

"WHAT A CHICKEN!"

FADE IN:

INT. BACKYARD WORKSHED - NIGHT

A small, tin shed crammed with every kind of contraption and tool known to man... or chicken. A bare bulb hangs above a workbench. From BEHIND, we see the silhouette of a CHICKEN laboring at the workbench.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Randolph T. Snood was a chicken...

(beat)

...who was a complete and utter chicken.

CIRCLE around Randolph so that when the next line is read we finally see him from the front, fully lit. He's a likeable, but rather ordinary bird. Somewhat scrawny. Definitely not "most likely to succeed" in the chicken yearbook.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

(continuing)

To make matters worse, Randolph was a yellow chicken.

There's a NOISE from outside the shed. Randolph freezes. His eyes dart nervously back and forth.

A few tense moments pass before he resumes his work.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

(continuing)

But as it turns out, there was more to Randolph than just being the biggest coward in town. More than anyone might have ever expected -- including Randolph himself.

EXT. BACKYARD WITH WORKSHED

Randolph can be seen working in the shed window. Another chicken, PRISCILLA, watches from the rear window of the house.

NARRATOR

(continuing)

Actually there was only one person who could have ever imagined it.

CLOSER, we see Priscilla drying a plate with a knowing smile. She's a bit bigger, healthier and more capable-looking than Randolph.

NARRATOR

(continuing)

Randolph's sister, Priscilla,
always knew great things lay in
store for Randolph.

HOLD, then CUT TO:

EXT. BACKYARD - MORNING - ESTABLISHING

Aside from a hint of an imminent sunrise, lights in the kitchen and workshed windows are the only sources of light.

INT. KITCHEN

Priscilla is at the stove. She's humming merrily. A milk-type carton is on the counter.

CLOSEUP on the carton's label: "THAT'S NO YOLK!" over a red circle/diagonal line "NO" logo with a chicken in it. At bottom is "EGG SUBSTITUTE" followed by "CHOLESTEROL FREE."

Priscilla's wing grabs the carton and her other wing opens the top.

She pours some of the carton's contents into a pan. It makes a satisfying SIZZLE sound.

She looks up from the pan.

A clock over the stove reads 5:10.

PRISCILLA

(calling out)

Randolph! You've overslept again!

(turning her head
in the direction
of what we assume
is his room)

Randolph!

(turning back to
the stove)

Hmmm. Not a peep from the boy.
I wonder...

She looks out the window at the workshed. Putting down her spatula, she opens the window.

Hanging just inside the window is a rack of pots and pans. It has room for many, but holds just a few. Priscilla grabs the biggest cast iron frying pan on it. She also takes the little S-shaped hook that held the pan on the rack.

There is a clothesline attached just outside the kitchen window. Priscilla reaches out and puts the hook over the clothesline. She hangs the frying pan on the hook and lets go.

We see the frying pan slide away from us. At first, all we can see is the back of the pan. As it recedes, however, we see where it's headed -- the workshed! The weight of the pan causes the line to sag. It hits the shed with a deafening CRASH!

The pan rebounds from the impact, comes loose from the hook and...

...drops on top of a pile of other pots and pans.

Priscilla watches as the shed door flies open and Randolph races out and around the shed like a chicken with its head cut off.

CUT TO:

KITCHEN

Priscilla and Randolph are eating breakfast at an egg-shaped table. They sit as humans do. Priscilla has IT'S NO YOLK! and toast on her plate. She reads a magazine. Randolph alternates between pecking at a bowl of grain and working on a crossword. The puzzle has picture clues. He uses a ballpoint pen.

Priscilla stops what she's doing and looks over at Randolph, who's oblivious to her gaze.

PRISCILLA

You know, Randolph, I've been thinking...

He's just getting an answer in his puzzle. He's quite delighted with himself as he fills in the letters.

RANDOLPH

C-R-A-C-K-E-R

(louder)

Cracker! That's it then!

(He looks up from his puzzle)

What's that then, Prissy?

The moment he says this, however, he becomes distracted. He holds his pen in front of his eyes, clicking and unclicking it. He unscrews the barrel, pours out the innards and looks down the tube.

RANDOLPH
 (continuing)
 Very interesting...
 (reassembles pen,
 jots down notes)
 It might just work...

He finishes writing, suddenly remembers Priscilla and peers up sheepishly. She has a half impatient, half I've-been-here-before look on her face.

RANDOLPH
 (big, cheesy grin)
 Oh. Right then, Prissy. I'm all ears.

He puts his pen down and crosses his wingtip feathers to demonstrate his undivided attention.

