

Chantecler!



Heather Lynn

Adapted from the play by Edmond Rostand

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

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**BIG DOG PUBLISHING
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Chantecler!

COMEDY. Adapted from the play by Edmond Rostand. When Chantecler, a barnyard rooster, attends the Guinea Hen's soirée, he isn't intimidated by the fancy roosters in attendance. While they may have fancy feathers, Chantecler proudly struts around knowing that it is his crowing that causes the sun to rise every morning. Annoyed that their nighttime hunting is brought to an end at dawn every day, the owls and other night birds concoct a devious plan to rid themselves of Chantecler and his crowing. Audiences of all ages will love this witty comedy and its charming cast of characters.

Performance Time: Approximately 90-120 minutes.



Edmond Rostand
(1868-1918)

About the Story

French poet and dramatist Edmond Eugène Alexis Rostand was born in Marseilles, France, to a wealthy family. Rostand was inspired to write *Chantecler* after traveling to the south of France, where he spent time in the countryside recuperating from a bout of ill health. Rostand wrote several other plays including *The Romancers* but is best known for what is now considered his masterpiece, *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

Characters

(13 M, 11 F, 27 flexible, extras)

(With doubling: 12 M, 10 F, 21 flexible. Tripling possible.)

CHANTECLER: Proud, ordinary, farmyard rooster with a red comb who thinks his crowing causes the sun to rise; male.

PATOU: Shaggy farmyard mutt who is Chantecler's loyal friend; dislikes the Blackbird and Cat; flexible.

BLACKBIRD: Sassy, humorous pet blackbird who lives in a cage; flexible.

PHEASANT HEN: Beautiful golden pheasant from the forest who falls in love with Chantecler; female.

OLD HEN: Chantecler's elderly foster mother who lives in a wicker basket; female.

GUINEA HEN: Society hen who loves to host tea parties; female.

YOUNG GUINEA COCK: Guinea Hen's son; male.

MAGPIE: Announces guests at Guinea Hen's tea party; wears a black coat and tie; flexible.

TORTOISE: Has a tendency to be habitually late; flexible.

GREY HEN: Grey hen who is in love with a cuckoo clock because he is Swiss and a "thinker"; female.

WHITE HEN: White hen who thinks she is Chantecler's favorite hen; female.

BLACK HEN: Black hen who thinks she is Chantecler's favorite hen; female.

SPECKLED HEN: Speckled hen who thinks she is Chantecler's favorite hen; female.

CHICK 1: Speckled Hen's chick; flexible.

TUFTED HEN: Tufted hen who thinks she is Chantecler's favorite hen; female.

PIGEON: Carrier pigeon who works as a postal carrier for the Postal Service of the Air and is one of Chantecler's biggest fans; male.

PIGEON 2: Pigeon's wife who is one of Chantecler's biggest fans; female.

CAT: Farmyard cat who doesn't like dogs; flexible.

GUINEA PIG: Khaki-colored guinea pig; flexible.

BRIFFAUT: English hunting dog with long ears; flexible.

PEACOCK: Haughty peacock who thinks he is fashionable; male.

ROOSTER WYANDOTTE OF ANDALUSIA: Fancy rooster with a strawberry-colored coronet; male.

ROSE-FOOTED SCOTCH-GREY ROOSTER: Fancy grey rooster with rose-colored feet; male.

BLUE ROOSTER OF ANDALUSIA: Fancy blue rooster; male.

ROOSTER OF MESOPOTAMIA: Fancy rooster that has a double comb; male.

ROOSTER BRAEKEL OF CAMPINE: Fancy white rooster braided with black; male.

WHITE PILE ROOSTER: Famous fighting rooster with a docked comb; male.

CHICKEN 1-3: Chickens who don't like Chantecler because his picture is on all the Farmer's plates and the weathervanes; flexible.

GANDER: Goose; male.

DUCK: Doesn't like Chantecler because he's not web-footed; flexible.

TURKEY: Turkey who has known Chantecler since he was a chick and gave him bugle lessons; female.

