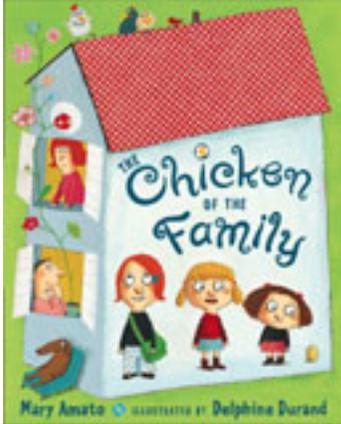


The Chicken of the Family Reader's Theater Script by Mary Amato



Summary

When Henrietta's big sisters tease her about being a chicken, Henrietta takes it to heart. She runs away to Barney's farm to find her real family, makes friends with the chickens, and discovers that it's wonderful to be a chicken, after all.

The Chicken of the Family has received many honors and has appeared on the children's choice master lists in Vermont, Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, Utah, and more.

Genre: Fiction

Themes: Chickens, gullibility, sibling rivalry, sisters, teasing.

Length: 5-10 minutes

For Ages: 5-10 years

Roles: Narrator, Henrietta, Clare, Kim, Chickens (as many as you please), Barney

Suggestions/Notes

Share the fun: Videotape your Reader's Theater performance, post it on YouTube (make sure you have parents' permission) and send it to Mary Amato, so she can feature it on her website.

Discuss: When Mary Amato was three years old, her big sisters tried to convince her that she was a cow and that if she misbehaved, she'd have to go back to the pasture. How do you think this made Mary Amato feel? Encourage a discussion about teasing and gullibility.

Musical available: A script and score for *The Chicken of the Family* musical is available by request. Contact Mary Amato, then share this information with your local theater company.

The Chicken of the Family

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Narrator: Henrietta had two older sisters who loved to tease her. She hated it when they laughed at her and made fun of her games. One night, Henrietta was lying in bed trying to decide what to dream about when...

Kim and Clare: Boo!

(Henrietta screams.)

Kim: We have a secret to tell you. You're a chicken.

Henrietta: Ha, ha.

Kim: It's true. Mom got you from Barney's farm. Didn't she Clare?

(Clare nods.)

Henrietta: But I don't even look like a chicken.

Kim: You do too. Look. Your legs are yellow and your toes are long.

Narrator: Henrietta's legs were kind of yellow, and her toes were long.

Henrietta: What about feathers? I don't have any feathers.

Kim: Yes you do. You grow feathers every night and we have to pluck them out before you wake up. That's our job. It's why we get more allowance than you do. Right, Clare?

(Clare nods.)

Henrietta: I don't believe you.

Kim: What do *you* eat for breakfast every morning?

Henrietta: Cereal.

Kim: Aha! That's what chickens eat! And what do *we* eat every morning?

Henrietta: Eggs.

Kim: Where do you think we get the eggs from?

Henrietta: From the grocery store?

Kim: Wrong! We get them from you!

Henrietta: You do not!

Kim: Sweet dreams, Henrietta.

Clare: Sorry.

Narrator: Poor Henrietta tried to sleep but she couldn't stop worrying. What if they were telling the truth? She closed her eyes and chanted...

Henrietta: I am not a chicken! I am not a chicken!! I am not a chicken!!!

Narrator: The chant helped her fall asleep.

(Henrietta sleeps. Kim and Clare sneak in and put egg and feathers near Henrietta.)

Narrator: When Henrietta woke up, she jumped out of bed and looked in the mirror.

Henrietta: Look! I'm not a chicken. I'm a girl! A perfectly normal girl!

Narrator: But there in her bed was an egg.

(Henrietta gasps loudly.)

Narrator: And on her floor were two brown feathers.

Henrietta: Feathers! My sisters are right! I really am a chicken.

Narrator: She crept down the stairs and peeked in the kitchen. Her family was gathered around the breakfast table. Kim was singing her "I love bacon song."

Kim (singing): I love bacon!

Narrator: Clare and her parents were laughing and joining in...

All (singing): We love bacon!!!

Narrator: They sounded so... human. Henrietta couldn't face them. She had to find her *real* family, so she slipped out the front door and walked down the road to Barney's farm. A dozen chickens were out, strutting in the long grass.

Henrietta: It's me! I'm Home!

Brown Chicken: Cluck. Cluck.

Henrietta: Are you my little sister? It would be nice to have a littler sister for a change.

Brown Chicken: Bawk!

Henrietta: Bawk! Bawk!

Narrator: Another chicken flapped her wings... Henrietta flapped her wings...! The chickens strutted around, and Henrietta followed. They flapped their wings and rolled in the dirt. They even played a game of tag. Henrietta was "it" when Kim and Clare came on their bikes.

Kim (panting): We've been looking for you everywhere. You've got to come home or we're in big trouble. Mom and dad are mad at *us* because *you* ran away! Clare squealed and told them how we teased you about being a chicken.

Henrietta: But I am a chicken!

Clare: You aren't. We made that up.

Henrietta: What about the egg in my bed and the feathers?

Kim: Don't be silly. We put those there to fool you.

Henrietta: I don't believe you.

Kim: What a dumbhead! You're not a chicken.

Henrietta (to chickens): You would never call me a dumbhead, would you?

(Chickens shake their heads and cluck.) (To sisters): They're nicer to me than you guys.

Kim (loudly): But you're not a chicken!

Henrietta: This is a peaceful meadow. Please use a peaceful voice.

White Hen: Bawk, bawk.

Farmer Barney enters.

Farmer Barney: Hey girls, what's all the squawking about?

Clare: Henrietta thinks she's a chicken.

Farmer Barney: Chickens are the greatest. I wouldn't mind being one myself.

Henrietta: Can I stay here with the other chickens?

Farmer Barney: Always got room for another free-ranger. (He exits.)

Kim: (angrily) You *want* to get us into trouble.

Henrietta: I'm just a chicken. What do I know about trouble?

Kim: Come on Clare. Let's go.

Clare: Mom is going to be mad at us. I don't want to go home.

Kim: You are such a chicken Clare!

Clare: Maybe I am a chicken. Can I be a chicken with you Henrietta?

Henrietta: Always got room for another free-ranger.

Kim: I don't believe this. I am so outta here! (She exits.)

Clare: So, what do we do now?

Henrietta: We'll play follow-the-leader. It's easy, just follow me. Bawk Bawk.

Clare: Bawk. Bawk.

(Henrietta, Claire, Brown Chicken, White Hen bawk and cluck noisily.)

Narrator: They flapped their wings in a glorious, uproarious chicken dance, and everybody in the meadow joined in. Oh, how wonderful to be a chicken after all.

All: The End.

Optional Ending: Show Kim getting lectured by parents.