

(A moment later, a GOOSE enters, followed by a GANDER. They circle WILBUR, studying him carefully.)

GOOSE. Hello, hello, hello.

WILBUR (a bit startled). Who . . . who are you?

GOOSE. The Goose.

WILBUR. Oh. Hi, Goose.

GOOSE. And this is my friend, the Gander, Gander.

WILBUR. But I only see one Gander. You introduced me to three.

GOOSE. No, no, no.

GANDER. We tend to repeat, repeat, repeat ourselves.

GOOSE. Do you have a name . . . besides "pig"?

WILBUR. Yes. They call me Wilbur.

TEMPLETON (offstage). Wilbur? That's a pretty tacky name, if you ask me.

GOOSE. Well, nobody, nobody, nobody asked you.

WILBUR. Who was that?

GANDER. Templeton, the rat.

(TEMPLETON, a rat, enters. He carries string, a tin can, and an orange.)

TEMPLETON. In person. (He stares at WILBUR.) Well, I will admit it's nice to have a pig around the place again. I haven't had delicious, leftover slops in an age.

WILBUR. But the slops will be for me.

TEMPLETON. I'm sure you'll find it in your charitable little heart to share your food with dear old Templeton. Especially if I make a nest right here beside your trough. (He arranges the straw at one side of the trough and buries the string, can, and

orange.)

SHEEP (offstage). What's all the commotion in here?

GANDER. It's the old, old Sheep.

GOOSE. And the little, little Lamb.

(The SHEEP and LAMB enter.)

GANDER. We have a new resident.

GOOSE. His name is Wilbur.

LAMB (unenthused). Oh, yeah. The pig.

WILBUR. You know about me?

SHEEP. We overheard the Zuckermans discussing you. They plan to keep you nice and comfortable.

LAMB. And fatten you up with delicious slops.

WILBUR (delighted). Oh, I *am* going to like it here.

SHEEP. Just the same, we don't envy you. You know why they want to make you fat and tender, don't you?

WILBUR. No, I don't.

GOOSE. Now, now, now, old Sheep. He'll learn soon enough.

WILBUR. Learn what?

SHEEP (after a beat). Oh, nothing. Nothing at all. Nice to meet you . . . Wilbur. Lamb, mind your manners.

LAMB (not meaning it). Nice . . . to . . . meet . . . you . . . you . . . Wilbur.

WILBUR (a bit concerned). My pleasure, I'm sure.

GOOSE. Well, I have eggs to hatch.

TEMPLETON. And I have trash piles to raid.

GANDER. Good, good, good night, Wilbur. Better get some rest after such a long day.

WILBUR. Yes, thank you, I will. (GOOSE, GANDER, SHEEP, LAMB, and TEMPLETON exit.) The animals seem nice . . . I

(He exits.)

WILBUR. It does look delicious. But I don't want food. I want love. I want a friend. Someone who will play with me.

CHARLOTTE (offstage). Do you want a friend, Wilbur? I'll be a friend to you. I watched you all night, and I like you.

WILBUR. Where are you? And *who* are you?

HOMER (offstage). I think this will do the trick, Lurvy.

(HOMER, with a container and spoon, and LURVY enter.)

HOMER. Now he won't like this medicine, so you hold him and I'll feed it to him. (LURVY grabs WILBUR who protests.) Come on, boy. This is sulphur and molasses. It'll cure what ails you.

LURVY. Okay, dose him up, Mr. Zuckerman. (HOMER gives WILBUR a spoonful. WILBUR gags.) There, that wasn't so bad, was it? (WILBUR makes a face and nods vigorously.)

HOMER. I think I'll give you a second dose, just for good measure. (He forces another spoonful down WILBUR who gags again.) Good work, Lurvy. That pig will be well in no time. (He and LURVY exit. WILBUR catches his breath and clears his throat.)

WILBUR. Attention, please! Will the party who just spoke to me make himself or herself known? (A pause.) Please tell me where you are if you are my friend.

(CHARLOTTE enters.)

CHARLOTTE. Salutations.

