# Poultry in Motion

By Patrick Rainville Dorn

**Cast of Characters**
(In Order of Appearance)

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**Synopsis of Scenes**

Time: An autumn morning. The action is continuous with no scene breaks or set changes.

Place: Young MacDonald's free-range poultry farm.

**Setting**

UP RIGHT is a wheelbarrow containing a spade, a canvas tarp or drop cloth and a feed bucket. Stenciled on the side of the wheelbarrow is: “Young MacDonald's Free-Range Poultry Farm.” UP LEFT is a stump, sturdy enough for an actor to stand on. Optional backdrop depicting a barnyard scene. EXIT RIGHT and LEFT lead to various parts of the farm. EXIT through audience leads to the farm’s fence and beyond.
POULTRY IN MOTION

AT RISE: FOXY LOXY ENTERS through the AUDIENCE. She sniffs and looks around, licks her lips and rubs her stomach. Crosses to wheelbarrow.

FOXY LOXY: (Reads.) “Young MacDonald’s Free-Range Poultry Farm.” (To AUDIENCE.) Sounds like the perfect place to pick up a bite to eat. I hope they don’t have fast food here. I’d rather not have to chase my breakfast down. I’ll use my brain instead. (Looks OFF RIGHT.) Someone’s coming. I’d better hide. (Hides behind stump UP LEFT.)

CHICKEN LITTLE: (ENTERS RIGHT and stomps UP LEFT. Sits on stump and faces AUDIENCE. Doesn’t notice FOXY LOXY right behind him, who pops up, smiles at AUDIENCE and licks her chops.) That’s it. I’ve had it. No one takes me seriously. Just because I’m the smallest chick on the farm doesn’t mean I don’t have feelings. Beneath this downy fluff beats a tender heart. Instead of Chicken Little, they should call me Chicken Tender. (Just as FOXY LOXY is about to pounce on CHICKEN LITTLE, he stands and moves CENTER.) I’ll show them. Some day everyone in the whole free-range poultry farm will listen to me. I’ll be flying high. (Sees feed bucket in the wheelbarrow.) Hmm. Young MacDonald left the feed bucket here. I wonder if there’s any food left? (Crosses UP RIGHT to wheelbarrow and sticks his head in the bucket.)

FOXY LOXY: (Shakes off frustration at missing CHICKEN LITTLE. To AUDIENCE.) Missed him. Oh, well, he’s not much more than an appetizer anyway. (Thinks.) I wonder if there’s a way I can use this small fry to get a fine, feathered feast? (Finds acorns behind the stump.) Acorns. (Bites one.) Too hard to eat. Still, they might be useful. (Throws an acorn at CHICKEN LITTLE, who reacts, looks around and puts his head back in the bucket. FOXY LOXY throws another acorn. Same response. FOXY LOXY throws a whole handful of acorns at CHICKEN LITTLE and he jumps up.)

CHICKEN LITTLE: Ouch! What was that? (Sees FOXY LOXY) Who are you?

FOXY LOXY: (Thinks fast.) Did you see that?

CHICKEN LITTLE: What?

FOXY LOXY: (Points) The sky. I think it’s falling!

CHICKEN LITTLE: The sky is falling? Is that possible?

FOXY LOXY: Didn’t you feel it? Like little bits of sky coming down all around you?
CHICKEN LITTLE: I felt something. Was that the sky?

FOXY LOXY: What else?

CHICKEN LITTLE: Hmm. That's interesting. (Registers. Panics.) The sky is falling! Cheep! The sky is falling! Cheep! Cheep! (Runs in a circle.) What should we do? What should we do? Cheep! Cheep! Cheep!

FOXY LOXY: You've got to tell someone.

CHICKEN LITTLE: Tell someone. Right. I've got to tell someone. (Thinks.) Who should I tell?

FOXY LOXY: All your friends. You've got to warn all your friends and bring them back here.

CHICKEN LITTLE: No one will believe me. No one ever takes me seriously. They'll call me a bird-brained, chicken livered, feather head.

FOXY LOXY: Nonsense.

CHICKEN LITTLE: You don't know what it's like. Chickens can be tough. The scratching, the pecking. It's a jungle out there.

FOXY LOXY: (Looks at wheelbarrow. Gets an idea.) I have an idea.

CHICKEN LITTLE: You do?

FOXY LOXY: If you warn the queen that the sky is falling, she will reward you. You'll be the hero of the poultry farm.

CHICKEN LITTLE: (Considers.) Do you think so?

