



ADVENTURES IN CHICKENING

(Rhymes with sickening, for
the Uninitiated)

Chickening is certainly not for the faint of heart. I embarked on a mission of goodness today with a smile and unlimited optimism. It had been raining for many days and this was the first sunny day in recent memory. It fairly begged for an outdoor adventure with the Silkie flock. So I decided we would have a 'spa day' at the "Coop DeVille" and get everyone trimmed and looking fine. I was not met with the same enthusiasm by my girls however. Far from relaxing and sharing gossip while being pampered, they were wiggly, uncooperative and generally surly. Some even had the audacity to growl at me. That's when I decided I wouldn't paint their nails after all if they were going to have an attitude like that.

I ignored their resistance and pressed bravely on as I snipped feathers around eyes for better vision, trimmed stained bum feathers for general appearances, and cut toenails before they twisted into a miniature ram's horn. One girl in particular decided to show the others what a real rebellion looks like. She avoided being picked up for a while, but when I finally did pick her up, she wing slapped me repeatedly. Silkies may be small but they are STRONG. So I'm holding her feet with one hand and trying to control the two propeller wings with the other hand. It was not a pretty sight. I have, however, qualified for the National Silkie Juggling competition for the coming year.

What Silkies lack in the flight department, they more than make up for in the jumping exercise.

Finally I subdued her long enough to trim her toenails. I got all the way to the last one before she succumbed to a fit of thrashing hysteria once again.

I now look like a slasher victim and my arms are bleeding from the scratches I've sustained. The flies and mosquitoes were particularly interested in these places, I might add. But, I digress.

The butt trim was an exercise in frustration. Every time I'd hold her tail up and out of the way, pick up the scissors to trim below the vent, she would flop her tail feathers down in my way. We played this game for about 5 minutes at which time it had lost its charm on me. I dared not let go of the feet which were held firmly in my left hand. I am no fool. The right hand wielded the scissors. The only appendage left to hold her tail out of the way was my chin. So I tucked her tail feathers under my chin and tried to cut quickly and carefully...two things that usually do not go together. It worked for about two snips. Then, with limited options at her disposal to illustrate her displeasure, she decided to poop upon me. Not your ordinary, ladylike dropping, oh no! This was a monster poop of many colors and quasi-liquid consistency. Did I mention that it smelled like 10 day old rotted fish lying in the sun? Not only did it cover my hand and the scissors, but dripped down my leg and into my sandals where my toes curled up in protest, to no avail. I personally think that is taking revenge one step too far. I looked her in the eye and said, "You poor little girl, you must feel terribly abused right now, but I think you are beautiful anyway". I said that not because I felt it at the moment, but because it sounded SO much better than, "You STUPID CHICKEN, I ought to turn you into the world's first SUB-ORBITAL HEN!"

As I repositioned her in my arms to put her back in the coop she had the sheer audacity to turn and viciously peck my eyebrow. My guess is that she was aiming lower. It was one of those two-phase pecks. You know, the kind where they strike and then twist. That is certainly going to leave a mark which I will not be able to explain to my non chicken friends who already think I'm insane.

She assuredly did herself out of a free

shampoo and blow dry. Worse yet, I saw her huddling with the other hens telling them lies about her experience no doubt. I think I saw the Roo standing off to the side laughing.

I finally finished trimming and grooming, cleaning and checking everyone. I made a last check of the nest boxes and found one egg uncollected. I slipped it into my pocket to take into the house and closed up all the doors, checking the locks for security. I swept the shavings and hair clippings away and tossed some fresh basil into each coop for a nice fresh scent. I wanted to go shower and sit down for a rest, but looked at the list of things yet undone and decided to do a couple more things before stopping. By now, the yard mower had arrived and he was blowing the grass clippings off the driveway. I got the keys to move the car so he could blow all of them off. As I sat down in the seat I heard this sickening "c-r-u-n-c-h-h-h-h-h-h-h" and felt warm viscous liquid seeping down my thigh and oozing into the car upholstery. Yes, you guessed it. I am now an official member of the OP Club. That's the "Omelette in the Pocket club". They originally wanted to call it the PO club for "Pocket Omelette" but it was already taken by the "Pooped On Club" I'm afraid. I'm awaiting my certificate in the mail any day.

I might end up having to explain the maniacal laughter as I walked into the house, to my yard man who stared uncomprehendingly at me. Or... maybe not.

Written by,

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Sweetheart Silkies**