WILBUR (excitedly). Oh, hello. What are salutations?

CHARLOTTE. It's a fancy way of saying "hello."

WILBUR. Oh. And salutations to you, too. Very pleased to meet you. What is your name, please? May I have your name?

CHARLOTTE. My name is Charlotte.

WILBUR. Charlotte what?

CHARLOTTE. Charlotte A. Cavatica. I'm a spider.

WILBUR. I think you're beautiful.

CHARLOTTE. Thank you.

WILBUR. And your web is beautiful, too.

CHARLOTTE. It's my home. I know it looks fragile. But it's really very strong. It protects me. And I trap my food in it.

WILBUR. I'm so happy you'll be my friend. In fact, it restores my appetite. (He begins to eat.) Will you join me?

CHARLOTTE. No, thank you. My breakfast is waiting for me on the other side of my web.

WILBUR. Oh. What are you having?

CHARLOTTE. A fly. I caught it this morning.

WILBUR (choking). You eat . . . flies?

CHARLOTTE. And bugs. Actually, I drink their blood.

WILBUR. Ugh!

CHARLOTTE. That's the way I'm made. I can't help it. Anyway, if I didn't catch insects and eat them, there would soon be so many they'd destroy the earth, wipe out everything.

WILBUR. Really? I wouldn't want *that* to happen.

CHARLOTTE. Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm going to have my breakfast. (She exits behind the web.)

WILBUR (with uncertainty). Well, I've got a new friend, all right. But Charlotte is . . . brutal, I think. And bloodthirsty. How can I learn to like her, even though she is pretty, and very clever, it seems. (He glances back at the web, then slowly lies down.)

THIRD MEMBER. Come one, come all! Foot-long hot dogs, giant hamburgers, french fried potatoes. It's all here, and more, at the Lion's Club Barbecue Pavillion.

CHORUS. At the Fair. At the Fair. At the Fair. (They begin to leave.)

FIRST MEMBER. Harness racing.

SECOND MEMBER. Livestock judging.

THIRD MEMBER. Four-H exhibits.

CHORUS. At the Fair. At the Fair. At the Fair. (They exit.)

(**HOMER** enters. He is followed by **WILBUR** who is tied to a rope held by **FERN**.)

HOMER (yelling offstage). We're back! (**FERN** unties **WILBUR** and he rolls in the straw.)

(**LURVY** enters with a pitchfork filled with more straw.)

LURVY. They're mighty generous with their straw around here, Mr. Zuckerman. Thought I'd get a little more to make Wilbur comfortable. (He dumps the straw, then exits.)

(**ARABLE** enters with a trough. **AVERY** follows him with a bucket.)

HOMER. Right over here, John. (**ARABLE** sets the trough down. **AVERY** pours in the slops.)

AVERY. Pop, can I eat some of Wilbur's slops someday? (**WILBUR** eats.)

ARABLE. In a way, you already do. What he eats is leftovers

ACT TWO

SCENE: The stage is empty. After a moment, the **CHORUS** enters. As they speak, they rearrange the "furnishings" from the barn to suggest an area in the livestock locale at the Fair, specifically Wilbur's pen and ample passage room around it. The UR web is removed and another hung UL.

FIRST MEMBER. The days of summer drifted on.

SECOND MEMBER. Before long, summer was almost gone.

THIRD MEMBER. The end of summer brings many things. Late harvesting. Thoughts of school. *And* the County Fair. (Carnival music is heard.)

FIRST MEMBER. Step right up, ladies and gentlemen. Ride the giant Ferris wheel. Only ten cents. One thin dime. You can see the whole county from the top of the giant Ferris wheel.

SECOND MEMBER. Right over here, fellows. Win a genuine Navaho blanket. Knock down three cloth cats with three regulation baseballs, and you're a winner every time.

from what we eat.

AVERY. Yeah, but it looks better in the bucket than it does on the table.

(MRS. ARABLE enters, holding a washcloth.)

MRS. ARABLE. Well, thank you very much. (She scrubs Avery's face while he squirms.) Hold still, Avery. There's something behind your ears.

