

Clover Gets a Haircut

Clover heard Good Morning walking towards the coop, like she did every day before Good Morning brought back the sun. When the door opened, Magnolia made a happy clucking noise as she hopped down from the roost. "Come on Clover, come on down, Good Morning brought back the sun, and I bet there's breakfast in the yard!"

(Good Morning is the name the chickens gave the woman who took care of them. They lived in a bright aqua blue coop in her backyard, and when she came out each day to open their door and give them breakfast, the first thing she said was "Good Morning!" "Good morning chickens, how did you sleep?" They didn't know if she had another name, but since "Good Morning" is what she said every day when she brought back the sun, "Good Morning" is what they decided to call her.)

Clover nearly tripped as she hopped down, and she stumbled out into the yard. "What's wrong with you, Clover?" said Magnolia, "I mean you're always a clutz, but you seem extra-clutzy lately." Clover sighed. Magnolia was her best friend, and they did everything together, but sometimes Magnolia could be a bit mean. The truth is though, Clover did feel extra-clutzy lately, and she wondered why. Things just didn't seem as clear as they used to be. Even when Good Morning brought back the sun each day, she just saw the sunlight coming in streaks through the feathers in front of her eyes. Now Clover had the most fabulous head feathers. She was really quite proud of them. She was a pure-breed Polish Top Hat after all, and *anyone* who knows *anything* knows Polish Top Hats are known for their feather crowns. (Magnolia could call her a clutz all she wanted; she knew that Magnolia was a little jealous of the feathers Clover had on her head).

Clover was still thinking about how lovely her feathers were when she remembered breakfast. BREAKFAST!! Magnolia would have all the corn finished if she didn't hurry. She ran over to the pile of corn as quick-quick-quick as she could. Ooops! She tripped over a rock! "Well where did *that* come from?" She thought. She walked a little more carefully now, but she still nearly bumped into Magnolia when she got to the corn. "BAWK!" she bawked in surprise. "Where did *you* come from??" asked Clover, "you nearly scared the tail feathers off me!"

"I've been right here since I left the coop, eating all *your* breakfast," Magnolia said. "Besides, how could you not notice me?" she continued. "Even with your head down, there's no way you could miss these gorgeous feet." And she held up a large gnarly foot for Clover to admire. Now Magnolia had the most magnificent pair of feet (if she did say so herself). Clover thought they looked a little like dinosaur feet but still, she had to admit, they *were* impressive.

Clover busied herself eating what was left of the corn while Magnolia continued to appreciate her own feet. "BAWK!!" Clover bawked, and jumped as high in the air as *her* chicken feet could take her. "Sheesh," said the little sparrow that had been eating corn next to her. (The sparrows were always trying to get a free meal). "I've been right next to you for the past five minutes!" "Sorry," mumbled Clover, "I guess I didn't see you there." But as she walked away she muttered, "Go find your own Good Morning, and get your own corn, you cheeky sparrow."

Clover wandered over to the water dish, wondering why she was so clutzy lately. Why were things surprising her? She could get lost in daydreams sometimes, she knew that, but something different was going on here. She took a big sip of water, and tipped her head back to swallow, and kept thinking. She took another sip, dipping her beak further into the refreshing water. This time when she tipped her head back, she couldn't see a thing! "BAWK!! BAWK BAWK BAWK!" she bawked. "I'm blind!" she bawked. Good Morning came running out when she heard Clover in distress. "What's going on, chickens??" Magnolia, who was staring at Clover just

shrugged a wing as if to say, "You know how Clover is." Good Morning bent down, speaking softly to Clover, and picked her up. She saw that Clover's fabulous head of feathers had gotten soaked in the water bowl and were all hanging down over her eyes. "Oh, Clover," Good Morning said, as she wiped the feathers away from her eyes, "you silly bird, you're not blind, your feathers are just in the way! You need a haircut. Or should I say feathercut!"

Good Morning put Clover down and went inside the house. When she came back out a few minutes later she had a pair of scissors in her hand. Clover had had a few minutes now to think about this "feathercut" thing, and she wasn't sure she liked it at all. Ok, so maybe the beautiful plume of feathers on her head *were* the reason she'd been clutzy lately. They *had* gotten quite long. She even remembered a day last week when it was still cold, and her feathers had turned into icicles in front of her eyes after she had been to the water bowl! But she loved her head feathers. "I love my head feathers!" she thought.

Good Morning seemed to understand. She had picked Clover up, and Clover had been standing in her lap as she was having these thoughts. Good Morning brushed Clover's head feathers back so she could see her eyes and she said, "I'm only going to cut a little bit, Clover. You will be just as fabulous, but you'll be able to see all the pretty things in the world. And the sparrows won't be able to steal your food so easily." Good Morning winked when she said that, and Clover thought, "It's nice to see Good Morning wink. And it *would* be nice to see the world better too. I didn't even know I was missing anything!" Clover finally decided it was a good idea, and she trusted Good Morning. So she sat down, and stayed very still while Good Morning gave her a feathercut.

"Holy Moly!" said Clover, as she ran around and around and around the yard looking at things. "Did you know there were flowers over here, Magnolia? And a rhubarb plant over here??" she yelled.

"Yes, Clover. Yes, I knew about the flowers, and the rhubarb plant, and about the windchimes over there, and the birdbath over there" said Magnolia, who was starting to lose patience with Clover. Clover didn't care though, she was just so happy to be seeing the world again.... until she ran past a mirror that Good Morning had put out in the yard. She saw herself for the first time without her fabulous plume. She stopped running. She stared at her reflection. She stared, and stared. Finally she thought, "I do have lovely eyes. And Good Morning did leave some of my fabulous head feathers, and ... actually, I think this new feathercut makes me look pretty sharp."

"BOO!" said Magnolia from behind her. "BAWK" bawked Clover. "You scared me, Magnolia!"

Magnolia laughed. She was flapping her wings, she was laughing so hard. "I guess even with your head feathers trimmed you can still be blinded by vanity!" Clover started laughing then too, and when they noticed that the sun was going to sleep, they walked wing in wing toward the coop.

When they were settled on their roost, Magnolia said, "You know Clover, I'm sorry I called you a clutz. It wasn't your fault, it was just your feathers in the way."

"Thanks Magnolia," said Clover, and she gave her friend a little nudge of gratitude with her wing.

"Although..." Magnolia went on, "you *were* always a *little bit* of a clutz even before your feathers grew too long."

"And your feet *are* a *little bit* funny looking," Clover said back to her.

"Hey!" said Magnolia, but then she started giggling. "They are, aren't they," she said.

"And I am a little bit of a clutz," said Clover.

And the two friends were still giggling together on the roost when Good Morning came out to close up the coop.

"Goodnight chickens," said Good Morning. "Have a good rest, and I'll see you when the sun wakes up."

The End

