

LEVELED BOOK • K

Chickens in My Backyard



Written by Savannah Duclo

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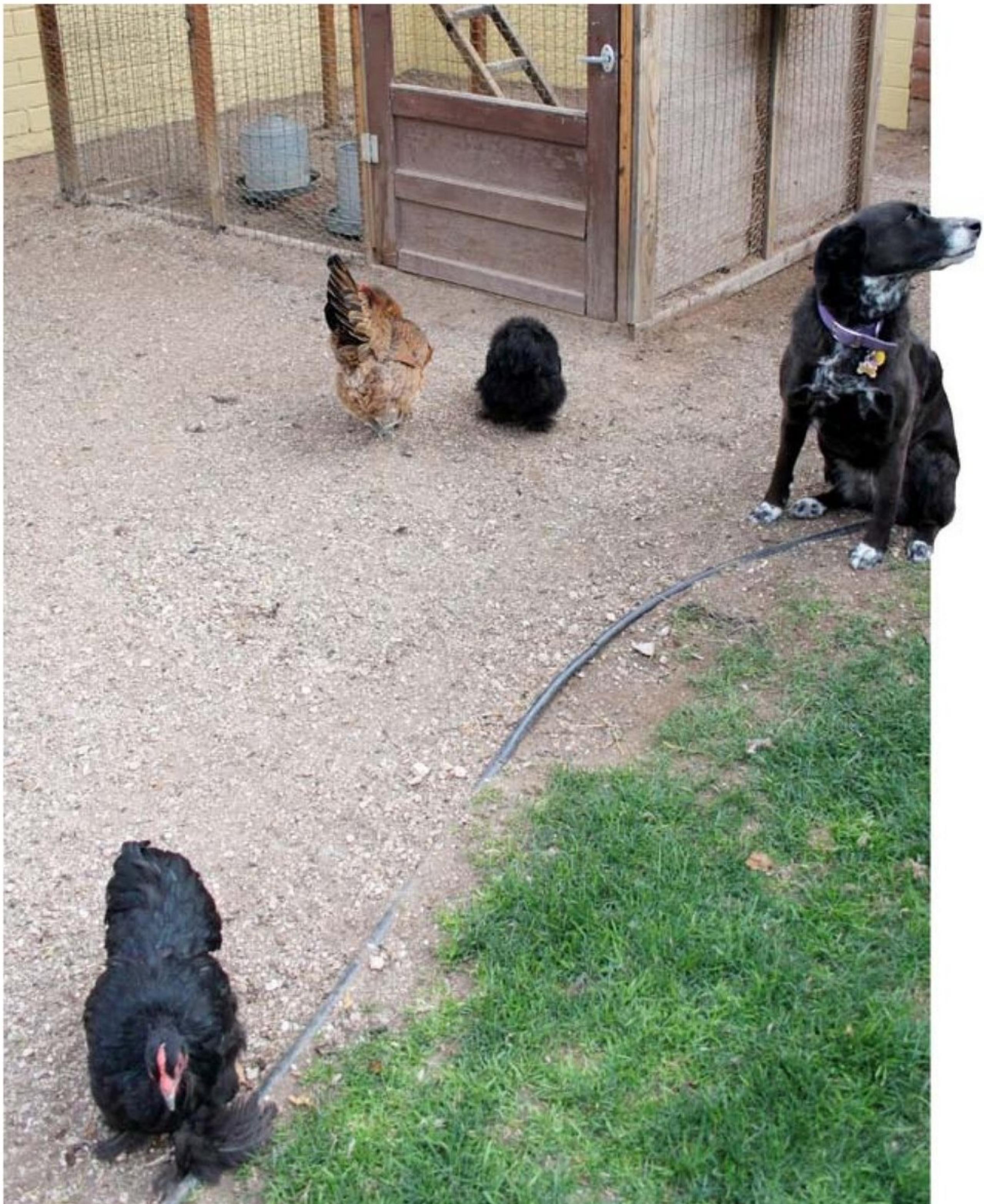
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The Duclos: Savannah (front), Sophia (left), Dana, and Scott



My name is Savannah, and I live in Tucson (TOO-sawn), Arizona.



Even though my family lives in the city, our backyard is like a farm. We have a dog and three chickens. The chickens live in a **coop** we made with wood we found in the alley.



In the beginning, chicks often need a heat lamp (top left). A young Savannah beams with a very young Sleepy in her lap (top right). Twinkle, Scott Jr., and Sleepy search the grass for food (bottom).



We bought our chickens at a feed store when they were **chicks**. We named them Sleepy, Twinkle, and Scott Jr. (Sleepy got her name because she always fell asleep in our hands.) At first, the chicks had to live in a box with a heat lamp to keep warm. Soon they were ready to move out to their coop.



Our dog, Trixie, is kind to the chickens. She even lets them eat her dog bones! Once a coyote showed up in the alley behind our house. Trixie barked to keep the chickens safe.



Our chickens depend on us to take good care of them. We keep their coop clean and fill their **nesting boxes** with soft **bedding**. In the summer, we hang a screen on their coop to keep out the hot sun.



Each afternoon, our chickens eat grass, bugs, and pebbles in the yard. Chickens don't have teeth—eating pebbles helps them **grind** up their food. We feed the chickens corn **pellets** and table scraps, too. They really like grapes and watermelon.



When Scott Jr. gets wet, she looks like she's wearing hair gel...well, feather gel.



The chickens love to go outside when it rains. The wet soil is a good place to find insects and **slugs**. When Scott Jr. gets wet in the rain, her feathers stand up like spiky hair. She looks so funny!