MOLE: Mole who hates Chantecler because he has never seen him; takes the "subway"; flexible.

GRAND DUKE: Leader of the Screech Owls; hates Chantecler because he thinks his crowing causes enlargement of the spleen and pericarditis; male.

SCREECH OWL 1, 2, 3: Flexible.

OLD HORNED OWL: Old horned owl; flexible.

SCOPS: Small scheming owl; flexible.

WOODPECKER: A scholar on the language of birds; wears a green coat with a buff waistcoat and a red skull cap; flexible.

BIG TOAD: Leader of the Toads; flexible.

TOAD 2, 3, 4, 5: Toad knights of this Fungoid Round Table who hate the Nightingale because they are envious of his singing talent; live in the forest; flexible.

NIGHTINGALE: Nightingale who sings beautifully; flexible.

NIGHTINGALE 2: Nightingale who sings beautifully; flexible.

MANAGER: Theatre manager; wears evening dress; flexible.

FARMER: Farmer who owns the farmyard where Chantecler lives; voice only; male.

FARMER'S WIFE: Wife; voice only; female.

EXTRAS: As Cuckoo, Acme Incubator Chicks, Chickens, and Night Birds.

Options for Doubling

FARMER/PEACOCK (male)
FARMER'S WIFE/WHITE HEN (female)
MANAGER/DUCK (flexible)
BIG TOAD/SCREECH OWL 1 (flexible)
TOAD 2/SCREECH OWL 2 (flexible)
TOAD 3/SCREECH OWL 3 (flexible)
TOAD 4/TURKEY (flexible)
TOAD 5/GUINEA PIG (flexible)

Setting

A farmyard and a forest.

Sets

Farmyard. There is a backdrop that depicts a country landscape with flowers. At the back, there is a low wall. At SR, there is a house covered with wisteria and there is a cat door at the foot of the door. At SL, there is a farmyard gate that leads to the road. A doghouse for Patou, a cage for the Blackbird, and old covered wicker basket for the Old Hen are present. There is also a small drinking trough. A ladder leads to the henhouse.

Hillside. Moss-grown and ferny, it overlooks a valley with scattered villages and a winding river. There is a crumbling wall, a gigantic chestnut tree, and hollies and foxgloves. There are gardening implements lying on the ground, logs, and broken flowerpots. Night Birds will “perch” in tiers of branches, briars, and stones. There is one tree branch above the rest for the Grand Duke to “perch.”

Garden. A garden that is enclosed on the sides by hedges. At the back is a vine-covered fence with vegetables and flowers of all kinds. There is a scarecrow dressed in an old coat, a pair of trousers, and opera hat.

Forest. There is a backdrop depicting rising slopes carpeted with heather and huge trees with thick gnarled roots. At the base of one of the trees a lightning strike has hollowed out a chamber in the tree. There is a large toadstool that serves as a table for the Toads.

Synopsis of Scenes

ACT I: Farmyard.

ACT II: Hillside.

ACT III: Farmer’s garden.

ACT IV: Forest.

Props

Cage (large enough for Blackbird)	Logs
Old wicker-looking basket with lid (large enough for Old Hen)	Wheelbarrow
Butterfly net	Broken chain
Doghouse (large enough for Patou)	Dog collar, for Patou
Small drinking trough	Watering can
Dog food bowl	Cabbage leaf
Tied bundles of brushwood	Bird net/snare
	Large toadstool
	Nightingale
	2 Feathers

Special Effects

Horse pawing	Glowing yellow Owl eyes
Cracking of a whip	Stars in the sky
Bells on a harness	Sun rising
Bumblebee	Cutout of a donkey's head that can be raised and lowered
Violins tuning up	Hee-haw (donkey)
Hen	Rooster crowing
Cuckoo	Assorted sounds of human activity (hammers, bells, laughter, singing, cracking of whips, grinding noises)
Woodpecker rapping three times	Bird warbling
Knocks	Dark shadow of a hawk circling
Butterfly attached to a fishing line and pole	Rustling of leaves
Sound of a hunting horn	Twigs snapping
Grating noise	Owls hooting
Cuckoo clock	Sound of a nightingale
Gunshot	
Distant whistle (to call a dog)	
Glowing green cat eyes	

***“And you believe that
at the sound of your voice
the whole world is lit?”***

—Pheasant hen

Prologue

(Before the curtain. Three knocks are heard. The curtain wavers and then begins to rise.)

