

START this all the time. I'll put it right here under the trough with my other things. (He does so.)

FERN. Oh, Wilbur, I have some good news. Uncle Homer and Aunt Edith seem to be glad that you're putting on weight. (WILBUR beams.)

LAMB. Sure they are.

SHEEP. And you know why, don't you?

WILBUR. You asked me that once before, but you didn't tell me why.

GOOSE. Now, now, now, old Sheep.

SHEEP. He has to know sometime.

WILBUR. Know what?

SHEEP. Wilbur, I don't like to spread bad news. But they're fattening you up because they're going to kill you.

WILBUR (dismayed). They're going to *what*? (FERN is rigid on her stool.)

SHEEP. Kill you. Turn you into smoked bacon and ham. It'll happen when the weather turns cold. It's a regular conspiracy. WILBUR. Stop! I don't want to die. I want to stay with all my friends. I want to breathe the beautiful air and lie in the beautiful sun.

LAMB. You're certainly making a beautiful noise.

WILBUR. But I don't want to die.

CHARLOTTE. Wilbur, quiet down. (A beat as WILBUR tries to control himself.) You shall not die.

WILBUR. What? Who's going to save me?

CHARLOTTE. I am.

WILBUR. How?

CHARLOTTE. I'm afraid that remains to be seen.

AVERY (offstage). Fern!

FERN. In here, Avery.

(AVERY enters.)

AVERY. Mother sent me to get you. You're going to miss supper.

FERN. Coming. "Bye, everybody. And thank you, Charlotte, for whatever it is you're going to do to save Wilbur.

AVERY. Who's Charlotte?

FERN. The spider over there.

AVERY. It's tremendous! (He picks up a stick.)

FERN. Leave it alone.

AVERY. That's a fine spider and I'm going to capture it. (He advances toward CHARLOTTE.)

FERN. You stop it, Avery.

AVERY. I want that spider. (FERN grabs the stick and they fight over it.) Let go of my stick, Fern!

FERN. Stop it! Stop it, I say! (WILBUR waves to FERN that he has an idea. He rushes behind AVERY and kneels, then makes a "pushing" motion with his hands. FERN pushes AVERY over WILBUR. AVERY falls into the trough. The ANIMALS react.)

AVERY. Help!

FERN. I warned you, Avery.

AVERY. That's not fair. You and Wilbur ganged up on me. FERN (wrinkling her nose). What's that smell?

AVERY. I think we broke a rotten egg. Good night, what a stink! Let's get out of here. (He and FERN exit hurriedly. The SHEEP, LAMB, GOOSE and GANDER flee in different directions, protesting violently.)

END