**The Orange Bowl**

**1479**

Once upon a time... ew, ew, ew, nope, nope... Uh, scratch that. Uhm, here is a story...uh, my story...yeah.

Monday: I woke up quite abruptly to the sound of my stupid chicken alarm blaring beside my head. I had set the silly sound as default a while ago, with the hopes that I would be overcome with the same ecstatic energy that farmers are filled with at five in the morning when they go to milk their cows; alas, I will truly never understand the appeal. Allow me to tell you here, it does not work.

And there I sat, contemplating my every reason for being, truly searching for any feeling that would aid in my movement out of bed and onto the cold, hard, wooden floor. Well, the answer did come eventually. It came from the loud clanking of clean dishes and pots being put away from last night's supper. This was my usual sign. Crawling out of bed, I sniffed a shirt, weighed its cleanliness, tossed it on, ran my fingers through my hair, yanked the covers over the area where my warm body once lay peacefully some short five minutes ago, and headed for the kitchen. On par with normal routine, I grabbed the Frosted Flakes box off of the pantry shelf. My younger sister adamantly requests to get them, even though my mother knows that they're filled with just sugar, and if you were to ask me, well, they taste like glue. I poured myself half a bowl and then raced against time to eat them while they still contained their desirable crunchiness, before the milk became overbearing.

After swallowing a mouthful of sugar milk, I plopped that bowl beside the ancient, never-moving, almost sacred, slimy-on-the-bottom, orange-chipped bowl that resides in the left-hand corner of our old brass sink. My mother insists on keeping it, even though it just collects water and generously leaves a slimy ring on the bottom of the sink. It's one of those things I truly will never understand. I might as well ask the rain if it could personally shower inside our house instead of outside.

By this point, the dog was scratching at the door, informing the already informed that it needed to be let out. Usually, this is right about the point when I start scrounging for my shoes, looking in every place but the right one, and then the shoes turn up, right where I didn't think I left them. The dog and I always walk a couple of blocks or so, him dragging me by the leash, and every time I open the front door, he flies outside as though there is something magical and exciting awaiting him, but I can tell you there is not.

You needn't ask me how Tuesday went, or Wednesday, or truly any day after, because I've already told you everything that ever happens during my nine to noon. I never expected anything different. Yet, on no particular day, this is precisely where my story takes its shift...

Uhh, so let me take you to the less boring part.

Thursday: You know that thing called waking up on the wrong side of the bed... well, you could have just as well given me that title, plastered it on a sticker, and stuck it to my forehead. I woke up excessively more peeved at the chicken sound blaring in my ear. I didn't follow through with my morning contemplation, and I sure as heck didn't wait for the pots and pans to mark my cue for getting up. I didn't bother to pull the covers over my bed that day. Why would I? I would be back here in the same place in less than twenty-four hours anyway. Let the heat escape more quickly for all I care! Did I bother to sniff my shirt... no... did I try to do anything with my hair, also no. And then there I was, standing in the same kitchen, with the same option of cereal. I poured myself another bowl of that cereal: I’m going to spare you the thoughts I was wielding towards the Frosted Flakes that day. When I was done, I set that bowl in the sink... and that's when I lost it, and all hell broke loose. There was that stupid, good-for-nothing, ugly, orange bowl!! I was so tired of it all! Tired! Tired! Tired! Done with the stupid bowl, over the Frosted Flakes, weary of the same tiresome, mundane routine. I couldn't take it anymore. And just when I didn't know what I would do with myself, the dog started scratching at the door. Looking back now, I don't know if he was trying to escape the house or if he was trying to escape the possible chance that he might be a witness to all of the emotions that I was going through at that precise moment.

I swung the front door open, and off he scampered. And then it hit me; I hadn't even tied him to the leash. I ran out the door after him, but to my dismay, a four-legged creature compared to a two-legged creature is much faster. And then there I stood. On a sidewalk, on a Thursday, tired and upset. Beside the sound of distant cars, it was silent. I didn't know what to feel; I didn't even know if I was or could feel anything at all. And then it just came out. “I WANT TO FEEL, I WANT TO BE!!” I screamed it, and I meant it! Yet, at that moment, something shifted. I realized I could feel. I was feeling, and I had the power to look at things in two ways. I had the power to control my experience.

I was helpless in finding the dog, but as I walked home, I noticed things I hadn't seen before. Small dandelions scattered over the neighbor's overgrown grass and how bright and alive they looked. The warm sun shining from up above gently warmed the morning's dew. I returned to the house, opened the door, and found myself walking over to that orange bowl that lay so peacefully in the sink. For the first time, its presence didn't annoy me. I thought about what it could mean to my mother, the history of it being passed down through generations of my family, and why, when all this was put together, I could see how it might be important to her. But I'll be honest, some things I just wouldn't understand, and I decided that that was okay.

The dog eventually came back a little bit later, and a calming sense of relief overcame me. I couldn't be mad at him for running out of the door when that was precisely what I had been doing with myself: running away from everything that I didn't like or didn't comprehend.

So, allow me to tell you how my days went on from that point forward.

Friday: I woke up to soft chimes on my newly set alarm. The chicken sound had had its place and time, but I was ready for something new and different. I didn't wait for any cue to tell me that I should get out of bed. I still threw the covers over my bed and ran my fingers through my hair, but I did pull a clean shirt from out of my dresser drawer and throw that on. And just as I was about to leave my room to head downstairs, I decided to open my curtains to let in the trickling sun.

I was now downstairs, and I stood there, as I did every day, in that kitchen with the same box of cereal in front of me. I pondered how much my sister loved those Frosted Flakes and how I had a choice as to how I felt and reacted to this. I turned to my right, and there on the counter in our fruit bowl was a banana. Beside the Frosted Flakes box in the pantry was a jar of peanut butter. And that was what I ate that day. Nothing spectacular, but something a little different, a change. Just on cue, the dog started scratching at the door, letting me know that he was ready and waiting for his daily morning walk. I slipped on a pair of unhidden and available shoes, attached him to the leash, and opened the door.

I saw that I had the power and choice when it came to the decision as to how my day went, how I felt, and what I felt. I knew that nothing had changed. The mundane was still mundane, the orange bowl still sat in the sink, and the Frosted Flakes still tasted like glue, but my perception and perspective were altered, and this newfound harnessed power was exactly what I needed.