

UNCERTAIN EGG-TOWN

A 10-minute Tragicomedy

by

Suzan Averitt 2022

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Place:

A dirt patch with a large chicken coop Center Stage Right. Along Stage Left is a beat-up chain link fence. A ratty curtain covers the entrance, DSL. A rusted aluminum sign Center Stage Left points and reads SCRAMBLED EGG FACTORY. On the roof of the coop is a metal removable rooster weather vane.

Time:

Early morning, still dark.

Characters:

Saundra-- An energetic, thinnish, dirty white hen with spots and a characterly face. Wears dated dress or skirt and matching top (but not identifiable by decade), mainly white, off-white, with brown spots. Also wears a medium brown sports jacket and a jaunty brown cap for her first scene. Medium brown pumps with low chunky heels. Hair looks like it was done in a beauty salon about two weeks ago-- curly, shortish. Wears dingy one-piece off-white slip with long brown gloves, and oversized large false eyelashes, club make-up and the same shoes for dance scene. *Slight chicken behavior here and there. No need for exaggerated make-up to help explain she is a hen--it should all be done in the facial expression and body behavior, and even then, it is only suggested, used for emphasis, and does not need to be carried on the entire time.*

Mischa'elle, A younger and plumper hen with long eyelashes and a luxurious coat of bluish-black plumage. She wears a black cocktail dress, a dark fancy cape and black pumps with a low stiletto heel. *Slight chicken behavior here and there. No need for exaggerated make-up to help explain she is a hen--it should all be done in the facial expression and body behavior, and even then, it is only suggested, used for emphasis, and does not need to be carried on the entire time.* Pronounced 'Misha L'

Tony (V.O.) A rough East Coast club manager's voice.

Gordon MacRae (V.O.) An overconfident, crude pretty boy who speaks with dulcet tones.

SFX cricket sounds

SFX feather-storm sounds, can be abstract but should be menacing

SFX egg cracking on a skillet

SFX sizzling skillet

PRODUCTION NOTES:

This play is influenced by German Expressionism.

Props: realistic eggs with weight to them, human-sized shiny black feathers (Mischa'elle's). The weather vane is a real object. It must be able to spin and be removable to use as a prop onstage.

The set can be created with a painted backdrop, including a partial view Stage Left of the Scrambled Egg Factory.

The feather-storm and the cage Sandra dances in can be created with lights.

The leaves covering the chicken scratches, and the cricket, created in space.

No other characters (chickens etc) are depicted in the play.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

This piece easily allows for a more minimalist interpretation, in both set and costumes.

The two hens can be anywhere from 25-40 or so in age.

EXT. JUST BEFORE SUNRISE, IN FRONT OF A CHICKEN COOP

Two hens scuffle DSC, edging toward DSL.

SAUNDRA

NO, we're **tickling!**

Saundra has one of Mischa'elle's feathers in her beak and is jabbing her with the soft end.

MISCHA'ELLE

Stawp! Give that back, I need that.

SAUNDRA

For what exactly, it's not as if it's your last one.

They rest for a moment and fix their hair.

SAUNDRA (CONT'D)

Have you seen Josephen? She went and tore up that colored cardboard that's been underfoot here and shredded it into strips and stuck them in her hinny-quarters. Next thing ya know, she's knocked up, again, by Mr. Gordon MacRae. He doesn't care if her parts are real or not. Kitchie Coo, Kitchie Coo!

MISCHA'ELLE

(giggling)

We are definitely not tickling, one cannot be affected in a sensory way by one's own protuberances, so OUCH! Why, why?

Saundra carefully places a freshly plucked feather from Mischa'elle in her jacket. They resume fixing their hair.

SAUNDRA

Maybe I need something to remember you by, Mischa'elle.

MISCHA'ELLE

Oh silly.

Mischa'elle squints at the weather vane.

MISCHA'ELLE (CONT'D)

(wistfully)

Look at Mr. Gordon MacRae, up there, pirouetting like nobody's business. Balanced on the roof, probably scoping out his next conquest. How does he stay so dapper, I wonder?

SAUNDRA

Oh 'Misch. You're not exactly undumb, are you? That's not himself; don't you even know *what* you are preening for?

MISCHA'ELLE

Same as all of us, Sandra. I would imagine.

Both peer through the slowly dawning sky, toward the coop. A breeze picks up, turning a rooster weather vane fixed to the coop roof in a circle. Mischa'elle freezes in place, cowering.

MISCHA'ELLE (CONT'D)

Don't let him see me like this, my my my my-

Sandra pulls the feathers from her coat and holds them up like she's guiding the weather vane in for a landing. The dawning sun catches their gloss and the breeze loosens their shape. Mischa'elle pushes her face through the two feathers in glee.

