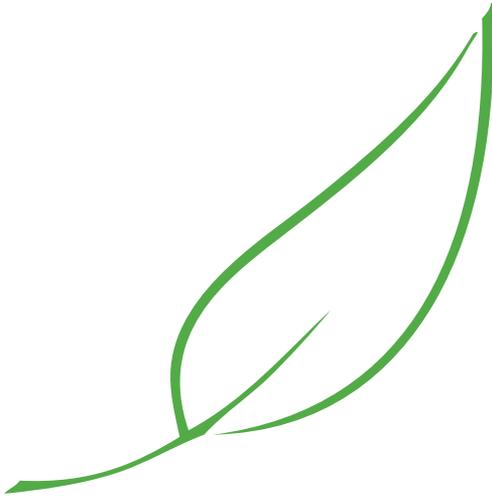


A Duck's Life

By Michael Soetaert



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A DUCK'S LIFE**By Michael Soetaert**

SYNOPSIS: What's the big deal? I mean, anybody would rather fly south to Hawaii for the winter, than, say, go just about anywhere. But then, Queen Vula, the Supreme Superlative of Flock 22B, isn't just anybody. And neither is her Grandduck, Chuck. And they're not letting Larry, or any other duck that wants to join him, go without a fight. Find out what happens in *A DUCK'S LIFE*.

CAST OF CHARACTERS*(9 males, 9 females, 1 either)*

LARRY DUCKWORTH (m) He's our hero. He's the one who wants to fly off on his own. He's the duck equivalent of, say, 20. *(247 lines)*

ELDON DUCKWORTH (m) Larry's father. He's your typical, working class duck. A gentle soul. *(46 lines)*

DORIS DUCKWORTH (f)..... Larry's mother. Worried about appearances. *(44 lines)*

DARLA DUCKINGHAM (f) Larry's girlfriend. *(85 lines)*

BURT DUCKINGHAM (m)..... Darla's father. Overbearing. *(29 lines)*

CORA DUCKINGHAM (f)..... Darla's mother. Mousy. A bit of a twit. *(38 lines)*

CLAUDE (m)..... He's Larry's best friend. He's a pal. Same age as Larry, more or less. *(116 lines)*

- ROSCOE (m)..... He's just another duck; a friend
of Larry's. About the same age.
(40 lines)
- NORMA (f)..... Roscoe's wife. Very practical.
(10 lines)
- VULA (f) The Supreme Potentate, Queen,
Grand Poo Bah, and Supreme
Superfluous Superlative.
(36 lines)
- CHUCK (m)..... He's smarmy. He hangs out
with the guys, but he's not one
of them. He's next in line for the
leadership. After this migration,
he will take over the flock.
(115 lines)
- BOB (m) He's a bit slow. Is on the
Supreme Council. Not a bad
duck. (99 lines)
- BILL (m)..... He and Bob are interchangeable.
Also on the Supreme Council.
(101 lines)
- OWL (m/f) Off-stage voice. Can be
doubled. (1 line)

JEBADIAH DUCKLEY (m) 20-ish; Along with the DUCKLEY girls, they're the cousins from down south. He wears holey, cut-off jeans tied with a rope, straw hat, suspenders with no shirt. Actor can use a southern accent. However, he's smart, regardless of what he might tell you. *(53 lines)*

JOLENE DUCKLEY (f) She, like her sissins (a combination of sister and cousin.) are pretty much interchangeable. In fact, you probably don't need three, and more than three wouldn't hurt. They're all 20-something, but younger than Jebadiah. They dress like those hick girls in stereotypical movies that usually involve a car as a major character. Have fun. *(8 lines)*

JESSICA DUCKLEY (f) See JOLEAN. *(11 lines)*

JAYLENE DUCKLEY (f) See JOLEAN. *(10 lines)*

DELILAH DUCKLEY (f) Jebadiah's mother. Pragmatic. *(8 lines)*

SET

One set, fairly simple. The idea is to transform the stage into a pond. There are large clumps of cattails RC, and LC (pretty much the wings.), but the rest of the stage is pretty much “open water,” with an occasional rock to sit on. If desired, the cattails can be set up on risers made to look like shore line to give the set depth. Actors can exit UL and DL, and UR and DR. If possible, you can give the impression that the pond disappears into the distance UC. The cattails Left, at least some of them, need to be able to support a clothline.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE: A sunny, autumn afternoon on a pond in Alaska.

ACT TWO: The next day.

COSTUMING

Pretty much, you're on your own. You could go with the full duck costume, augmented with various pieces of clothes (like a hair ribbon for Darla.). You could go with partial costuming, such as tail feathers but no bills. Or you could go for simply having them act like ducks, such as waddling. However, duck costumes would be the most fun.

SOUND EFFECTS

- Duck call
- Loud boom off stage

PROPS**CHUCK**

- “Beginner’s Frog” Book
- Breath Spray
- Brown bottle with a rope tied to it

ROSCOE

- Goggles

CLAUDE

- Compass
- Several notes
- Pencil

ELDON

- Note pad
- Pencil
- Old tweed jacket (the kind with the elbow pads.)
- Driving cap
- Old time driving goggles

BILL and BOB

- Large leaf to read off of
- Pogo stick

BURT

- Tail Feather
- Suitcase with wheels

CORA

- Suitcase with wheels

THE DUCKLEYS

- Ramshackle suitcases with laundry inside
- A clothes line
- Lawn chairs
- Assorted camping equipment, including a campfire coffe pot and cups

DELILAH

- Baby carriage
- Rock
- Baby blanket
- Rocking chair

NORMA

- A very large, heavy suitcase
- Horn-rimmed sunglasses
- A head scarf
- Sweater
- Ironing board and iron
- Various articles of clothing to iron – especially socks.

