREE: Never is a big word.

NINE: I don't know what to believe.

FOUR, EIGHT, FOURTEEN: Bwak, bwak. Bwak.

TEN: I couldn't do it.

FIVE: I...

ELEVEN: What?

SEVEN: Why did the chicken cross the road?

ONE: Don't ask me.

THIRTEEN: I didn't know him.

FIFTEEN: I knew him.

TEN: I'm not surprised.

SEVEN: Knock knock.

TWELVE: I sort of knew him.

EVERYONE but TWELVE takes a large step back with precision. TWELVE is alone.

EIGHT: *(lively)* Knock knock.

TWELVE: I go up the back staircase for math. He goes down the back staircase for something, I guess. Some other class. I never knew. And we'd smile. 'Cause he's friendly. And it became a thing. Up the stairs. Down the stairs. Every day. Smile. How you doing? Can't complain. There's a rhythm and a pattern. How you doing? Can't complain. He never complained. And somewhere along the way, we started knock knock jokes. Stupid. And we only had time – up the stairs, down the stairs, Knock, knock, who's there? Dewy! It was something to look forward to. Sometimes it was the only good thing in the whole day. And now it's all, everything is... When the pattern breaks, it's like... stupid. I don't know.

SEVEN, EIGHT: *(lively)* Knock knock.

ONE, TWO, THREE: Who's there?

TWELVE: Couple weeks ago, I was like, two seconds ahead of schedule. Two seconds ahead of the pattern. I saw him at the top of the stairs. Staring out the window. Third floor. Not in a normal way. Not in a what's out the window way. What can I see out the window? Not like that.

SEVEN, EIGHT, NINE: (*lively*) Knock knock.

TWELVE: But in a, if this window could open, and if, no one was around, and if, I was fast enough, could I fling myself out this window? Could I get enough speed, could I get a running jump? And go? Through?

SEVEN, EIGHT, NINE, TEN: (*lively*) Knock knock.

TWELVE: If I could?

ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR: Who's there?

TWELVE: Would I?

SEVEN, EIGHT, NINE, TEN: Dewey.

TWELVE: What would happen?

ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR: Dewey who?

SEVEN, EIGHT, NINE, TEN: Dewey have to listen to all this knocking?

TWELVE: But then someone bumped him. On the stairway. He turned and he smiled at me. Knock Knock... (*shakes head*) I didn't see what I thought I saw.

ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE: Knock knock.

SIX: You're over analyzing.

TWELVE: Right...

THIRTEEN: You didn't see anything.

TWELVE: I was wrong.

FOURTEEN: Right.

TWELVE: That's what I thought.

TWO: Why did the chicken cross the road?

TWELVE: I miss the jokes.

EVERYONE steps forward to join TWELVE.

THREE: The origin of the joke is quite obscure. It may have made its first appearance in some magazine, some New York magazine, some time in the 1800s.

TEN: Wow, they really knew how to fun it up back then.

TWO, FIVE, FIFTEEN: Bwak, bwak. Bwak.

ONE: What are you doing?

THREE: (*ignoring*) And we've been talking about it ever since. The variations are endless.

EVERYONE gives a squeal of glee and moves into a tableau.

FIVE: (*with glee*) Why did the chicken cross the road?

FOURTEEN: Why did the duck cross the road?

FOUR: Why did the turkey cross the road?

ELEVEN: Why did the dinosaur cross the road?

NINE: Why did the elephant cross the road?

EIGHT: 'Cause it was the chicken's day off.

TEN: 'Cause it was stapled to the chicken.

TWO: Gross!

SEVEN: And yet, not. It's an elephant. And a chicken.

TEN: And a stapler.

THIRTEEN: Why wouldn't the chicken cross the road?

FIVE: Because?

THIRTEEN: It would be a fowl proceeding.

EVERYONE groans and falls out of the tableau.

EIGHT: The question remains. If a chicken is presented with a road, do they think about what might happen if they step into said road?

TEN: If something might come along and smuck said chicken?

ELEVEN: Does the chicken step with purpose?

FIVE: He always seemed like the perfect boyfriend...

NINE: Is there ever a moment of...?

SIX & SEVEN: Bwak, bwak. Bwak.