SAUNDRA

(stage whisper)

Don't worry sweetheart, he's facing the other way, keeping abreast of the pluckless 'working hens' from the other side of the tracks. He'll throw them a bone from time to time.

MISCHA'ELLE

(snorting with laughter)

Oh 'Saund, you're a card, a virtual card. You really know how to pick up my spirits. You know I'm dreaming about our future, once I am over birthing eggs and you have satisfied your wild oats. What mis-adventures we will experience! Someday...after...

SAUNDRA

(sighing)

Doesn't matter. I've known for awhile you wanted a babe of your own. And you may have noticed, I keep moving closer to the factory next door. The aroma of whatever they are making compels my foolhardy spirit.

MISCHA'ELLE

Gah. I will think of you often. I'll name my first-laid after you.

GORDON MACRAE

(V.O. A blood-curdling scream breaks
their reverie- not a rooster crow)

SAUNDRA

He needs a lozenge! But it is getting to be that time.

MISCHA'ELLE

(referring to the factory next door)

What IS a Scrambled Egg Factory, exactly?

SAUNDRA

I'm going to find out. And if it's as good as it smells, we may not see each other for a very long time. Remember me to your chicklings.

Saundra scoots under a corner of the chain-link
fence surrounding the factory.

The sun rises fully and Mischa'elle putters
toward the coop.

MISCHA'ELLE

I never did smell what Saundra did, and I neglected to grab one of her feathers to remember her by. It's as if she were never here, almost.

Mischa'elle rubs her behind where Saundra
plucked a feather. She spies a small pile of
popcorn seeds on the ground and cautiously
approaches it.

MISCHA'ELLE (CONT'D)

I love popcorn, but my figure!

Mischa'elle eats a few kernels.

MISCHA'ELLE (CONT'D)

One last nibbly. I'll exercise later. I need to get back to my deciphering.

Mischa'elle sucks up a beakful of kernels and
serpentine her way to an obscured section of
the coop, making sure no one sees her.

She pulls away some big leaves covering a pattern on the ground.

MISCHA'ELLE (CONT'D)

(still with seeds in her beak)

I wish, so wish I had shown this to Sandra before she took off but I really can't explain anything yet.

She peers at the scratchings, but while doing so creates new patterns without realizing it.

MISCHA'ELLE (CONT'D)

(referring to the new markings)

What's this? Someone is trying to communicate with me! Every time I inspect the site there are more glyphs. I am just too dumb to puzzle it out. Sandra told me often enough I was dumber than a rock, but twice as beautiful.

In the sky a dark cloud begins to form.
Mischa'elle frantically re-covers the scratchings with the leaves and then runs around the yard.

MISCHA'ELLE (CONT'D)

A feather-storm! This time of year! Do I let it wash me clean of my sins or take cover?
Whaat? Whaat?

Mischa'elle takes cover in the middle of the stage, which is no cover at all. She pulls her wings around her and tucks her head down, noticeably shaking. The weather vane spins uncontrollably, blows down and lands harshly on Mischa'elle, who thinks she is mating with Gordon MacRae.

MISCHA'ELLE (CONT'D)

Awk Awk, my love, finally, ouch, awk!

They roll around in the dust and dark sky.

MISCHA'ELLE (CONT'D)

I got your messages. They were... emotionable, I just couldn't make sense of them because of my stupidity. They were art. You can sing AND write. If only I were your muse BLOODY HELL THAT HURTS

The lights come up suddenly. The feather-storm is over. Mischa'elle is in the same spot, quite still. The weather vane is tangled on top of her. Saundra appears from under the fence, and rushes over to Mischa'elle. She is concerned.

SAUNDRA

I saw the feather-storm from the peephole! I came to check on you and found you like this!

MISCHA'ELLE

He was forceful.

Saundra distastefully removes the weather vane from Mischa'elle's back.

SAUNDRA

Was he now. Glad to hear he hadn't gotten rusty. Glad to hear you don't need a tetanus shot after being bawked by 'you're so vain'! Looks like 'Gordon, Mr. MacRae' got himself all mangled. He belongs in the trash!

Saundra tosses the bent shape to the back of the stage.

MISCHA'ELLE

It was a forceful lovemaking.

I consented awhile back simply by being a hen. He attacked me, more like a brute than a star of stage and screen. I broke my wish bone and I had been saving it for...for... It wasn't pleasant. But now I have three beautiful eggings and I will name one after you, as pledged, one after me and one after Gordon!

Mischa'elle, still in the same position, looks up and around. She turns to gaze up at Saundra.

MISCHA'ELLE (CONT'D)

It's going to be a beautiful morning. Saund, I've missed you. I'm different now, a different hen. How can you stand to look at me? I'm nothing more than an ugly cocotte, now.

SAUNDRA

Shhhh, close your broken, beady eyes. Let me fluff your feathery bits back in place.