FOXY LOXY: Just imagine. You'll be cock of the walk. All of the hens will cluck, lay an egg and faint when they see you strutting by.

CHICKEN LITTLE: (Puffs out his chest, strikes a pose and waves to imaginary fans.) Hello. Hello. (Flirts with imaginary admirer.) Hi, there.

FOXY LOXY: So, will you do it? (CHICKEN LITTLE doesn't hear FOXY LOXY.) Chicken Little. (Shouts.) Chicken Little!

CHICKEN LITTLE: (Startled back to reality.) What?

FOXY LOXY: You've got to do it. Everyone's depending on you.

CHICKEN LITTLE: To do what?

FOXY LOXY: Go and tell the queen!

CHICKEN LITTLE: Right! Tell the queen. Tell her what again?

FOXY LOXY: (Slaps her own forehead.) The sky is falling!

CHICKEN LITTLE: The sky is falling? Oh!
FOXY LOXY: Here come some of your friends now. (Aside.) I’d better keep out of sight until the right moment. If I play this right, I’ll have a bird buffet. (EXITS back through the AUDIENCE.)

CHICKEN LITTLE: The sky is falling! Cheep! Cheep! (Runs in a circle CENTER, flapping wings in panic. HENNY PENNY and COCKY LOCKY ENTER RIGHT. CHICKEN LITTLE bumps into them, falls down.)

HENNY PENNY: Chicken Little! What’s the hurry?

COCKY LOCKY: Slow down there, little chick. What could be so important?

CHICKEN LITTLE: (Gets up.) The sky is falling! The sky is falling!

HENNY PENNY: Oh, is that all?

COCKY LOCKY: We should be so lucky.

CHICKEN LITTLE: What do you mean? Aren’t you worried?

HENNY PENNY: Who cares about the sky?

COCKY LOCKY: There are worse things in the world than having the sky fall down, you know.

CHICKEN LITTLE: There are?

HENNY PENNY: Sure. (Refers to COCKY LOCKY) Take bandy-legged fancy-pants there, for instance.

COCKY LOCKY: Henny Penny, be careful what you say.

HENNY PENNY: Afraid everyone will find out your little secret?

COCKY LOCKY: No.

HENNY PENNY: Everyone’s going to hear about it sooner or later. Or rather not hear about it, if you get my drift.

COCKY LOCKY: It’s just a temporary condition.

CHICKEN LITTLE: What is?

COCKY LOCKY: (To HENNY PENNY) Don’t say it. I’m warning you.

HENNY PENNY: Don’t you threaten me. I’ll shout it from the rooftops if I want to. At least I still can.

CHICKEN LITTLE: What is it? What’s the matter?

HENNY PENNY: What time did you wake up this morning?

CHICKEN LITTLE: I don’t know. I can’t tell time. But the sun was way, way up in the sky. I guess I slept in.

HENNY PENNY: Right. And why was that, do you think?

COCKY LOCKY: Oh boy, here we go.

CHICKEN LITTLE: I’m not sure.
HENNY PENNY: It’s because Cocky Locky, here, didn’t crow at the
crack of dawn the way he’s supposed to.

COCKY LOCKY: Now you’ve done it. Now you’ve done it!

CHICKEN LITTLE: Come to think of it, you’re right. I don’t remember
hearing any “cock-a-doodle-doo” this morning.

HENNY PENNY: And do you know why?

CHICKEN LITTLE: Laryngitis?

HENNY PENNY: No.

CHICKEN LITTLE: Frog in your throat?

HENNY PENNY: Guess again.

CHICKEN LITTLE: Cat got your tongue?

COCKY LOCKY: No! No! No! (Hesitates, then blurts it out.) I’ve got
stage fright. All right? There. I’ve gone and said it. (To HENNY
PENNY.) Are you happy now?

CHICKEN LITTLE: Stage fright?

HENNY PENNY: Young MacDonald was playing some kind of music
called opera in the henhouse to encourage our egg laying, and
when Cocky Locky got an earful of that, his throat cramped up.

CHICKEN LITTLE: Stage fright? And your throat got a cramp?

COCKY LOCKY: I’ve never heard anything like it. It was the Three
Tenors singing a medley of pieces from “Omelette.”

HENNY PENNY: Now every time he’s supposed to “cock-a-doodle-
doo,” he cock-a-doodle doesn’t!

COCKY LOCKY: I thought I was ruler of the roost, but after hearing
those guys, I realize I’m nothing but a bantam weight croaker.

CHICKEN LITTLE: That’s terrible!