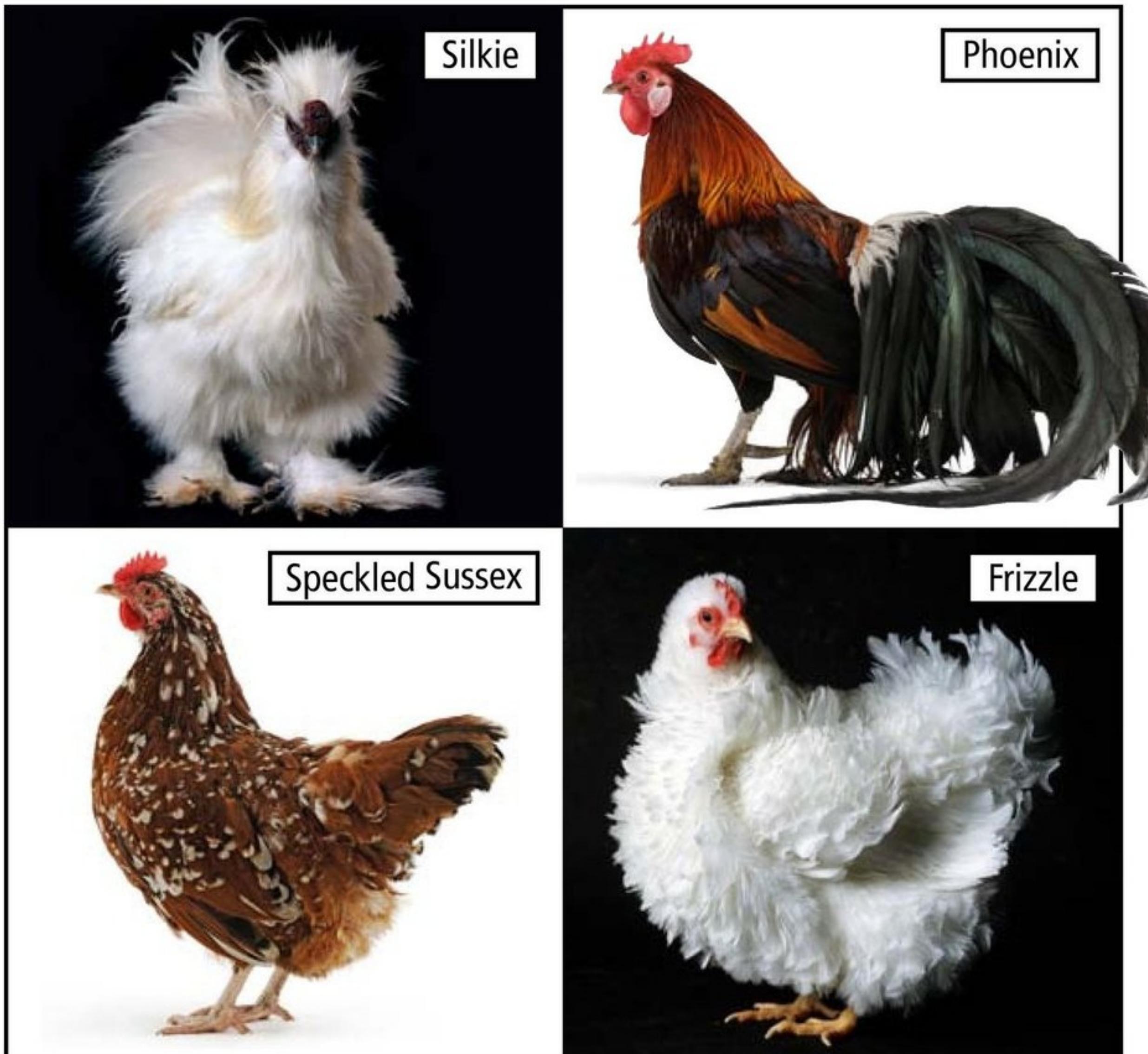
Twinkle lays the larger green eggs. Scott Jr. and Sleepy lay the tan and pink ones.



My favorite part about having chickens is seeing what color eggs they lay. Sometimes the shells are tan. Sometimes they are light pink or green. We eat the eggs for breakfast.



I also like the sounds that the chickens make when they lay their eggs. They say things like “rah, rah” and “bah-bock, bah-bock!” When we hear the sounds, we know that more eggs are on the way.



Did you know there are more than 100 breeds of chickens? Each breed has its own specialty. For example, Rhode Island Reds are known for laying lots of eggs. Silkies are small and have soft, fluffy feathers. Different breeds can live together in the same group, or flock.



One day, our chickens escaped from the yard. We found them under a bush behind our house. We were so happy to see them! We sprinkled their favorite seeds on the ground to lead them back to the coop.



At night, our chickens climb the ladder to their nesting boxes and go to sleep. Dad closes the coop door to keep them safe.



Having chickens is a lot of fun. They make us laugh, and they lay eggs for our breakfast. What good pets!

Glossary

bedding (<i>n.</i>)	material on which animals sleep, such as straw (p. 7)
chicks (<i>n.</i>)	baby birds (p. 5)
coop (<i>n.</i>)	a large cage in which birds, such as chickens, are kept (p. 4)
grind (<i>v.</i>)	to crush something into powder or little pieces (p. 8)
nesting boxes (<i>n.</i>)	boxes where birds nest and lay eggs (p. 7)
pellets (<i>n.</i>)	small, rounded masses of something, such as food, medicine, or wood (p. 8)

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Author's Note: Savannah would like to thank her mom for help in writing this book.

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