



Chickens

in

Shit



theSailor

It is imperative that you read

Seven Gifts in The Rain

before reading this,

otherwise you will not have
the slightest idea what is going on.

Even then you may have to work a bit.

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO

YOU, WHO READ IT.

THE CHICKEN'S STORY

Doris snorted. "A Great Pop Singer in the Sky! Are you mad? With an eleven string banjo and a pet cat? What are you smoking? Can I have some?"

"Listen," said Popeye patiently, "It's all in the book, right here - ***The Six Edicts of MoleHole Munster***. You ignorant, hick chickens from down the road just don't get it, do you? This is the truth. This is the reality of our lives, written down millions of years ago by the great Profit MoleHole Munster, who was a famous pop singer with a pet cat and an 11 string banjo, who made a lot of money out of it. And we have to worship him and obey his rules because he is the creator and ruler of us all, and if we follow him we can become rich too. But if we don't," he added darkly, "you know what will happen."

"Oh yeah," said Doris, "We'll be cast down into The Garden of Weeds and dissolved by the white powder. I've heard all that. You don't seriously expect me to believe it though, do you? You don't seriously expect me to believe that a pop singer floats about up in the sky with a cat and makes a fortune out of property development, blowing up castles with an 11 string banjo so he can build gated communities for the rich and famous, do you?" The thought of perhaps emulating such dramatic success suddenly spiked Doris with a twinge of doubt, and her query hung in the air for a moment before resolving.

Popeye the one-eyed rooster chimed in: "Yes, Doris, I do. Be-

cause that is the truth. It was written down in seven books which were found in an old, half-buried tower aeons ago on the other side of the world and have been translated from the ancient Yumon by the Accountants, digitally enhanced so we can all read them clearly for ourselves. And you have to read them, young chicken."

"Yeah, right," muttered Doris. Then, with sudden interest, hopping to catch out the old cock: "I thought you said there were six edicts. How come there are seven books then?"

Popeye paused for a moment, suddenly a bit unsure of his ground. There was always some damn fly in the ointment where truth was concerned. "Well, he said slowly, "it seems the seventh must have been an index or something. Some chickens claim it describes a weird, psychedelic dream about a yellow submarine, but it is not considered important so it does not get taught. The important things we must learn are the six edicts, which tell us how to live good and productive lives. And you have to read them and get yourself sorted out."

So Doris the chicken was packed off to the shed at the bottom of the garden and told to carefully read and understand ***The Six Edicts of MoleHole Munster***. And as she passed through the meadow, the cow turned to her and said: "It could be 42."

"42 what?" Doris snapped, looking at the bovine as though it were an idiot.

"Octaves," replied the cow enigmatically, and continued chewing the cud.

"Idiot!" said the chicken, scurrying on.

Deep in our dreams the dolphin sleeps,
and the singer waits in the darkness

A Bespoke Garden

"42 octaves? What on earth is that cow babbling on about?" the chicken was muttering to herself when she got back to the coop.

"How should I know," bellowed Popeye, who was not having a good day, "All I do with my life is get blown out of a cannon into a chicken farm to be nagged half to death by a bunch of fat floozies who want to build an aeroplane. How would I know anything about all those octaves?"

The chicken snorted. "Never mind the octaves, what about that weird book? You're supposed to explain to me all the things I don't understand. What was all that about motivational tarts and saintliness? How can a tart be saintly, for heaven's sake? Was that really this MoleHole guy talking? And what do I need a house for anyway? I've already got one."

Popeye perked up at that. "Ah," he said triumphantly, "But where did it come from? You didn't build it. It must have come from somewhere. It must have come from MoleHole Munster, because he made everything"

"Not necessarily," retorted the young chicken, "Maybe it has always been there, or maybe it just happened accidentally. Haven't you read that Dorkward guy? He seems to know all about it, and doesn't have to trot out a weird pop singer in the sky with a cat and a fiddle to explain it all. He reckons everything just happened accidentally, and it's all wonderful"

"Well, that just goes to show that some people are plain wrong on all counts. And MoleHole Munster had an eleven string banjo, not a fiddle. You're a berk. Keep up, Doris!"

"But Popeye, what is it about? I have no idea. Have I really got to read five more like that?"

"Yes.

Doris took a different route home through the farm this time, as she was growing tired of the cow babbling "42 octaves" at her whenever she passed. As she dropped down into the dell and rounded the small apple orchard she beheld a strange sight at the edge of the pond.

Rising from the ashes in the rubbish-burning pit was quite the strangest object she had ever seen. If she had been a human - rather than a chicken in a parallel universe - she would hve recognised it as a man's arm clutching a battered old thirteen-string guitar.

As the strange, unworldly object shook the dust off itself it swung round and spoke, seemingly to her.

"Are you the chicken?" it asked.

Doris sighed. 'And to think I came round this way specifically to avoid a peculiar cow muttering "42 octaves",' she thought. She pinched herself, shook her head and opened then closed her eyes. But the thing was still there; and it repeated the question: "Are you the chicken?"

With considerable aplomb, given the circumstances, the chicken replied, "What chicken?"

"THE chicken," responded Coalhole Custer, for it was he who was attached to the arm and guitar. "The one that clucks and squawks and flaps its wings but is not really a chicken at all. According to my instructions you are it."

"Oh," said Doris, somewhat dumbfounded at this assertion. Not a chicken? How could she not be a chicken? This strange thing was even weirder than the cow. She felt she needed to go and lie down in a darkened coop and hope it would all go away.

But Coalhole Custer would not let her go.

"Look, chicken," he said, with undisguised exasperation, "There's more to all this than a dark and cosy chicken coop, you know. You don't know what you're getting into, questioning those books. And, in-

cidentally, don't believe that rooster when he tells you the seventh is not important. In fact, don't believe any of them when they tell you anything."

Coalhole coughed some dust out of his throat and continued: "I used to believe I was a simple musician, you know, but it seems I am not."

Doris decided that that was highly likely, given that he looked like a weird musical instrument and spoke like an Ancient Yuman, and seemed to have landed on the wrong planet.

The Singer went on: "One minute I was minding my own business, merrily playing my instrument at the Ice Princess's Birthday Bash, and the next I'm entirely somewhere else talking to a chicken. Now that's not normal, is it?"

Doris felt inclined to agree. "Are you sure you're on the right planet?" she asked.

"No," said Coalhole, "I'm not even sure I'm in the right story." He looked around carefully. "Where's the Snow Queen's palace?" he asked.

"The what!?" laughed Doris. "This is real life, you know, not some airy fairy tale. I think you must have had a knock on the head or something."

The Singer laughed now: "Real life? This? Are you mad?"

- to be finished one day ...

*"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers:
for thereby some have spoken with the Angel unawares"*