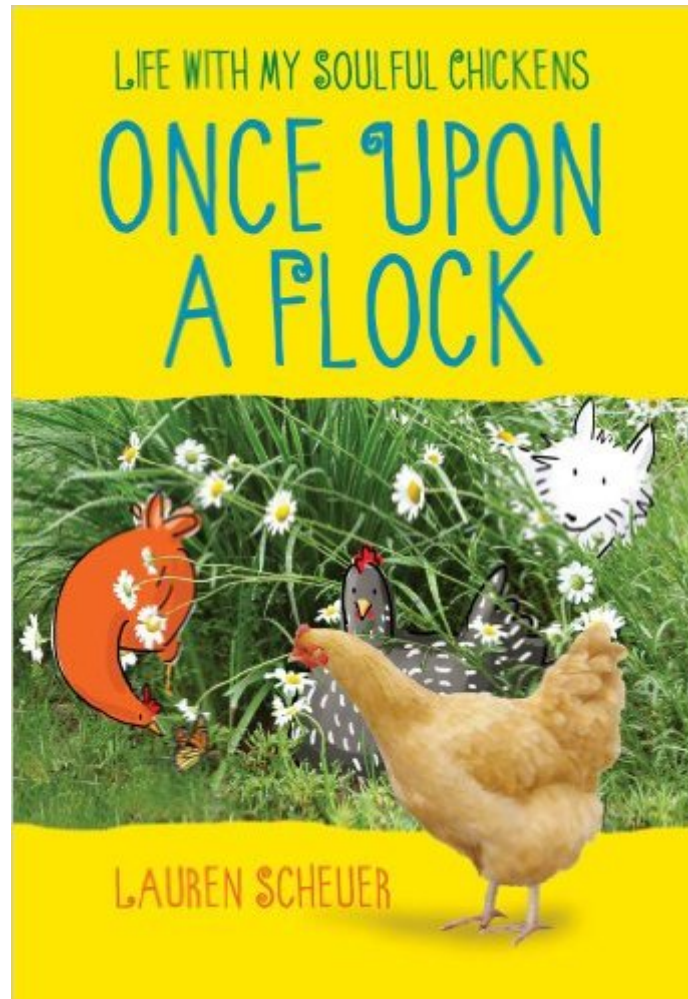


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# Once Upon A Flock: Life With My Soulful Chickens



## Synopsis

This delightful memoir about life with a spirited, sometimes reckless flock of backyard chickensâinspired by the authorâs popular blog, *Scratch and Peck*âincludes color photographs and imaginative illustrations throughout. When longtime illustrator and lover of power tools Lauren Scheuer was looking for a project, she got the idea to raise backyard chickens. Her husband and teenage daughter looked on incredulously as coop sketches and chicken-raising books filled their New England home. But when the chicks arrived, the whole family fell in love with the bundles of fluff and the wild adventures began. *Once Upon a Flock: Life with My Soulful Chickens* stars Scheuerâs backyard chickensâwith their big personalities, friendships, rivalries, and secretsâand the flockâs guardian, Marky the terrier. The flock includes Hatsy, the little dynamo; LilâWhite, the deranged and twisted Buff Orpington; Pigeon, the fixer-upper chicken; and Lucy, the special-needs hen who bonds with Lauren and becomes a fast friend. This charming story of Laurenâs life with her quirky flock is filled with moments of humor and heartbreak: When Lucy is afflicted with a neurological disease, Lauren builds Lucy a special-needs coop. When Lucyâs nesting instinct leads Lauren to act as a chicken midwife of sorts, Lauren hatches a chick in her home. And when Lucyâs best friend Hatsy falls ill, Lauren finds an unlikely friend for Lucy in a chicken named Pigeon, who requires an emergency bath and blow-dry. Enthusiastically immersing herself in the world of her flock, Lauren discovers that love, loss, passion, and resilience are not only parts of the human experience, but of the chicken experience as well. Throughout it all, Lauren documents the laughter and drama of her flockâs adventures with her own whimsical photos and illustrations. At once humorous, poignant, and informative, *Once Upon a Flock* is a feathered tale like no other.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When you have an author that truly touches your soul, there are always mixed feelings when a new book or blog post arrives. "Hooray!" is the first reaction, followed by the tiniest bit of anxiety that we've built up this person's work so highly in our heads that the reality couldn't possibly be all that we are hoping. Lauren's blog, *Scratch and Peck*, is such a huge favorite with me that I had some of those feelings when learning she was releasing a book. I love her blog format, which mixes photographs, illustrations, and text in the perfect ratios to tell her story sweetly, clearly, and with a hint of magic. Surely in this day of low publishing budgets, she wouldn't be able to write a book that includes color illustrations and photographs on every page? How would she tell her story in just the right way if publishing constraints made her change what is so magical about her format? I needn't have worried. Upon receiving *Once Upon a Flock* in the mail (I had it pre-ordered!) I flipped through right away and was overjoyed to see the same type of beautiful illustrations mixed with photographs that you see on her blog. Lauren writes for a paragraph or so, then uses her sweet, soulful illustrations to enhance the stories she's telling about her life, her chickens, and her dog Marky. If you're unsure of what to expect from Lauren's style, you can check out her blog *Scratch and Peck*. While there is a tiny bit of overlap between the stories she shares on her blog and the story found in the book, the book felt like an entirely fresh experience (and I have read every post on the blog). I can't overstate how much I enjoyed reading this. I own chickens myself, so a lot of the stories she shared are ones that I could relate to. Lauren's storytelling abilities and illustrations seem to elevate even ordinary happenings into more meaningful experiences. While reading, I found myself more appreciative of all of the small pleasures in my own everyday life. If you're a fan of chickens, or a fan of Lauren's blog, I would absolutely recommend you pick up this book right away. I enjoyed it so much that I've purchased a second copy to give to a friend who's about to get her own backyard flock.

