

Army Chicken





Write a Book in a Day 2016 Book Summary



The Team Supervisor must confirm the details on this page. When the book is complete, please mark the checklist items and sign where indicated. Please add this page as the first page in the final book.

TEAM DETAILS

Writing Division: Middle School (QLD)
 Writing Date: 13-08-2016
 Group or School: Genesis Christian College
 Team Name: Year 9 - Team 3
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PARAMETERS

Primary Character 1: Judge
 Primary Character 2: The Queen
 Non-Human Character: Chicken
 Setting: Train station
 Issue: Family disgrace

RANDOM WORDS

Delicious
Nonsense
Hums
Cracked
Danger ✓

AFFIDAVIT

I, NICHOLA WELSH (Team Supervisor), certify that the above team:

- completed all work on their book in accordance with the competition rules
- completed all work between 8:00am and 8:00pm on the day of writing
- included all five random words
- Word Count: 4033 words

Date: 13.08.16 Signed: [Signature]



'Write a book in a day'
Competition

Authors

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Competition Category

Middle School (QLD)

Team

Year 9 – Team 3 (Genesis Christian College)

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Primary Character One: The Queen

Primary Character Two: Judge

Non-human Character: Chicken

Setting: Train Station

Issue: Family Disgrace

Words: Danger, Cracked, Hums, Nonsense & Delicious

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Acknowledgment

We would like to dedicate this Hannah Gibson, one of our own students currently in hospital.

We wish her luck, and a quick recovery.

Secondly, we would like to say to all who are going through something they shouldn't have to – you are amazing, and even though it might be tough, you have survived up until today, and that is truly amazing. You were never going to be given a life that you could not handle.

We wish you a safe, swift and full recovery.

Chapter 1

“Are you the Queen?”

David Queen studied the brown-white chicken who had him fixed in its beady stare. “Are you a talking chicken?”

“I am,” the chicken replied. “So. Are you the Queen?”

“In name only.” He leaned against the chicken fence. “It’s in my last name.”

“Do you know how to help me out of this chicken pen?” the chicken asked. She was in the school agriculture centre, the only chicken to come up to the fence when David visited. Up until now, she hadn’t said anything, but now she was looking right at him and speaking to him.

The other chickens sent short glares towards her. But David’s chicken ignored their pearly stares and focused on her conversation. “I’m Ash,” she informed him. She glanced to either side, at the other chickens, and then, in a hushed voice, she leaned forward and added, “I’m thinking of joining the army.”

“Joining the army?” David exclaimed. “Well, I suppose a talking chicken is strange as it is. A talking chicken wanting to join the army? Eh. Why *shouldn’t* a talking chicken want to join the army?”

“So, do you know how to get me out of this chicken pen?” She blinked in a show of patience, self-contained eagerness.

“Not that I want to be fined for stealing chickens.” He tilted his head thoughtfully. “But I *could* help you. I could take you to Judge Quinn.”

A sheep *baaed* in the background. A cow retorted with a loud, obnoxious moo. A filly whinnied and belted its hooves against the ground, then sprinted off. A pig snorted, and a goat bleated.

“Bubaaaahk,” a chicken offered.

“Buk?” another chicken asked.

“Bukbahhkh!” the first chicken confirmed.

“Chicken gibberish,” Ash explained. “But I can speak it well enough to know what they think of my plans and dreams. So I prefer not to listen. It’s become gibberish to me by now. So, about this Judge Quinn. . . .”



Stealing a chicken would glean a fine; David was certain about that. But taking a chicken out of its pen, just for a while, and escorting it to the judge? That was utterly unheard of. Even the *concept* of a chicken that could talk, and who wanted to join the army, no less, was the kind of preposterous idea that no one would have considered plausible—until now. But Ash didn't care that she was thought of as a preposterous dreamer. In fact, it appeared that she *revelled* in it.

But David had gone to the owner of the Agriculture farm anyway. "One of your chickens wants to join the army," he'd explained. "Should I let her? I could take her to Judge Quinn."

