

R. Eugene Jackson

Inspired by the Hans Christian Andersen tale

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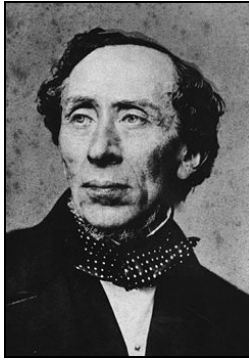
THE U-U-GLY DUCKLING

CHILDREN'S COMEDY. Inspired by the 1844 Hans Christian Andersen tale. Mama Duck is thrilled when her ducklings finally hatch. However, when the last and largest egg hatches, Mama Duck is puzzled when Summer emerges. Summer is much larger and doesn't look anything like the other ducklings. Upon further inspection, Old Duck concludes the eggs must have gotten mixed up and that Summer is most definitely a turkey because she is so ugly. Gramma Duck disagrees and is convinced that Summer must be a tree trunk. Two geese on their way south guess Summer's either a chicken or a horse. Summer then meets a cat and hen who think she may be a big brown cow, an aardvark, a rhinoceros, a pig, a deer, a squirrel, an alligator, a snake, a tiger, or a kitchen sink. Confused, Summer ventures out on her own to discover what type of animal she is and where she belongs but she must first escape the sharp claws of Scary Cat, a pair of hunters, and a couple of hungry humans determined to eat her for supper. This charming play features a host of irresistible characters that will delight your audience.

Performance Time: Approximately 60 minutes.

THE U-U-UGLY DUCKLING

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Hans Christian Andersen

ABOUT THE STORY

Danish writer and poet Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) published "The Ugly Duckling" in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1843 as part of a collection of fairy tales. Andersen acknowledged that "The Ugly Duckling," an original work, reflects his childhood in that he suffered ridicule from his classmates because he was considered unattractive and suffered from dyslexia. As an adult, Andersen went on to become one of the world's greatest children's writers of all time. Andersen's stories have been translated into more than 150 languages and some of his most famous tales include "The Little Mermaid," "Thumbelina," "The Emperor's New Clothes," and "The Princess and the Pea." "The Ugly Duckling" is one of Andersen's best-loved stories and has spurred numerous film and stage adaptations.

Characters

(7 M, 12 F, 6 flexible

(Doubling possible.)

SUMMER: Baby swan; large with gray feathers and a pink bow on the top of her head; female.

MAMA DUCK: Summer's "mother."

MARY: Mama Duck's duckling and Summer's "sister"; smaller than Summer with yellow feathers.

CARRIE: Mama Duck's duckling and Summer's "sister"; smaller than Summer with yellow feathers.

LARRY: Mama Duck's duckling and Summer's "brother"; smaller than Summer with yellow feathers.

OLD DUCK: Elderly duck who thinks Summer is a turkey; has a long white beard, wears glasses, and leans on a cane; male.

GRAMMA DUCK: Elderly duck who thinks Summer is a tree trunk; wears glasses, an apron, an old-fashioned bonnet and carries a broom.

DARCIE: Duckling who thinks Summer may be a dog; Marcie's sister; female.

MARCIE: Duckling who thinks Summer may be a cat; Darcie's sister; female.

GRETCHEN: Goose who wonders what it would be like to play in the snow; thinks Summer may be a turkey, a goose, or a human girl.

GIL: Goose who thinks Summer is a chicken or a horse; Gretchen's no-nonsense husband.

SCARY CAT: Hungry cat with sharp claws who thinks Summer is ugly but could be a delicious entrée; speaks in the third-person; flexible.

BUCK: Teen hunter who thinks Scary Cat is a 'possum; wears hunting garb and carries a toy shotgun; male.

BILL/BRENDA: Pre-teen hunter who carries a tree branch as if it were a shotgun and “shoots” it by shouting “Bang!”; wears hunting garb; flexible.

KITTY-A-BIDDY CAT: Cat and star of the comedy show, “The Cat and Hen Show”; thinks Summer is a big brown cow, a rhinoceros, a deer, a tiger, or an alligator; wears a vaudevillian costume complete with a hat and cane; male.

CHICKY-A-BIDDY HEN: Hen and star of the comedy show, “The Hen and Cat Show”; thinks Summer is an aardvark, a pig, a squirrel, a snake, or a kitchen sink; wears a vaudevillian costume complete with a hat and cane; female.

HUSBAND: Elderly human who is quite ravenous; wears a winter coat and scarf.

WIFE: Hungry, elderly woman who is married to Husband; wears a winter coat and scarf.

MAMA SWAN: Kindhearted swan who is the mother of Jenny and Jim.

JENNY: Sweet, young swan.

JIM: Jenny’s brother who likes to fight and isn’t thrilled at the thought of having another female in the family.

MIME 1, 2: Non-speaking; flexible.

CLINTON/CINDY: Human child who likes to feed swans bread; flexible.

AMANDA/ADAM: Human child who enjoys feeding swans bread; flexible.

EXTRAS (Opt.): As Birds.

NOTE: For flexible roles, please change the script accordingly.

Setting

A barnyard and pond.

Set

Locations are represented or defined with the addition of a few simple props. The only set piece needed is a depiction of the back wall of a cabin.