HENNY PENNY: You’re telling me! Why, he’s thrown the whole
henhouse off schedule. Egg production has dropped off from
“Double A” to single digits.

COCKY LOCKY: It’s not my fault if you dumb clucks don’t know how
to set an alarm clock. Crowing is something that comes from the
very gizzard. I’m an artiste. I can’t just wing it.

CHICKEN LITTLE: What are you going to do?

HENNY PENNY: We’ve scrambled our best layers to fly in and make
up the difference, but if something doesn’t happen soon, we’re all
going to go from the flying plan into the fryer.

COCKY LOCKY: So you’ll pardon us if we don’t flap about until we fall
over just because the sky is falling.

CHICKEN LITTLE: Why don’t you come with me?
HENNY PENNY: Where?
CHICKEN LITTLE: To see the queen. I’m going to see the queen to tell her that the sky is falling. Why don’t you tell her about your crowing crisis and your egg-laying layoff? Maybe she can help.
HENNY PENNY: The queen? What can she do?
COCKY LOCKY: It’s not like she’s the Wizard of Oz or something.
CHICKEN LITTLE: Do you have a better plan?
HENNY PENNY: Well, no.
COCKY LOCKY: It couldn’t hurt, I suppose.
CHICKEN LITTLE: That’s the spirit. You’ve got to see the sunny side. Things will be looking up in no time.
HENNY PENNY: Sunny side?
COCKY LOCKY: Up?
CHICKEN LITTLE: Right! Getting help will be easy. Then your problems will be over.
HENNY PENNY: Over?
COCKY LOCKY: Easy?
CHICKEN LITTLE: Right. So are you with me?
LITTLE RED HEN: (ENTERS RIGHT, carrying a bag of grain.) Hey, guys.
CHICKEN LITTLE: Hi, Little Red.
LITTLE RED HEN: How’s it going?
COCKY LOCKY: Don’t ask.
HENNY PENNY: Things have been better.
CHICKEN LITTLE: Well, besides the sky falling, I guess okay.
LITTLE RED HEN: Great. Say, I’m going to make some bread. Do you want to help? I’m about to plant the grain of wheat.
COCKY LOCKY: Not I, said the rooster.
HENNY PENNY: Not I, said the hen.
CHICKEN LITTLE: Not I, said the chick.
LITTLE RED HEN: Then I shall do it myself. (Starts to EXIT RIGHT.) Don’t say I didn’t ask. (EXITS.)
HENNY PENNY: I’m having second thoughts about leaving the farm. I don’t like to stray too far from the nest.
COCKY LOCKY: And I’m not sure I want to stick my neck out for something like this.
CHICKEN LITTLE: Give me a chance to round up some more of our friends to come with us. There’s safety in numbers. You know what they say…
HENNY PENNY: Don’t count your chickens before they’re hatched?
COCKY LOCKY: Don’t put all your eggs in one basket?
CHICKEN LITTLE: No! Birds of a feather flock together.
HENNY PENNY: Oh, all right. We’ll come along if you can get others to join in.
COCKY LOCKY: What have we got to lose?
CHICKEN LITTLE: I’m going to go drum up some support. We need to stick together.
HENNY PENNY: Drum?
COCKY LOCKY: Stick?
CHICKEN LITTLE: Meet me back here in a little while, and then we’ll all go and tell the queen. (EXITS RIGHT.)
HENNY PENNY: That’s quite a plan Chicken Little has hatched. Of course you could save us all a lot of trouble if you could just stop being such a chicken and get your cock-a-doodle-doo back. (EXITS LEFT.)

(COCKY LOCKY: Henny Penny’s right. I’ve got to overcome my fear. (Shakes all over, stretches neck and works himself up for a massive attempt at crowing.) I just need to loosen up my neck a little. (Rolls head around.) Noodle neck. Don’t be a chicken. Be a noodle. Chicken… noodle. Chicken… noodle. Okay, here goes. (Puffs up.) Cock-a… Cock-a… Cock-a-doodle… Cock-a-doodle… Urrrk! (Deflates.) That’s enough crowing for one day. I’m fried. (EXITS LEFT. DUCKY LUCKY and GOOSEY LUCY ENTER RIGHT. They are “wogging,” a waddling hybrid of walking and jogging which involves exaggerated side to side hip action. They wear jogging accessories, including sneakers, headbands, perhaps even portable radios with headphones. During this scene they pace, stretch, do silly exercises, check their pulses, etc.)