"Eh, whatever," the owner had muttered. "Silly kid," he'd added under his breath. "Of course it's just a prank. Chickens can't talk."

Five hours later, the owner of the farm was mortified when he went to the chicken pen with their daily feed to discover that one of the chickens was missing.

By that time, school had finished for the day. David returned home first.

“Hello, David!” his mother greeted him, as he entered the door with Ash behind him.

“Hi!” David closed the door behind him.

“Hello!” Ash exclaimed.

David’s mother gasped, turning her gaze to the chicken. “David! Where did you get that bird?”

“From the Agriculture farm at school!” David replied. “The owner didn’t mind. She wants me to take her to the court!”

“Exactly.” Ash walked ahead of David, and fixed her eyes on his mother’s.

“To the court?” David’s mother gasped. “Why? Did someone commit a crime against her?”

“Oh, no.” David shook his head. “She wants to speak to Judge Quinn. So she can join the army.”

“A chicken, joining the army? That’s ridiculous!”

“So could I?” David asked.

“Could you *what*?”

“Take her to Judge Quinn.”

His mother sighed. “Yeah. . . .”

David, with the chicken following behind, set off through the streets and made their way to the courtroom. The walk was long and enduring, but as they made their way through the many roads, Ash insisted that an army chicken like her needed the practise.

“Besides,” she added, “I haven’t been this far out of my pen before. I’ve only been as far as the corners of the farm. But because of you, I can go on this adventure.”

They stopped after two hours, and David turned and stared at the **cracked** pavement below his feet. “Maybe I could join the army sometime!”

“Why?”

“Eh. I don’t know.”

Chapter 2

“Okay. You are asking to join the army?” Judge Quinn asked, studying the chicken with a steady, impenetrable gaze.

“That’s the truth,” Ash chirped.

“And how do you propose that we make this happen?”

“Propose? I don’t plan on getting married anytime soon.”

“You misunderstand my meaning, Ash.” Quinn stood up from his seat behind the judging stand. “What I meant, was how do you suggest that a chicken may join the army?”

“That’s the part I need your help with.” Ash eyed the judge carefully as he knelt down to watch her. “The Queen told me you could help.”

“The Queen?” Quinn raised an eyebrow.

“My last name’s Queen,” David explained. “So I get called the Queen from time to time.”

“This reminds me of when I went to court about my Ashtralia idea,” Ash muttered.

“Ashtralia?”

“Oh, nothing.”

“Considering your idea,” Quinn muttered, “I suppose I could contact the army. Perhaps they will allow you to join their classes.”

Ash looked at him excitedly. “Really?”

“Yes.” Quinn looked back at her with a deadpan face, entirely void of an external display of emotion.

“Yes!” Ash exclaimed, beaming.

Quinn turned to look at David. “Should not you be at home or at school, young boy?”

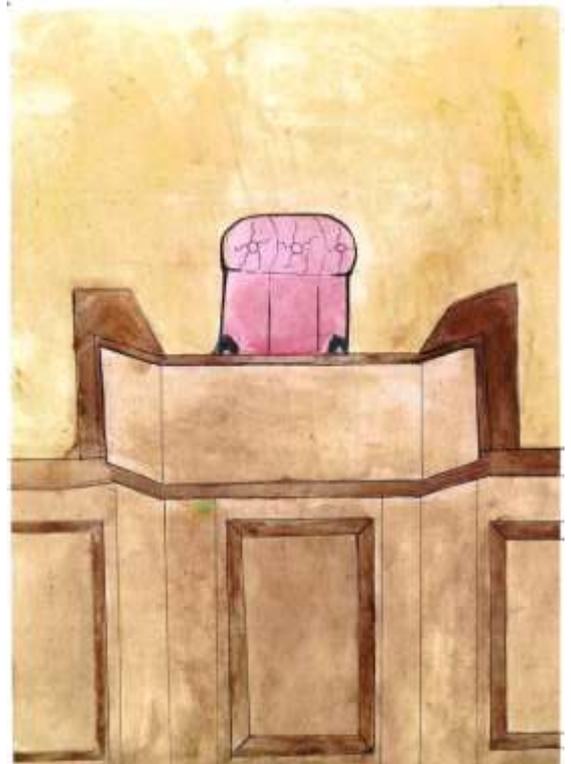
“My mum told me I could come here,” David replied.