Props

- | | |
|---|--|
| 3 Eggs large enough for a person to fit inside | Plastic fork |
| 1 Egg large enough for a person to fit inside that is larger than the others | Crutch |
| 2 Large shoulder bags to contain props | Arm sling |
| Pocket watch | Curtain hung on a horizontal post supported by two vertical posts to represent a stage |
| Large calendar | Drum and drumsticks |
| Walking cane | Cymbal and drumstick |
| Chisel | 2 Ukuleles or other accompanying instruments (or taped music can be used. |
| Hammer | Scarf and wool cap, for Summer |
| Large magnifying glass | 2 Scarves and wool caps, for Mimes |
| Large poster board containing a crude drawing of a turkey | White confetti to represent snow |
| Plastic toad | Pots and pans |
| 2 Blue tarps or cloth or blankets each about 1/3 the size of the stage to represent a pond and a lake | Large canister big enough to fit over someone's head |
| Broom | Cornmeal |
| Large dog bone | Stool |
| Squeaky cat toy | Frying pan |
| Tall marsh grasses or reeds | Pot of lard |
| Toy shotgun | Big plastic knife or hatchet |
| Branch | Big pot |
| Female long-haired wig | Birds suspended on long poles (opt.) |
| Small bouquet of plastic flowers | White swan costume, for Summer |
| Bib | Bread |
| Plastic knife | |

SOUND EFFECTS

Sound of shells cracking
Muffled groans
Pounding of metal hitting
metal
Grunts and groans
Geese honking
Sound of geese flying
overhead

Gunshot
Musical fanfare
Sound of brisk wind
Loud banging crash
Chirping birds
Rain, thunder
Springtime music

NOTE: Many sound effects may be found online.

"IF I DON'T KNOW WHAT I AM,
I CAN'T REALLY HAVE A HOME.
AND IT'S VERY LONELY
WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE A HOME."

—SUMMER

THE U-U-UGLY DUCKLING

(AT RISE: A barnyard. Four eggs, each of which is large enough to house a person, sit prominently onstage. Three are smaller while the fourth is larger than the others. Mime 1, 2 passively flank the eggs, and each has a large bag hanging from his shoulder that contains various objects. Mama Duck paces left, stops, turns to the eggs, checks her pocket watch, and sighs exasperatedly. Then she paces right, stops, turns to the eggs, checks her watch, and sighs exasperatedly. Then she paces left, stops, turns to the eggs, checks her watch, and starts to sigh but is met by Old Duck. He has a long white beard, wears glasses, and leans on a cane.)

OLD DUCK: (*Indicating eggs.*) Have your ducklings hatched yet?

MAMA DUCK: (*Exasperated.*) Well, can't you see?

OLD DUCK: Not very well. (*Adjusts glasses.*)

MAMA DUCK: Oh, sorry. My little ducklings show no signs of breaking out of their eggs yet.

OLD DUCK: What's taking so long?

MAMA DUCK: I wish I knew. (*With a blank face, Mime 1 pulls a calendar from his bag and flips it to the month of May.*) Do you see this calendar?

OLD DUCK: (*Adjusts glasses.*) All I see is a blur.

MAMA DUCK: Well, this is the month of May. I laid these three eggs on the first. (*Indicates the three smaller eggs and points to the first of May on the calendar.*) Right here. They should have hatched by the 28th... (*Points to it.*) ...here. But here's today. (*Flips the calendar to June and points to the 3rd day.*)

OLD DUCK: (*Adjusts glasses.*) Where? I can't see it.

MAMA DUCK: (*Ignoring him.*) June the 3rd. Today is the third of June, and they still haven't hatched. They're way overdue.

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(Mime 1 stuffs the calendar back into his bag and moves back to his original position.)

OLD DUCK: *(Indicating larger egg.)* What about that humongous egg?

MAMA DUCK: I don't remember that one.

OLD DUCK: You don't remember when you laid it?

MAMA DUCK: No. I must have been asleep at the time. Oh, what's a mama duck to do?

OLD DUCK: Just wait, I guess.

MAMA DUCK: For what? If those ducklings had any sense, they would have cracked open those shells by now. *(Muffled groans are heard and then the sound of shells cracking.)* What's that?

OLD DUCK: *(Looks around.)* What's what?

(Louder cracking sounds are heard.)

MAMA DUCK: *(Happily.)* They're hatching! My little ones are breaking out of their shells! *(To the first egg.)* Quickly, quickly!

(First egg cracks open and Mime 2 assists with the broken shell. Mary pops out.)

MARY: *(Looks at Mama.)* Quack, quack?

MAMA DUCK: My first little duckling! I'll call you Mary.

MARY: Mama, I love you.

(Mama Duck embraces Mary.)

MAMA DUCK: Oh, Mary! *(To second egg.)* Quickly, quickly!

(Second egg cracks open and Mime 1 assists with the broken shell. Carrie pops out.)

THE U-U-UGLY DUCKLING

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CARRIE: *(Looks at Mama.)* Quack, quack?

MAMA DUCK: My second little duckling! I'll call you Carrie.

CARRIE: Hey, Mama...got any dead insects? I'm hungry.

(Mama Duck embraces Carrie.)

MAMA DUCK: Soon, dear...soon. *(To third egg.)* Quickly, quickly!

(Third egg cracks open and Mime 2 assists with the broken shell. Larry pops out.)

LARRY: *(Looks at Mama.)* Quack, quack?

MAMA DUCK: My third little duckling! I'll call you Sherri.

(Mama Duck embraces Larry.)

LARRY: *(In a deep, male voice.)* Better make that Larry, Mama.

MAMA DUCK: Oh! *(Pulls back.)* A male duckling. A drake. I'm so lucky!

(Mama Duck embraces Larry again.)

LARRY: I want to grow up to be a zookeeper and play with snakes and lizards and toady frogs.

MAMA DUCK: *(Pulls back.)* Ewww! Boys! *(Gathers Larry, Carrie, and Mary together and hugs them.)* Still, you're all my babies.