MANAGER: *(Shouts.)* Not yet! *(Hurries toward the stage.)* Not yet!
(The curtain is lowered. Manager listens to the sounds coming from behind the curtain. The curtain ripples as if about to rise. Shouts.) Stop!
Do not raise it yet!

FARMER: *(Behind the curtain. Sound of horse pawing.)* Whoa, Dapple!
Come along! We shan't get home till morning!

FARMER'S WIFE: Are you ready?

FARMER: Fasten the shutters!

FARMER'S WIFE: All right!

(Cracking of the whip is heard and then bells on a harness.)

FARMER: Gee up!

(Sound of horse hooves.)

MANAGER: *(To audience.)* The performance can begin. Man in leaving does not take with him all drama. Let us begin. *(Violins are heard tuning up. Footlights up. A Bumblebee is heard. A Hen is heard. A Cuckoo calls. A woodpecker's bill raps out the three strokes. To Audience.)* Hush! The curtain must go up. A woodpecker's bill has rapped out the three strokes!

Act 1

(AT RISE: A farmyard. At SR, there is a house covered with wisteria. At SL, the farmyard gate leads to the road. There is a doghouse. At the back, there is a low wall, beyond which depicts a distant country landscape. All Barnyard Animals are onstage. The Blackbird is in his cage. The Cat is asleep on the wall.)

WHITE HEN: *(Pecking.)* Ah! Delicious!

DUCK: What are you eating?

(Hens rush over.)

HENS: *(To White Hen, excited.)* What are you eating?

WHITE HEN: A small green beetle, crisp and nice, tasting of the rose leaves he had lived on.

(Black Hen is standing before the Blackbird's cage. Blackbird whistles.)

BLACK HEN: Really, the Blackbird whistles amazingly!

WHITE HEN: Any little street urchin can do as much!

DUCK: He never whistles his tune to the end.

TURKEY: You should know, Duck, that the thing in art is to leave off before the end! Bravo, Blackbird!

(Blackbird comes out in front of his cage and bows.)

CHICK 1: *(Astonished.)* He can get out?

BLACKBIRD: Applause is salt on my tail!

TURKEY: *(To Chick 1.)* He can come out, and he can go in again. His cage has a spring door.

(Black Hen catches the sight of a butterfly alighting on the flowers above the wall at the back.)

BLACK HEN: Oh, what a gorgeous butterfly!

WHITE HEN: Where?

BLACK HEN: *(Points.)* On the honeysuckle.

CHICK 1: *(To Speckled Hen.)* Mother, why does the cat hate the dog?

BLACKBIRD: Because he always steals his seat at the theatre.

CHICK 1: (*Surprised.*) They have a theatre?

BLACKBIRD: Where dumb shows are performed.

SPECKLED HEN: (*To White Hen, who is pecking.*) Do you peck peppers?

WHITE HEN: Constantly.

SPECKLED HEN: How can you stand the sting?

WHITE HEN: It imparts to the feathers a delicate, rosy tint.
(*"Cuckoo" is heard offstage.*) Listen! (*"Cuckoo" is heard.*) The Cuckoo!

(*Grey Hen runs over.*)

GREY HEN: (*Excitedly.*) Which Cuckoo? The one who lives in the woods...or the one who lives in the clock?

(*"Cuckoo" is heard but farther off.*)

WHITE HEN: (*To Grey Hen.*) The one in the woods.

GREY HEN: (*Sigh of relief.*) Oh, I was so afraid of having missed the other!

WHITE HEN: (*Stage whisper.*) Do you love him?

