



I WAS THERE

I was there.
I was there when she layed it.
No more than six feet away. I was there.

Ukito, the rooster, he was there, too. Right there next to her. Over there near her side. Crowing and announcing to the universe the amazing feat performed: a beautiful, new, dark- brown egg just entered the world.

Yes, over there, on that chair, right there a warm, perfect, delicate chocolate-brown egg had just been layed by his novia, his sweetheart, his main squeeze, the lovely Miss Mademoiselle Therese, a large, supple, full-bodied, feather-legged Cuckoo Maran hen.

She was there, right up here, near the house, nestled in a soft lawn chair, laying a fragile, oblong, rich-brown, egg. They were there, Therese's ancestors, off the Atlantic coast in France, at the beginning of the twentieth century, right before World War I, representing a new chicken breed coming to the world. And here she was now, their distant descendant nearly 100 years later, introducing a new egg into the world, right here in Manvel, Texas.

I was there and I am here now, nearly a year ago, when Therese and Ukito arrived together in a box. We went there, to the US Post Office window, at 6:30 AM. Got up with the roosters, we did. We were there to pick up the small cardboard box peeping and chirping with 23 freshly-hatched chicks and a duckling. An odd mix, but siblings, all the same.

From out there at hatchery in Cameron Texas, they were shipped to us here in Manvel, traveling by special overnight delivery. We were together, here in courtyard a year ago to start their gentle, tiny lives here on our little farm, our My Chicken Diaries "fincacita".

I was there, for the past twelve months, watching Therese & Ukito grow, watching them learn to jump and learn to fly, when they lost their chicky fluff and sprouted feathers. I was there as they formed friendships and social groups, and, as with Ukito and Therese, as they chose mates.

And I was there, yes right there in the courtyard, at nine o'clock this morning, soaking up the morning sun and sucking in the spring air, when she layed her egg. I was there with Therese and Ukito, as the precious miracle of life passed from her body onto the soft, brown lawn chair.

And I will continue to be there. Yes, right here, with the chickens, in Manvel Texas, sharing one beautiful, gorgeous, spring day after another. Yes, over there hanging in that chair, up here by the house in the courtyard of the place I call home. Yes, I will be here celebrating as the cycles of life repeat themselves in a timelessness beyond my comprehension.

I was there when she layed an egg. Yes, I was there.