OLD DUCK: Aren't you forgetting something?

MAMA DUCK: What?

OLD DUCK: The fourth egg.

MAMA DUCK: Oh!

(The pounding of metal on metal is heard from inside the fourth egg, along with grunts and groans. They all turn to the egg and watch.)

THE U-U-UGLY DUCKLING

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MARY: What is that awful sound, Mama?

MAMA DUCK: I don't know, dear.

CARRIE: (*Covers her ears with her hands/wings.*) It's making my ears hurt.

LARRY: (*Delighted.*) Somebody's hitting something metal with something metal!

MAMA DUCK: But that's impossible. It's coming from inside the egg.

LARRY: Mama, I know heavy metal when I hear it.

MAMA DUCK: (*Cheering the new arrival.*) Quickly, quickly!

MARY/CARRIE/LARRY: Quickly, quickly!

(The last egg cracks open, and Summer, a gray-feathered baby swan with a pink bow on top of her head, steps out, carrying a hammer and a chisel. Mime 1 assists with the broken shell.)

SUMMER: "Quickly, quickly"? Why "quickly, quickly"? Am I late for something?

MAMA DUCK: (*Puzzled.*) What? Who are you?

SUMMER: I guess I'm a... (*Looks at the other Ducklings.*) ...a duckling? I mean, if that's what they are, that must be what I am. I guess. I think. Right?

MAMA: (*Reluctantly.*) Uh, yes, that's right. I'll call you...

SUMMER: Summer. I thought I would call myself "Summer"...unless you have a better name for me.

MAMA DUCK: Uh, no. I guess not. "Summer" is good. (*Indicating chisel and hammer.*) What are those things?

SUMMER: Oh, these? A hammer and chisel. This eggshell is as hard as a rock. I thought I'd never get out of there.

(Summer gives the tools to Mime 1, who puts them into his bag and steps aside. Old Duck examines Summer closely.)

OLD DUCK: (*To Mama Duck, as if making a major pronouncement.*) This is not a duckling!

MAMA DUCK: What?

THE U-U-UGLY DUCKLING

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OLD DUCK: A duckling it is not!

MAMA DUCK: Then what is she?

OLD DUCK: I'm not sure. (*Mime 2 steps forward, pulls a large magnifying glass from his bag, and hands it to the Old Duck, who gives Summer a quick look. He turns to Mama Duck.*) After close and careful examination, I have come to an unfortunate conclusion.

(*Pause.*)

MAMA DUCK: Well?

OLD DUCK: (*With disdain.*) Sadly, I must inform you that this creature is...a turkey!

(*Others gasp.*)

MAMA DUCK: A turkey?

OLD DUCK: That's what it is...a turkey!

MAMA DUCK: But that's...that's impossible. She came from one of my eggs, and I'm a duck. A duck can't have a baby turkey. She can only have baby ducklings. So she must be a duckling.

OLD DUCK: Sometimes eggs get mixed up.

(*Old Duck returns the magnifying glass to Mime 2, who returns to his regular position.*)

MAMA DUCK: (*Cautiously.*) True. But...

OLD DUCK: It's a turkey! Can't you see how big it is...and how perfectly ugly?

MARY: It really is ugly, Mama.

CARRIE: Really, really ugly, Mama.

LARRY: (*Delighted.*) Yeah. Can I play with it?

MARY: What is a turkey, anyway?

OLD DUCK: What is a turkey, you ask? What is a turkey?
(*Motions to Mime 1, who steps forward and pulls out a large*

rolled-up sheet of art paper from his bag and unrolls it. It shows a crude drawing of an adult turkey.) This, my dear, is a turkey – the ugliest bird ever hatched. Do you see the colors?

MARY: Hideous.

OLD DUCK: Do you see this horrible red thing hanging from its beak?

CARRIE: Repulsive.

OLD DUCK: And instead of the harmonious “quack-quack” of a duck, it goes “gobble-gobble.”

LARRY: *(Delighted.) Really? (To Summer.) Gobble-gobble for us! I want to hear you gobble-gobble!*

MAMA DUCK: Larry, she can’t gobble-gobble.

LARRY: *(Indicating Old Duck.) He says she can gobble-gobble. I want to hear her gobble-gobble. (To Summer.) Go on...gobble-gobble like a turkey!*

SUMMER: *(Trying to gobble.) Goggg...googg...goober-boober...gaga, gee-gee....*

MAMA DUCK: *(To Old Duck.) She doesn’t sound like a turkey.*

OLD DUCK: She faking it...to trick us.

MAMA DUCK: Well, there’s one way to find out if she’s a turkey or not. We’ll go swimming. If she’s a turkey, she’ll sink to the bottom of the pond. If she floats, she’s a duckling.

OLD DUCK: It’ll sink like a lead balloon.

MAMA DUCK: We’ll see. Okay, ducklings, let’s get quacking. *(They quack loudly as Mama Duck leads them in a row around the stage with the Old Duck bringing up the rear. Mimes 1, 2 remove the eggshells from the area and disappear. The Ducks go SL. Signals to her ducklings.) Stop! (Ducklings bump into each other and squabble.) I said, stop! (Ducklings halt.) I hear something...*

(Darcie and Marcie, enter SR, carrying a plastic toad.)

DARCIE: *(To Marcie.) Good food! (Shurps.)*

MARCIE: A tasty toad! (*Slurps.*)

(*Scary Cat enters SR, runs up behind them, and snarls and hisses.*)

SCARY CAT: (*To Darcie and Marcie.*) Grrrr! Sssssst!