(EDITH enters with a sponge and a large jar of buttermilk.)

VOICE ON LOUDSPEAKER (offstage). Attention, please! Will the owner of a Pontiac car, license number H-two, four, three, nine, please move your car away from the fireworks shed! HOMER (to EDITH, who has begun to bathe WILBUR). What are you doing, Edith?

EDITH. Giving the pig a buttermilk sponge bath. He worked up a sweat when you and Fern took him for that walk just now. FERN. Can I have some money?

AVERY. Can I, too?

FERN. I'm going to win a doll.

AVERY. I'm going to crash a jet plane into another one. (He demonstrates and almost upsets EDITH.)

MRS. ARABLE. Avery!

AVERY. Sorry, Aunt Edith.

EDITH. It's okay. They're just excited.

FERN. Can I have a balloon?

AVERY. Can I have a cheeseburger?

MRS. ARABLE. You'll have to wait until we can go with you.

ARABLE. Oh, now, Martha. Let's let the children go off by

themselves. The Fair only comes once a year. (FERN and AVERY cheer.)

ARABLE (giving change to FERN and AVERY). Now run along.

But don't be gone long.

FERN. Okay, 'bye. Scrub Wilbur up real good, Aunt Edith.

He's got to win that blue ribbon tomorrow.

AVERY. Come on, Fern.

ARABLE. Now hurry back. We'll be leaving in a little while.

Tomorrow's the big day.

FERN. Okay, Papa. (FERN and AVERY exit as the OTHERS call after them.)

ARABLE. Don't eat lots of stuff that's going to make you sick to your stomachs.

MRS. ARABLE. And if you go on those swings, you hang on tight. Hear me?

EDITH. And don't get lost!

MRS. ARABLE. Don't get dirty!

HOMER. Don't get overheated!

ARABLE. Watch out for pickpockets!

EDITH. And don't cross the racetrack when the horses are coming! (A beat.)

MRS. ARABLE. Do you think it's all right, John?

ARABLE. Well, they've got to grow up sometime. And a Fair is a good place to start, I guess. (MRS. ARABLE sighs and blows her nose into the washrag.)

(LURVY enters with a wooden sign reading: "Zuckerman's Famous Pig.")

LURVY. Here's the sign from Wilbur's crate, Mr. Zuckerman. HOMER. Good, Lurvy. We'll set it right here so everybody will

CHARLOTTE'S WEB

Act II

THIRD MEMBER. After she had written the new word in the web, she moved on to another project. (CHARLOTTE moves away from the web slightly. Though she is largely obscured by the dim lights, her movements are now very elaborate and mysterious.)

FIRST MEMBER. It carried her far into the night. (CHARLOTTE climbs up and sticks an egg sac high up on the wall, then collapses.)

SECOND MEMBER. When she was finally finished, she was exhausted, and she fell into a deep, deep sleep.

THIRD MEMBER. The first light of the next morning revealed the word in Charlotte's web. (A light illuminates the word "Humble." The other lights come up slowly.)

SECOND MEMBER. It was very early when the judges came around to determine the winners of the blue ribbons.

(Three JUDGES enter silently. They observe the sleeping WILBUR, write on a scoresheet, then exit in the direction of Uncle's pen.)

THIRD MEMBER. The blazing orange sun slowly began to rise on the most important day of Wilbur's life. (The CHORUS exits. WILBUR wakes up and sees the web.)

WILBUR. Oh, look! There's the new word. Charlotte, Charlotte! You've done it again!

CHARLOTTE (waking up). "Humble." It fits you perfectly.

WILBUR (looking at the egg sac). And what's that object up there? It looks like cotton candy. Did you make it?

CHARLOTTE. I did, indeed. It's my egg sac.

WILBUR. What's inside it? Eggs?

CHARLOTTE'S WEB

Act II

lighting effects may accompany the sounds.)

WILBUR. Listen. It's the fireworks.

