



**Sample Pages from
Chicken. Road.**

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CHICKEN. ROAD.

A DRAMA BY
Lindsay Price



Chicken. Road.

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CHARACTERS

ONE

TWO

THREE

FOUR

FIVE

SIX

SEVEN

EIGHT

NINE

TEN

ELEVEN

TWELVE

THIRTEEN

FOURTEEN

FIFTEEN

Although these characters have no specific names, they are individual characters with specific reactions to their situation. They each 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. For example, create a pose for each character based on how they feel about the situation.

FIVE is female and SIX is male. Other than that, the characters are gender neutral.

Notes on the Premiere 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. The girls had tufts of feathers in their hair.

The actors’ movement at the top of the show was very much chicken inspired – bobbing of the head, bobbing at the knee, flapping of wings, scratching and pecking at the ground. 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 dressed and acted 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 semi circle, the line, isolating an individual by forming a group away from them. Relate the movement of chickens to the movement of teenagers – how are they similar? The possibilities are endless.

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.

Chicken. Road. was premiered by Listowel District Secondary School on March 22, 2012 with the following cast:

ONE: Connor Jared

TWO: Miranda Heathers

THREE: Taylor Chappel

FOUR: DJ Keller

FIVE: Alexis Piercey

SIX: Dima Polykin

SEVEN: Katelyn Claessens

EIGHT: Danielle Schultz

NINE: Jodi Olson

TEN: Jesse Russell

ELEVEN: Travis Morris

TWELVE: Kevin Stickley

THIRTEEN: Sara Godfrey

FOURTEEN: Melissa Dunphy

FIFTEEN: Kennedy Service

Stage Manager: Stephanie Strub

Lights: Tim Klumpenhauer

Sound: Daniel Jakobsen

Costumes: Paige Stirling

Direction: Mrs. Stefanie Webster

Lights come up on a bare stage. There is a moment of silence. And then, there are the faint sounds of something scratching at the floor and clucking. Slowly, shyly, the entire cast moves out on to the stage – 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 each other and as a group move downstage, pecking, scratching, flapping their wings, bobbing their heads.

Once everyone has moved downstage, there is the sound, the loud sound of a semi truck blasting its horn. EVERYONE on stage screams and runs for the exits.

Blackout.

Music plays in the darkness. (See Music Note on page 34.)

Lights up on a bare stage. There is an invisible line downstage, a road that runs from left to right.

Now when the actors enter, they are human.

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

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

THREE enters SR. Crosses. Stops centre stage.

FOUR and FIVE enter SL. Cross. Exit.

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

NINE chases TEN on from SR. They loop around THREE and exit the other side.

THREE turns head slowly to stare at the audience. Once the head turn is complete, THREE runs off.

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

The following overlap: FIVE, SIX, SEVEN, enter, cross and exit. NINE and TEN enter, cross and exit. ELEVEN and THREE enter, cross and exit. TWELVE, THIRTEEN, FOURTEEN, and FIFTEEN enter. Cross.

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

FIFTEEN turns head slowly downstage to stare at the audience.

FIFTEEN runs off.

EVERYONE enters. 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.

EVERYONE slowly turns their heads downstage to stare at the audience.

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

EVERYONE looks left and right.

EVERYONE raises one foot as if to take a step forward. They crash their feet to the ground. They freeze for a moment before moving into the next section.

SECTION OF CHAOS. This section shows varying expressions of grief. Each actor does one of the following actions over and over again. The number of repeats will depend on your choice of music.

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

Sink to the floor covering head with hands. Stand up, sink to the floor again.

Move slowly as if underwater.

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

Stand with back to the audience. Slowly reach arms out to the side.

One holds another in comfort. They release and repeat.

A puts hand on B's shoulder in comfort. B pushes hand away. They turn their backs on each other. Repeat with B trying to comfort A and being rejected. Repeat.

At the end of the section, EVERYONE runs offstage.

EIGHT enters. Stops.

EVERYONE enters. Crosses. Stops. EVERYONE moves slowly to form their line downstage.

NOTE: Don't line up in numerical order. 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.

Music fades.

There is a pause. EVERYONE looks very uncomfortable.

ONE: So.

TWO: (*nervously*) So...

THREE: (*brightly*) So!

There is a pause.

FOURTEEN: Are we...

THIRTEEN: 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...

There is a pause.

SIX: What?

FIVE: What?

SIX: You thought what?

FIVE: You thought what, what?

SIX: 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: (*nervous*) 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.

