

# The Crack

by Jeffrey S. Callico

'Don't move or you'll make me miss.' She held the egg lightly in her hand, like a very fragile tennis ball. 'Okay,' she said with a slight grin or arguably a smirk, 'ready?'

'Ready,' said the girl, half the other's age but just as sure of herself.

The egg-thrower readied her throw, moving her hand to the right of her head and a few degrees above. Upon release, the airborne egg smashed into the girl's forehead, the burst yolk oozing down the bridge of her nose. The girl kept her lips closed as the exploded yellowness flowed downward and began dripping from her chin. She looked as if she wore a strange yellow beard. But it lasted only a moment, for the yolk dropped into a small puddle at her feet.

'Whammo!' shouted the egg-thrower (she had exulted in her precision upon impact). 'I knew I'd do it!'

'Good shot,' the girl said, using a cloth to wipe away the remainder of the egg-mess from her face. She knew the clear stuff was chicken semen, but this didn't bother her. 'Now it's your turn.'

'Okay.'

They switched places. The girl took her egg from the cardboard container while the other positioned herself. Holding the hard white globule encasement, she fancied it felt like a large pebble or an oddly colored housing for Silly Putty. The fact that it was an egg, that although it felt like a solid and could seemingly withstand immeasurable harm, made her realize that she was much like it, sturdy and stubborn yet simultaneously weak and not immune to eternal wreckage.

Staring down at it, the other waited.

'You gonna throw it or what?'

The girl looked up. 'Sure,' she said. 'Just give me a minute.'

'Oh, c'mon, what are you waiting for? Just hit me.'

'Okay,' she said, vexed. Grasping the egg snugly in her palm, she prepared her throw in the same way the other did, aiming for the

forehead. Suddenly her hand started shaking; she felt her grip grow tighter; she was afraid she would burst the egg. The other frowned.

'What? What's wrong? Throw it!'

The girl lowered her egg hand. 'I can't,' she said. 'I just can't do it.'

'Why the hell not? What's the matter with you?' She was coming toward the girl.

'I don't know. It's the egg. I don't want to ruin it.'

The other snorted. 'Ruin it? What do you mean ruin it? It's just an egg. Are you afraid they're gonna go extinct?'

'No,' implored the girl. 'Of course not. It's just—'

'It's just you're a—yeah, that's right, a chicken. You're a big fat chicken. What, do you think you laid the egg yourself? Is that your little chick in there?'

'Screw you. You just don't understand.'

'No, I don't. You're being completely ridiculous. Now I'm going back over there and I want you to throw that stupid egg, okay? Okay?'

The girl was staring down at the egg in her hand. 'Okay,' she said after a moment. 'I'll do it.'

'Good girl.'

While the other returned to her former position, the girl noticed that the egg had a tiny crack, thus making it imperfect. Now it doesn't matter, she thought. It doesn't matter what happens to it.

She prepared her throw once more, then released the oval into the air. As it traveled the short distance to its intended target, the girl knew then that each one is egg, and that each one also is chicken. But which came first she would never know.

