

THE CONDOR EGG

By Jeff Dunne

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CHARACTERS

- JOSEY A young (the younger the better) woman, enthusiastic to the point of naivety, but full of creativity and drive.
- EVAN A practical young man, slightly older than Josey. Could be an older brother, or perhaps a roommate depending on the ages. He's not unkind, but not really an art person.

SETTING

A modern-day kitchen or living room in an apartment or house.

SCENE

(Josey is sitting at a table, intently staring at an egg. She has a camera on the table near her, and a backpack nearby. After a few moments, she gets up, moves her chair to a different side of the table, sits down, and intensely stares at the egg from this new direction. Then she whistles to it and says...)

JOSEY

Come on. You can do it...

(She drums her fingers on the table, starting near the egg and moving back towards her. She suddenly thinks she hears something, and quickly grabs the camera and points it at the egg, ready to document the hell out of it. Nothing happens. As she pulls the notebook over to her and starts to notate this non-event, Evan enters.)

EVAN

Hey, Josey. The Anderson twins asked if we wanted... what are you doing?

JOSEY

What does it look like?

EVAN

It looks like you're sketching an egg. Is this for the art—

(Indignant, Josey shows him a page of written notes.)

JOSEY

Does this *look* like a sketch?

EVAN

Whoa, Jos... wound a little tight, are we?

JOSEY

Sorry. It's been a very frustrating day.

EVAN

Sorry to hear. So I guess this isn't for the art show. What are you—

JOSEY

It *is* for the show. I wanted to do this sequence of photos showing the first moments of a baby condor, and then through its life. You know, first steps, first food—

EVAN

A condor? Like... *(he flaps his arms in a slow, dramatic gesture)?*

JOSEY

Well, I'm not talking about birth control, you moron.

(Evan stops for a moment, then shakes his head.)

EVAN

Where'd you get a condor egg?

JOSEY

From the fridge.

EVAN

Those are chicken eggs.

JOSEY

You don't know that.

EVAN

I really do.

JOSEY

You just think you do. I saw a picture online, and this looks just like it.

EVAN

Lemme see.

(With a sigh of frustration, she puts down the notebook, and then says to the egg...)

JOSEY

Don't you dare...

(Josey takes out her phone, navigates to an image, and then shows it to Evan. He looks at it, then swipes through another few images.)

EVAN

I admit that one picture looks a little like it—

JOSEY

Same rough surface, and—

EVAN

But did you see this next picture? With the dude holding it? It's the size of his whole hand.

(Reaching for the egg...)

This one is only—

JOSEY

Don't you *dare* touch that egg!

EVAN

Wwwwwhy?

JOSEY

I've been with it for nineteen hours now, and if it hatches and imprints on you at the last minute, I'm gonna kill you.

EVAN

Josey... Josephine... It's not a condor egg.

JOSEY

It could be.

EVAN

It's half the size of—

JOSEY

So it's a dwarf condor. That's fine. It'll make the art even better. The story of a lone, midget condor as she struggles to overcome challenges and takes to the skies and...

EVAN

You're going to document all of this?

JOSEY

Of course.

EVAN
For the art show.

JOSEY
That's what I said, isn't it?

EVAN
The one that's in three weeks?

JOSEY
Twenty-four days.

EVAN
Whatever. Do you know how long it takes a condor to reach maturity?

JOSEY
No. Do you?

(Evan goes back to his phone and moment later...)

EVAN
They can live up to seventy years.

(Keeps reading.)

JOSEY
That's fine. I don't need to document all the way through her death.

EVAN
It says here that it doesn't start flying until about six months.

JOSEY
Give me that.

(She grabs the phone, reads.)

Oh. *(Then brightening...)* Actually, that's even better. I can do one this year on the hatching and early days, then follow it up next year with one showing its first flight and stuff.

EVAN
And stuff.

JOSEY

You know, hunting, soaring above the clouds, its first kiss...

EVAN

Please tell me you're kidding.

JOSEY

Don't be such a Debby Downer.

EVAN

Josey, there are so many things wrong this, I... I don't even know where to start.