DUCKY LUCKY: Goosey Lucy, I just don’t know why Mallard and I always manage to get talked into these things. How did you end up here at Young MacDonald’s resort?
GOOSEY LUCY: Zander and I won a free weekend visit in some kind of drawing. How about you?
DUCKY LUCKY: My cousin Donald sent me a brochure. Said he really liked his place in Orlando, and that it would make a good investment.
GOOSEY LUCY: If only I’d known that the 90-minute tour would last three hours.
DUCKY LUCKY: And that Young MacDonald’s sales pitch would be so persuasive.
GOOSEY LUCY: He's a real go-getter, Ducky Lucky.

DUCKY LUCKY: True, true. I was especially impressed by the way he described this free-range poultry resort as the future in luxury migration management.

GOOSEY LUCY: He has a point. I mean, if we're going to fly south every single winter anyway, why shouldn't we enjoy the benefits of a five-star lifestyle?

DUCKY LUCKY: I guess, but now that we've invested in this timeshare plan, there's no way to do anything else. The contract locks us in tighter than webbed feet stuck in a frozen pond.

GOOSEY LUCY: It's not so bad. The evening entertainment is pretty good. Gander Wingtip and his Honkers flew all the way from Central Park to perform here.

DUCKY LUCKY: And they've got a lovely wading pool for the ducklings and goslings.

GOOSEY LUCY: And the food! I get goose bumps just thinking about it.

DUCKY LUCKY: Don't remind me!

GOOSEY LUCY: It's like Young MacDonald deliberately wants to fatten us up or something.

DUCKY LUCKY: All the high class resorts do that. (MALLARD DRAKE and ZANDER GANDER ENTER RIGHT, carrying golf putters.)

MALLARD DRAKE: Hey girls!

ZANDER GANDER: There you are.

MALLARD DRAKE: We've been looking all over for you.

DUCKY LUCKY: We didn't think you cared.

GOOSEY LUCY: All you ever want to do is play your silly games.

MALLARD DRAKE: Golf is the sport of kings.

DUCKY LUCKY: I thought that was chess.

ZANDER GANDER: Well, then, golf is the sport of executives.

GOOSEY LUCY: What kind of executives play putt-putt golf?

ZANDER GANDER: Laugh all you like, but I'll have you know that I scored a birdie on the fifth hole today.

DUCKY LUCKY: Is that good?

MALLARD DRAKE: It wasn't good for the birdie. Bounced a golf ball right off his beak. Knocked him out. Gave him a bump on the head the size of a goose egg.

GOOSEY LUCY: Ouch.
PRODUCTION NOTES

PROPERTIES
ONSTAGE: Wheelbarrow UP RIGHT containing a spade, a canvas tarp or drop cloth and a feed bucket. Stenciled on the side of the wheelbarrow is: "Young MacDonald's Free-Range Poultry Farm." Sturdy stump UP LEFT. Handful of acorns (or hazelnuts) preset behind stump. Optional barnyard backdrop.

BROUGHT ON:
Golf putters (MALLARD DRAKE, ZANDER GANDER)
Bag of grain, sheaf of wheat, bag of flour, basket of bread, whistle on string (LITTLE RED HEN) [Bread may be actual long loaves of French bread or foam rubber, taped and painted to look like bread. Must be soft.]

COSTUMES
All the characters in this play are animals, and all but FOXY LOXY are birds. Full costumes would be fun, but suggested costumes can also work. For example, characters may wear basic colored tee-shirts or sweat shirts and tights to indicate species (yellow for CHICKEN LITTLE, white for CHICKENS, green for DUCKS, gray for GEESE, brown for TURKEYS and FOXY LOXY), and then accessorize with decorated ball caps festooned with felt "feathers." You can also make a basic shawl out of a triangular piece of fabric that attaches at the wrists with elastic and is pinned at the nape of the neck, creating the effect of "wings." Attach felt "feathers" with hot glue. The turkeys should be padded to enormous proportions.

FOXY LOXY could wear a basic hooded sweatshirt with pointy felt ears attached, a rubber canine nose, sweat pants with a bushy tail attached and perhaps a vest.

TINA TURKEY is super-stuffed for her reappearance halfway through the play.

MOVEMENT
Much of the humor in "Poultry in Motion" comes from the physical movements of the characters. Work with the actors as they develop characteristic movements and gestures: rocking forward motion for chickens, high-stepping ducks, waddling geese and lumbering turkeys. FOXY LOXY can have quick, canine movements.

FLEXIBLE CASTING
FOXY LOXY and CHICKEN LITTLE can be male or female roles. While the other animal characters have specific genders, any could be played by males or females for a more tongue-in-cheek production!

For preview only
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