

When I heard that a local egg factory was shutting down, I went there, determined to save a chicken or two. The first thing I noticed when I arrived was a horrible stench coming from the warehouses. Inside them, row upon row of battery cages had once been home to thousands of hens. It seemed especially strange here on Maui, a paradise where the air is filled with fresh ocean breezes.

When I got out of the car, two workers outside saw me holding my cat carrier and eyed me suspiciously. I walked over to them and said I was hoping to adopt a couple of chickens. They directed me to the manager who said, "Sorry, we just had a chicken sale." I said, "Can't you please think of a couple of hens for me to adopt? I'll take good care of them." He paused, told me to go to my car and wait, then got on a golf cart and drove to the warehouse. Minutes later, he came driving back, steering with one hand and holding two chickens upside down by their legs with the other.

Once inside my car, the terrified hens covered motionless, pressed against the back of the cat carrier.



A Tropical Paradise for Laverne and Shirley

by Laurelee Blanchard

When we got home and I set them free in their huge yard, they were in shock. Never in their lives had they stretched their wings or walked a

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single step. After about 30 minutes, they slowly started walking around, reveling in the grass beneath their feet and flapping their cramped wings.

Today, Laverne and Shirley, as I named them, do all the normal chicken activities—hunting for bugs, dustbathing and preening. They love to sunbathe.

The first time I saw them lying on their sides in the sun with their eyes closed and their legs sticking out, I thought they were dead. But they were just soaking up the sun—which the millions of hens in egg factories never feel in their whole lives.

Later, Laverne and Shirley were joined by four more hens rescued from a tiny cage at a local bed and breakfast. They all run together and flap their wings and cluck and cluck—it's the clucking that tells me how happy they are, because all of them were so quiet when they first arrived.

The cats pay little attention to the chickens, except for Tommy, whom we call "Tommy the Chicken Man" because he loves to sit right in the middle of the flock. He'll sit there for hours, and he goes everywhere with them.

Although the chickens have a special roost and nesting boxes, they prefer to roost in the trees. Meanwhile, the cats sleep in the chickens' nesting boxes. And the chickens lay their eggs in the cats' beds!

