

ESCAPE

By Michael Callahan

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CHARACTERS

ROGER ROOSTER	A cocky and adventuresome rooster.
CUDDLES	A sweet and rather innocent chicken.
HENRIETA	An older chicken, used to following rules.

PROPS

A cage. It could be a cardboard side with bars painted on it or just three chairs side by side. It should be tall enough for three people to crouch behind it.

A white line (could be a roll of toilet paper) down the middle of the stage.

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SETTING: Roadside. A cage stage right. A white line center stage.

AT RISE: LIGHTS UP

ROGER: *(from behind cage)* Cock-a-doodle-do!

ALL: Bawk! Bawk! Bawk! Bawk!

ROGER: *(his head pops up)* This is too much!

CUDDLES: *(her head pops up in the middle)* I can't move!

HENRIETA: *(her head pops up on the right)* I can't breathe! *(SHE puts her wing over CUDDLE's head and pushes her down.)* I need air!

CUDDLES: *(from below)* Would you mind terribly not standing on me?

ROGER: Look out for that car!

HENRIETA: It's coming right at us!

ROGER: Duck!

(ROGER and HENRIETA duck.)

ALL: *(beats)* Bawk! Bawk! Bawk! Bawk!

(They tip over cage and fall all tangled up.)

ROGER: *(HE gets up and looks over his shoulder)* Crazy teenagers! Henrieta, are you all right?

HENRIETA: *(SHE gets up and looks back.)* They could have killed us!

ROGER: Cuddles, how about you?

CUDDLES: What happened? I couldn't see a thing. *(to HENRIETA)* You were standing on my head.

HENRIETA: I couldn't help it. I couldn't move my leg.

ROGER: Those crazy teenagers came right at us. Our driver swerved and we were thrown off the truck.

CUDDLES: Look at this cage. It's ruined!

ROGER: Fine with me. I'm glad to be out of it. They jammed us in. What do they think we are, sardines?

HENRIETA: I just knew something like this would happen. We were the last cage they packed on that truck and they didn't tie it tightly enough. I tried to tell them but would they listen? No. No.

CUDDLES: What do we do now?

HENRIETA: We wait. As soon as our driver realizes we've fallen off, he'll come back.

ROGER: Oh boy, it feels good to stretch.

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HENRIETA: Roger, go and see how Peter and Jane are. They were on the bottom. *(HE turns and looks down behind the cage.)*

CUDDLES: We were crammed in so tight I thought I was going to lay an egg. How do my tail feathers look? I feel like I've been plucked.

HENRIETA: *(looking at CUDDLES' rear)* Calm down. You look fine.

ROGER: *(returning)* I have bad news. Peter and Jane didn't make it. *(CUDDLES leans over to look.)* Don't look. I'm afraid they're chicken cacciatore.

CUDDLES: Who's going to tell their chicks?

HENRIETA: They're still back at the barn. We'll break the news when we get back.

ROGER: Oh yeah? What makes you think we're going back?

HENRIETA: I heard Farmer John say we were all going for Christmas dinner.

CUDDLES: Oh I hope they have corn. That's my favorite.

ROGER: Why stuff us in these cages and ship us off like this? I don't like it one bit.

HENRIETA: Just like a rooster, suspicious of everyone. Where's your Christmas spirit?

ROGER: Sorry, but Farmer John doesn't strike me as the Santa Claus type.

CUDDLES: To be honest I've never really liked Farmer John. I never told anyone this before but, more than once, when he came into the barn he would walk right over to my nest and pinch me. Then he'd say, "I like fat chicks."

ROGER: Bawk!

HENRIETA: If he ever pinched me, I'd give him a good peck.

ROGER: I tell you something is going on. This morning, before we left, Farmer John and his wife were acting very odd.

CUDDLES: I noticed it too. They were trying too hard to look normal, wouldn't look you in the eye.

ROGER: That's nothing. Neither of you have seen what I've seen. You know I don't sleep well and I'm up early. There have been mornings, just before dawn, when I've seen things. . . scary things.

CUDDLES: Like what?

ROGER: Like chickens running around with their heads cut off!

HENRIETA: Roger! Stop it right now! You are scaring poor Cuddles right to death. You and your wild imagination.

ROGER: OK, you tell me why we were all snatched from our nice warm nests and jammed into these. . . these cages. I tell you it was inhumane treatment.

HENRIETA: What are you going to do? Complain to Amnesty International?

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