(*Ducks turn, see Scary Cat, and become frightened.*)

DARCIE: A cat!

MARCIE: A scary cat!

DARCIE: Run!

MARCIE: Run from the scary cat!

(*As Darcie and Marcie start to waddle to CS, Scary Cat runs around them and faces them. Mama Duck protects her ducklings by trying to hide them under her wings. Old Duck is also caught under her wing.*)

OLD DUCK: Hey! What? Stop, stop.

SCARY CAT: (*To Darcie and Marcie.*) I like good food, says the Scary Cat. I like tasty food. Gimme! (*Demands the dead toad.*)

DARCIE: No!

MARCIE: (*To Scary Cat.*) It's ours!

SCARY CAT: It's mine now!

(*Scary Cat reaches for the toad, but Darcie and Marcie pull it back.*)

DARCIE: You can't have it.

MARCIE: (*To Scary Cat.*) We found it.

SCARY CAT: (*To Darcie and Marcie, threatening.*) If you don't give me that food, I'll scratch your eyes out. How would you like that?

DARCIE: (*Scared.*) If you did that, we couldn't see.

SCARY CAT: That's right, says the Scary Cat.

MARCIE: Oh! Please don't do that.

SCARY CAT: If you don't give me that dead toad, I'll rip your feathers off. How would you like that?

DARCIE: If you did that, we couldn't fly.

SCARY CAT: That's right, says the Scary Cat. You'd fall out of the sky.

MARCIE: And we couldn't float on water.

SCARY CAT: That's double right, says the Scary Cat. You'd sink to the bottom of the lake.

DARCIE/MARCIE: Oh!

SCARY CAT: So gimme!

DARCIE/MARCIE: No!

(Scary Cat snarls again and grabs the toad. Darcie and Marcie screech and quack as they play tug-of-war with Scary Cat. Scary Cat claws Darcie.)

DARCIE: Owwww! *(Starts to cry.)*

SCARY CAT: *(To Marcie.)* You're next, warns the Scary Cat.

(Scary Cat raises his claw. Marcie hands him the toad.)

MARCIE: Here. Take it. Take it and go away.

(Scary Cat snatches the toad.)

SCARY CAT: *(Smiles.)* Gee, thanks. Got anything else I want?

MARCIE: No.

SCARY CAT: Cat-cha later, says the Scary Cat.

(Scary Cat laughs and starts to exit but suddenly halts and turns back to look at Summer. Unaware of any danger, Summer waves to Scary Cat, who starts to wave back but stops himself and exits SR. Marcie and Darcie cry on each other's shoulder.)

MAMA DUCK: Summer! Don't wave at the Scary Cat! Always beware of him. He's very dangerous.

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SUMMER: Yes, Mama Duck.

OLD DUCK: (*Pushing his way out from under her wing.*) Let me out of here! I'm a grown duck. I can take care of myself.

MARY: It was a cat.

CARRIE: (*To Old Duck.*) A scary cat.

OLD DUCK: Oh. Well, in that case, maybe I could use a little protection. (*Burrows back under Mama Duck's wing.*)

DARCIE: (*To Marcie, as she dries her tears.*) I'm still hungry.

(*Carrie rushes to Darcie.*)

CARRIE: Me, too.

MARCIE: Who are you?

CARRIE: I'm Carrie, a duckling.

DARCIE: I'm Marcie. I'm a duckling, too.

MARCIE: No, I'm Marcie. You're Darcie.

DARCIE: I thought I was Marcie.

MARCIE: I'm Marcie. You're Darcie.

DARCIE: Are you sure?

MARCIE: Yes. You're Marcie, and I'm Darcie.

DARCIE: That's what I said.

MARCIE: That's what I said.

CARRIE: I'm confused.

DARCIE: *You're* confused?! We don't even know which of us is which.

(*They talk in mime.*)

MAMA DUCK: (*To Old Duck, who is still under her wing.*) The danger's over now.

OLD DUCK: (*Peeps out.*) Are you sure? (*Comes out of his hiding place and looks around suspiciously.*) It's clear as far as I can see...which isn't very far.

MARY: Mama, the cat stole their food.

SUMMER: Mama, the cat scratched... (*Indicating Darcie.*)
...that duckling.

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LARRY: (*Balls up his "fists" as best a feathered fowl can.*) I'd like to get my hands—

MAMA DUCK: Ducks don't have hands.

LARRY: My fists—

MAMA DUCK: We don't have fists, either.

LARRY: My wings, then. I'd like to get my wings on that mean Scary Cat!

MAMA DUCK: Stay away from him. He has very sharp claws.

LARRY: I'm not afraid of his claws.

MAMA DUCK: His teeth are like needles.

LARRY: I'm not afraid of his teeth.

OLD DUCK: He's bigger than you.

LARRY: I'm not afraid...uh, bigger?

OLD DUCK: A lot bigger. And faster.

LARRY: (*Nervously.*) Yeah, well, anyway, he's gone now. He probably saw me, got scared, and ran for the woods.

OLD DUCK: Dream on, little one.

SUMMER: Are we safe now, Mama?

MAMA DUCK: I think so. And we're ready for our morning swim.

SUMMER: Where are we going to do that?

MAMA DUCK: In the pond.

SUMMER: What pond?

(Mimes 1, 2 enter and quickly spread a single blue tarp or cloth on the floor to represent the pond.)

MAMA DUCK: That pond.

(Mimes 1, 2 stand upstage. Gramma Duck enters SR and crosses to CS, avoiding the "pond." She wears glasses, an apron, an old-fashioned bonnet, and carries a broom.)