GENERAL

- Feathers (to blow in the air.)

ACT ONE

AT RISE: *CLAUDE and LARRY are DR, CHUCK is UL, and BILL and BOB UC. EVERYONE but LARRY will randomly quack from time to time. CLAUDE will finally quack particularly loudly.*

LARRY: For cryin' outloud, Claude. Give it a rest!

CLAUDE: What?

LARRY: Enough with the quackin', already!

CLAUDE: Gee, Larry, what's wrong with quackin'?

LARRY: It's all you ever do, Claude. It's all any of you ever do.

CLAUDE: Well, yeah. It's because we're ducks, Larry. Ducks quack.
Quack!

BOB and BILL and CHUCK join in with the quacking.

CHUCK: Ribbet!

ALL the others stop quacking, and look at CHUCK, who doesn't notice because he's intently reading a book entitled "Beginner's Frog."

CHUCK: *(Striking a pose.)* Ribbet.

LARRY: What the heck was that, Chuck?

CHUCK: *(Looking up.)* Ribbet. I'm learning a foreign language.

LARRY: What? Frog?

CHUCK: Yeah. Why not? *(Trying to act sophisticated.)* You know, the ladies dig a dude who can converse with the locals. They think you're suave and debonair *(He pronounces it: swa-vay and de-boner.)*

LARRY: They'll think you're insane, Chuck.

CHUCK: *(Freshening his breath with a squirt from his breath spray.)*
Hey, when I have all the ladies hanging on my wing... Ribbet...you'll be laughing out the other side of your bill.

BILL: Huh?

CHUCK: Oh, sorry Bill.

LARRY: What are you even saying?

CHUCK: *(Acting more sleazy than usual.)* I'm saying that the women all love guys who can communicate in another tongue.

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LARRY: That's not what I meant, Chuck. I meant, what does "ribbet" mean?

CHUCK: (*Back to a modicum of normalcy.*) I haven't a clue. What difference does it make?

LARRY: What difference does it make? You could be saying *anything*. You could be talkin' about somebody's mother.

CHUCK: (*Back to sleazy.*) Yeah, but the ladies aren't going to know that.

LARRY: But the frogs might.

CHUCK: So?

LARRY: What if they start yellin' at you?

CHUCK: I'll pretend they're all telling me how chic I am. (*He pronounces it chick.*)

BOB: Why would you want to be a chicken.

CLAUDE: I think he means chic, Bob. (*He pronounces it correctly.*)

BILL: Like those oil guys?

CLAUDE: Not that kind of sheik.

BOB: Good. Oil slicks make me nervous.

CLAUDE: Besides, I think the oil guys are actually called "shakes."

BOB: Oh. I like milk shakes.

LARRY: Bob, you're an idiot.

BOB: (*With a good natured laugh.*) I know.

CLAUDE: I tried learning Frog once. I mean, Frog's hard enough on its own, but the dialects are crazy. You take your Three-toed Tree Frog; it ain't close to your Bullfrog. I'm told they can understand each other, you know, like to get carry out and stuff like that, but I don't know how. And then there's your Toad. You'd think it would be the same. Or maybe close. But uh uh. It's a whole 'nother language. I'm told it's closer to Salamander. And I guess that makes sense. But then Salamander ain't nothin' like Newt.

LARRY: What are you talking about?

CLAUDE: I'm really not sure. Thanks.

LARRY: For what?

CLAUDE: For stopping me. Sometimes I get to talking and I just go on forever. You know, I start talking about stupid stuff. Like the echidna. Why do I know an echidna is a monotreme? They're related to duck-billed platypuses, you know. Or is it platypi? Who cares. I figure they're alright as long as they got a bill.

BILL: Huh?

CLAUDE: Sorry.

LARRY: Stop.

BILL: OK.

LARRY: Not you, Bill.

BILL: OK.

CLAUDE: Oh. See?

ROSCOE enters from Right.

ROSCOE: Ah! Another day on the pond. Fellas, it don't get any better than this.

BOB: And we didn't even need Old Milwaukee.

ROSCOE: You know, boys, we got it easy. The life of a duck! Dabble for a little duckweed. Waddle around when we feel like it. But mostly just sit out in the sun and bob.

BOB: What?

ROSCOE: Not you, Bob. I meant like bob... you know... *bob*.

BOB: What?

ROSCOE: Never mind

LARRY: Hey, Roscoe, what brings you over to this corner of the pond?

ROSCOE: *(Looking around; in confidence.)* Norma.

BILL: She's not here.

ROSCOE: I know that, Bill.

BILL: Oh, I'm not Bill.

CLAUDE: *(Puzzled.)* Weren't you Bill earlier?

BILL: I think so.

BOB: We're trying out what it's like to be each other.

BILL: You know...

BOB: Instead of being Bill...

BILL: I'm Bob.

BOB: And I'm Bill.

CLAUDE: Wouldn't you still be... *you*? I mean, just because you've changed your name, you're still the same duck that you always were... aren't you?

There is a pause while both BOB and BILL ponder the question.

BOB: Nope. Not following you.

BILL: Not at all.

CLAUDE: Oh... Um... Well... Never mind.

ROSCOE: Ah! Bob and Bill! Those guys quack me up! I'm going to miss you guys when we head south.

BOB: We're going, too.

BILL: Aren't we?

ROSCOE: Well, you know. A duck can always hope. (*Taking in the whole pond.*) You know... I always get nostalgic about the pond the day before we head south.

LARRY: Just the day before?

ROSCOE: Yeah. Why wait until the last minute? (*Putting on goggles.*) Well, I'm going down for some breakfast. Can I pick you up anything?

LARRY: Naw... I'm not really hungry this morning.

ROSCOE: Well, you know what they say: Feed a cold, starve a fever.