NINE: A pause?

TWO: Did he pause?

FIVE: He always held his girlfriend's hand.

ALL: Bwak, bwak. Bwak.

FIFTEEN: Listen.

THREE: Oh oh.

FIFTEEN: This is stupid, right? The chicken. Is a chicken. The chicken never had a thought. You can say to yourself "Why did the chicken cross the road?" As if it mattered here. But it doesn't. 'Cause it's about a chicken. Period.

EIGHT: So, chickens don't think and people do think?

FIFTEEN: I didn't say that.

NINE: But they do. People. Right?

TEN: Depends on the person.

NINE: People make choices. Right?

ONE: A person who steps out into traffic isn't thinking.

TWO: Oh I don't know if that's...

ONE: (*cutting TWO off*) What?

THIRTEEN: It suggests some forethought.

SEVEN: When a person steps out into traffic, runs into traffic, times it so there's an exact moment when... you have to know that it was with purpose. That a person intended ... you know. You know?

EVERYONE feels uncomfortable. They break from the line, moving, not standing still.

FIFTEEN: That's not funny.

SEVEN: Wasn't trying to be.

NINE: I don't know anything.

TWO: Why is the sky blue?

ELEVEN: I thought I knew him.

FIVE: I don't know anything.

THIRTEEN: Why is the small intestine so long?

FOUR: I don't know anything.

TWELVE: What's two plus two?

SEVEN: What if the chicken wanted to die?

EVERYONE stops.

FIFTEEN: What?

SEVEN: You know... Not the other side, but the other side.

ONE: That's not funny.

SEVEN: Wasn't trying to be.

FIFTEEN: THAT is wrong.

SEVEN: Just a thought.

FOUR: So stop thinking.

ONE: (*pushing SEVEN*) You think you're pretty smart, don't you?

SEVEN: No.

THREE: (*gently*) Hey, hey...

ONE steps forward. ONE is alone. EVERYONE slowly forms a line behind them.

ONE: I knew him. I knew him. Hooray for me. Knew him when we had birthday parties with cake and pin the tail on the donkey. I used to cheat. Sneak looks under the blindfold. It was my party; I should win. He didn't speak to me for ages when I told him. "You should have told me sooner!" I was five. "I can't believe you did that." It was my party; I should win pin the tail on the donkey. He always had very defined lines. Lines you shouldn't cross. Don't cheat at pin the tail on the donkey. Help old ladies across the street. Smile. Hug. Be nice. (*beat*) Everyone keeps looking at me, staring, like I have the answers. You knew him, you knew him, you knew him, you knew, you knew, you knew, you knew, you, you, you, you... Waves of questions, voices, following me down the hall like wasps, those wasps who never leave you alone when you're trying to eat outside. I don't want to be the centre of attention over this. Everyone looks to me to make sense of what happened. Because I knew him. Like I should have known. Like he

told me his plans. Like I should have done something. What was I supposed to do? I'm not the only one who knew him. Everyone knew him, everyone thought they knew him, everyone thought he was exactly what they saw because he had lines. HE crossed the line, I had nothing to do with it! (*pause*) His mother drives by my house. Really slow. She wants to throw her swarm of questions at me and watch me die from the stings. Why didn't you do something? Why didn't you know? Why weren't you looking? Did you get a note? Where's the note? Give me my note! I want to tell her the pin the tail on the donkey story, but I'm pretty sure she wouldn't see the humour.

EVERYONE steps forward to join ONE.

ELEVEN: I thought I knew him.

SEVEN, TWELVE: Bwak, bwak. Bwak.

THIRTEEN: I didn't know him.

FOUR: I sort of knew him.

TWO: I can't imagine...

SEVEN: I get it.

ELEVEN: I thought I knew him. That's why there has to be an answer.
 'Cause I'm not stupid. There has to be something. An answer.
 Two plus two.

NINE: Do you believe in heaven?

FIVE: I want to go home.

NINE: Did he?

SIX: Are we done yet?

THREE: Soon.

SEVEN: It's a done thing.

EIGHT: We can talk.

TEN: What's talking going to do?

TWELVE: Doesn't bring him back.

FOURTEEN: I didn't know him.

FIVE: I'm a pretty happy person.



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