



HONORABLE MENTION

# Lucky's Life

BY: AVA FORSYTHE

**SHEILA AMARAL**  
4-H CLUB LEADER  
TURLOCK EAGLES 4-H CLUB  
STANISLAUS COUNTY

- ILLUSTRATED BY -  
ELK GROVE  
HIGH SCHOOL

*Author's note: this is the story of how I rescued a baby chick, raised her, and then completely fell in love with chickens. Rescuing Lucky, my beloved chicken, inspired me to join 4-H when I was nine years old. I'm now an officer and junior leader of the poultry project. This story is from Lucky's perspective.*

My story begins as a chick, a tiny black and yellow ball of fluff. I spent my days peeping and chasing my siblings. Caring for a baby chick is a lot of responsibility. I don't think the person that originally took me realized that. After keeping me for a few weeks, I was taken to a walking trail at CSU Stanislaus in Turlock and was left there. I was alone, scared and freezing since it was the middle of January. I still had my juvenile feathers, and wasn't able to keep warm. Terrified, I huddled under a big pine tree, shivering and trying to hide from predators. I sure wish people would research poultry care before owning chickens.

After what felt like an eternity huddling under that humongous tree, I heard something. I peeked out from my safe place, and saw a giant creature sniffing and barking! There were also people. I was excited because I thought my original owner came back to get me. I ran to them, peeping happily. I realized these were different people, two big humans and two small humans, and a furry animal. The little girl immediately ran and scooped me up in her arms. She carried me over to her family. I instantly felt safe and snuggled in her warm jacket. I didn't know it yet, but I had just been rescued by a kind and loving girl named Ava.

Ava and her family knew I would not survive without proper care, so they decided to take me home. I happily stayed snuggled in Ava's coat while she walked to the car. I sat on her lap, relieved to be safe, the entire ride to my new home.

The family had never owned chickens, so they researched and went to the feed store to purchase necessary supplies: chick starter, heat lamp, food and water dish, and pine shavings. I was only a few weeks old and needed a temperature of ninety degrees to survive.

I spent those first weeks living in a dog crate in the house with the family. I loved it! I would peep loudly and flap my wings when I wanted their attention, which was frequently! On warm afternoons, Ava would take me outside and I would follow her around. The family decided to name me Lucky, because I'm lucky to be alive.

With proper care, I quickly became healthy and strong. My gorgeous black and gold adult feathers started to grow in. It was time for me to move outside in my very own coop that my new family built in their backyard. I didn't have any chicken friends, so my family brought home two hens. They picked on me a little at first, but eventually we became friends. Even though I preferred to hop into Ava's lap and spend time with her, it was nice to finally have my own flock.

I continued to grow into a beautiful, fluffy five pound Golden Laced Cochin hen. I even laid my first egg in my nest box. When Ava found it, she was excited. I was given extra treats!

I love when Ava takes me for walks in my special chicken stroller as I happily sit and look around. I'm even patient when other people pet me while Ava tells them everything that is required to properly care for chickens. I eventually learned that the animal that was barking at me on that walking trail was the family's dog, Katie. Because of my friend Katie, and of course Ava, I am alive and healthy. I found a forever home and always will be loved.

Over the years I have helped Ava teach many members in her 4-H club about chickens and what kind of care we require, so other baby chicks don't end up in a bad situation like I did before I was rescued. Ava is even the junior leader of the poultry project this year. I put my head up high and fluff up my gorgeous feathers with pride when she tells them that I am the chicken that inspired her to join 4-H so she could share her love and knowledge of poultry.

## Ava Forsythe



**AUTHOR**

Real life inspired Ava's story. Her family rescued a baby chick that was dropped off at a nearby college campus, raising her and watching her grow. Lucky was the first chicken Ava had ever taken care of, inspiring her love of chickens and this story.

Ava originally worked on the story from her own perspective, but decided to write from the chicken's perspective, envisioning what it was like for Lucky on the day she was rescued. Ava was eager to incorporate how Lucky encouraged her to join 4-H, and hopes readers may consider joining 4-H, too!

## Amia Newberg



**ILLUSTRATOR**

**CRYSTALLINE OWEN,  
ART TEACHER**

As Amia read this story, she felt a strong connection with the dog and hen's friendship and she wanted to illustrate that unique relationship. The high school senior's first step was free flow drawing, and she enjoyed the creative process that allowed her to examine parts of the story which resonated with her as an illustrator. Amia utilized digital art to bring this story full of personality to life!