

FOR THE BIRDS... OR WHATEVER

By Jeff Dunne

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CHARACTERS

RUBY	A die-hard protester, dedicated but not quite ready to be organizing them on her own
FI	A hobbyist protestor
TRACY	Another hobbyist protestor

SETTING

An empty parking lot.

SCENE

(Ruby and Fi are standing in a parking lot, dressed as a turkey and a chicken, respectively.)

RUBY

This is gonna be great.

FI

Totally.

RUBY

Such a great idea for a protest.

FI

Totally.

RUBY

A lot of protests come off as vague, you know?

FI

Totally.

RUBY

But this one... people will know. None of that ‘what were they protesting again?’ happening here.

FI

Totally.

(There’s an awkward pause, then...)

So, on that, what are we—

(She stops as Tracy enters, dressed as a penguin.)

RUBY

What the...

TRACY

Hey, guys!

RUBY

What’s this?

TRACY

Oh, I know, right? Isn't this just the best?

RUBY

No!

TRACY

I think it looks amazing! Don't I look amazing? I do, right?

FI

Oh my god yes. You look amazing!

RUBY

But in the worst way possible!

FI

Oh, don't be such a curmudgeon.

RUBY

A curmu—?? Tracy...

TRACY

Yeah?

RUBY

Why the hell are you not dressed like an ostrich like we agreed on?

TRACY

I was going to, but then I was walking down the aisle and I saw this!

RUBY

That's not an ostrich costume.

TRACY

Obviously. I know that. I'm not an idiot.

RUBY

If you're not an idiot, then why aren't you dressed like a big gawky bird?

TRACY

Look, I was going to keep looking for an emu costume, but penguins are SO adorable.

RUBY

Not an *emu*...

TRACY

And they're all the rage. Everyone loves penguins!

RUBY

We had an agreement. There was a plan. A purpose. This... This does not serve the purpose.

TRACY

They didn't have any emu costumes anyway.

RUBY

Not an emu!! An ostrich.

TRACY

They're the same thing.

RUBY

They are NOT the same thing. Emus are emus, ostriches are ostriches.

FI

Ostri.

RUBY

What?

FI

One ostrich, two ostri.

(Ruby just stares at Fi, then turns back to Tracy.)

RUBY

Emus are not ostriches.

TRACY

Yes, they are. They're just smaller.

RUBY

No, they—

TRACY

They're only called an ostrich when they reach maturity.

RUBY

They're not the same thing!!

FI

Whoa, Ruby. We're not the enemy here.

RUBY

Emus are not baby ostriches.

FI

Ostri.

RUBY

They are a totally different species. But it doesn't matter. The whole point is that you are not supposed to be dressed as a penguin!

TRACY

What does it matter? It's a bird, right?

RUBY

Becau—

TRACY

A flightless bird. That's what we're protesting, so what does it matter if I dress as a penguin or an em— Fine, or an ostrich?

RUBY

Because... the whole point is to raise awareness about discrimination, and—

FI

Wait a minute. I thought we were raising awareness about endangered species.

RUBY

Dressed as a chicken? Chickens... are not endangered.

FI

I don't think I can agree with that.

RUBY

There are like twenty-five billion chickens in the world!

FI

Do you want to be a chicken?

What? RUBY

Do. You. Want to be. A. Chicken? FI

No. RUBY

And why not? FI

(Ruby just stares at her.)

Because the life of your average chicken is basically just being fattened up until someone kills and eats you.

Fi... RUBY

If that's not endangered, I don't know what is. FI

Fi... RUBY

Same thing with turkeys. FI

Fi!! RUBY

What? FI

This is not about endangered animals. It's about discrimination. RUBY

I thought we were protesting flightless birds, not discrimination. I mean, people don't really discriminate against turkeys. TRACY

RUBY

It's not just discrimination in general. Look... (*She takes a calming breath.*) We picked these birds in particular because humans are taking advantage of their flightlessness. Chickens, turkeys, and ostriches—

FI

Ostri—

RUBY

Whatever! They're all farmed for food. We take advantage of their inability to fly so that we can—

TRACY

Penguins don't fly either, so—

RUBY

But no one eats penguins!

TRACY

That can't be true.

FI

I'm with Tracy. Polar bears eat penguins.

RUBY

No, they don't.

FI

Sure they do!

RUBY

They don't. They're on the other side of the planet. Polar bears eat seals.

TRACY

Well, there you go.

RUBY

There I go what?

TRACY

Penguins and seals are related, so—

RUBY

THEY ARE NOT RELATED!!

FI

Whoa, Ruby. Settle down. We're not the enemy here.

RUBY

You're ruining my protest!!

TRACY

We can still protest. I'll just be dressed as a penguin.

RUBY

It doesn't work if you're dressed as a penguin. People don't eat penguins!

FI

Polar bears eat—

RUBY

Polar bears are not people! Even if they do eat them – which they don't – polar bears are not people.

TRACY

I wonder why they don't. Eat them. Humans, that is.

FI

Maybe they don't taste good.

TRACY

I bet they taste like chicken.

RUBY

Alright—

FI

Why do you say that?

RUBY

Alright—

TRACY

Everything tastes like chicken.

RUBY

Now—

FI

Oh oh oh... What if...

Now—

RUBY

FI

What if we have it all wrong? What if everything tastes like *penguin*, and we've just always been giving the chickens credit for it?

TRACY

Oh my god.

RUBY

Can we get back to—

TRACY

That's what we should be protesting!

RUBY

Can we just—

FI

That's genius, Tracy! We should totally protest that!

RUBY

But—

TRACY

It's time to end the tyranny!

FI

Totally!!

RUBY

But—

TRACY

Wai-wai-wait. What about Ruby's protest?

RUBY

I—

FI

Honestly, between just you and me...

I'm standing right here. RUBY

And don't tell Ruby this... FI

I can hear you, you know... RUBY

I never really understood what we were protesting before. FI

We went over this! RUBY

I know what you mean. TRACY

Like ten times! RUBY

The whole thing was a little vague. FI

We went over it!! RUBY

But it's so much fun to dress up, you know? TRACY

Totally. FI

But— RUBY

I've had this costume just sitting around for years, and honestly, how often do you get to dress up like a raccoon? FI

Wait, what? RUBY

Oh, is that the same getup you wore for the Scavengers of Earth thing last June? TRACY

Yep!

FI

That's a chicken costume.

RUBY

What? Oh, no. I'm just wearing it that way.

FI

Just wearing... It's definitely a chicken costume.

RUBY

(Fi and Tracy share a knowing, don't-upset-Ruby look.)

Raccoons don't have feathers, Fi.

FI

Right. If that makes you feel better.

(Ruby stares at the two of them, and finally gets so frustrated that she storms off while saying...)

I don't have to take this!

RUBY

TRACY
(Calling after her...)

Are we still getting together on Tuesday for Humans Against Humanity?

My place. Four thirty!

RUBY (OFF)

(Beat.)

So... You hungry?

TRACY

Starving.

FI

Wanna go to Chik-Fil-A?

TRACY

FI

Ooh, great idea. I think they give you free food if you show up dressed like a chicken.

TRACY

I think that's if you dress like a cow.

FI

Ahh, same thing.

(They exit. Lights out.)