JOSEY

You're always so close-minded.

EVAN

I'm close-minded?!? Let me see if I have this straight. You want to document the... Condors don't kiss!

JOSEY

That's all you've got?

EVAN

No, it's not all I've got. Even if this *was* a condor egg – which it's not – it wouldn't hatch anyway. You got it from the fridge!

JOSEY

I warmed it up!

EVAN

And how... You know what? I don't want to know how. It's not a condor egg.

(She starts to object, but before she can say anything.)

It's not a dwarf condor egg. It came from Shop and Save. In a carton. From a farm. A *chicken* farm. Where they farm *chickens*. And do you know what kind of eggs you get from chickens? Chicken eggs!

(Josey glares at Evan, but then her expression goes from anger to sadness. She looks down at her notebook, and in resignation crosses something out at the top of the page.)

I'm sorry. I don't mean to spoil this for you, but...

(Josey's spirits have suddenly brighten, and she scribbles something in the notebook.)

EVAN (CONT.)

Josey? What are you thinking, Josey?

JOSEY

I just realized. Suppose it is a chicken, but it's brought up to think it's a condor! That's an even better story. How it escaped from a life of slavery on some chicken farm, and flies off to Lithuania to soar over the oceans with her adopted condor family.

EVAN

Lithuania's near Poland.

JOSEY

Okay.

EVAN

In Europe. Condors live in South America. And in the mountains, not over the ocean.

JOSEY

Jesus, Evan! So she goes to live in the mountains of Portugal then!

EVAN

Also in Europe...

JOSEY

You're picking this apart based on tiny details that aren't even important to the main story, and—

EVAN

Chickens don't fly.

JOSEY

...even if... *(Pause.)* They don't?

EVAN

Not appreciably. Maybe enough to take a dump on Colonel Sanders, but that's about it.

JOSEY

Oh. (*Thinks about it...*) Well, that's okay. It can walk to South America. Or hitchhike.

EVAN

I suppose it could fly long distances if you got it a plane ticket, but there's still—

JOSEY

(*Now very excited...*)

There's the support I'm looking for! Yes! It flies to Zimbabwe or whenever they live in South America, and gets adopted by a family of flightless condors that weren't able to hatch chicks.

EVAN

Josey...

JOSEY

They raise it as their own...

EVAN

Josey.

JOSEY

Teaching it the mystic ways of condor shamanism...

EVAN

Josey!!

JOSEY

What?!

EVAN

Eggs you get from grocery stores aren't fertilized.

JOSEY

So?

EVAN

They can't hatch.

JOSEY

I warmed it up in my—

EVAN

Told you. I don't want to know.

JOSEY

I could get it warmer.

EVAN

There is no temperature, none, anywhere between frozen and omelet, that will make that egg hatch.

JOSEY

You're sure?

EVAN

Yes.

JOSEY

Positive?

EVAN

Absolutely.

JOSEY

Then what am I going to do for the art show?

EVAN

(At a loss. Finally...)

I... I have no idea. Just paint a picture or something like everyone else.

JOSEY

That's it? That's all you've got? Paint a picture? Don't you know anything about the artistic process?

EVAN

Honestly, Jos, I've never really understood all that art cr— stuff. You paint some random picture of a street in Paris, or you tape a banana to a wall or whatever. What's the point? In the end, some art critic is still going to tell you that it represents the angst in neo-futilist dichotomized cultural dysfunction or whatever. So what does it really matter?

JOSEY

Art brings things to life.

EVAN

(Impatient, but not cruel...)

Whatever that means. But the one thing I can guarantee you, beyond any shadow of a doubt, is that you aren't going to bring *that* egg to life, and it sure as hell won't become a condor.

(Evan exits. Josey watches him leave, looks back at the egg, and then back to where Evan left.)

JOSEY

Oh yeah?

(Josey retrieves her backpack. She brings it to the table, and takes out a set of paints (or whatever), and picks up the egg.)

Don't listen to him.

(She starts to paint the egg.)

You're gonna be the most awesome condor in Lithuania ...

(Lights out)