Saundra lifts Mischa'elle's hem of her dress and pulls out an egg and inspects it. She shakes it and holds it up to the light. She sees no embryo. She tucks it into her large brown handbag and quickly grabs the other eggs.

SAUNDRA (CONT'D)

Don't brood darling. It's all over now, Kitchie Coo.

MISCHA'ELLE

He's not going to call again, that's it for me. I can't take it.

TONY V.O.

(from the direction of the Scrambled Egg
Factory)

Sandy, you're up in 3...

SAUNDRA

(calling back)

Thanks, Tony! Heat up the pan!

MISCHA'ELLE

(Shyly) Are you a performer now? I'd love to see you. I so admire the arts (breaks down, softly crying).

SAUNDRA

Ah well, it's nothing you need to see, just up in a cage with the other chicks, nonstop figure 8-ing my hips. At least I've got my own enclosure now. Do you want to go back to the coop?

MISCHA'ELLE

No I'll stay here in case anyone wants to find me for something or other.

Saundra cheers Mischa'elle up by pulling an egg out from behind her ear.

MISCHA'ELLE (CONT'D)

Oh My Toes! How did'ju do that?! Oh do be careful.

SAUNDRA

Let me put it back now.

Saundra sneaks the egg back into her bag.

SAUNDRA (CONT'D)

They can't start without me but I still gotta go.

Saundra wipes Mischa'elle's eyes.

SAUNDRA (CONT'D)

I'll be back after my set, alright lovey? Let me just say my hellos to the other biddies back there.

MISCHA'ELLE

(Softly) All right...

Saundra skedaddles off in serpentine fashion to steal more eggs, and disappears. She reappears with a full bag of eggs and crawls under the fence to the Scrambled Egg Factory. The sun begins to rise behind Mischa'elle. First we hear a loud 'crack', (SFX egg cracking on a skillet) then the yellow of the sun is poured into a sun shape, surrounded by clouds. Mischa'elle gathers herself. She sneaks DSL and pulls back a curtain to reveal the inside of the club. Saundra is gyrating in a cage. Eggs drop from her butt. (sizzling skillet SFX) Mischa'elle is horrified. She noisily darts away from the club, and begins to run in circles in front of the coop, crying and ranting about her fate.

MISCHA'ELLE (CONT'D)

(to herself, under her breath, but the audience can hear her)

I just wanted to brood, I just wanted to brood, to brood and be brooded over, to bring him his slippers in front of the fire, and sip Frangelica while we wait for our girls to become women.

We see Saundra in the club and Mischa'elle at the same time, Saundra finishing her dance in low light and Mischa'elle running in circles in front of the coop, holding her head (as if to keep it on).

Saundra sees her and finishes her dance. When the music ends, Saundra grabs her jacket and starts to go after Mischa'elle but she is stopped by an offstage Gordon MacRae.

GORDON MACRAE (V.O.)

Who's your little friend, doll?

SAUNDRA

G, you have no sense of timing at all. Absolutely none.

GORDON MACRAE (V.O.)

That's not what you cooed last night, baby.

Mischa'elle, overhearing the exchange, suddenly backs up and shakes her tail feathers aggressively in his direction. Saundra stops her from attacking.

SAUNDRA

It's nothing 'Misch. He just comes in to unwind.

Mischa'elle begins ripping her own feathers out.

SAUNDRA (CONT'D)

Gordon MacRae is not the rooster you think he is. You are too good for him and I know that for a fact. His name's not even Gordon, it's Gary, and he's had every hen in this coop more than once, dirty devilish cockalorum!

Saundra looks anxiously toward the club.

SAUNDRA (CONT'D)

Stawp pulling at yourself! I will explain everything to your tender feathered head once I'm off, if Tony doesn't fire me first.

Saundra runs back to The Scrambled Egg Factory. The stage darkens. Mischa'elle collapses where she is, facing the audience, CS. A cricket jumps near by.

MISCHA'ELLE

(in a high voice)

Cricket. Cricket.

She catches the cricket with her mouth and eats it.

MISCHA'ELLE (CONT'D)
(muffled, with her hand over her mouth)

Cricket (like a belch).

(removes her hand, face to sky)

Excuse me.

Saundra slides under the fence and rushes to Mischa'elle.

I've quit! I've quit! We're free birds now, with our lives ahead of us!

Mischa'elle attacks and they scuffle, hard. Mischa'elle rips Saundra's throat out with her talons.

In the disturbance Saundra lays three eggs. Mischa'elle holds one up to the light. She gives it a peck-kiss. She pushes Saundra away and sets to brood on her new chicklings.

MISCHA'ELLE (CONT'D)
Much better than a silly old feather to remember you by. Kitchie Coo. Kitchie Coo.

END