GRAMMA DUCK: Well, well, Mama Duck. How are you doing, dearie?

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MAMA DUCK: Just ducky, Gramma Duck.

GRAMMA DUCK: You shouldn't be out in this hot sun without a bonnet, you know. You could get sunburned.

MAMA DUCK: I think our feathers will protect us from the sun.

MARCIE: *(To Gramma Duck.)* The Scary Cat stole our food.

DARCIE: *(To Gramma Duck.)* The Scary Cat scratched me...and it hurts.

GRAMMA DUCK: The Scary Cat?! *(Holds up her broom for protection.)* Where is he? Where is that sneaky thief? I'll sweep him up and bash him with my broom!

MAMA DUCK: He's gone.

GRAMMA DUCK: *(Lowers her broom.)* Lucky for him. You shouldn't be out in this dangerous area without a broom, you know. You could get attacked.

MAMA DUCK: I think I can protect my new babies. My pecking will keep the cat away.

GRAMMA DUCK: *(Notices the ducklings.)* Oh, dearie, I see your eggs finally hatched. What a nice group of ducklings. *(Counts them, including Marcie and Darcie.)* Let me see...one, two, three...four, five, six. Six ducklings! My, my, my!

MAMA DUCK: No, Gramma Duck. Four. Four of them are mine. Mary, Carrie, Larry... *(Each of them raises a wing when his/her name is called.)*

GRAMMA DUCK: They are so cute!

OLD DUCK: Cute? Obviously, you haven't seen this one.

(Old Duck pushes Summer forward.)

SUMMER: *(To Gramma Duck, shyly.)* Hi. I'm Summer.

GRAMMA DUCK: *(Gasps. To Mama Duck.)* Oh, my! *(Indicating Summer.)* Is that one of yours?!

MAMA DUCK: Of course.

GRAMMA DUCK: I'm so sorry...

MAMA DUCK: Why are you sorry?

GRAMMA DUCK: Well, it's...it's so...so ugly!

SUMMER: *(To Mama Duck.)* I'm ugly?

MAMA DUCK: No, Summer. You're not ugly. You're...

(Thinks.) ...you're....

OLD DUCK/GRAMMA DUCK: U-u-u-u-uglyyyyyy!

OLD DUCK: *(To Gramma Duck.)* I've identified it as a turkey!

GRAMMA DUCK: A turkey? Well, that would explain it.

Turkeys are—

OLD DUCK/GRAMMA DUCK: U-u-u-u-uglyyyyyy!

DARCIE: Let me see... *(Takes a closer look at Summer.)* Oh, golly!

MARCIE: Let me see... *(Takes a closer look at Summer.)* Oh, golly-wally-golly!

DARCIE: Is that what a turkey looks like?

SUMMER: Stop saying that. I'm not a turkey. *(Pause.)* I don't think—

DARCIE: Oh, I know! She's a dog!

(Mime 1 pulls a huge bone from his bag and holds it out to Summer.)

SUMMER: I'm not a dog.

DARCIE: Say, "arf-arf."

SUMMER: I'm not a dog!

(Mime 1 replaces the bone in his bag and moves back into his position.)

MARCIE: Maybe she's a cat.

(Mime 2 pulls a squeaky toy from his bag, holds it in front of Summer, and makes it squeak.)

SUMMER: I'm not a cat.

MARCIE: Say, "meow-meow."

SUMMER: I'm not a cat!

(Mime 2 replaces the toy in his bag and moves back into his position.)

MAMA DUCK: Let's have no more of this silliness.

GRAMMA DUCK: *(Confidently.)* I think she's a tree trunk.

(Mimes 1, 2 step forward and then jerk to a stop. Everyone turns toward Gramma Duck with puzzled looks on their faces.)

MAMA DUCK: A tree trunk?!

GRAMMA DUCK: Well, I mean, she's got this...you know...along with a tall...I mean, there's...you know...

OLD DUCK: I'm telling you, it's a turkey.

MAMA DUCK: She's not a turkey. And she's certainly not a tree trunk. She doesn't even have any leaves.

GRAMMA DUCK: A leafless tree trunk...

MAMA DUCK: *(Trying to ignore them.)* Oh! We're going for a swim in the pond.

GRAMMA DUCK: I wouldn't do that, if I were you.

OLD DUCK: *(To Mama Duck.)* That turkey will sink like a lead balloon.

DARCIE: *(To Mama Duck.)* She'll sink.

MARCIE: *(To Mama Duck.)* She'll drown.

GRAMMA DUCK: *(To Mama Duck.)* Turkeys are not good swimmers.

MAMA DUCK: We shall see. Come, ducklings, follow me. *(Jumps into pond and turns back to Ducklings.)* Come on...into the pond...

(Mary jumps into the pond and swims a few paces.)

MARY: Hey, this is fun!

(Carrie jumps into the pond and swims a few paces.)

CARRIE: It's okay, but I'd rather eat.

(Larry runs and plops into the pond.)

LARRY: Wheee!

(Mary and Carrie flinch and scream as if being hit by flying water. Summer hesitates.)

MAMA DUCK: Your turn, Summer...

SUMMER: I know. I just...I just...

OLD DUCK: Stop wasting time! *(Shoves Summer into the pond and laughs.)* Sink, you repulsive turkey!

SUMMER: Ahhhh! *(Flounders for a few seconds.)* Ahh, ohhh, ewww, ahhhh! *(Straightens up, swims a few paces, and smiles.)* Oh! Mama, this is nice! I like swimming!