LARRY: What does that mean?

ROSCOE: Does it matter?

NORMA: (*From offstage Right; shrill.*) Roscoe!

ROSCOE: (*Panicky.*) Oh, gees! That's Norma. Tell her you haven't seen me?

LARRY: She won't believe me for a second.

ROSCOE: (*Concerned.*) Oh, you don't want to lie to Norma.

LARRY: Then why did you tell me to say that?

ROSCOE: Because she wouldn't believe me if I said it.

NORMA: (*Still offstage.*) Where is that worthless duck!

ROSCOE: What should I do!

LARRY: Why don't you stay and talk to her?

ROSCOE: There ain't no talkin' to Norma. A lot of listening... yes. But talking? No. You just wait, my feathered friend. When you and Darla tie the knot... they never tell you what kind of knot it is. (*He mimes being strung up.*)

NORMA: (*Still off stage.*) Roscoe! I ain't callin' for you again!

LARRY: One can only hope.

CLAUDE: Why don't you duck behind the cattails?

ROSCOE: There's a duck behind the cattails?

CLAUDE: Hide! Hide in the cattails.

ROSCOE: Oh!

ROSCOE quickly hides in the cattails stage Left, where HE will be peeking out when NORMA enters.

NORMA: Where is that useless, shiftless, good for nothing, lazy, lowdown duck of mine?

BOB: He's hiding in the cattails.

BILL: That is a fact.

ROSCOE: *(Sarcastic.)* Thanks, Bob.

BOB: Bill

BILL: What?

NORMA: Get out of those reeds before I make you into a feather duster!

NORMA crosses over to ROSCOE and grabs him by the ear, pulling him out of the cattails.

NORMA: You think that you can hang out with all of your shiftless friends while there's work to be done?

ROSCOE: I...

NORMA: Well, I got some news for you, buster!

ROSCOE: I...

NORMA: And don't talk back!

ROSCOE: But...

NORMA: *(As she's dragging him off the stage.)* We're heading south tomorrow and I don't intend to do all the packing myself!

They exit, but their voices trail off after they're gone.

ROSCOE: But...

NORMA: And I'll tell you something else! Your bachelor days are over, buster!

CLAUDE: *(After a beat.)* So... How is Darla?

LARRY: *(Snapping out of his daze.)* Oh! Um... she's fine.

CLAUDE: So... why aren't you two married yet? I mean, you've been going out with her since junior high. I thought you'd be settled down by now. Have a new nest over in the marshland. Maybe a couple of ducklings...

LARRY: Do you remember when we were ducklings, Claude?

CLAUDE: Oh, yeah. Remember when we had Career Day back in the ninth grade, and you brought in a down-filled jacket? Now *that* was funny. You know, you never told me where you got that.

LARRY: You can find all sorts of things floating in a pond. You know, the way Ms. Bimbaum freaked out, you'd think I'd brought in her husband.

CLAUDE: According to Ms. Bimbaum, you *did* bring in her husband.

LARRY: It was a stupid assignment, anyway. I mean, what kind of careers are there for a duck?

CLAUDE: You could be a wing leader.

LARRY: If we actually flew in V's, I could see that. But we don't.

CLAUDE: Umm... you could... ah... You could be... I know, you could... No.

LARRY: See? All we do is sit here and bob.

BOB: Huh?

LARRY / CLAUDE: Sorry.

LARRY: Don't you remember? We used to sit around and dream up all sorts of crazy things.

CLAUDE: Remember when we were going to save up enough aluminum cans to buy airline tickets south?

LARRY: Or when you put the decoy outside of Old Man Haversham's nest?

CLAUDE: Dude! And he thought it was real...

LARRY: And then his wife came home...

LARRY / CLAUDE: Wow!

LARRY: *(After a beat.)* What happened?

CLAUDE: She freaked out! You remember. You were there. She started throwin' things and...

LARRY: I wasn't talking about the Havershams. I was talking about us.

CLAUDE: What do ya mean?

LARRY: I mean, what happened? We were determined we weren't just going to be ducks. We were going to do something with our lives. Something special. Ducks everywhere would know our names. The Quack Brothers!

LARRY / CLAUDE: Look out world! Here we come! *(Ending on a high, held note.)* Quack quack Quack!

LARRY: *(After a beat.)* Well... here we are. And what are we doing?

CLAUDE: Me? Right now?

LARRY: Yeah, you. Right now.

CLAUDE: Same as you, bobbing.

BOB: Huh?

LARRY / CLAUDE: Sorry.

LARRY: See, that's what I'm saying. Do you want to end up like Bob?

BOB: Huh?

LARRY / CLAUDE: Sorry.

CLAUDE: Well... what else is there to do? I mean, it pays the bills.

BILL: Huh?

LARRY / CLAUDE: Sorry.

LARRY: Besides, we're ducks. We don't have any bills.

BILL: *(A bit alarmed.)* What?

LARRY: Well, aside from Bill. *(After a beat; in more confidence.)*

Look, I don't intend to end up like those guys...

LARRY hooks a thumb at BOB and BILL, who look around for the "guys" that THEY think LARRY is talking about. BOB will look at CHUCK, and then will count with his fingers, CHUCK as one and BILL as the other. BILL will then count CHUCK as one as BOB as the other. THEY'll try a few more combinations, then shrug and go back to what THEY were doing before, which is pretty much just floating there. CHUCK, who has been self-absorbed, will have missed it all.

There's got to be something more than just bo...

BOB immediately leans toward LARRY in anticipation.

...than just floating around in a pond all our lives.

CLAUDE: We migrate. Don't forget about that.

LARRY: Oh, I haven't. I mean, have you ever thought about how pointless our lives are? We fly north so we can spend the summer in Alaska, which is cold. Then we fly south so we can spend the winter in Arkansas, which isn't much warmer. And we'll do it year after year after year... until the day we die.

