

## NOTES

*Ruffled Feathers* is a contemporary retelling of the childhood classic Hans Christian Anderson's *The Ugly Duckling*. This short play is written for a male; however, a female can easily perform this selection by changing the name of the ugly duckling from David to Darla. *Ruffled Feathers* may be performed as either a Humorous Interpretation or, with creative blocking, may be used in Duo Interpretation. With the myriad of characters found within the play, each character should be distinct and unique. It is important for the audience to fall in love with the protagonist of the story, so make the ugly duckling as likeable and endearing as possible. There is nothing like hearing an audience collectively go "aww" as the ugly duckling reacts to the taunts and insults from the others throughout the play. Be creative. Use sound effects, creative blocking, and play the humor found within the script; however, be sure to have the characters react to what has been said. Comedy is all about timing, and much of the humor found within this play lies in the reactions of its characters. The vocals of the ugly duckling would work well with a Donald-like voice; however, the rest of the characters would contrast beautifully, if performed as more realistic, human-type characters with perhaps even a few stereotypical voices thrown in the mix for fun!

### **Characters:**

**Narrator**

**Nguyen, a Peking duck**

**David, the little ugly duckling**

**Tong, another Peking duck**

**Mama Duck**

**Sally Swan, owner of Sylvia Swan's Swan Lake Salon**

**Bank Manager**

**Producer**

**Cat**

**Jon, an actor**

**Dr. Webb, M.D.**

**Narrator:** Once upon a time, there was a little duckling named David. David was—well, let's just say that he didn't have the natural grace and beauty of all of the other ducks around the pond. When the other young ducks saw David approaching, they would hide and peek out through the bushes. They were, after all, *Peking* ducks. They would often taunt David as he passed by.

**Nguyen:** You're ugly!

**David:** (*Sadly*) I know.

**Tong:** No! I don't think you *do* know! I don't think you realize just how ugly you are!

**David:** How ugly am I?

**Nguyen:** Let me put it this way. If ugliness were bricks, you could be the Great Wall of China!

**David:** Am I really that ugly?

**Tong:** Let me put it *another* way. If ugliness was a crime, you'd get the electric chair!

**Narrator:** David, the little ugly duckling, was naturally upset by the ridicule of the other young ducks. He tried to make friends.

**David:** Hey, would you like to be my friend? We can play peek-a-boo!

**Narrator:** David, the little ugly duckling, peeked. All of the other little ducks would *boo*. So he decided to talk to his mother.

**David:** Mama, was I always this ugly?

**Mama Duck:** Well, yes. I suppose so. I had a feeling from the very beginning—the way your egg looked—well, it just wasn't an attractive shell. I think that's what made me put up tinted windows around your incubator.

**David:** Is that why you always told me to sneak up on my mirror?

**Mama Duck:** Well, yes. Sweetheart, I've never told you this, but when you were born the doctor took one look at you and slapped your father and me!

**David:** I'm sorry, Mama.

**Mama Duck:** Don't you worry about that, sweetheart. That was a long time ago. Besides, he was just a quack! (*She laughs*) Sometimes I just quack myself up! Listen, David, I suppose I should tell you a little secret.

**David:** What is it, Mama? (*Hopeful*) Are you giving me a make-over for my birthday?

**Mama Duck:** No. Your father and I are flying South for the winter.

**David:** Why, Mama?

**Mama Duck:** Well, Sweetheart, it's too far to walk!

**David:** But Mama, why would you leave me here by myself?

**Mama Duck:** Honestly, David, you won't even notice we've flown the coop. (*Feeling guilty*) Oh, all right, I'll find replacements for your father and me before we leave.

**Narrator:** And she did. David's mother left two decoys on the embankment of the pond. David knew there had to be a reason for his mother and father to just... fly off like that.

**David:** (*Sadly*) They left because I'm ugly.

**Narrator:** It was time for Donald, the little ugly duckling, to do something about his ugliness. He tried preening himself, but got a little *down* in the *beak*. David tried to make friends, but alas, that daunting task proved to be