

THE MORRISTOWN FABLES: PART 3

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"Tuesday" said the hen perched on the mantelpiece.

Ross Begorrah glanced at the wretched bird wearily. His wife had been teaching the fatuous fowl the days of the week and all it could recall was the days up to Wednesday, after which it returned to Sunday and started all over again. Judging by the number of 'weeks' it had got through that afternoon, Ross was half expecting it to wish him a Happy New Year any minute; silently he cursed the silly shepherdess who had recommended such an inept temporary cuckoo clock. How much more of this could he stand?

It had been a bad enough day anyway. Dead Rheum, the spirit name of the ghost of Bert N. Weepy, had just paid a visit and brought some fellow shades including Gene Krupa (now known as Dead Beat), Napier (Dead Reckoning) and Bonnie Prince Charlie (Dead Head), and it had taken him hours to clean their ectoplasm off Faith's new carpet. More visitors were expected, Mr and Mrs King and their fat child of indeterminate gender, and he still had not finished his canvas. (Ross had recently taken up painting-by-numbers.) Glancing through the window, he saw the members of the famed hidden orchestra clambering over his garden fence and he dreaded the consequence of their unexpected assembly.

"C-2," said Ross, returning to his artwork. "That's olive green." "Wednesday," said the hen with that cross-eyed look which suggested that she was on the point of laying an egg. "Sunday," and the agonized tone betokened not one but a whole clutch of eggs. "Monday," and she was hopping from leg to leg in the agony of gestation.

Just at that moment, in came Faith with the Kings and their mystery child whom Faith introduced to Ross as Carrie. "Tuesday," squawked the boring bird as she leaped off the mantelpiece and crashed into Begorrah's artwork, covering it with eggs.

"Oh, dear," said the artist as he surveyed the yolk running all over the top half of the picture turning the sky from blue to green. The orchestra struck up and the royal shade sang:

"Carrie, the lad born Tubby King,
Ova, the C-2 sky..."