FOURTEEN: Do we?

THIRTEEN: It's a done thing.

ELEVEN: So?

EIGHT: We should talk about it.

NINE: Why?

TEN: Are you scared?

NINE: (*to TEN*) Are you?

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.

EIGHT: We should talk about it.

ONE: What for?

FOURTEEN: Why?

THREE: Why not?

SIX: What's there to say?

FIFTEEN: Nothing.

ALL: Bwak, bwak, bwak!

ELEVEN: I knew him.

TWO: It's a done... thing?

ELEVEN: I knew him.

FIFTEEN: (*disgust*) Huh.

TWO: (*disturbed*) Thing. Thing?

FOUR: I'm at a...

SIX: What?

FOUR: Huh?

TWO: Thing.

SIX: Forget it.

NINE: Loss?

FOUR: Yes.

THIRTEEN: You're... aporetic!

FIVE: What?

TEN: Big word.

THIRTEEN: Thank you.

SEVEN: There is no answer.

ONE: This is stupid.

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

FIFTEEN: THAT is stupid.

ELEVEN: There's always an answer.

TEN: Boring...

FOUR: I hate this.

EIGHT: There's an answer for everything.

TWO: Why is the sky blue?

SEVEN: Not true.

THREE: Why did the chicken cross the road?

THIRTEEN: There is no answer.

ELEVEN: You can't think like that.

TWO: Why not?

THREE: There is an answer.

FOUR: I don't know.

ELEVEN: There's something.

NINE: That's not the same thing.

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?

SIX: That's a joke.

ONE: (*deadpan*) Ha.

THREE: Ah ha!

FOUR: What?

THREE: A starting point.

FIFTEEN: So?

TWELVE: Go ahead.

EIGHT: Are you ready?

ONE: No.

FOURTEEN: Do we have to?

ELEVEN: (*overly loud*) Let's do this!

SEVEN: Coffee much?

ONE: So?

TWO: So...

THREE: 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: I didn't know him.

NINE: I don't know what to believe.

THREE: It's unexpected.

FIVE: It's cute?

THREE: Unexpected.

FIFTEEN: Stupid.

THREE: It's a start.

TWELVE: Go on.

THREE: Why did the chicken cross the road?

ONE: Who cares?

EIGHT: Don't you want to know?

FOURTEEN: No.

ELEVEN: Do you think you know?

TEN: Do you?

THIRTEEN: There's nothing to know.

FOUR: For sure?

TWO: Definitely?

SIX: Big word.

TWO: Huh?

EIGHT: Why did the chicken cross the road?

THREE: Don't you want to understand?

TWELVE: No.

ELEVEN: No?

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

EIGHT: Why not?

TWO: So...

ONE: This is stupid.

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

SEVEN: I knew him.

FIFTEEN: THAT is stupid.

NINE: Why?

FIFTEEN: A chicken is a chicken. Period.

THIRTEEN: There is no answer.

ALL: Bwak, bwak. Bwak.

EIGHT: Are you sure?

SEVEN: Yes.

TWO: No...

ONE: Chicken. Road.

SEVEN: Here. There.

SIX: Here's the chicken, here's the road, there's the other side.

SEVEN: It's not rocket science.

SIX: Can chickens do rocket science?

ONE: With their intelligent brains?

SEVEN: Intelligent for a bird.

EIGHT: I knew him.

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, like there's an invisible wall. 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*)

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

SEVEN: Nothing to it.

THIRTEEN: Nothing more.

EIGHT: Are you sure?

NINE: I'm not sure of anything.

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

FIVE: It's a joke. Right?

ONE: THIS is a joke.

EIGHT: (*sing song*) You're not trying.

ONE: Why should I?

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

ELEVEN: Maybe it's not about a chicken.

TWO: So...

TWELVE: So?

FOURTEEN: So what's it about?

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

NINE: I didn't know him.

TWO: Thing.

FOUR: I can't do this.

THREE: Soon.

THIRTEEN: There is no answer.

EIGHT: I'm telling you...

SEVEN: Why did the chicken cross the road?

TEN: It's obvious.

TWELVE: Is it?

ONE: It's a joke.

THIRTEEN: I don't know him.

TWO: So...

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.

FIFTEEN: *(dryly)* Huh.

SIX: Who knows?

FOURTEEN: *(moving centre stage)* I should, I should. That 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.

TWO: I wouldn't do that.

THREE: What?