“What is her name?”

“Mrs. Queen, sir.”

Quinn drew a phone from a stand. “I will contact the army. Perhaps they will enlist you into their soldiers. Perhaps not. We will see.”

Ash hopped from one foot to the other as Quinn dialed the number.



“Good evening, Captain R. H. Patrick.” Ash danced as Quinn spoke into the phone.

“Fistpalm!” she exclaimed. David scrunched his hand into a fist and bumped Ash’s claw-fist with it.

“Oh, it is Judge Quinn,” the judge was saying. “I have a potential recruit for your army.”

“It’s . . . happening!” Ash half-flew, half-jumped into the air.

“Ahem. She can’t come to you because . . . well, she does not have the usual access to recruitment officers. She came here with a boy named . . . what is your name, young boy?”

“I’m David. David Queen.”

“Ah, yes. David Queen,” Judge Quinn finished. “You’ll accept her? Oh, her name is Ash. Ash what? Oh, it’s Ash—”

“Ash Chicken,” Ash finished for him.

“Erm . . . Ash Chicken.” Judge Quinn glanced around him warily, most likely hoping that they wouldn’t suspect anything. It was too early for them to know that their newest potential recruit was none other than a chicken.

David’s phone rung.

“Hello?”

“David! It’s time to come home,” his mother informed him.

“Okay.”

“Bye!” his mother called.

“Bye!” The phone call ended.

“Okay, I will send her to the train station,” Judge Quinn muttered. “Thank you. Ta-ta.”

That phone call ended too.

“Perth Train Station is the closest!” David grinned at Ash. “It’s on the way back to my place. I’ll drop you off on my way home!”

At the station, Ash and David stood together as the train pulled in. They’d been there for a minute, but the train that arrived was the perfect one for Ash. As she stepped on-board, David waved to her. “See you!” he called.

“Goodbye!” Ash waved her wing to him. “Hope I’ll see you again one day!” A smile stretched across her beak.

“Bye!” David called, one last time, as the train vanished down the tracks.

Chapter 3

She guessed that this would happen.

The laughing stares just thought she wasn't capable. Unable to hold her ground against the world. Seriously, people were weird.

She'd prove them wrong.

It seemed few people hadn't noticed her presence – the consistent murmurings, the flickering stares, and some kicks swept her way. Easily dodged, but still there.

Ash just tossed her head and ignored them.

Despite it being a short line, each person seemed to take ages before being sent away. It was good she'd gotten here quite early. She wouldn't have to wait hours.

Maybe just a *few* minutes.

“Hey! Chicken! You in the line?”

An army official was seated at the desk, waving towards her. The man seated beside him just scribbled on a clipboard, earplugs in his ears.

“Yep!” She bounced up and plopped onto the desk.

“I think you're in the wrong place,” the official told her. “Shouldn't you be back at a farm?”

He chuckled heartily.

Scratching the table, she clucked. “Excuse me? I want to defend Australia too, you know! I'm NO. DIFFERENT. Than the rest of you. THERE.”

“I'm not sure, chicken...”

She narrowed her eyes and dug through the wood with her claws.

He sighed. “Fine. Name?”

“Ash.”

“Gender?”

“Female!”

The official turned to his partner, who took down her words with messy writing. “9am sharp, training course. Be behind this centre.”

With a squawked, she flapped off the table and dashed off.

She'd prove all her friends and family wrong.

9am took *slightly* longer to come than she'd thought it would, but she was still there with half an hour to spare. A few stragglers turned out, but the crowd was rather small – well, it made sense, she supposed.

“Attention!” one of the army officials called. The enlisted people did as he commanded, but instead of a hand, Ash put up her wing.

What? She had no hands. What else was she supposed to put up? Her leg?

