



Wood duck photo - provided under Creative Commons conditions.

Frank Vassen - Flickr: Wood Duck (Aix sponsa), Parc du Rouge-Cloître, Brussels

Does it Quack?

a short play by Albert Fried-Cassorla

CHARACTERS:

JACK, a game show host

JILL, a game show host

KIM CHI KING - a show guest who believes that Kim Chi delivers the path to happiness

WOMAN - an actress dressed up in various guises who appears as a contestant. She plays, variously:

MIRANDA - a wrestling champion, famous on TV. She now has a plan for happiness through wrestling.

YASMINA - a yoga guru, specializing in laughter achieved through reacting to a bubble machine

SETTING: a TV game show set. There is a sign above the set that says: ***Does It Quack? The Happiness Game Show!*** A table with a table cloth holds a standing replica of a wood duck

AT RISE: JACK stands at Center Stage and waves at the audience. The audience is asked to applaud by JILL, who holds a placard up a SIGN that says APPLAUSE! They do applaud.

JACK

Hi, and welcome to Does it Quack?, the game show that let's YOU decide what works in becoming happier! I'm Jack, your host, and....

JILL

I'm JILL, your co-host. Together, we will begin the magnificent adventure leading to a more satisfied YOU! Say Jack, do you think they remember how our show works?

JACK

There are always some ignoramuses who have forgotten, so why don't we review the basics, Jill?

JILL

Sure, Jack. First, let's introduce Woodie, our wood duck mascot!

JACK

Yes indeed. This is Woodie. Say hello to the folks (*Woodie is silent*). But he IS a symbol of happiness. He's wood duck, the prettiest duck in all of nature. He presides over everything with his austere eyes. Show 'em your eyes Woodie!

JILL *(to camera-man)*

Let's get that close-up. Yeah, there ya go!

(now speaking to audience)

So we bring various guests onto our stage and before Woodie. All claim to have a way a method, or a way of thinking that will make people happier.

JACK

After they've had their say, we ask Woodie and you, the studio audience, to tell decide if the latest idea is likely to work. If yes, we say: Lights up! And if it's a sham...

JILL

...and you want the charlatan to scam...

JACK

Just yell: Back to Black! and we darken the house lights. Like this!

(Blackout then fade up again.)

JILL

Got that?

JACK

I think they DO. So let's give it a pretend try, shall we?

JILL

I have some dental floss right here. See it? I say that wrapping floss around your ears will make you wiser and happier.

JACK

Okay, folks, what do you think?

JILL

Let's hear it! I want you to yell Lights up or Back to Black!

AUDIENCE yells -- regardless of what they say,

JACK hears Back to Black the loudest.

JACK

Back to black wins it!

(BLACK OUT for 3 seconds. Then lights up.)

JILL

I think they've got it! So our first guest is a World Wrestling F champion.
Welcome Miranda Muscles!

[MIRANDA struts in, flexing biceps and huffing]

MIRANDA

Yo! I got youse covered.

JACK

Welcome, Miranda! I've heard so much about you -- and seen you on TV. What's your secret of happiness, Miranda?

MIRANDA

I pummel 'em, and pin 'em! Any chick that comes in the ring with me gets to know PAIN. And that makes me happy.

JILL

Why, Miranda -- pummeling and pinning? That's all there is to it?

MIRANDA *(slams the table)*

Nothing like the sold thwack of a back hitting the floor, or the crunch of knees buckling. (aside) The orthopedists love me!

JILL

Well, I don't know about--

MIRANDA

Yu don't know squat, Jill. Lemme show ya!

(MIRANDA tackles JILL and sends her to the floor.)

I feel a whole lot better!

JACK

So, audience - what do **you** say! Lights up, or back to black?

(Back to Black wins out)

AUDIENCE

Back to black!!!!

(Exit MIRANDA)

JILL

Jack, our next guest is Kim Chi King. King come on out here!

(Audience Applauds)

JACK

King, welcome

KING

Jill and Jack, I'm so glad to be here to tell the world about the amazing powers of

Kim Chi!

JILL

And what exactly *are* those powers, King? Our audience wants to know if it quacks. Right, audience?

AUDIENCE

Quack! Quack! Quack!

JILL

We're all going for the quack, King. So give it to us in a nutshell.

KING

Here let me open this jar, give you some, and you'll all be quacking a happy tune.

[KING opens a jar. JILL holds her nose.]

JILL

Pee-yoo!

KING

Hang in there, Jill. It's the stink that takes you over the brink. Here try this morsel of spicy goodness,

[JILL gags but swallows some kim chi, grimacing.]

JACK

Jill, are you happier?

JILL

It does taste good once you get use to it.

KING

See?