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? Doesn't that seem weird that there are pictures, posters, not like, you know, POSTERS, but there are pieces of paper about the, the thing, memorial, in the bathroom. I don't want to see a picture of a dead guy while I'm peeing. (*winces*) That was – sorry, sorry. That was really bad. I'm not – I'm not trying to be funny. Even though, it's kind of funny. Isn't it? (*laughs a little, swallows it*) No, it's not, it's not. It's – It's just that someone, a whole bunch of someones, put his picture, poster, piece of paper, up everywhere. He's everywhere, he's in the bathroom. Necessary? 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.

ELEVEN: What?

FOURTEEN: You know. You know? That.

FIVE: That.

FIFTEEN: Huh.

TWELVE: That.

TEN: That.

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

THIRTEEN: What?

TEN: Speak up!

FOURTEEN: It sounds bad, it sounds bad, I know it does.

SIX: Speak!

EIGHT: Hush.

FOURTEEN: You know. You know? Cowardly. It's a cowardly thing to do. Don't you think?

TEN: The coward's way.

ALL: Bwak!

FOURTEEN: It's just an opinion.

FIFTEEN: Coward.

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 just saying, all I'm really saying is that I wouldn't. And I can't really...

FIVE: I wouldn't do it.

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, like there's an invisible wall. They freeze gasping for breath, gasping for air. Fighting for control.

TWELVE: I wouldn't do that!

FOUR: I don't get it.

TWO: I wouldn't do it.

ONE: Wouldn't.

NINE: I...

FOUR: 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.

SIX: Chicken.

TEN: (*moving centre*) I am a chicken. Full on. Winner winner chicken dinner. 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 didn't care. Not even in the second grade. 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? Why would you stand there for? You want to get blood on your clothes?" 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 be all right. 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 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: Are you ready?

They all turn upstage. 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, like there's an invisible wall. They freeze gasping for breath, gasping for air.

NINE: I...

TWO: Couldn't stand there.

TWELVE: Here.

TEN: Here, there...

FOUR: Couldn't make my legs...

ELEVEN: What?

FIVE: Do that.

FOURTEEN: That.

FIFTEEN: I'd never do it.

THREE: Never is a big word.

THIRTEEN: Step.

SIX: Forward.

SEVEN: Step.

TWELVE: Back.

EIGHT: Out.

SEVEN: A very big step.

FIVE: A step into what?

FIFTEEN: Nothing.

NINE: Is it?

TWO: Thing.

ONE: Stupid.

THREE: Step.

FOURTEEN: Into... what?

ELEVEN: The other.

TWELVE: Why did the chicken cross the road?

NINE: The nothing.

THIRTEEN: Step.

FOUR: I couldn't do it.

FIFTEEN: I wouldn't ever do it. Ever.

THREE: Ever 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 saw him. Often. Daily. 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 smile. Cause he's friendly.

He always was. 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. Smile. How you doing? Can't complain.

He never complained. And somewhere along the way, we started knock knock jokes. Stupid. How did that happen? And we only had the time – up the stairs, down the stairs, to get the joke done. Knock, knock, who's there? Dewy! Something to look forward to. Sometimes it was the only good thing in the whole

stinking day. And now, now it's all, everything is... When the pattern breaks, it's like... stupid. I don't know. When what you expect to see, every day, when you expect to see someone, hear someone, when everything shifts, when the rhythm you've become used to is gone...

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

ONE, TWO, THREE: Who's there?

TWELVE: So, I saw him. One day. 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? I'll be, look at that interesting thing 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: Could I?

ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR: Dewey who?

TWELVE: What would happen?

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

TWELVE: It's purely hypothetical. Even he, I'm sure, knew it was hypothetical. Cause the windows don't open. Any of them. And what's up with that? Why aren't we allowed to have windows that open? What do they think's going to happen? It's not good to breathe air that just recycles in and out of rooms picking up germs and dust and who knows what... this is off topic. I'm off. Sorry. It's all hypothetical because even if he wanted to, he couldn't. Go through.

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

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.

FOURTEEN: You didn't see anything.

TWELVE: Right. 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 1800's.

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.*

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

FOURTEEN: Why did the duck cross the road?

TWELVE: 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.

FIVE: 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.

ALL: Ha. Ha. Ha.

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, like there's an invisible wall. They freeze gasping for breath, gasping for air. Fighting for control.

SEVEN: So!

EVERYONE stops.

SEVEN: 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?

SEVEN: Does the chicken step with purpose?

FIVE: He always seemed like the perfect boyfriend.

NINE: Is there ever a moment?