PRISCILLA
 It's something I've just been reading in this magazine article.

She holds it up. The title is: "CHICKEN LIFE." Randolph's smile begins to melt a bit at the corners.

PRISCILLA
 (continuing)
 It's this one article in particular.

She opens the magazine and we see the headline: "Are You A Happy Chicken?"

RANDOLPH
 (slowly reading)
 ARE - YOU - A - HAPPY - CHICKEN?
 (beat; trying to sound cheery)
 Aren't you a happy chicken, Priscilla?

PRISCILLA
 (closing the magazine)
 I'm very happy, Randolph. It's not me I'm thinking of.

Her head moves forward. Randolph's moves backward -- then left, right and up at the ceiling.

RANDOLPH

Me?
 (bigger)
 ME?!
 (incredulous)
 Not ME!
 (small)
 me.
 (as he began)
 Me?

PRISCILLA

You, Randolph.

She lays down the magazine. Randolph's face is frozen.

INSERT - CLOCK OVER STOVE

which reads 5:59. As the 6:00 numbers fall over, the top of the clock opens and a plastic rooster springs out. It CROWS six times, drops and the top closes.

BACK TO SCENE

RANDOLPH

(relieved,urgently)
 Crowing time, Prissy!

He jumps from the table and runs for the door.

PRISCILLA

(calling after him)
 We're not done talking about this,
 Randolph...

The kitchen door SLAMS shut.

EXT. STREET

Randolph comes tearing up the driveway and races down the sidewalk. Up ahead, he sees two sheep with briefcases coming his way.

He quickly hops over the fence of the neighbor's yard and slinks behind the bushes until they've passed.

Several blocks later, he sees a RACCOON with a rent-a-cop hat and a nightstick coming out of a building.

RACCOON

See you tonight, Rocky...

Randolph ducks behind a telephone pole until the raccoon is safely around the corner.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN COURTYARD

We see Randolph approaching at full speed. In the center f.g. is a wooden post. To one side is a storage box with a hinged lid.

He arrives, throws open the box -- cringing at the loud BANG it makes -- and drags out an oversized megaphone.

He hops atop the post just as the sun peaks over the horizon. He hoists the megaphone and lets forth with the mightiest COCK-A-DOODLE-DO he has in him. The megaphone slips down as he hits the "DO," and we hear the pitiful squawk he'd be making sans megaphone.

Lights begin coming on in the surrounding houses.

RANDOLPH
(wiping his brow)

Whew!

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISCILLA-RANDOLPH'S HOUSE/FRONT PORCH

Priscilla locks up the front door, then puts the keys in her satchel. She saunters down her front walk, reaches the sidewalk, pivots on her left foot and heads off.

PARKING LOT

FROM BEHIND, we see Priscilla crossing a large parking lot. Other chickens join her. GREETINGS are exchanged. PULL BACK and up to see they're heading into a large factory building with a sign atop it: "IT'S NO YOLK!"

INSIDE - FACTORY HALLWAY

Priscilla and the others enter their offices one by one. Titles are on the doors: ACCOUNTANT - HEAD OF SALES - INVENTORY MANAGER - ASST. TO THE VICE PRESIDENT - VICE PRESIDENT - and finally Priscilla entering (each a separate line): PRESIDENT - CEO - CHAIRHEN OF THE BOARD - aka - CHIEF CHICKEN.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISCILLA-RANDOLPH'S HOUSE/FRONT SIDEWALK

A ferret strolls by reading the newspaper. As he disappears O.S., we see Randolph step out from behind a bush and run down his driveway.

He makes a beeline for the shed, opens the door and runs inside. All is quiet for a few moments -- and then -- the CLANKING and other NOISES begin...

SLOW FADE TO:

EXT. WORKSHED - LATE NIGHT

as the CLANKING and other NOISES continue.

EXT. KITCHEN WINDOW

We see Priscilla inside, looking out with a slightly perturbed look. She takes off her apron.

EXT. YARD AND WORKSHED

Priscilla exits the house and walks over to the shed.

The NOISE from inside continues. She waits for a opening and then knocks twice. Two HAMMERING sounds from inside muffle her knocks.

She tries again. Two RATCHETING sounds are heard.

Once more -- three times this time -- but all we hear are three loud SQUEAKS.

She looks annoyed. She starts to knock again -- but stops short at the last second. Two HAMMERING sounds come from inside. The moment they cease...

INT. WORKSHED - ON RANDOLPH

...two KNOCKS sound on the door. Randolph nearly jumps out of his feathers.

PRISCILLA (O.S.)

Randolph, it's me. Can I come in?