CLAUDE: What about getting married and having ducklings?

LARRY: Just like our parents did?

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CLAUDE: Well, I don't know about you, but I kinda think that was a good thing.

LARRY: Don't you see? It's all monotony.

CLAUDE: You can't let stuff like that bother you. I just let stuff like that roll off me. You know, like water off a... well... me. Besides, what else is there?

LARRY: I don't know. But I intend to find out.

CLAUDE: How are you going to do that?

LARRY: (*Holding out his arms.*) Do you know what these are?

CLAUDE: (*Excited, thinks he's playing charades.*) No! Don't tell me! Don't tell me! You're a... you're a tree! I know! I know! It's *Into the Woods*.

LARRY: No!

CLAUDE: *The Woodrow Wilson Story?*

LARRY: No!

CLAUDE: "Would ya be my Valentine?"

LARRY: No!

CLAUDE: (*Thinking he's got it for sure this time; excited.*) How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood!

LARRY: No!

CLAUDE: How about another clue? How many words? Is it a book or a movie?

LARRY: No! I'm trying to make a point here.

CLAUDE: Then why are you playing charades?

LARRY: I wasn't playing charades!

CLAUDE: Could've fooled me. (*After a pause.*) You want to?

LARRY: No! Look! (*Holding out his arms again.*) These are wings!

CLAUDE: Well... yeah.

LARRY: We can fly.

CLAUDE: Well... yeah.

LARRY: We can fly *wherever* we want...

CLAUDE: Well... yeah.

LARRY: Don't you get it?

CLAUDE: (*After a pensive beat.*) Apparently not.

LARRY: It's like having frequent flier miles to anywhere in the world. *Anywhere!* But where do we go? Alaska... and Arkansas.

CLAUDE: What's wrong with Alaska and Arkansas?

LARRY: You've got to be kidding me!

CLAUDE: I do?

LARRY: We spend our summers in Northern Alaska. We have to share a pond with moose. Moose!

CLAUDE: You know, they don't look any better even if they wear lipstick.

LARRY: Stick to the subject, Claude. It's cold in Alaska. Even in the summer it's cold. And now, we're getting ready to fly South. We could go to the Caribbean. We could go to South America. Heck, we could winter in a retirement village down in Florida. But where do we go? Arkansas! News Flash! It's cold in Arkansas in the winter, too.

CLAUDE: But not as cold as it is here.

LARRY: You're missing the point, Claude. We don't have to be cold at all.

CLAUDE: I'm not followin' ya.

LARRY: Listen. Year after year. Back and forth. It's always the same thing. The same lake in Arkansas, and the same ponds all along the way. And then we turn around and go back to the same lake in Alaska, and it's the same ponds again, all along the way. Just once! Couldn't we stop at some place different?

CLAUDE: I don't know. I kind of like knowing where I'm going. Some of those little ponds... they look good from the air, but they're nasty up close. You remember that one duck? Really goofy? Talked with a lisp?

LARRY: The one that was always throwing fits?

CLAUDE: No. The other one.

LARRY: Oh yeah. The mallard, right?

CLAUDE: Yeah.

LARRY: Oh, yeah. I remember him. Whatever happened to him?

CLAUDE: It's just what I'm talking about. He went off on his own, landed in on this lake he'd never been to before, and Wham! He died of lead poisoning. (*Snapping his fingers.*) Just like that.

LARRY: That can't be right. Even if there were that much lead in the water, it still takes a long time to die from lead poisoning.

CLAUDE: I'm not talking about in the water. I'm talking about in the air... hunters. They blew him away. Trust me. It's safer to stick to the places that you know.

LARRY: How in the world did we ever find those places to begin with?
Somebody had to go there first.

CLAUDE: That's exactly what I'm sayin'. It's safer not to be the first guy.

LARRY: What? Never take risks? Never take chances? You want to be just like Bob and Bill?

BOB / BILL: Huh?

LARRY / CLAUDE: Sorry.

LARRY: Well, brother, not this little brown duck. I'm tired of playing it safe.

CLAUDE: What are you sayin'?

LARRY: I'm sayin', I ain't goin'.

CLAUDE: Where?

LARRY: Anywhere.

CLAUDE: Anywhere?

LARRY: Yeah.

CLAUDE: You know... far be it from me to give you advice... but if you think it's cold now, just hang around another month or so. You won't have to wait for New Year's Eve to have Cold Duck.

LARRY: Fine. But I'm not going south.

CLAUDE: If you don't South, where would you go?

LARRY: There are a lot more directions than south.

CLAUDE: You know, when you're this close to the North Pole, pretty much every direction *is* south.

LARRY: Then I'm going to go a different south.

CLAUDE: *(Taking out a compass and checking it, shaking it and checking it again.)* I think I need to get a new compass. Mine only has one south on it.

LARRY: When you guys go left, I'm gonna go right.

CLAUDE tries to figure out with his hands just exactly how that would work.

(Decisive.) I'm going to Hawaii!

CLAUDE: Hawaii?

LARRY: Absolutely.

CLAUDE: You can't go there. American Widgeons don't belong in Hawaii.

LARRY: Yes I can. Last I checked, Hawaii is still part of America. As long as it's America, and as long as I'm a widgeon, what difference does it make?

BOB: What's a widgeon?

LARRY: You are, Bob.

BOB: I always thought I was a duck.

LARRY: A widgeon *is* a duck.

BOB: Oh. (*Thinks for a beat.*) Then why don't they just say duck?

LARRY: Because there are different kinds of ducks, Bob.

BOB: (*Embarrassed.*) I know that. I remember seeing the movie.

CLAUDE: Won't going to Hawaii mess with the balance?