SIX & SEVEN: Bwak, bwak. Bwak.

NINE: A pause?

SEVEN: Did he pause?

FIVE: He always held his girlfriend's hand.

FOUR: I sort of knew him.

EVERYONE but FOUR takes a large step back. FOUR is alone.

FOUR: We sat beside each other in English. He made me laugh. A lot. We got in so much trouble. I couldn't help it! He could just look at me funny and – and – and – (*loud laugh*)

SIX, EIGHT, ELEVEN: (*stepping forward*) Do I have to separate you two? (*stepping back*)

FOUR: That would have been the worst. I hate English. And maybe... yeah. Once. Half of a second of a once. Of a moment. Maybe I caught a look, a glance, a eye off into the distance. Something... off.

ONE: You're over-analyzing.

SEVEN: You thought you saw something.

FOUR: Maybe...

SIX: You didn't see anything.

ONE: It's only your memory playing tricks.

TWELVE: It's only the afterglow.

FOUR: Maybe.

ONE: You didn't see anything.

FOUR: Maybe.

FIVE: It's better if you didn't see anything.

SIX: There was nothing to see.

FOUR: Anyway, I never asked. I never... I just laughed and laughed and laughed.

EVERYONE steps forward to join FOUR.

ALL: Bwak, bwak. Bwak.

FIFTEEN: Listen.

THREE: Oh oh.

FIFTEEN: This is bogus. This is stupid, right?

ONE: Oh yeah.

TEN: Stand back.

EVERYONE moves to form a tennis watching tableau between ONE and FIFTEEN. They move their heads with precision back and forth between the two.

FIFTEEN: The chicken. Is a chicken.

ONE: The chicken is a chicken.

FIFTEEN: The chicken never had a thought.

ONE: Chickens don't think.

FIFTEEN: Ever.

ONE: Chickens aren't intelligent.

FIFTEEN: Chickens don't have good brains.

ONE: Chickens peck at the ground.

FIFTEEN: That's what they do.

ONE: All day.

FIFTEEN: And if you stand where a chicken is pecking, they'll peck your feet.

ONE: Chickens cannot tell the difference between the ground and your feet.

FIFTEEN: That is not the action of something smart, or intelligent, or anything.

ONE: So you can tell yourself –

FIFTEEN: You can say to yourself –

ONE & FIFTEEN: Why did the chicken cross the road?

ONE: And you can answer that question.

FIFTEEN: As if it mattered.

ONE: As if it had reason and matter in the world.

FIFTEEN: But it doesn't.

ONE: Cause it's about a chicken.

FIFTEEN: A chicken. Period.

EVERYONE slowly moves back into line.

ONE: A chicken is a chicken.

FIFTEEN: Chickens do not think.

THREE: Are you sure?

FIFTEEN: Don't start.

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

ONE: I didn't say that.

NINE: But they do. People. Right?

TEN: Depends on the person.

NINE: People make choices.

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. Some thinking ahead.

SEVEN: When a person steps out into traffic, runs into traffic, times it to run into a semi, you have to know that it was with purpose. That a person intended for a semi to... you know. You know?

EVERYONE feels very 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... 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.

FIFTEEN: So stop thinking.

ONE: You think you're pretty smart don't you.

SEVEN: No.

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

ONE: I knew him. I knew him. Hooray for me. I knew him. Knew him a long, long time. Knew him when we had birthday parties with cake and Pin the Tail on the Donkey. I used to cheat at Pin the Tail on the Donkey. At my parties. It was my party, I should win. He didn't speak to me for a month when I told him, like years later. Years. "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. "That is totally wrong, that is immoral!" I was five. 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)*

I knew him. Yep. And everybody knows it. Everyone keeps looking at me, staring at me, 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... I walk from class to class, except I'm not right now... I'm not good with being the centre of attention. I would walk from class to class, my eyes glued to the floor. Me. Eyes. Floor. Not that it helped. I could feel the stares all the way down the hall. The 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. You can bob and weave all you like but... 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. Don't cheat at Pin the Tail on the Donkey. Help old ladies across the street. Smile. Hug. Be nice. HE crossed the line, I had nothing to do with it! (*pause*) His mother drives by my house. Four times now. 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 stop him? Why didn't you know? Why weren't you looking? Did you get a note? Where's the note? Give me my note! You're the one who mopes around all the time. You're the one who wears black and listens to bad music. It should have been you. Why wasn't it you? 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. 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?

SIX: What does it matter?

TWELVE: Doesn't bring him back.



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