“At – ease!” The officer's order was instantly followed. “Now, your first test commences – now! Obstacle course, complete in five. Fail, go home.”

He glanced at his clipboard. “First up, Henry Banks.”

The male in question stepped up to the starting line. From her position, Ash could see the start – a muddy track, followed by a steep hill. She could also spot the finish, which led right back to the starting line in a flat track for sprints.

The first runner had taken off, and she noticed one of the other humans staring at her. “What?” she asked. “Think chickens can't join armies?”

“Chickens should be back on the farm, producing **delicious** eggs for us humans, not dying out on a battlefield,” the man snapped. “A chicken can't do anything to save lives.”

Her feathers puffed up. “Well, I'll remember to tell you they can in about a year.”

“You won't.” He took a swig of water.

“By then you'll be a mess of blood.”

She opened her beak to cluck a return, but there was a shout from the field. “Next up, Chicken!”

Glancing around, she awaited movement. Surely the officer couldn't be referring to her?

No one bothered to move.



At the next call, she groaned and strode up.

“Take your mark.”

She stepped onto the line.

“GO!”

She dashed from her spot, and jumped onto one of the barrels.

Going through the mud would slow her down too much. She had to jump – carefully, in an attempt to stop her feet from getting bogged.

It'd be hard enough to get to the finish on time.

Hopping from barrel to barrel with short bursts of horrendous flight, she breathed out when she landed on the rocky end and started to sprint. Stones dug into her feet, and her legs burnt from the steep climb.

But still, she had to make it. Becoming an army chicken? That'd never happen if she didn't plough on.

Once she reached the top, most of her body aching, she glanced down to see a lengthy hill heading downwards. She stepped on the slope.

She squawked as her feet went flying and she started tumbling.

Flapping her wings, she attempted to stop her relentless tumble.

Was she really cut out to be an army chicken? Was she really cut out for the work involved? Was she really just a chicken?

No, she told herself. I'm an ARMY chicken. I'm not destined for the farm. I will NOT fail!

She landed feet first on the bottom of the hill, and ran. The next section was laid out in front of her, a sharp turn ahead to create the loop. Massive poles littering the track, tall and heavy, stood in her way – meant for humans, from appearance.

So easy, she thought, darting between the poles with ease. Her size had no matter. The gaps were large enough for her to slip through.

Then there was the final stretch.

The official was looking down at his watch, tapping his fingers against his legs. Filled with energy, she dashed forward, ignoring the protests from her legs.

“The chicken's actually *back*.” She heard the officer's mumble, and pushed harder.

A timer beeped just as she crossed the line

Chapter 4

It was a few hours before the official appointment of the army trainees began, but Ash was glad for it.

Her legs still ached from the obstacle course. Well, she'd made it just on time. There were some who didn't.

"To begin the ceremony..." The official coughed, and his gaze fell down to his script. "To begin, we announce the most recent army recruits."

He coughed again. "To start, we have Ash Chicken."

Smothered laughs came from the audience, and Ash squawked as she strode onto the stage.

Their insults didn't matter. She'd stood against the complaints of family and friends alike. Why did it matter what some strangers thought?

"Ash Chicken, despite being very... small, completed the obstacle course with seconds to spare," the official announced. "We find it our... pleasure to officially declare her an army trainee."

Spattered claps arose from the crowd, but Ash caught sight of the stares from the others. They didn't think she could be in the army.

Oh well.

"A chicken in the army... **nonsense**," the announcer muttered. He raised his voice. "For Ash's first mission, she will be deployed to take supplies to a nearby outpost."

Ash's beak dropped.

What had the official *dared* to say?

"Please wish her well on her mission." Glancing back to his pages, he sighed. "Next up, we have Yvette Lumina."

He nudged Ash with his foot, bumping her off the stage.

Her feathers puffed. *How could they do this to me?* She thought. *I've defied my own family to get here, and I'm made a WATERGIRL?*

She clucked. There wasn't much she could do.

Well, except pass the test flawlessly. Then they would promote her.

Everyone had to start *somewhere*, right?

