

Telling Tail Tales

Our Pets During Covid-19

By Jerry Xia



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One Sunday afternoon, my dad hefted a large cardboard box through the front door and carefully set it down in a corner of the living room.

“The chickens are here!” he called out.

Two fluffy yellow balls barely the size of my hand sat snuggled together in a corner of the wood shaving-filled box. They stuck their heads above the box, chirping and flapping their feathers as they took in their new home. It was the middle of the corona virus pandemic, and after being stuck inside our homes for six months, we decided to pick up two chicks from a local farm to raise as pets.

We named the chickens Albert and Arthur. They lived in a cardboard nest, with a box filled with wood shaving bedding, food and water trays, and a heat lamp to keep the chicks warm. During the first month, they were too small to stay outside; it was January, and the winter nights were too cold. So they grew up in our living room: day by day, they grew larger, their wings became longer, and their feathers turned a shade of reddish-brown, until they grew to be two fully mature Cornish hens.

After a month and a half, we moved the chickens outside to our backyard, into a coop designed like a miniature house. A ramp leads up into the main room of the structure where a window in the wall provides a view of the lawn, and in the back, a cozy nest box provides a space to sleep and lay eggs. Outside, a wire mesh enclosure protects the chickens from hawks and other predators, with a door leading out into the backyard.



Albert and Arthur in the yard

During the pandemic, our chickens grew to be invaluable companions as pets. Every morning they lay two eggs, so there's never a need to buy a carton at the grocery store. But more than that, filling the chickens' food tray, cleaning out their water, and replacing the wood shavings inside their coop has taught me about the responsibilities of good caretaking.

Most importantly, watching Albert and Arthur bouncing around the backyard, digging for worms to eat, or taking dust baths together in the dust bath tub has brought a spark of joy into my life trapped inside during the corona virus pandemic.



Albert and Arthur taking a dust bath



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