MAMA DUCK: *(To others.)* I knew it! I told you. She's not a turkey. *(Pause.)* But I sure wish I knew what she is.

GRAMMA DUCK: She doesn't look like any duck I've ever seen.

OLD DUCK: *(To Mama Duck.)* I still say she's a turkey...

DARCIE: *(Taunting Summer.)* Gobble-gobble.

MARCIE: *(Taunting Summer.)* Gobble-dee-gobble-dee-gobble-dee.

MAMA DUCK: Well, whatever she is...she's mine, and I will love her and protect her forever.

(Mama Duck warmly embraces Summer.)

SUMMER: *(Smiles.)* Thanks, Mama.

OLD DUCK: This is outrageous, Mama Duck. You'll be an outcast from the duck community.

GRAMMA DUCK: *(To Mama Duck.)* You'll never be allowed to bring that...that *thing*...into my barnyard.

DARCIE/MARCIE: *(Chant.)* She's a turkey, she's a turkey, she's a turkey—

SUMMER: *(Angrily.)* Stop it, stop it! Stop saying that! *(Others pause and watch her.)* I am not a turkey! I am not! *(Swims for*

shore, steps out of the pond, shakes off the water, and turns to face them.) But what if I were? What if I were a turkey? Would that be so bad? Turkeys are birds, too.

(Mama Duck, Mary, Carrie, and Larry approach Summer.)

MAMA DUCK: Pay no attention to them, honey. We're your family.

OLD DUCK: Well, it's certainly not a part of my family.

GRAMMA DUCK: *(To Mama Duck.)* Nor mine. Since I'm not a tree.

SUMMER: *(To Mama Duck.)* You're wonderful, Mama Duck. And I love you very much. But even you don't know what I really am.

MAMA DUCK: It doesn't matter.

SUMMER: It does matter. To me it matters. I just don't feel comfortable being a duck. I know I'm different from you and Mary and Carrie and Larry. And I want to know why. So I'm going to find out. *(Moves SL and turns back.)* No matter where I have to go, or how long it takes, I intend to discover my true self. Goodbye. *(Starts to cry and rushes off SL.)*

OLD DUCK: Good riddance...

GRAMMA DUCK: Do you see that? She waddles just like a tree trunk!

(Puzzled, the others stare at Gramma Duck for a few seconds.)

MAMA DUCK: Tree trunks don't waddle.

GRAMMA DUCK: That one does.

OLD DUCK: Only a turkey would run off like that.

(Darcie heads SR.)

DARCIE: *(To Marcie.)* Come on, Darcie. Let's find some more food.

MARCIE: Okay. But I'm Marcie.

DARCIE: Then who am I?

MARCIE: My sister.

DARCIE: Oh...right.

(Marcie and Darcie exit SR.)

GRAMMA DUCK: *(To Mama Duck.)* You're lucky she ran off like that. *(Exits SR.)*

OLD DUCK: *(To Mama Duck.)* She was nothing but trouble.

(Old Duck exits SR. Mama Duck starts to exit SR.)

MAMA DUCK: Come along, ducklings.

MARY: Did Summer run away, Mama?

CARRIE: *(To Mama Duck.)* Is she going to get lost in the woods?

MAMA DUCK: No, honey. She won't get lost. She'll just spend a little time...trying to find herself. *(Leads them SR.)*

LARRY: Man, I would like to wring their necks!

MAMA DUCK: Whose necks?

LARRY: Any necks that would make fun of my sister!

(Mama Duck puts her wing around Larry.)

MAMA DUCK: *(Smiles.)* Mama's little drake.

(Mama Duck and Ducklings exit SR. After a few seconds, Scary Cat enters USR, snarls, and looks around.)

SCARY CAT: The big one went thatta way, observed the Scary Cat. *(Points off SL.)* And since she's all alone, I should have no trouble catching her...and dining on baby duck...or goose...or turkey...whatever she is. Look out, little birdie, little birdie. Scary Cat is on your trail!

(Scary Cat snarls and waves his claws as if boxing someone. Then he scampers off after Summer. Mimes 1, 2 remove the tarp or cloth and place tall marsh grasses about the stage. They exit. The lights change slightly to indicate a change in time. Honking like geese, Gretchen and Gil Goose enter SR.)

GRETCHEN: *(Flapping her wings.)* I really dread the trip, Gil.

My wings are tired from just thinking about it.

GIL: Yeah, well, you can stay here if you want to. I'm flying south for the winter...like all smart geese do.

GRETCHEN: *(Happily daydreaming.)* Have you ever wondered what it would be like to stay here in the north and play in the snow?

GIL: No. Have you ever wondered what it would be like to stay here in the north and freeze to death in the snow?

GRETCHEN: No.

GIL: How about this...I'll fly south and stay warm while you remain here and freeze to death. And when I come back in the spring, you can tell me what it was like.

GRETCHEN: What? You don't make any sense. If I freeze to death, I won't be able to tell you anything.

GIL: That's my point, Gretchen. *(They hear some geese flying overhead. Gil points to the sky, and the two of them look up and watch the geese fly across the sky.)* Look! There go some geese now...flying south.

GRETCHEN: Geese.

GIL: Them, too.

GRETCHEN: No. You said "geeses." You keep saying "geeses." It's not "geeses." It's "geese."

GIL: So you're a geese?

GRETCHEN: No, I'm not a geese. I'm a goose.

GIL: *(Points to sky.)* Then they must be geeses.

GRETCHEN: *(Exasperated.)* What? No. You don't make any sense.

GIL: The geese and the geeses...they're all flying south...because that's what geese and geeses do in the autumn.