LARRY: I don't think a couple of ducks is going to make that much difference.

CLAUDE: What if every duck felt that way?

LARRY: Then I say we head to Tuvalu.

BILL: Where's Tuvalu?

LARRY: Head west from Hawaii. About halfway to somewhere else, take a left. If you reach Antarctica, you've gone too far.

CLAUDE: That's a long way to go.

LARRY: I'm really not planning on going to Tuvalu, Claude.

CLAUDE: I meant Hawaii. By the time you got there, it'd be time to turn around and come back. Well, heck Larry, I wouldn't see you for an entire year.

LARRY: I'm not coming back, Bob.

CLAUDE: (*Puzzled.*) How can you migrate if you don't come back?

LARRY: Don't you get it?

CLAUDE: Apparently not.

LARRY: I'm through with migrating. I can stay in Hawaii forever.

CLAUDE: What about Darla?

DARLA enters from Right.

DARLA: Yes... what about me?

CLAUDE: (*Checking a watch that isn't there.*) Hey! I'd love to stay around and chat but... I'm not.

CLAUDE quickly exits Right.

DARLA: What's wrong with him?

LARRY: Well, you know Claude. He's just a little bit daffy.

DARLA: It's you that I was wanting to talk to, anyway.

LARRY: I need to talk to you, too.

DARLA: Me first. You know, I was thinking... Last spring you migrated with your family and I migrated with mine.

LARRY: Yeah...

DARLA: Well... do you remember how much we missed each other?

LARRY: No.

DARLA: Well, we did.

LARRY: We saw each other every day.

DARLA: I know. But it wasn't the same.

LARRY: The same as what? It was the same as every year when we migrate.

DARLA: I was thinking that maybe... maybe this year we could migrate... *together*.

LARRY: Together?

DARLA: *(Taking his arm.)* You know, *together*.

LARRY: But wouldn't we need to be... married?

DARLA: *(Hopeful.)* Or engaged...

LARRY: I... um... You... um... Ahh... Listen, Darla, I'm not migrating this year.

DARLA: What? You're staying here?

LARRY: No.

DARLA: Then you're migrating.

LARRY: No.

DARLA: Then you're staying here?

LARRY: No. Listen, Darla. I've decided not to go with the flock.

DARLA: That's exactly what I had in mind. We'll be our own little group.

LARRY: You're not making this easy, Darla.

DARLA: *(Pushing him away; suddenly angry.)* Are you trying to break up with me, Larry Duckworth!?

LARRY: No! No.

DARLA: *(Her anger has been replaced by puzzlement.)* Then... what?

LARRY: I'm not going to Arkansas... ever again.

DARLA: Then where will you go?

LARRY: Hawaii.

DARLA: *(A sudden epiphany.)* You can do that? *(after a beat.)* What about me?

LARRY: I want you to go with me...

DARLA: OK.

LARRY: What?

DARLA: OK.

LARRY: But I'm not coming back.

DARLA: Ever?

LARRY: I don't think so.

BURT, DARLA's father, enters unnoticed, Right. HE will stay there until his lines.

DARLA: You're never going to see your parents again? Or your friends?

LARRY: I guess not.

DARLA: OK.

LARRY: Just like that?

DARLA: Yeah. Just like that. I love you. You're my duck. If you want to go to Hawaii, then I'm going to Hawaii with you. If you wanted to go to Antarctica, I'd follow you there. But don't get me wrong, Hawaii sounds a lot better.

LARRY: But what about your family? Won't you miss them?

DARLA: Probably. But not more than I'd miss you.

LARRY: But what will your father say?

BURT: *(Crossing toward LARRY and DARLA.)* Yes, what will I say?

DARLA immediately fades back a step.

LARRY: *(Nervous.)* Oh! Hello Mr. Duckingham.

BURT: Mr. Duckingham? If you're planning on being my future son-in-law, shouldn't you call me Burt?

LARRY: Um... Burt?

BURT: Call me Mr. Duckingham. *(To DARLA.)* So. You're planning on going with this... boy?

DARLA: *(Nervous.)* Yes.

BURT: Just follow him without thinking?

DARLA: Well...

BURT: And I suppose if all of your friends jumped in a lake, you'd jump in, too.

DARLA: All my friends *do* jump in lakes.

BURT: You just be quiet. (*To LARRY.*) Now let me get this straight... Are you asking me for my tail feather?

LARRY: Umm... I think so...

BURT: You think so?!

LARRY: Yes. Yes, sir, I am.

BURT: And why should I bless this... proposed union between you and my only daughter with one of my tail feathers?

LARRY: (*Rehearsed.*) Because, sir, I would love your daughter for all time. I would provide for her and protect her. I would be the kind of duck that she would want me to be.

BURT: "Would," would you? Aren't you for certain?

LARRY: Yes, sir! Yes, sir, I am! I am more certain of this than I have ever been of anything in my entire life. I *will* love your daughter for all time. I *will* provide for her and protect her. And I *will* be the kind of duck that she *will* want me to be.

BURT: So... So you'd be the kind of duck she needs you to be?

LARRY: Yes, sir.

BURT: Well, now, just how are you going to do that, (*with rising anger.*) when the kind of duck she needs is one that will keep her with her family!

LARRY: But she wants to be with me.

BURT: Oh, she doesn't know what she wants. And neither do you. And yet, you have the nerve to come here and ask me for my tail feather.

LARRY: Yes, sir.

BURT: Well the answer is No! Now you, young lady, I suggest you get back to the nest and get ready for the migration south... with your family! And you, young duck... I suggest you do the same.

BURT exits Right.

DARLA: (*Furious.*) How dare he!

LARRY: (*He's lost his nerve.*) Maybe he's right, Darla.

