

The World Egg

~ or ~

Creation according to Madam Two Pecks

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Out in the hen house the chickens were getting ready for the night. They wandered in one by one, clucking softly to themselves until the farmyard was empty – except for Six O’Clock the Rooster. He stayed outside because he had to crow from the barn roof the next morning. He was sure his crowing made the sun rise, and that without his cock-a-diddle-dooing we would all live in darkness. He flew on top of the hen house and kept guard.

The sun was settling behind the forest trees when Farmer John locked the hen house door. It was made of metal so that Mr. Fox could not get inside no matter how hard he tried. The chickens flew up to their roosts and tucked their heads beneath their wings. Madam Two Pecks stayed below and sat with her chicks in the nest.

“Peep-peep!” went the chicks underneath her wings. “Peep-peep!”

They were asking for a story. “Please-please!” is what they were really saying.

“Pwawk-pwawk-pwawk,” answered Madam Two Pecks. “Pwawk! Pwawk!”

This meant: “Settle down my little ones and I’ll tell you a tale. Quick! Quick!”

Quickly the chicks snuggled under her feathers and settled down.

“Soon it will be Easter Sunday,” she said, “and tonight I will tell you an egg story. Easter is the day the Easter Chicken comes and hides eggs all around Farmer John’s garden for Tom and June to find. Farmer John tells his children it’s an Easter Bunny that hides the eggs, but that just shows you how silly humans can be. Pwawk-pwawk-pwawk!—and humans think they are so clever!” she chuckled. “Everyone knows that rabbits don’t lay eggs!”

Madam Two Pecks closed her eyes, fluffed out her feathers, and rocked her head back and forth. “This story,” she said, “is called *The World Egg*.”

“There was an Egg, once upon a time, before time was to once upon. It was the World Egg and it was huge. It had to be huge because everything was inside the egg.”

“Everything!” peeped the chicks in astonishment. “Everything?”

“Yes,” said Madam Two Pecks. “Everything. The whole hen house, all the chickens, all of Farmer John’s farm, the barns, trees, fields and Running River—even the sun and moon and all the wiggly worms you’ve ever seen—they were all inside the egg.”

“How about Mr. Fox?” asked Flip-Flop. He had big feet and they flipped and flopped whenever he ran.

“Yes,” said Madam Two Pecks, “even Mr. Fox. Everything was inside, and they were all asleep. Rivers didn’t run, wind didn’t blow, even the sun didn’t shine or the moon change her shape. All were asleep. Sound asleep.”

“What about God?” asked Flip-Flop. “Was God inside the Egg?”

“That’s a good question,” clucked Madam Two Pecks approvingly. “God was inside the Egg because it was Her egg, and God was outside the Egg, because She was the one who laid the Egg.”

“See!” said Flip-Flop to his brothers and sisters. “The chicken *did* come before the egg. I told you so!”

The chicks had been arguing about it all day long.

“Indeed, indeed,” clucked Madam Two Pecks. “Of course the chicken came before the egg! But don’t tell humans. They don’t lay eggs and understand things that us chickens know.”

“God must be the biggest chicken ever,” said Flip Flop in awe.

“Huge! Huge!” peeped all the chicks excitedly. “Huge! Huge!”

“Yes,” agreed Two Pecks, “She is the hugest chicken ever,” and her little chick’s eyes grew big and round.

“Well,” continued Madam Two Pecks after a moment, “God brooded upon her World Egg for ages and ages and ages. She brooded for time out of mind. Suddenly she squawked! A huge squawk! A squawk louder than has ever been. The egg hatched. It burst open, and out tumbled hundreds and thousands of star-chicks. There were so many, and they scattered so fast, that she had to stretch out her wings and make the sky to hold them all. This is why the sky is so huge—and yet all the stars are inside her wings.”

“PWAAAANK-PWAWK-PWAWk-PWAWk-PWawk-Pwawk-pwawk-pwawk!” clucked Madam Two Pecks. “Their numbers were so great that she could only look after two star-chicks properly, a boy star-chick and a girl star-chick. The rest had to wait their turn. The boy chick grew into Rooster Sun and taught all the roosters how to crow in the morning, and the girl chick became the Broody Moon and taught all the hens how to lay eggs and look after their little ones.”

“Like us! Like us!” peeped all her chicks from under her wings.

“Yes,” pwawked Madam Two Pecks, “just like I look after you.”

“But what about the egg shell? What happened to the World Egg Shell?” asked Flip-Flop.

“Well,” said Madam Two Pecks, “after the World Egg burst, all the bits and pieces of eggshell fell down from the sky with a clatter and made the earth. It made the farm, the barn and the trees, even the tractor. Bits of egg white fell on the Snowy Mountains and made the snow, or floated in the air and made the clouds. A touch of yellow yolk fell down too and that’s how yellow buttercups and dandelions came to be—even the golden straw we make our nests with came from the egg. All this fell down and made the world.”

“And Mr. Fox?” asked Flip Flop. “Did he come down too?”

“Yes,” said Madam Two Pecks. “He came down too—but Farmer John made a strong door for us so we don’t have to worry. Now settle down my little chicks and go to sleep.”

And the chicks nestled together under Madam Two Peck’s warm wings and quickly fell asleep.