GREY HEN: (*Sadly.*) Without ever having set eyes on him. He lives in a chalet hanging on the kitchen wall above the farmer's great coat and shotgun. The moment he sings, I rush to the spot, but I never get there in time to see anything but his little door closing. This evening, I mean to stay right here beside the door. (*Takes up her position on the threshold.*)

PIGEON: (*Calls, offstage.*) White Hen!

(*A Pigeon appears. White Hen looks about with quick jerks of her head.*)

WHITE HEN: Who called me?

PIGEON: A pigeon.

WHITE HEN: (*Looking.*) Where?

PIGEON: Here.

WHITE HEN: (*Sees him.*) Ah!

PIGEON: Good evening, Hen!

WHITE HEN: Postman, how-de-do?

PIGEON: My duty for the Postal Service of the Air obliges me this summer evening to pass your habitations. I should be most happy if—

WHITE HEN: (*Spies a crumb.*) One moment, please.

(*White Hen pecks at the crumb. Black Hen runs over to White Hen.*)

BLACK HEN: (*Eagerly.*) What are you eating?

(*Other Hens run over.*)

HENS: (*Eagerly.*) What's she eating?

WHITE HEN: A grain of wheat.

GREY HEN: As I was saying, I mean to stay right on the doorstep there—

(*Grey Hen points to the door of the house. White Hen looks at the door.*)

WHITE HEN: The door is shut.

GREY HEN: Yes, but I shall hear the hour striking, and I will catch a look at my Cuckoo by stretching my neck—

PIGEON: (*Impatient.*) White Hen!

WHITE HEN: One moment, please! (*To Grey Hen.*) Catch a look at your Cuckoo by stretching your neck where? Where?

GREY HEN: (*Pointing her beak at the cat door, a small, round opening at the foot of the door.*) Through the cat door!

PIGEON: (*To White Hen, impatient, shouts.*) Helloooooo...whitest of hens!

(*White Hen hops over to the Pigeon.*)

WHITE HEN: You were saying?

PIGEON: I was about to say—

WHITE HEN: What, bluest of pigeons?

PIGEON: (*Shyly.*) If I might be so favored as to be permitted to get a glimpse—

WHITE HEN: Of what?

PIGEON: Oh, just a glimpse...a small glimpse of—

HENS: (*Impatiently.*) Of what?! What?!

PIGEON: (*Blurts out.*) Of his comb!

WHITE HEN: *(To Hens, laughing.)* Ha! Ha! He wishes to see—

PIGEON: *(Excited.)* That's it! Just to see—

WHITE HEN: There, there, cool down!

PIGEON: I am shaking with excitement!

WHITE HEN: You are shaking down the roof!

PIGEON: You don't know how we admire him!

WHITE HEN: *(Annoyed.)* Oh, everyone admires him.

PIGEON: And I promised my missus to tell her what he is like!

WHITE HEN: *(Pecking.)* Oh, he's a fine fellow, no doubt of that.

PIGEON: We can hear him crowing from our birdhouse. The one whose cry pierces the blue horizon like a gold-threaded needle stitching the hilltops to the sky! The Rooster he is! When you praise him, call him "The Rooster"!

BLACKBIRD: *(Hopping up and down in his cage.)* Tick-tock! Who sets all hearts a-beating? Tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock!

HENS: Our Rooster!

TURKEY: *(To Pigeon.)* He will soon be coming in from his usual round in the fields.

PIGEON: *(Impressed.)* You have the honor of his acquaintance?

TURKEY: *(Proudly.)* I have known him since he was a chick. This chick—for to me he is still a chick—used to come to me for his bugle lesson.

PIGEON: Indeed? You give lessons in—?

TURKEY: Most certainly. A bird who can gobble is qualified to teach crowing.

PIGEON: Where was he born?

TURKEY: *(Points to basket.)* In that old basket.

PIGEON: And is the hen that brooded him still living?

TURKEY: *(Points to basket.)* She is there.

PIGEON: Where?

TURKEY: *(Points to basket.)* In that old basket.