DARLA: My father? Right about anything? He's my father! Fathers are never right. I'm going.

LARRY: But you'd never see your family again.

DARLA: Big deal.

LARRY: Won't that make you sad?

DARLA: I'll get over it.

LARRY: I'm sorry, Darla. But you can't go.

DARLA: What?! You just asked me to go with you and now you're telling me I can't? What's wrong with you?

LARRY: I can't separate you from your family. It just wouldn't be right.

DARLA: Don't I have some say in this?

LARRY: I'm sorry. I just can't.

DARLA: Augh! You're an idiot!

BOB / BILL: Huh?

DARLA / LARRY: Not you!

DARLA: (*Angry; near tears.*) Fine! You just go off to your stupid Hawaii. I wouldn't want to go with you anyway!

LARRY: But...

DARLA: Obviously Hawaii matters more to you than I do!

LARRY: But I thought you wanted to go to Hawaii with me.

DARLA: And I thought you wanted me to go. I guess we were both wrong. (*She exits Right.*)

LARRY: (*As she's leaving.*) Wait...

After a beat, CHUCK walks up.

CHUCK: Ah, women. You can't live with them...

LARRY: (*With the proper disdain such a trite saying should deserve.*)
Oh, shut up.

CHUCK: Hey, I was only trying to help.

LARRY: By offering a stupid cliché?

CHUCK: Well... yeah. Wait, how about: If there's ever anything I can do, just let me know.

LARRY: No.

CHUCK: How about: If you love someone, let them go. If they come back, it was meant to be. If not... hey, do you remember the Sietzer Twins?

LARRY: What?

CHUCK: Oh, sure you do. They were a grade behind us. Cheerleaders. Really cute. Not as cute as Darla, but...

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LARRY: No!

CHUCK: Oh, yeah. They really are. I mean, wow!

LARRY: Why are you here?

CHUCK: I was just trying to help out.

LARRY: Well, you're not.

CHUCK: (*Actually being sincere; puts his hand on LARRY's shoulder.*)

Look, I really am sorry. You're a nice guy, and she's a sweet kid.

It's a rough thing to go through, breaking up with the duck you love.

It's really gotta hurt. And I just want you to know that I'm there for you.

LARRY: (*Touched.*) Gee, thanks.

CHUCK: Think nothing of it. (*Squirting his breath.*) Well, wish me luck, ol' buddy.

LARRY: What do you mean?

CHUCK: You know, *luck*. Hit the high score. Home rum. Bulls eye. Va Va Vaa Voom!

LARRY: What are you talking about?

CHUCK: I'm going to ask out Darla.

LARRY: What?!

CHUCK: Do you have any pointers? You know, little things that she can't stand? What's her favorite movie.

LARRY: You can't take out Darla! She's my girlfriend!

CHUCK: Not any more, *amigo*. Remember, you're going right, she's going left. You dropped the ball, and now she's fair game. I'm going to shoot for broke. (*An after thought.*) Hey, do you know what her favorite cliché is?

LARRY: I'm going to break your neck.

CHUCK: (*Really sleazy.*) So... she likes it rough.

LARRY: No! *I'm* going to break *your* neck.

CHUCK: Dude, I'm only doing you a favor.

LARRY: A favor?

CHUCK: Sure. You know. You won't have to worry about her being taken advantage of if she's got a drake around. A *real* drake. So tell me, does she like to have her webs rubbed?

LARRY takes a swing at CHUCK, who ducks.

(As he's walking away.) Chee! Ya try to help somebody out, and this is what you get. *(Stopping.)* Oh, yeah, and as grandson of the Supreme Potentate, which I am, and as her only living heir, which I am, and as the Divinely Designated Replacement to the throne after this migration, which is me, I only feel it my duty to tattle.

LARRY: What?

CHUCK: I'm tellin'. You can't just choose not to go. Why, I'd be surprised if I didn't call an emergency meeting of the Supreme Council.

LARRY: Why are you doing this?

CHUCK: Because having power is fun. I'll tell ya what I'll do, though. You don't go after that sweet young thing of yours, and I won't care which direction you fly.

LARRY: *(In total disbelief.)* I always knew you were sleazy, but I never knew you were evil.

CHUCK: What can I say? *(With a breath squirt.)* Hey, have a nice day.

LARRY will hesitate for a few moments, and then hurry off stage Right. If you must know, he's going after DARLA. After a few more moments CORA – remember, DARLA's mother – will enter Left as DARLA enters right.

CORA: Oh, there you are dear. Your father sent me looking for you.

DARLA: Oh! That man. How dare he treat me like... like a duckling! And Larry, too. Oh! I don't care how he treats Larry! Larry can just take care of himself! Oh, Mother! How could you love a duck like that?

CORA: What? Larry?

DARLA: No! Father!

CORA: Practice.

DARLA: Mother... I fell in love with an idiot.

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CORA: Yes, dear. I know.

DARLA: Mother! You don't have to agree with me.

CORA: Don't you want me to?

DARLA: Well... yes.... No. I don't know. *(Pause.)* He drives me crazy.

It's not that he even does anything wrong. It's just that he doesn't do anything... right.

CORA: Yes, dear. I know.

DARLA: Mother! Stop agreeing with me!

CORA: I never thought I'd live to see the day when those words would come out of your bill.

BILL: Huh?

CORA / DARLA: Sorry.

CORA: Besides, I wasn't just agreeing with you to be polite. I really do know how men are. Remember? I have one, too.

DARLA: But that's dad. It's not the same.

CORA: I tried to convince my mother of the very same thing.

DARLA: Why do they all act that way?

CORA: Because that's the way they all act, dear.

DARLA: *(Confused.)* What?

CORA: Well... It's kind of like asking, "Why do hunters hunt?" They just do. If they didn't, they wouldn't be hunters.