Randolph composes himself -- actually unruffling his

feathers -- puts down his hammer and opens the door.

RANDOLPH

(uneasily)

Well then, Prissy, what brings you here?

PRISCILLA

It's late, Randolph. Are you going to hide out here all night?

RANDOLPH

I...

(deflated, small)

...like hiding out here.

PRISCILLA

(not too forgiving)

You must. There's hardly a moment when you're not.

Randolph can do no better than a unconvincing smile.

PRISCILLA

(continuing)

We've got a bit more talking to do, you and I. Come on, now. You haven't even had dinner.

RANDOLPH

(meekly)

Coming.

INT. KITCHEN TABLE

Randolph has a bowl of grain and a plate with what appears to be steak. Priscilla's already eaten. Randolph is just finishing a bite of "steak," while holding another on his fork.

RANDOLPH

Tasty tofu steaks, these.

PRISCILLA

Randolph, I'm concerned about you. Randolph pushes a button on his fork that telescopes a bite of steak toward his mouth.

PRISCILLA

(continuing)

You're going nowhere fast. Just look at you.

Randolph looks at himself as his fork un-telescopes.

PRISCILLA

(continuing)

Answer me this -- what do you do all day?

RANDOLPH

I'm the town crier, Prissy. It's an important position in the community.

PRISCILLA

Randolph, really! You crow every morning at sun up. It takes all of five seconds.

RANDOLPH

(proudly)

Seven seconds for my Sunday rendition!

PRISCILLA

It's hardly what I'd call a good use of your talents.

RANDOLPH

Somebody's got to do it.

PRISCILLA

Anybody could do it, Randolph! The point is -- what do you do with the rest of your day?

(not waiting)

I'll tell you what. You huddle yourself in that workshed of yours and invent things that nobody has any good use for.

Randolph demonstrates his fork with one wing, pointing to it with the other. His smile is flimsy.

PRISCILLA

(continuing)

There are great things within you, Randolph, and you're wasting your life -- alone in a shed -- hiding from the world.

Randolph starts to protest -- but stops. He puts down his fork.

RANDOLPH

Ohhh, I know it's true, Prissy. But I'll never change.

PRISCILLA

Not unless you want to. Do you want to?

RANDOLPH

Well, yes, of course I do. It's just that I don't see how I'm ever going to.

PRISCILLA

I do.

Randolph is taken aback. Haltingly, against his better judgement, he wades in.

RANDOLPH

You... you do?

PRISCILLA

I think you should move out.

RANDOLPH

(chuckling)

That's a good one, Priss...

It dawns on him she's serious. He's suddenly unnerved.

RANDOLPH

(continuing)

Move out? WHAT ON EARTH FOR?!

PRISCILLA

You need to find yourself. Here, you'll always be Randolph -- the yellow chicken!

She begins counting on her wingtip feathers.

PRISCILLA

(continuing)

Running Randolph... Randolph Rubber Bones... Yeller Feller... The Fleeing Flyer... Squawking Squab...

(switching wings)

Shiver Liver... Scaredy Coop-er... Sir Randolph the Fainthearted... Turntail T-Bird... Fearful Fowl...

RANDOLPH

Alright, already! I know what they call me. Sheesh!

Priscilla looks relieved -- she's run out of feathers to count on.

PRISCILLA

The point is, Randolph, here
your lot is set. Out there,
another lot awaits you.

(emphasized)

Lots of lots.

Smiling, she comes around behind Randolph. She raises her wing toward the window. Not much more than the side of the neighbor's house can be seen.

PRISCILLA

Great things await you out there,
Randolph.

(beat; amending)

Well... not in the Fitzberger's
house. Beyond that.

(back on track)

You've only got to have the nerve
to find those great things that I
know are within you.

We see Randolph UP CLOSE. He looks sick! The words "great things" softly ECHO, once, twice, three times.

FADE TO:

"GREAT THINGS" ACTION SEQUENCE

with Randolph performing a series of great feats -- perhaps M.O.S. to music.

EXT. LARGE CONCRETE DAM/OVERLOOK - DAY

Randolph is looking through a tourist viewfinder. He notices a leak at the bottom of the dam.

He jumps over the railing and runs along the top of the dam, stopping at the center.

He heads down the face, first sliding, then running.

At the bottom, he turns on a dime and thrusts his beak in the hole.

A flashbulb goes off and the frozen picture of Randolph transforms into a picture in the newspaper with the headline: "Chicken No Chicken"

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

He nonchalantly walks down the sidewalk with a ladder (doesn't everyone?). Suddenly, he hears a cry for help.