JACK

But how is your mood, Jill? What are you thinking about? Lilacs, the Mona Lisa? Michelangelo's David?

JILL

No, Jack -- my appointment for a root canal on Tuesday.

JACK

Oh no!! Woodie, whattaya think? Woodie's not quackin'. Okay, audience, your turn!

JILL

Lights up or back to black?

AUDIENCE

Back to black!!

JACK

Sorry, King. The audience and Woodie have spoken.

KING (*brandishing fist at audience.*)

Fools!

JACK (agitated, sweating)

Maybe you can expand your line down at the Asian Market, If you like, I can help you get a low-cost business loan.

KING (*leaving, angrily*)

Danged ignorant idiots!

JILL

Thank you everybody. We'll be right back after this commercial break...

JACK

I don't know about you but I can't wait for s real quacker. I'm not feeling so good right now.

JILL

Hmm?

JACK

I need this to work - soon! You know -- something that'll get woodie totally excited

JILL

So you want woodie to get a woodie.

JACK

Don't be crass Jill - you know how sensitive I am. I need something or somebody to straighten me out -- or my mind's going right to black!

JILL

You look like you have a fever. Here. Let me see. Dang! You're burning up. What's up with you?

JACK

Monica left me.

JILL

Whoa!

JACK

And this show's getting clobbered in the ratings. Every time we air, half the city's at a Bernie Sanders rally. And Pedro told me this morning he's not long for this world

JILL

Let me get this straight -- your dog talks to you?

JACK

Alphonse is very intelligent.

JILL

You are weirder than I thought.

JACK

Don't tell anyone. Promise?

JILL

You need help. Not from this show. Real help! But don't think about it too long. We're back on the air in 10 seconds.

JACK (*crying*)

I don't know if I can make it!

JILL

You have to. Pull yourself together man

(*To the AUDIENCE*)

Welcome back to Does it quack. It's the show that gives you the best routes to happiness. Please give a hand to my co-hosts, Jack Esmeralda and Woodie!

(*AUDIENCE applauds*)

JACK

Jill, I understand that we have a treat in store for us now.

JILL

Right you are, Jack! Our next guest has pioneered a new form of yoga -- Bubble Yoga!

JACK

Wow! I could use some amazing new ideas right now. I-I-- (*cries*)

JILL (*hissing to JACK*)

GET yourself together! NOW! They don't want to hear about or see your problems!

(*JACK still cries*)

JILL

And now, let's welcome YASMINA the BUBBLE YOGI!

(*AUDIENCE applauds. enter YASMINA,*

who speaks with a middle eastern accent of some kind,

She is carrying half-hidden bubble blower machine.)

YASMINA

I ahm go glahd to be here, I have mahvelous news to share with you and your audience.

JILL

What's that odd machine you're carrying, Yasmina?

YASMINA

All in good time, my dear. May I explain my form of yoga to your audience?

JILL

Of course!

JACK

And then we'll decide: Does it quack? Or is it back to black?

YASMINA

Yes. Whatever. My form of yoga is a variant on laughter yoga, or *hasyayoga*. It which is a respected form of our art, whose chief exponent is Madan Kataria. Have you heard of it?

JACK

No. But there's so much I don't know. Right Jill?

JILL

Like I'm always sayin', Jack!

YASMINA

The premise -- a ***proven*** one by the way -- is that laughter releases endorphins and increases serotonin. In any case, it brings us closer to release and calmness in our inner souls. Ready to give it a try?

JACK and JILL

Yes!!!

YASMINA

And you in the studio audience and you at home, feel free to get into your favorite seared yoga position. Like this. (*she demonstrates*) Begin reciting your favorite mantra if you have one. If not, just say Ommmmmm!

(JACK, JILL and WOODIE get into position

on a piece of carpet at the fore of the stage.)

YASMINA

Now while you are meditating, I will gently spray you with ***Beatific Bubbles***. These will bring you closer to the bliss of Nirvana, if you just let them. Feel the bubbles splash -- little explosions of happiness against your skin and note the increased joy you will feel. Are you ready? Here goes.

(MUSIC up. YASMINA begins spraying JILL and JACK and WOODIE, the first

two of whom who respond a bit joyfully. JACK'S pleasure will build, so he does not start out fully happy. Then she goes around the audience and sprays bubbles at those who seem willing to receive them)

Are you feeling it yet?

JILL

YES!

YASMINA

Jack?

JACK

Oh yes!!!

YASMINA *(to AUDIENCE)*

And you folks?

(AUDIENCE responds positively)

JILL

So does it quack, or back to black?... Quack, folks, if you're feeling it!!

AUDIENCE

Quack! Quack Quack!

JACK

Oh YES!!!! Quack quack quack quack!!!!

(Music and quacking, all build to crescendo. Fade to back.)

THE END