PIGEON: *(Interested.)* Of what breed is she?

TURKEY: She is just a good old-fashioned hen.

PIGEON: How proud she must be of having hatched such a rooster!

TURKEY: Yes, proud. Her beloved chick is all grown up. He is all she seems to understand or care about. *(Calls toward the basket.)* Hey, old lady!

(The lid of the basket lifts up and the Old Hen's head appears.)

PIGEON: *(To Old Hen, gently.)* Does it make you happy, Mother, to see that he has grown into such a fine, big rooster?

OLD HEN: *(Nods.)* Wednesday's crops do credit to Tuesday! *(The basket lid drops and her head disappears.)*

TURKEY: She opens now and then like that and shoots at us some such pearl of lore.

PIGEON: *(Calls.)* White Hen!

TURKEY: Not always wholly without point!

OLD HEN: *(Head pops up from basket.)* In the Peacock's absence, the Turkey spreads his tail!

(Turkey turns quickly around, but the lid has already dropped and the Old Hen's head has disappeared.)

PIGEON: *(To White Hen.)* Is it a fact that Chantecler is never hoarse...his voice never the least bit husky?

WHITE HEN: *(Pecking.)* Perfectly true.

PIGEON: Ah, you must be proud! A rooster who will be remembered five, ten, 15 years from now!

TURKEY: Very proud. Very proud.

PIGEON: *(To White Hen.)* This rooster, now...this rooster of yours...is it true that his song inspires, encourages, and keeps away birds of prey?

WHITE HEN: *(Pecking.)* Perfectly true.

PIGEON: Is it true...that he has a secret for his amazing singing?

WHITE HEN: Perfectly true.

PIGEON: That secret...that great secret...is it known to anyone?

WHITE HEN: No.

PIGEON: He has not even told his hen?

WHITE HEN: *(Correcting.)* His *hens*.

PIGEON: *(Shocked.)* Ah, he has more than one?

BLACKBIRD: He crows, remember. You only coo.

PIGEON: Well, then, he has not even told his favorite?

TUFTED HEN: No, he has not!

WHITE HEN: No, he has not!

BLACK HEN: No, he has not!

BLACKBIRD: Hush!

(A butterfly net appears above the wall, softly moving toward the Butterfly, who has settled on one of the flowers.)

HEN: (*Indicating net.*) What is that?

TURKEY: (*Solemnly.*) Fate!

WHITE HEN: Oh, a net...at the end of a cane!

(*Watching the net beyond the wall all adlib, "He'll catch it!" "No, he won't!" "Yes, he will!" etc. Suddenly, offstage "cock-a-doodle-doo!" is heard. At the sound, the Butterfly flies off. The net wavers a moment and then disappears.*)

BLACKBIRD: It's Chantecler!

PIGEON: (*Overly excited.*) Chantecler!

BLACK HEN: (*Looking off.*) He is coming!

WHITE HEN: (*Looking off.*) He is just outside— (*To Pigeon.*) Now you will see. He's a very fine bird, indeed.

TURKEY: (*Admiringly.*) Admirable!

BLACKBIRD: (*To Pigeon.*) How to describe Chantecler... (*Thinks.*)

You take a melon—a fine specimen—for the trunk. For the legs, two sticks of asparagus...prize sticks, of course. For the head, a red pepper...as handsome as you may find. For the eye, a currant. For the tail, a sheaf of leeks with a luxuriant blue-green stalk. For the ear, a dainty kidney bean. And there you have him...there's your rooster!

PIGEON: One thing you have omitted: his heavenly trumpet-like call!

(*Chantecler appears upon the wall.*)

BLACKBIRD: (*Indicating Chantecler, proudly.*) Yes, but you must admit my portrait is a true likeness.

PIGEON: (*Eyeing Chantecler.*) Not at all. Not in the very least.

CHANTECLER: (*On the wall, in a long guttural sigh.*) "Coa—"

BLACKBIRD: (*Aside to Pigeon.*) When he makes that noise in his throat, he either is in love or preparing some poetic outburst.