CHARLOTTE. Fireworks are an important part of the Fair. (She and WILBUR listen for a moment. The sounds begin to fade. *If used, the special lighting effects also fade.*)

WILBUR. This is the first night I've ever spent away from home. (A pause.) I'm glad you're with me, Charlotte. I never feel lonely when you're near.

CHARLOTTE. Thank you.

WILBUR. Even if I don't win the blue ribbon . . . and the worst happens . . . I will never forget you.

CHARLOTTE. That's very nice of you to say. Now, go to sleep.

WILBUR. Good night. (WILBUR stretches out and goes to sleep.)

(The CHORUS enters.)

FIRST MEMBER. Before long, Wilbur was asleep.

SECOND MEMBER. Charlotte could tell by the sound of his breathing that he was sleeping peacefully in the straw. (CHARLOTTE goes to her web and, with her back turned, begins to work.)

THIRD MEMBER. By now, the Fair was quiet, and the people were gone. It was a good time for Charlotte to work.

FIRST MEMBER. Though she was very tired, she worked quickly, for she had yet another job to do.

SECOND MEMBER. Before long, she finished writing in the web.

CHARLOTTE (slowly). The message is spun. I've come to the end. (A beat as she catches her breath.) The job than I've done is all for my friend.

CHARLOTTE. Five hundred and fourteen of them.

WILBUR. You're kidding. Are you really going to have five hundred and fourteen children?

CHARLOTTE (with a touch of sadness). If nothing happens, yes. Of course, they won't show up till next spring.

WILBUR. You don't seem very happy about this.

CHARLOTTE. I guess I feel sad because . . . I won't ever see my children.

WILBUR. Of course you will. We'll *all* see them.

CHARLOTTE. Wilbur, I don't feel good at all. My eggs and I may not make it back to the barn.

WILBUR. Charlotte, don't say that.

CHARLOTTE. Now stop worrying about me. This is your big day today. I'm sure you'll win.

TEMPLETON (offstage). What a night!

(TEMPLETON enters. His stomach is bloated.)

TEMPLETON. What a night! What feasting and carousing. A real gorge. I must have eaten the remains of thirty lunches. Oh, it was rich, my friends, rich! (He emits a loud, satisfied sigh.)

CHARLOTTE. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. You'll probably have an attack of acute indigestion.

TEMPLETON. Don't worry about me. Wilbur's the one you should be worrying about.

CHARLOTTE. What do you mean?

TEMPLETON. I've got some bad news for you. As I came past that pig next door — the one that calls himself Uncle — I noticed a blue ribbon on the front of his pen. That means he won first prize. (A pause.)

CHARLOTTE (softly). Oh, no. (WILBUR sits down slowly. CHARLOTTE goes to him and puts her arm around him.)
TEMPLETON. Wait till Zuckerman gets hankering for some fresh pork and smoked ham. He'll take the knife to you, my boy. (WILBUR stares straight ahead.)

CHARLOTTE. Be still, Templeton! Don't pay any attention to him, Wilbur.

TEMPLETON. I'll bet he's so scared he's going to faint again. WILBUR (after a beat, still looking ahead). No, I'm not. (Another beat.) Whatever will happen, will happen. (He gains courage.) I may not live as long as I'd like, but I've lived very well. A good life is much more important than just having a *long* life. So starting now, I'm going to stop worrying about myself. There are more important things than just thinking about yourself all the time. Like *you*, Templeton. You didn't even notice that Charlotte has made an egg sac.

TEMPLETON. Egg sac?

WILBUR (pointing to the egg sac). Up there. She is going to become a mother. For your information, there are five hundred and fourteen eggs in that peachy little sac.

TEMPLETON. Well, congratulations! This *has* been a night! (He finds an out-of-the-way spot, covers himself with some straw or an old blanket, and goes to sleep.)

CHARLOTTE. I'm sorry about the blue ribbon, Wilbur. But you're being very brave about it.

WILBUR. Bravery is just one of the many things I've learned from you, Charlotte . . . my friend.

FERN (offstage). Look! Look, everybody!

(FERN runs in.)