DARLA: You're making no sense.

CORA: Yes, dear. I know.

DARLA: Oh! Mother! You're no help at all!

CORA: Thank you anyway for trying.

CLAUDE enters from left.

CLAUDE: Hey, Mrs. Duckingham. Hey, Darla. *(He walks on by and then stops when he's almost off R.)* Oh, yeah, Larry's looking for you.

CORA: Me?

CLAUDE: He didn't say that he wasn't, but he didn't say that he was, either.

CORA: Oh.

DARLA: Well who did he say he was looking for?

CLAUDE: You. *(CLAUDE continues off R.)*

DARLA: Oh! How dare he come looking for me! If I want to be found then I'll find him!

CORA: Then maybe you ought to go find him first so that he doesn't get the satisfaction of finding you first.

DARLA: *(Suddenly inspired.)* Oh, mother! That's a wonderful idea! Maybe you aren't so clueless after all.

CORA: Oh, no, dear. Trust me. I have no idea what's going on. It's easier to be happy that way.

DARLA really wants to hug CORA, but turns and exits L after a moment's hesitation.

(As she's leaving.) Dear... I think he went the other way... *(Walking toward Left.)* Oh, dear. Now she's lost too.

CORA exits. After a beat ELDON enters UL. He looks more like he's sightseeing than anything else. He slowly wanders to Center, looking casually around the whole while. LARRY will enter UR and cross to C on his lines.

LARRY: Dad! What are you doing here?

ELDON: Finding you. And I am successful. I call that a pretty good day.

LARRY: But why do you need to find me?

ELDON: Because your mother wanted me, too. Son, let me give you some advice.

LARRY: What?

ELDON: Advice. You know, that stuff folks tell you when they think they know something you ought to learn.

LARRY: Dad, I know what advice is.

ELDON: Oh. Then I guess I really didn't need to explain that.

LARRY: What?

ELDON: The whole definition. Listen, son, here's my advice. I know that you've been seeing Darla now for a quite a while. Now me? I think she's a beautiful duck, and she'll make a wonderful hen someday.

LARRY: Dad! I know about the herds and the fleas!

ELDON: You do? *(He takes out a notepad and marks off a line with a pencil.)* Well, there's one less thing I need to do.

LARRY: What?

ELDON: I just wanted you to know, son, the two most important words in a marriage.

LARRY: What?

ELDON: Glad you asked. Those words, without further fanfare, are "Yes, Dear."

LARRY: What does that have to do with right now?

ELDON: I thought you wanted to know why I was here. Your mother told me to go find you, and I said, "Yes, dear." And now I've found you.

LARRY: Well... what did she want you to do after you found me?

ELDON: She didn't say.

LARRY: Oh... ah... well... look dad, I gotta go.

ELDON: OK. I'll tell her I saw you.

LARRY exits DR. After a beat DORIS enters Left.

DORIS: *(Shrill.)* Is that all you have to do? Just sit here and bob?

BOB: Huh?

DORIS: *(To BOB.)* Oh, hush! *(To ELDON.)* Why aren't you out looking for our son?

ELDON: Because I found him. I figured I could stop looking after I found him.

DORIS: You found him? Well, where is he?

ELDON: He left.

DORIS: What?

ELDON: He left.

DORIS: You let him go?

ELDON: Yes, dear.

DORIS: Why?

ELDON: Oh. I'm sorry. I didn't realize you wanted me to keep him.

DORIS: Why, in the name of duckweed, would I send you to find our son, just so you could let him go?

ELDON: Well, I have to admit, I did think it was a bit odd, but you seemed so determined to have me do it that I didn't think to...

DORIS: Oh! You're an idiot!

ELDON / BOB / BILL: Hey!

DORIS storms off UR, but will stop before going off and turn to ELDON, who has been standing unmoved, happily looking around.

DORIS: Well, come on!

ELDON: Yes, dear.

DORIS exits, eventually followed by ELDON, who is in no hurry. After a beat, LARRY will enter UL, going to center stage where he will look around, uncertain of which direction to go. While looking back UL, CLAUDE will enter DR and manage to cross all the way to LARRY. He will tap LARRY on the shoulder, causing him to jump.

LARRY: Dude! Don't go sneaking up on a duck like that.

CLAUDE: Sorry. Would you like me to go back and do it over?

LARRY: What? No.

CLAUDE: *(Taking out several notes.)* Darla says... *(Begins to read.)*
"Tell that..."

LARRY: You took notes?

CLAUDE: Yeah. Do you remember when we'd play telegraph back in grade school?

LARRY: Yeah. And you'd always mess it up on purpose, like on the very first word.

CLAUDE: That wasn't on purpose.

LARRY: Oh.

CLAUDE: *(Continuing to read.)* "Tell that useless duck that I want nothing to do with him." *(Not reading.)* She went on to say something about a Chinese restaurant, but I didn't get that part. *(New note.)* Burt, Darla's father says, "You tell that worthless friend of yours he had better not be comin' around no more..." Or maybe it was anymore. *(New note.)* Darla's mother says, "Hi." *(New note.)* Your mother wanted you to know that "...she's holding you personally responsible if her lifetime membership in the Watercross Club is revoked." That's a nice club... *(New note.)* Your father says, "Hi." and *(New note.)* Chuck just giggled.

LARRY: Is that all?

CLAUDE: Oh! *(Taking out one more note.)* Yeah. You've been summoned before the Supreme Council.

LARRY: What?

CLAUDE: All of them? Or any note in particular?

LARRY: The last one. The Supreme Council.

CLAUDE: Yeah. You know. The Supreme Council. They weren't very happy; they said... *(Reading.)* "You tell that shiftless friend of yours he'd better get over here right away."