CHANTECLER: (*Motionless on the wall, with head skyward.*) Blaze forth in glory! Dazzle and irradiate the world! (*In a groan of tenderness.*) Coa...I worship thee!

PIGEON: (*To Blackbird, aside.*) To whom is he talking?

BLACKBIRD: To the sun. The sun!

CHANTECLER: (*To Sun.*)

I worship thee, O Sun! whose ample light,

Blessing every forehead, ripening every fruit,
Entering every flower and every hovel,
Pours itself forth and yet is never less,
Still spending and unspent—like mother's love!
I sing of thee.

(Turkey watches as Chantecler takes a series of stately hops descending a pile of hay.)

TURKEY: Here he comes, prouder than—

(Speckled Hen stops in front of a small drinking trough.)

SPECKLED HEN: *(Impressed.)* See there! The new-fangled drinking trough! *(Drinks.)* Handy!

(Chantecler struts about the yard. White Hen pecks at something. Other Hens rush over to her.)

HENS: *(To White Hen, eagerly.)* What are you eating?

WHITE HEN: Corn. Nothing but corn.

CHANTECLER: *(To sun.)*

I praise thee, Sun! Thou sheddest roses on the air,
Diamonds on the stream, enchantment on the hill;
A poor dull tree thou takest and turnest to green rapture,
O Sun, without whose golden magic...things
Would be no more than what they are!

PIGEON: *(Clapping.)* Bravo! I shall have something to tell my mate!
We shall long talk of this!

(Chantecler notices the Pigeon.)

CHANTECLER: *(To Pigeon.)* Young blue-winged stranger with new-fledged bill, thanks! *(Pigeon happily "flies" off. In a cordial voice, to the whole barnyard.)* To work now, all of you! *(To others.)* Come! Let us make of labor a delight! Come, all of you! High time, ganders, you escorted your geese to the pond.

GANDER: *(Lazily.)* Is it quite necessary, do you think?

(Chantecler briskly approaches Gander.)

CHANTECLER: Quite! And let there be no idle quacking! (*Geese exit in haste. To Chicken 1.*) You, Chicken, your task, as you know, is to pick off slugs...your full number before evening being 32.

GREY HEN: None of this is particularly interesting!

CHANTECLER: (*Annoyed.*) Everything is interesting! Go and sit on the eggs you have been entrusted with! (*To Speckled Hen.*) You, walk among the roses and verbenas and gobble every creature threatening them. (*To Black Hen.*) You, go to the rescue of cabbages in old neglected corners where the grasshopper lays siege to them! (*To White Hen.*) You— (*Old Hen's head pops up from basket. To Old Hen.*) Ah, there you are! Good day! Well, have I grown?

OLD HEN: Sooner or later, a tadpole becomes a toad! (*Head disappears and lid closes.*)

CHANTECLER: True! (*To Hens, in a commanding voice.*) Ladies, stand in line! Your orders are to peck in the fields. Go!

WHITE HEN: (*To Grey Hen.*) Are you coming?

GREY HEN: No! I intend to stay behind so I can see the Cuckoo. (*Hides behind a basket.*)

CHANTECLER: You, little Tufted Hen, was it just my fancy that you looked sulky falling into line?

(*Tufted Hen approaches Chantecler.*)

TUFTED HEN: Rooster...

CHANTECLER: What is it?

TUFTED HEN: I, who am nearest to your heart—

CHANTECLER: (*Quickly.*) Hush!

TUFTED HEN: It annoys me not to be told—

(*White Hen approaches Chantecler on the other side.*)

WHITE HEN: Rooster...

CHANTECLER: Well?

WHITE HEN: I, who am your favorite—

CHANTECLER: (*Quickly.*) Hush!

WHITE HEN: I want to know—

(*Black Hen has softly drawn near.*)

BLACK HEN: Rooster...

CHANTECLER: What?

BLACK HEN: Your special and tender regard for me—

CHANTECLER: *(Quickly.)* Hush!