GRETCHEN: (*Annoyed.*) Oh! You are so exasperating!

(*The sounds of the geese fade and disappear. Summer enters SL, looking sad. She sees Gil and Gretchen.*)

SUMMER: Excuse me, I'm trying to find myself.

GIL: Well, look no further...because we found you, and you are right here.

SUMMER: I know where I am. I just don't know *what* I am.

GIL: Well, that's easy. You're a baby...uh...

GRETCHEN: (*To Summer.*) Duck?

(*Summer shakes her head no.*)

GIL: Chicken?

(*Summer shakes her head no.*)

GRETCHEN: Turkey?

(*Summer vigorously shakes her head no.*)

GIL: Horse? (*Gretchen and Summer give him a puzzled look.*)
What?

GRETCHEN: She can't be a horse.

GIL: Why not?

GRETCHEN: Because she doesn't look like a horse.

GIL: Well, I don't know... (*Trying to imagine.*) If she had a mane on her neck...and four legs...and a bushy tail...and was maybe ten feet taller, she could pass for a horse.

GRETCHEN: She's not a horse!

GIL: Okay, okay. (*Smiles.*) A goose, then. She's a goose...just like us!

(Gretchen and Gil look Summer over.)

GRETCHEN: Maybe...

SUMMER: *(Hopefully.)* You think so?

GIL: Not really. You're too ugly.

GRETCHEN: Gil!

GIL: Well, it's not my fault she's so ugly.

GRETCHEN: Gil!

GIL: Okay, it *is* my fault she's so ugly.

GRETCHEN: I didn't say that.

GIL: Well, whatever she is...she could fly south for the winter with us.

SUMMER: How far is that?

GIL: I don't know. Ten inches?

GRETCHEN: Ten inches? This is ten inches. *(Demonstrates by holding up her two wings ten inches apart.)* You don't make any sense. *(To Summer.)* It's maybe a thousand miles.

SUMMER: Is that a long way?

GRETCHEN: Well, it's more than ten inches. A lot more.

SUMMER: I'm not strong enough to fly very far.

BUCK: *(Offstage.)* You see 'em, Bill?

BILL: *(Offstage.)* I see 'em, Buck.

BUCK: *(Offstage.)* Aim fer their eyeballs, boy.

BILL: *(Offstage.)* I'll git the one on the right.

SUMMER: *(To Gil and Gretchen.)* What's that?

GIL: *(Looks in the direction of the voices. To Gretchen and Summer.)* Hunters!

SUMMER: Hunters? What are they hunting for?

(A gunshot is heard.)

BILL: *(Offstage. Shouts.)* Bang!

GIL: *(To Gretchen and Summer.)* Gooses! They're hunting for geoses. Head for the hills, Gretchen!

GRETCHEN: Now you're making sense!

THE U-U-UGLY DUCKLING

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(Another gunshot. Gil jumps up as if avoiding a bullet, grabs Gretchen, and the two of them scamper off SL as fast as they can go. Summer is so frightened, she cannot move and begins to shake.)

BILL: *(Offstage. Shouts.)* Bang!

BUCK: *(Offstage.)* You done missed 'em, Bill.

BILL: *(Offstage.)* So did you, Buck.

(Gil quickly enters, dragging Gretchen by her wing.)

GIL: *(To Summer, shouts.)* Run, you big ugly baby!

GRETCHEN: *(To Summer, shouts.)* Or they'll shoot you!

GIL: *(To Summer, shouts.)* And eat you for dinner!

(Gil and Gretchen quickly exit SL. Buck, a teen dressed in hunting garb and carrying a toy shotgun, enters. Bill, a pre-teen dressed similarly and carrying a branch as if it were a rifle, enters. Summer is frozen with fear and doesn't move.)

BUCK: *(Looking off toward the geese.)* Ya missed 'em agin, Bill.

BILL: Well, I ain't likely to shoot nuthin' when you make me use this branch fer a gun. An' you won't even give me no ammo. I gotta yell, "Bang!" instead. That ain't very effective, ya know.

BUCK: Still, ya shoul'da bagged one of them geeses.

BILL: How come you didn't hit one of 'em?

BUCK: *(Embarrassed.)* Oh. Well, ya know...I was jist givin' you a chance to make yer first hit.

(Bill sees Summer and quickly aims his branch at her.)

BILL: Buck! Buck! I got me one! Right [cheer]! [*"here"*]

BUCK: One what?

(Buck crosses to Bill.)

BILL: One geese, that's whut.

BUCK: Why, that ain't no geese.

BILL: It ain't?

BUCK: Naw. Why, that's a...uh...uh...

BILL: Whut? Whut is it?

BUCK: I told you, it's a...uh...

(Mime 1 enters and pulls a long-haired female wig from his bag and quickly puts it on Summer's head. He gestures for her to act like a girl. At first, Summer does not understand, but after more prodding, she puts on an act.)

SUMMER: *(Uses the hunters' slang.)* Hi, fellars. I'm jist a cute little ol' gal out here in the woods picking...uh...

BILL: [Flyers]? [*"flowers"*]

(Summer shakes her head no.)

BUCK: Blackburries?

(Summer shakes her head no.)

BILL: Sassafras roots?

(Summer shakes her head no.)

BUCK: Then whut in tarnation [ere] you a-pickin'? [*"are"*]

SUMMER: Uh, mudbugs.

BILL: She's a-lyin', Buck. There ain't no mudbugs up cheer in the north. Let me shoot 'er.

BUCK: Naw. She's too ugly. We take somethin' like [kat] home, an' folks'll laugh at us from here to Sundee. [*"that"*]
(Looks off SL.) Hey! I see sumthin' over thar. Come on!
(Moves several paces.)

