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Dramatic Publishing

The Day the Rooster Didn't Crow

A Comedy/Fantasy in One Act

by

JOSEPH ROBINETTE



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois

The Day the Rooster Didn't Crow

A Comedy/Fantasy in One Act
(with optional intermission)

For a cast of 11-17 (3-9 m, 8-14 w) or more*

REGINALD ROOSTER . . . a noble, but vainglorious leader
RED RHODA. a young hen, friend of Reginald
PENNY HEN. an older hen who raised Reginald
PROFESSOR WATTLES . . . a rooster, friend of Penny Hen
FOXY MOXY. a sly rascal, son of Foxy Woxy
MISS ELIZABETH B. BROWNEGG a poetical hen
MISS ALMA CLUCK. a choir-directing hen
CITIZENS OF FOWLDELPHIUS (4-10+) . . hens and/or
roosters who play multiple roles

THE PERIOD: In the time of fables and tales.

THE PLACE: A large room (a barn-like structure) in the
presidential palace of Fowladelphius.

**Optimal cast size is 17; see production notes for larger or
smaller cast size.*

The Day the Rooster Didn't Crow

SETTING: *A large room in a rustic, barn-like structure. It is the meeting place of the presidential palace, home of REGINALD ROOSTER, president of the Republic of Fowladelphius. A large wooden armchair sits atop a dais in the center of the room. Two or three smaller chairs and perhaps a small table or two complete the furnishings. A large decorative banner or flag may be behind or beside the large armchair. An entrance UC leads to the outside. A hallway at R leads to other areas of the palace. DL is a door to an office. A masked area UL leads to an unseen closet or small room. Two high openings on the UR and UL walls respectively serve as windows.*

AT RISE: *The sound of gargling and spitting is heard two or three times off R. The offstage voice of REGINALD is heard warming up musically, going up and down the scale.*

REGINALD *(offstage).*

La, la, la, la, la, la, la!

(Modulating.)

Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la!

(Modulating.)

Tra, la, la, la, la, la, la!

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(One final gargle.) There. Now I'm ready.

(Crowing melodically.)

Cock-a-doodle-doo!

Cock-a-doodle-doo!

(Modulating.)

Cock-a-doodle-dee!

Cock-a-doodle-dee!

(Modulating.)

Cock-a-doodle-day!

Cock-a-doodle-day!

Cock-a-doodle—

(Going up on the final syllable which he holds for several seconds.)

—daaaaaay!

(He enters spraying his throat with an atomizer.)

And what a day it will be. Our annual celebration of
Cockle Lochinvar Day.

(RED RHODA, an attractive young hen, enters from the office at L carrying a clipboard or ledger.)

RED RHODA. Reginald Rooster! Why on earth are you
crowing this late in the afternoon?

REGINALD. Practicing, my dear Red Rhoda. Practicing so
that I may bring up the sun in the morning. Especially
tomorrow.

RED RHODA. But, Reggie, you *always* bring up the sun
with your crowing.

REGINALD. Of course. But as president of the fine feathered Republic of Fowladelphius, I must stay in shape for my two expected duties—crowing and presiding.

RED RHODA. And you do them both so very well—which is why you will again be elected president tomorrow on Cockle Lochinvar Day—in honor of your late father.

REGINALD. Whom, alas, I never knew.

RED RHODA. Because you were only a baby chick when he gave his life in the service of the king.

REGINALD. Which is why we honor him tomorrow. And that reminds me, I need to call the entertainment committee together for their report.

RED RHODA. Do you think afterward we could take a stroll along the garden path together?

REGINALD. That would be nice. But it's getting late, and you know I have to be in bed by sundown since I must rise before everyone else in the morning.

RED RHODA (*a bit disappointed*). I know.

REGINALD. But we can have breakfast tomorrow, as usual.

RED RHODA. Of course. But I was just hoping that someday we could have a nice candlelight dinner together—like other couples do. (*The offstage voice of PROFESSOR WATTLES, a rooster, is heard.*)

PROFESSOR WATTLES (*offstage*). I believe it was coming from in here, my dear.

(*He and PENNY HEN, an elderly, but spry, chicken, enter.*)

PENNY HEN. Hello. Did we hear crowing just now?

RED RHODA. It's Penny Hen.

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REGINALD. And Professor Wattles—my new secretary of defense.

PROFESSOR WATTLES. We were strolling by and heard crowing inside.

RED RHODA. He was just practicing for tomorrow.