If you are wondering what it is about the backyard/small-flock revolution going on today, this absolutely charming book will spell it out for you. For those of us already in this mess, you can't put it down. Your mind keeps saying "Yes!" and "YES!!!" again and again. And you find you have fallen in love with her hens as well as your own, again. And if you as yet do not have hens, you will find

yourself wanting to adopt a family of girls for yourselves. This is a book to enjoy alone, with your family and with your hens, too! Lauren deeply loves her accidental second family. She pinpoints precisely the moment that she realized she had been changed forever. I remembered along with her, as I was reading, the same moment for me when I had my long since gone Divine, a beautiful Leghorn, lovingly settle up next to me and I knew I could never eat chicken again. Lauren has mastered writing as well as illustration. Both compliment each other all through this book. I won't spoil one of the nuggets of this book, except to say that Lauren captures the truth about real love: it is indeed a horse or a bicycle that you unwaveringly get right back up on. And I'm sure Pigeon is forever emblazoned in our hearts as a result. It made me love Lauren for the wonderful heart she is; a place I'm sure everyone reading this book will find themselves. One reservation is that this book will get worn out from repeated reads far too soon, and a second copy will be in the cards. Wabi-sabi aside, my only real reservation was that it ended too soon. BUT, paradoxically, it ended at exactly where it needed to end. I found that kindred spirit in seeing that everything really important to the reader is right in your back yard. Maybe that's what it is for hen people, like myself. You can't ever get enough. And it is, at the same time, all you need. Time spent with your hens as well as with this fabulous book is time spent well, indeed! Congratulations, Lauren.

Not just for chicken lovers, this is an excellent example of story structure and giving voice to seemingly non-verbal animals. *Once Upon a Flock* could stand alone as a beautiful funny recounting of Lauren's life with chickens. The superb photographs and illustrations just add another level of warmth and depth. Anyone who has ever nurtured and raised another from 'egg' to 'adult' will enjoy the ups and downs of this whimsical and sometimes poignant book. Lauren's chickens are part of her flock and I'm sure you'll want to make them part of yours.

Lovely little illustrations sprinkled throughout the book along with real photographs of the girls. Having chicken myself I felt as though she told my story as well. If you are thinking of getting chickens or have them this book is a blessing to have along side. Enjoyed the stories as well as the pictures. Quick read.

While reading this book, I fell in love with every single one of the characters, human and animal. Such a loving and touching account of living with a flock of chickens. Yes, chickens are people too, and anyone who ever owned or owns a flock of backyard chickens, knows what we're talking about. Chickens form friendships, they are loving, mean, jealous, curious, smart, hilarious and once you

own them, you can't be without. I'm a proud chicken mama since 1991 and I'll never, ever be without those lovable birds and suppliers of tasty eggs. Lauren is someone you want to meet, because the book makes you think - rightly so - that she is a very kind, loving and humorous soul, being able to write a story like that. I met Lauren in Austin during an event of the Backyard Chicken Meetup Group and she's every bit as personable as I thought she would be. The illustrations and photographs in the book are priceless. I love them so much. And I really, really hope there will be more books written by Lauren and her chickens.

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