BILL: Naw. I wanna shoot 'er.

BUCK: Okay, all right. Shoot 'er. Then come on. *(Exits SL.)*

BILL: *(To Summer.)* Ha! Gotcha...uh...whatever you may be. *(Holds up stick, shouts.)* Bang! *(Summer, looks at herself, expecting to be hurt. But she isn't. So she looks at Mime 1, who pulls a small bouquet of flowers from his bag, hands them to her, and encourages her to play dead. Holds up stick, shouts louder.)* I said, "Bang!"

SUMMER: *(Realizes.)* Oh. *(Staggers and falls down onto her back and holds the flowers across her chest.)*

BILL: Ha! Got me one! Hey, Buck! I got me a ugly one!

(Bill exits after Buck. Scary Cat enters SR and sees Summer, but Summer does not see him.)

SCARY CAT: There it is...dinner, says the Scary Cat! She may be ugly, but a cat will eat anything. *(Pause.)* Okay, most cats are choosy and will only eat the finest meat smothered in hot gravy and spicy onions and served on the most expensive plates. But me...I'll eat anything.

(Scary Cat tiptoes toward Summer. Summer sits up facing SL and doesn't see Scary Cat.)

SUMMER: "Bang"? He thinks he killed me with a "bang"?

SCARY CAT: My dinner is talking to itself.

(Summer hands Mime 1 the wig and flowers.)

SUMMER: *(To Mime 1.)* Here. I don't think I need these any longer.

SCARY CAT: My dinner is talking to somebody who's not there, says the Scary Cat.

(Mime 1 sees the Scary Cat, becomes excited, and points toward him. Summer does not understand Mime 1. Mime 1 anxiously jumps up and down and points several times. Summer stands and faces Mime 1.)

SUMMER: *(To Mime 1.)* What? What is it? *(Finally, Mime 1 takes Summer's head in his hands and turns her head to face the Scary Cat. She now sees him.)* Oh...a cat! *(Mime 1 indicates to Summer that it is a vicious cat.)* Oh...a Scary Cat!

SCARY CAT: That's right, oh dinner of mine. *(Mime 2 enters SR, pulls a bib from his bag, and places it over the Scary Cat's head. Then he pulls a plastic knife and fork from his bag and puts one in each of the Scary Cat's hands. Rubs the two utensils against each other.)* I think I'm ready now, says the Scary Cat.

(Scary Cat approaches Summer.)

SUMMER: *(Shaking with fear.)* R-r-r-ready for w-w-what?

SCARY CAT: Ready for this delicious entrée. *(As the Scary Cat steps toward the frightened Summer, a gunshot is heard SL. Shocked, the Scary Cat jumps, and Mimes 1, 2 hide behind something. He pauses.)* What was that?

BILL: *(Offstage. Shouts.)* Bang!

BUCK: *(Offstage.)* It's a 'possum, Bill! Shoot it!

BILL: *(Offstage. Shouts.)* Bang!

SCARY CAT: *(Shouts in the direction of Buck and Bill.)* I'm not a 'possum, you numbskulls! I'm a cat! A Scary Cat!

(Buck and Bill enter and aim their weapons at Scary Cat, who puts his paws up as if being arrested.)

BILL: That don't look like no 'possum, Buck.

BUCK: I know a 'possum when I see one, Bill. Shoot it!

BILL: *(Holds stick up, shouts.)* Bang!

SCARY CAT: Yeeiii! *(Pulls off his bib. Tosses the bib and plastic knife and fork at Mime 2.)* Yeeiii! Don't shoot, don't shoot! *(Runs off SR.)*

BILL: I already shot.

BUCK: You missed 'im.

BILL: I got 'im dead on, but I ain't got no ammo!

BUCK: I'll git 'im. (*Fires the rifle toward Scary Cat. To Bill.*)
Come on! We can track 'em. (*Runs off SR.*)

BILL: (*To Summer.*) Hey! I thought I kilt you awhile ago.
(*Mime 2 picks up the bib and utensils and exits SL. At the same time, Mime 1 rushes to Summer and takes out the wig and bouquet from his bag. He puts the wig on Summer's head backward and shoves the flowers into her hands upside down. Summer partially straightens her wig and the flowers and pretends to be shot and falls down. The Mime indicates to Bill that Summer is dead. To Summer.*) That's better. I'll be back later to skin ya.

(*Summer sits up.*)

SUMMER: Skin me?! (*Hearing this, Bill turns to look back at Summer, but Mime 1 pushes Summer back down with his foot. Bill turns away. Summer sits up.*) You can't skin me!

(*Bill turns to look back at Summer but Mime 1 pushes Summer back down. Summer starts to sit up, but Mime 1 holds her down. Bill crosses to Summer and looks closely at her.*)

BILL: Hmmm... (*Turns SR, shouts.*) Hey, Buck! Wait fer me!
I'm a-comin'!

(*Bill exits SR. A gunshot is heard off SR. Mime 1 moves away from Summer and holds his ears. Summer sits up.*)

SCARY CAT: Yeeei!!!! (*Rushes on SR, holding his butt where he was shot.*) He got me! He got me! Yeeei!!!!

BUCK: (*Offstage.*) I hit sumthin'. I know I did. (*Rushes on SR and sees Scary Cat.*) There he is...the 'possum! I hit 'im in his sit-down place!

SCARY CAT: (*Insulted.*) I'm not a 'possum, you ninny! I'm a cat. At cat! A cat!

[END OF FREEVIEW]