She trotted off, heading for the army centre. There, she'd find those supplies she need to take, and prove herself worthy.

“So, you’re Ash Chicken?”

“Yep,” she said. “Supplies, please?”

The commander of the army rolled his eyes. “Come with me.”

He stood up and walked off, and she followed.

They reached a small shed towards the back of the headquarters, and he opened the door and led her inside. There was a massive pile of stuff, ranging from rations to guns and even to ammunition.

“There. Hope you find a way to take it.” He stormed out, paying her no attention on the way.

Ash glanced over the items, eyes wide. How was she supposed to carry this? She wasn’t a strongman! This pile was at least twice her size. It wasn’t like she was an ant, who could carry 50 times her own weight!

Wait, she thought. Maybe... yes, that’d work!

If she couldn’t carry it due to size, perhaps something *else* could for her.

Chapter 5

If they weren't going to give her transportation, she'd make her own. A cart or wagon would be simple and easy enough to build.

Some wheels, some timber. A couple nails, a hammer. Voila!

It is kind of shabby, Ash thought. But it'll do to drag supplies.

The easiest way would be to go by train, all the way out in the country. Ash dragged the long wooden wagon across the platform, the tall pile stacked on top precariously swaying.



People milled about the platform, making it difficult to make it onto the train, forcing poor Ash left and right.

When she finally got into the carriage, it was nigh impossible to find a seat. In the end, Ash slowly made her way to the end of the carriage, and sat down next to the wagon.

The train pulled to a stop at a small rural station, consisting of a building and a platform. The train, being nearly empty now, emptied onto the platform. Moving away from the ten or so people around her, she pulled her wagon through the entrance to the building just as the train left. The building was tall and quiet. The small wooden wagon's wheels squeaked against the linoleum floor as Ash pulled it through the door on the other side.

The sun was hot on her beak as Ash walked out. The dry ground crumbled under her feet, and several small houses – more like huts really – surrounded the station.

An outpost stood tall in the distance, and Ash started towards it, weaving in between huts and through people in the small square in front of the station.

The outpost towered over her, the stairs winding up the outside. Ash pulled the wagon to the beginning of the stairs, left it there, and began climbing. She knocked on the trapdoor underneath, and waited for it to open.

A female face appeared in the open entranceway, reached down and pulled Ash into the outpost.

“Watch’ya here for?”

“Supplies.” Ash rolled her eyes.

“Captain, the supplies are here!” the female called.

A dark-skinned man walked up to them, saw Ash, shook his head and walked away.

The female sighed. “Sorry about **Hums**, he’s prejudice. I like your style, joining the army. It’s interesting. Also a great way to prove yourself to others. People seem to think if you can survive the army you can survive anything. What’s your name, little one?”

“Ash. Thanks, I guess. Uh, who’s Hums?”

“Oh, the captain. He hums at everything in disapproval. It’s a bit of a joke.”

“Oh. What should I call you?”

“Alex. I won’t be sticking around long though. Between you and me, Hums is hell to work with.”

Ash snickered. “Well, the supplies are downstairs. They are in a wooden wagon that I couldn’t bring up.”

“Oo, I haven’t seen anyone use a wagon before. Did you come on the train?” Alex laughed. “They do that to all the new recruits. At least they’re treating you like the others, eh?”

“I guess. I better get back now before they decide I’m too slow.” Ash waved, and climbed back down the stairs.

Ash wound through the small town once again, making her way back to the small rural train station platform.

The train arrived, she boarded it, and it left.



It was dark when Ash got back to the training centre, and she marched up to administration and demanded a better assignment.

“I want to experience **danger**, and I want to prove I can survive. Give me a better assignment.”

The official laughed cruelly at her. “Why should I give a dangerous assignment to someone who isn’t even human? A chicken! You’re a chicken!”

“Was that meant to be an insult, sir? Because pointing out something that I cannot change is not something that affects me. I really don’t care. Give me a dangerous assignment, and I *will come back*.”

“Suit yourself, chicken. You can try. Judge Quinn might’ve recommended you, but you’re useless to us and your country.”