PROFESSOR WATTLES. Oh, yes. The big celebration. I've just recently joined your flock, but I've heard all about Cockle Lochinvar Day.

REGINALD (*indicating PENNY HEN*). And I have this dear lady to thank for telling me all about my father who gave his life gloriously on the field of battle for the king.

RED RHODA. And your dear mother who passed away from grief a short time later.

REGINALD. Yes. Penny Hen raised me from a little chick to the leader I am today.

PENNY HEN. To the *great* leader you are today.

REGINALD (*flattered, but downplaying it*). Well, enough about me. Professor, you mentioned at the cabinet meeting this morning that you found a hole in the fence surrounding the barnyard.

PROFESSOR WATTLES. Yes, but as secretary of defense I patched up de fence, I mean—the fence.

REGINALD. Good, good. And now, perhaps you could help me round up the entertainment committee for a report on tomorrow's activities.

PROFESSOR WATTLES. I'd be delighted. (*To PENNY.*) I'll see you later, Penny, my hen. (*He kisses her hand.*)

PENNY HEN (*embarrassed, but delighted*). Oh, Professor Wattles.

PROFESSOR WATTLES. Now, now. It's Wally—remember? (*PENNY HEN giggles as REGINALD and PROFESSOR WATTLES exit.*)

RED RHODA. Professor Wattles seems to have taken an interest in you.

PENNY HEN. We do enjoy each other's company.

RED RHODA. I only wish *I* were as lucky.

PENNY HEN. But you have Reginald. You're the envy of all the young hens.

RED RHODA. But we never have any time together. He's always busy during the day, and he's always asleep by sundown... Well, I'd better get back to work.

PENNY HEN (*taking a dustrag or two from her apron*). And I think I'll tidy up the presidential palace a bit. It has to look spiffy on Cockle Lochinvar Day.

RED RHODA. You bet. The best day of the year. (*She exits into the office at L.*)

PENNY HEN (*to herself*). Yes. The best day of the year for everybody. Except me.

(She begins to dust as FOXY MOXY, carrying a bag, enters sneakily from UC. He sees PENNY HEN and quickly ducks behind the armchair or hides at the UL area.)

Oh, if only they all knew what I know—that Cockle Lochinvar was *not* a hero. Oh, he was *trying* to help the king, all right—until he met up with that scoundrel Foxy Woxy, which led to his untimely end. I should have told the truth at the beginning. But I wanted everybody to think Reginald was the son of a hero, so he would be elected president. I didn't exactly tell a lie. But I'm

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afraid I *did* stretch the truth a little. (*She runs her fingers across a table or chair.*) I have to get some more rags. Ever since the big dust storm, it's been impossible to keep this place clean.

(*She exits R as FOXY MOXY emerges from his hiding place.*)

FOXY MOXY. Well, well, well. How about that. So, the great Reginald Rooster's old man was Cockle Lochinvar—better known as Cocky Locky—who, along with Henny Penny, Ducky Daddles, Goosey Poosey and Turkey Lurkey, were all going to tell the king the sky was falling. That is, till they met up with *my* old man—Foxy Woxy. He must have told me that story a hundred times. And now, I'm going to tell everybody in Fowladelphius the truth about their beloved Reginald Rooster... But how best to do it? (*The offstage voice of REGINALD is heard.*)

REGINALD (*offstage*). Come along, everybody. It's getting late, and we have work to do. (*The offstage chattering of the MEMBERS of the entertainment committee is heard.*)

FOXY MOXY. I think it's time for me to dig into my little bag of tricks. I'll be running this little poultry farm—and enjoying tasty chicken dinners—before you know it, or my name's not Foxy *Moxy*.

(*He emits a sarcastic laugh and exits UL as REGINALD and PROFESSOR WATTLES enter UC, followed by the MEMBERS—hens and/or roosters—of the entertainment*

committee and their leader, ELIZABETH B. BROWN-EGG.)

REGINALD. Welcome, everyone. We have just enough time for a report on tomorrow's activities. Chairperson Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH (*reading from a list*). At nine o'clock we will begin promptly with—

1st MEMBER. The annual Presidential Election.

ELIZABETH. Eleven o'clock.

2nd MEMBER. The annual Egg-laying Contest.

ELIZABETH. One o'clock.

3rd MEMBER. The annual Lady Leghorn Luncheon.

ELIZABETH. Five o'clock.

4th MEMBER. The Chicken-in-a-Basket Race.

ELIZABETH. Seven o'clock.

