

SHELLEY AND BEN

'cause I only got three hours of sleep after working the night shift at the 7-11. And I could really give a crap about Christmas because all it means is that my father didn't love my mother and he didn't love me.

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CHANTICLEER AND PERTELOTE

PLAY: *The Canterbury Tales*
originally by Geoffrey Chaucer
GENRE: Comedy
TIME: 4:00

DESCRIPTION

This scene is taken from one of the stories in *The Canterbury Tales*, by Geoffrey Chaucer. Chanticleer is a vain rooster who gets caught by a fox and needs to trick the fox to be set free. This moment is between the rooster and his love, Pertelote, a hen.

ACTING HINTS

This is a scene of high romance. The acting should be stylized instead of realistic. Think big gestures and exaggerated emotional choices.

Also, think about how you will physicalize the two characters since they are animals. How will you balance the human and animal characteristics?

Pertelote believes hens are upper-class, while chickens are lower-class. See how often she falls into "chicken-like" behaviour.

CHANTICLEER the rooster enters and gives a loud 'cock-a-doodle-do.' He's very vain and proud of himself. CHANTICLEER begins to sing, showing off his lovely voice. This brings PERTELOTE, the hen, to his side.

CHANTICLEER: (*singing*) Hey trolly loly lo, maid where do you go?
I go to the meadow to milk my cow.

PERTELOTE: My dearest sweetheart, that was ever so beautiful.

CHANTICLEER: Thank you, lady Pertelote. The notes come out so because they are all for you.

The two coo at each other. Then CHANTICLEER turns away and gives a melodramatic groan.

PERTELOTE: My darling dear! What noise is this? What ails you to groan so?

CHANTICLEER AND PERTELOTE

CHANTICLEER: Dear madam, it is not grief that causes me to groan.

PERTELOTE: Oh thank heavens, my sweet.

CHANTICLEER: It is something much worse than grief.

PERTELOTE: *(screeching like a chicken)* Beloved! *(she clears her throat)* Beloved. What could be worse than grief?

CHANTICLEER: I dreamt last night that a loathsome beast came into the yard. The sound alone froze me to the spot as it leapt from the darkness and attacked me! I awoke in the middle of the night, drenched in the sweat of horror. I cannot remove that dream from my conscious mind. It is with me wherever I go. I move to the left, it is there. I move to the right, it is there! Now my body is locked in a foul prison! Now dread fear has lodged itself in my throat. That is what causes me to groan with despair.

CHANTICLEER gives a particularly spectacular groan, which gets cut off when he sees PERTELOTE looking at him in disbelief.

PERTELOTE: You are afraid of a dream?

CHANTICLEER: Yes.

PERTELOTE: A dream?

CHANTICLEER: It was a particularly scary dream.

PERTELOTE: And what did this monster look like?

CHANTICLEER: I am not sure. It was dark. It sounded extremely scary, though. It sounded as if it were going to rip me to shreds!

CHANTICLEER tries again to groan but the groan is cut off when PERTELOTE snorts in disbelief.

CHANTICLEER: Surely you do not want your Chanticleer to be ripped to shreds.

CHANTICLEER AND PERTELOTE

PERTELOTE: *(turning away)* You have lost, my love!

CHANTICLEER: *(trying to draw her back)* My Cherub!

PERTELOTE: Do not touch me, my once true passion.

CHANTICLEER: But why?

PERTELOTE: I cannot love a coward.

CHANTICLEER: Dear heart, how can you say that to me?

PERTELOTE: Every chick- *(she clears her throat)* every hen dreams of the day that she can marry a rooster who is hardy, wise, trustworthy, not a fool and not afraid of dreams. *(she screeches the last few words like a chicken then clears her throat)* Have you not a man's heart?

CHANTICLEER: Of course I do.

PERTELOTE: Then how can you fear a harmless dream?

CHANTICLEER: But if you had heard the noise of the loathsome beast you...

PERTELOTE: Everyone knows that dreams are not to be taken seriously. They are caused by problems elsewhere in the body. Surely this bad dream is nothing but a case of indigestion.

CHANTICLEER: Really my pet? Do you think so?

PERTELOTE: Indigestion has caused many a man to groan and cry in the middle of the night. Sir Chanticleer, fly from this perch at once. Do not groan; take a laxative.

CHANTICLEER: Madam I thank you for your words. Nonetheless, no man should be so reckless as to dismiss his dreams. It has been said dreams foretell the future for heroes. This dream could be a warning, a hero's warning.

PERTELOTE laughs. She pretends it's a cough.

CHANTICLEER AND PERTELOTE

PERTELOTE: My darling, dearest, dear. Take my advice. Take the appropriate herbal seasonings. Purge your innards and you will have these dreams no longer.

CHANTICLEER: Love of my life. Pearl of my oysters. Peach among plums. I honour your words with every breath in my body. However, I put no trust in laxatives. They taste funny.

PERTELOTE: But my treasure...

CHANTICLEER: Let us talk no more of this. For at this very moment I have no need of any herbal purging. With one look at your beautiful face, all my fears instantly vanish. It has often been said, and in Latin too, that a woman is a man's joy and all his bliss. With you by my side I am filled with such joy and such bliss; I will groan no more and think not of dreams.

PERTELOTE: What a sweet thing to say.

CHANTICLEER: I defy all dreams and visions!

PERTELOTE: Oh my dear.

CHANTICLEER: My darling.

PERTELOTE: Oh my dearest darling.

CHANTICLEER: My darling dear!

They coo at each other and finish in a pose of high romance.

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JILL AND JACK

PLAY: Free — Version 1
GENRE: Seriocomic
TIME: 4:00

DESCRIPTION

The scene is a hillside on the outskirts of a small town. The town has been suffering a depression ever since the lone factory shut down. Jill is the mayor's daughter and lives a somewhat privileged life. Jack is from the "wrong side of the tracks" but is trying to turn his life around. A huge picnic covers the hill. There is a sign that says, "Free Food."

ACTING HINTS:

Jack and Jill are very comfortable with each other. They have a good relationship. How can you show this through their actions?

Jill comes from privilege while Jack has had a much harder time with life. His mother is quite ill. Later in the play Jack considers rejecting his scholarship in order to stay closer to home. Keep the social status of the characters in mind as you work on the piece.

JILL enters the space. She does not see the food. She has been running and throws her arms into the air.

JILL: I win!

JILL does a little victory dance. She turns to look offstage.

JILL: Jack? Come on, it's not that steep. Use your arms. I didn't say use your finger, I said use your arms.

JACK crawls on stage, wheezing.

JILL: Took you long enough.

JACK: I'm not a runner, you know. *(He collapses onto the floor)*

JILL: Victorious again!

JACK: Oxygen. O₂. Air! *(He frantically gulps in air)*