“I’m going to come back, whether you like it or not.”

Epilogue

Several Months Later

A small brown chicken stepped off the train, carrying a miniature green army helmet. She marched briskly into the administration building at her old training centre, and surprised the officer standing behind the desk with a loud squawk.

“You came back! You survived!” he blubbered.

“Why wouldn’t I? It wasn’t that difficult.”

“Well. You seemed to have proved yourself.”

“Just... Just don’t judge a person’s ability on size. Or species. Or anything else, really.”

Ash nodded, and turned to leave. “I have to go.”

The officer waved back, dumbstruck.

The train pulled into the small brick station, and Ash stepped onto the busy platform. She began to walk towards the exit, when a tall boy and a short man stepped in front of her.

“Ash! You’re back! How was it?” The tall boy, David, exclaimed.

“It was okay. I got a lot of prejudice, but it was easy to get over it.”

“People can be judgemental at times without thinking,” Quinn said. “It is the nature of humans.”

“And chickens,” Ash muttered.

“Still, was it your calling?” David asked.

Ash shrugged her wings. “Perhaps. It was an awesome experience, either way.”

“I bet.” David clapped his hand. “So, do you recommend it?”

Smirking, Ash said, “If you’re willing to stand the pain, yep!”

A frown crossed David’s face. “Pain?”

“Nothing too bad.” Ash waved her wing. “It’s nothing. I’m going to go tell my family they were wrong. A chicken can fight for her country.” She tossed her head and strode off.

David grinned. “Hey, Judge Quinn?”

“Yes?”

“Do you think that soon we’ll have a sheep wanting to become a doctor?”

Quinn sighed. “That would be... interesting, I suppose.”

“Or a rabbit joining the police force?”

“Please, no.”

Ignoring the owner’s horrified stares as she walked into the farm wearing the army hat was easy enough – but the chickens weren’t anywhere to see.

She strode into the barn, and was greeted by clucks from all over the room.

“I’m back,” she said in the chicken language. “I’ve fulfilled my dreams! None of your comments stopped me.”

“A-Ash?” One of the chickens jumped down from the barn shelves and approached her, beady eyes staring back at her. “You’re *alive*?”

“Um, if I weren’t alive, I wouldn’t be here.”

More squawks arose.

“How in Australia did you manage to get in?” Another chicken came towards her. “Surely they wouldn’t let a *chicken* join the *army*.”

“Perhaps they would.” It sounded mean, but seeing the faces of the chickens who had once thought her a disgrace to the race was kind of amusing – she hadn’t let them stop her, and that was her victory. “Perhaps they would.”

Her papa flapped down, ruffling his greyed feathers. “Ash...”

“Papa, I needed to follow my dreams,” she said. “Otherwise, I wouldn’t become a better chicken.”

Her papa frowned. “Maybe you aren’t such a disgrace after all.”

She chuckled. “How can I be a disgrace? I reckon the army will *want* the rest of you to join after this!”

Horrified clucks came from across the barn.

“Er... no thanks, Ash,” her father stammered. “T-Thanks for the offer.”

A smirk spread across Ash’s beak. “Hehe, you might end up there one day. Still, I’m fine if you all just stay here laying eggs.”

“...I think... most of us would be okay with that.” Her papa pecked his feathers and clucked.

“No, I insist!”

“HEY! CHICKENS!”

The chickens, including Ash, jumped and turned to the front as the door banged open. “So, one of my pets was in the army?” the owner asked.

He was met with a group of innocent stares, and he threw up his hands. “Fine, fine. I’m going to have a word with that kid though... see if he did make good on his word.” He stormed out and slammed the door shut again.

“A human helped you?” Her papa blinked twice.

“Maybe, maybe not.” She grinned. “It was still great. They’re great, humans. Well, most of them are.”

Her papa remained silent.

“You know what, Papa?” Ash folded a wing over his back. “I think that you should just let people follow their dreams. You can do anything you want – nothing’s impossible.”

Her papa smiled. “Perhaps you’re right, Ash. Perhaps you’re right.”