5th MEMBER. The Cockle Lochinvar Memorial Cook-out—

6th MEMBER. —and fifty-fifty raffle.

ELIZABETH. And finally—nine o'clock.

7th MEMBER. The Big Rockin' Rooster Barn Dance—

8th MEMBER. —with a blue ribbon for the couple that does the best funky chicken. (*ALL cheer. Suddenly a loud noise is heard from the UL entrance.*)

REGINALD. What was that? (*ALL are quiet. Another noise, not as loud as before, is heard.*)

PROFESSOR WATTLES (*in a loud whisper*). This sounds like a job for the secretary of defense.

(He quickly creeps to the UL area and exits. A struggle, punctuated by sheep "baas" are heard. PROFESSOR

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WATTLES reenters dragging FOXY MOXY, disguised as an OLD SHEEP, behind.)

9th MEMBER. Look!

10th MEMBER. It's just an old sheep.

REGINALD. How did you get in here?

OLD SHEEP (*FOXY MOXY disguising his voice*). Through a hole in de fence. I mean—the fence.

PROFESSOR WATTLES. He must have gotten in before I patched it up. Okay, old fellow, be off with you.

REGINALD. Just a minute, Professor... What brings you here, Old Sheep?

OLD SHEEP. I seem to be lost. You see, my mistress, Little Bo Peep—

REGINALD. Oh, yes, we heard all about that.

OLD SHEEP. I just need a little food and shelter until I have the strength to find my way back home.

REGINALD. Are you willing to work?

OLD SHEEP. Yes, indeed.

REGINALD (*pointing toward DL*). Good. Go into that office there. My secretary of labor will find something for you.

OLD SHEEP. I'm much obliged, sir. Thank you. (*He slowly exits DL.*)

PROFESSOR WATTLES. I don't know about that one, sir.

REGINALD. He's harmless, I'm sure... Well, thank you, entertainment committee, for that fine—

ELIZABETH. But, sir—were not quite finished.

REGINALD. Oh?

ELIZABETH. The committee has a little poem in your honor. We would like to present it to the entire barnyard tomorrow. That is, if you approve.

REGINALD (*obviously very pleased*). A poem, you say? In my honor? Well, yes—yes, indeed. Let's hear it.

ELIZABETH (*to the MEMBERS*). All right, everyone. Take your places. (*The MEMBERS, including ELIZABETH, get into a unified formation as REGINALD and PROFESSOR WATTLES each takes a seat downstage.*) Ready? Concentrate. And begin.

(The lines should be distributed, as desired, among the MEMBERS. Some lines may be performed by more than one MEMBER.)

MEMBERS.

Hail to our chief, President Reginald.
In his presence we are all enthralled.
He raises the sun every day.
He's the finest leader in every way.
Yea!

REGINALD (*standing and applauding*). How delightful.
But I really don't deserve—

ELIZABETH. There's a second verse.

REGINALD (*sitting*). Oh, good. Go ahead.

MEMBERS.

We are the booster of this mighty rooster.
He makes us proud to be in his clan.
He never fails us.
He cures what ails us.
We'll ever be his number-one fan.

REGINALD (*again standing and applauding*). How very flattering. But you really didn't have to—

ELIZABETH. There's one more verse.

REGINALD (*sitting*). Wonderful. Let's hear it.

MEMBERS.

As the honorable son of Cockle Lochinvar,
His valorous deeds have taken him far.
He's the finest president ever produced.
May our esteemed Reginald ever rule the roost!
Yea!

(REGINALD stands and applauds, encouraging PROFESSOR WATTLES to join him.)

REGINALD. Bravo! Bravo! Superb!

ELIZABETH. May we present the poem at the celebration tomorrow?

REGINALD. Not once—but twice! *(The MEMBERS are delighted.)* You can present the poem right before Miss Alma Cluck leads the new anthem in honor of my father. Now, who composed this extraordinary tribute?

1st MEMBER. Miss Elizabeth, sir.

ELIZABETH *(feigning modesty)*. Well, I—I—

REGINALD. Then I shall recommend that our secretary of art and culture bestow upon our very own Miss Elizabeth Barrett Brownegg the distinguished honor of Pullet Laureate of Fowladelphius.

(ALL cheer as OLD SHEEP enters from the office.)

REGINALD. Well, Old Sheep, did Red Rhoda give you an assignment?

OLD SHEEP. Yes, thank you. I am the new security guard at Henhouse Number Five.

REGINALD. Wouldn't you like an easier job?