BLACK HEN: Tell me...

WHITE HEN: *(To Chantecler.)* ...the secret...

TUFTED HEN: *(To Chantecler.)* ...of your song? *(Going still closer to him. Curious.)* I do believe that you have in your throat a little copper contrivance—

CHANTECLER: That's it! That's what I have...very carefully concealed!

WHITE HEN: Most likely—like the great tenors one has heard of—
you gulp raw eggs.

CHANTECLER: You have guessed!

BLACK HEN: My idea is that you take snails out of their shells—

CHANTECLER: Exactly!

WHITE HEN/BLACK HEN/TUFTED HEN: Rooster!

CHANTECLER: Off with you all! Be off! *(White Hen, Black Hen, and Tufted Hen hastily start to exit but he calls them back.)* A word before you go. Do no injury! Shepherdesses trample the grass unaware that it's a crime to crush a flower! But you, my hens, show considerate thought for the flowers whose only offence is growing wild. The field carrot has her right to bloom in beauty. Now you may go. *(White Hen, Black Hen, and Tufted Hen hastily start to exit but he calls them back.)* And, remember, when chickens go to the...

WHITE HEN/BLACK HEN/TUFTED HEN: ...fields.

CHANTECLER: The foremost...

WHITE HEN/BLACK HEN/TUFTED HEN: ...walks ahead!

CHANTECLER: You may go! *(White Hen, Black Hen, and Tufted Hen hastily start to exit but he calls them back.)* A word! *(Sternly.)* Never, when crossing the road, stop to peck! *(Hens bow in obedience.)* Now let me see you cross! *(A horn is heard in the distance, "Honk! Honk! Honk!")* Chantecler rushes in front of the Hens and spreads his wings to protect them. *(A horn is heard near, "Honk! Honk! Honk!")* Chantecler bars the Hens' passage. *(Far away, the horn is heard, "Honk! Honk! Honk!")* Chantecler stands aside for the Hens to pass. You may safely go. *(The Blackbird is in his cage. The Cat is still asleep on the wall. The Grey Hen is hiding behind the Old Hen's basket. Pause. To himself.)* No, I will not trust a frivolous soul with such a weighty secret. *(Shaking his feathers.)* I must rejoice in being a rooster! *(Struts up and down.)* I am beautiful. I am proud. I walk...then I

stand still. I give a skip or two. The gear upon my head and under my eye is a far more gorgeous red when I puff out my chest and strut than any robin's waistcoat. A fine day. All is well.

PATOU: (*From inside his doghouse, gruffly.*) Beware, Chantecler!

CHANTECLER: (*To himself.*) What silly beast is bidding me beware?

PATOU: (*From inside doghouse.*) I! I! I!

CHANTECLER: (*Retreating.*) Is it you, Patou, good shaggy head staring out of the dark?

PATOU: Which do not prevent my seeing what is plain as that henhouse r-r-r-roof! (*Growling.*) Grrrrrrr...

CHANTECLER: (*Aside.*) When he rolls his "R's" like that, he is very angry, indeed.

PATOU: It's my devotion to you, Rooster, that makes me roll my "R's." Guardian of the house, the orchard, and the fields...more than all else, I am bound to protect your song. And I growl at the dangers I suspect lurking. Such is my nature.

CHANTECLER: Your nature? Your dogma! (*Laughs. Patou doesn't laugh. Louder.*) Your dog-ma! (*Laughs.*)

PATOU: You stoop to a pun? I'm enough of a psychologist to feel the evil spreading... (*Proudly.*) ...and I've the nose of a rat terrier.

CHANTECLER: But you are no rat terrier!

PATOU: Chantecler, how do you know?

CHANTECLER: (*Looking Patou over.*) Hmmm...your appearance is, in fact, peculiar. What, actually, is your breed?

PATOU: Oh, I am a horrible mixture! I can feel barking within me the voice of every dog: retriever, mastiff, pointer, poodle, hound. Rooster, I am all dogs. I am every dog!

[END OF FREEVIEW]