LARRY: *(Heading off DR.)* Well, you tell them that they can just wait. *(LARRY exits.)*

CLAUDE: *(Taking a pencil from behind his ear; wets the lead; speaking as he writes.)* Tell them that they... *(The lead breaks.)* Darn it! *(He carefully holds the lead in place and gingerly writes...)* can... wait. *(He's pleased with himself.)*

ELDON and DORIS cross from UR to DL, talking as they go; they are totally oblivious to CLAUDE.

DORIS: Why! Nothing like this has ever happened on our side of the family!

ELDON: Yes, dear.

DORIS: I blame this all on you!

ELDON: Yes, dear.

CLAUDE: Oh, hello Mr. and Mrs. Duckworth.

They will completely ignore him.

DORIS: And stop saying "Yes, dear."

ELDON: OK.

They exit. Just as they get off, BURT and CORA enter UL, crossing to DR, talking as they go.

BURT: I don't care what you say, Cora. She's chosen a bad duck. And I intend to find our daughter before that... that... boy does. *(BURT notices CLAUDE.)* You!

CLAUDE: Me?

BURT: Am I the only one around here with any intelligence?

CLAUDE: Quite possibly.

CORA: Oh, you can count me out.

BURT: You. You hang out with that despicable duck named Larry, don't you?

CLAUDE: Well... I wouldn't call him despicable...

BURT: Nobody's interested in your opinion. (*Grabbing CLAUDE's arm.*) Well don't just sit there all day long bobbing around like an idiot!

BOB: Thank you.

BURT: You're going to find your friend, and I'm going with you.

CORA: I thought you were trying to find our daughter.

BURT: I am. But if I find that Larry first, I'll make sure she doesn't.

BURT and CLAUDE exit DR. After a beat DARLA enters DL.

CORA: Oh, dear. There you are.

DARLA: Why did you say, "Oh, dear"? Is something wrong.

CORA: (*Thinks for a beat.*) No. I meant... Oh, never mind.

DARLA: Has... Has somebody been looking for me?

CORA: Well, yes, I think you were on the list.

DARLA: What list?

CORA: Claude has a list of everybody that everybody else is looking for.

DARLA: Who else has he been looked for?

CORA: (*Thinking.*) Larry and... you. But I guess I already mentioned you. So I guess it's just Larry.

DARLA: But was Larry looking for me?

CORA: You know, dear... far be it from me to give you advice, but maybe you should go looking for him. Especially since he seems to be incapable of finding you.

DARLA: I have no intention of finding that... that... duck!

CORA: Maybe you don't need to. Maybe if you just stayed still he could find you.

DARLA: And what makes you think I want to be found?

CORA: Because you'd be a fool not to. Listen, dear, this may just be your silly old mother talking here, but you shouldn't let that nice young duck get away.

DARLA: But he doesn't want me to go with him.

CORA: Oh, I don't see why that should stop you. Now you stay right here and let him find you. And when he does, you don't take no for an answer.

DARLA: But what will father do?

CORA: Oh, who cares what he does? This isn't about him. It's about you. And I don't want you to be sorry for the rest of your life.

DARLA hesitates for a beat and then hugs her mother.

DARLA: Oh, mother... I love you!

DARLA then hurries off DR.

CORA: *(After DARLA is gone.)* And I love you, too, dear. *(After a beat.)* Oh, dear. You were supposed to wait here!

CORA exits DR. After a beat, DORIS and ELDON enter from UL and cross to Center, more or less.

DORIS: Eldon, you've got to stop him. You've got to stop our son.

ELDON: You know, dear, defying all logic, I'm going to state my opinion.

DORIS: What?

ELDON: My opinion. And my opinion is this: Let him go, Doris. Let him go.

DORIS: What? What did you say, Eldon?

ELDON: You heard me. Let him go.

DORIS: Don't you care about our son?

ELDON: Of course I care about our son, Doris, but a duck's gotta do what a duck's gotta do.

DORIS: *(Incredulous.)* What?

ELDON: You remember when Larry just got his flying permit and he used to come in too steeply and darn near killed himself every time?

DORIS: No.

ELDON: Of course you don't. You weren't there. But I was. And one day, as he was coming in, it came to me. I had one of them epiphanies. I had never had one before, and I ain't had one since. But you know, if your epiphany is good enough, I guess one's all you need. So anyways, I was sittin' there, and it came to me. You can only do so much.

DORIS: *(After a beat.)* That's all?

ELDON: That's enough, if you think about it. I had taught the boy how to fly. And I had taught him how to land. I just had to trust him to do it. And he did. Came in perfect. Could've been a training video. Of course the next time, he lost a few feathers, but I trusted him then, too. There comes a point when you realize that your kids are either going to do the right thing, or not. You raise 'em the best you can, but in the end, what it comes down to, is you just got to hope. You got to let them make their own mistakes. And if they're lucky... if we're lucky, all their mistakes will turn out right.

DORIS: But we may never see him again.

ELDON: And that would make me truly sad. But what would make me even more sad is if I knew my son didn't want to be here, and yet he was, and he couldn't leave, and I was responsible for that. You don't want that either.

DORIS: But what will the neighbors say?

ELDON: Quack?

DORIS: That's not what I mean and you know it.

ELDON: Who cares what they say? I can't imagine they care what I say. And the only thing I'd say if I cared to say anything at all is it's none of their business. Yes sir-ree, bob.

BOB: Huh?

ELDON: Excuse me, boys, but have you seen my son Larry?

BOB: Not since he left.

ELDON: And where might he have been going?

DORIS: Oh, good grief! Where's my child?

Over the next few lines DORIS and ELDON will become increasingly shocked.

BILL: We don't know, but when he gets back, he'll be going in front of the Supreme Council. He has been formerly charged with treason.

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