

The New Me

By Maria Menendez, grade 6

The sun's rays pierced my eyes. I turned around, mumbling for more sleep, when I heard the alarm clock. At least, I thought it was the alarm clock, because instead of the normal everyday *beep beep beep*, it was something new.

"Get up this instant! You're already ten minutes late!"

This definitely woke me up. I tumbled out of the messy vortex of sheets and blankets that enveloped me like a warm down jacket. I stared at the alarm clock.

It had grown a mouth and some googly eyes.

Overnight!

"Well? Would ya quit staring at me?" it said.

I nodded, speechless.

I slipped on my flip-flops, the slippers of spring. My feet just barely fit.

"Eww! This stinks. Hey kid, have you ever thought about taking a shower?" the flip-flops asked me condescendingly.

This time, I yelped, startled. It had also sprouted googly eyes and a sassy mouth.

Overnight!

I replied in an equally sassy tone. "How can you smell? It's not like you have a nose."

This made them quiet. Surely, they weren't used to being wrong. Then again, they probably also weren't used to being alive.

I tried to get dressed. I opened my closet to the wide array of clothing. Shirts of various sizes and styles. They were all wiggling, excited.

"Pick me!" said a pink one. It giggled.

“No, I’m better!” replied the one next to it. “I have sequins!”

“I’m your top pick! Teal tank tops are all the rage!”

“Are you kidding?” squealed a particularly hyper one. “That’s so last week! No, take some jeans and put me on!”

“But bright purple doesn’t go with jeans!”

“Me? Again?” asked an exasperated dress in the corner, with frayed sleeves and paint stains all over it.

In the end, I put on the same dress as always. It was the quietest, after all. Slipping on a pair of smiling panties, I quickly made my way over to the dresser. I watched as the googly eyes on the hair comb blinked at me.

“*Sigh*. Another very tangled Monday morning.” Wow, the objects in this house sure loved to complain.

“It’s not even a Monday. It’s Sunday.” I replied, even though the date had no effect on the hair comb.

I plugged my ears as I combed my hair, an impossible task, but it was still better than listening to the comb moan and whine about split ends and my bird’s-nest of a hairstyle. I heard it grunt every time it reached a knot, the pink and purple teeth tangled in waves of dark hair. By the time I made a decent braid (with a silent elastic - thankfully), the comb was back asleep, snoring its head off. Of course.

I decided to look for some privacy. Slamming and locking the bathroom door behind me, I breathed a sigh of relief. No more voices. No more staring eyes. Good.

“Darling, did you wash your hands? Or brush your teeth?”

“Ahh!”

I searched around for the source of the sound.

I was slightly surprised. Who on earth would have the choice to put googly eyes on anything, and choose a shower cap that expired 90 years ago?

As I stormed out, I made sure to wash my hands. And clean my teeth.

Okay. Maybe I was going insane. One thing was for sure: I was getting hungry, and I needed a snack. I walked to the kitchen. I opened the silverware drawer and found that my favorite spoon was missing. How odd. When I checked the cupboard for a plate, I found the spoon giving the plate a warm embrace.

They were both muddy with wild, adventurous eyes, the kind that meant trouble, unlike the peacefully sleeping, gleaming dishes next to them. I don't think they noticed me.

"I love running away with you, spoon." I heard the dish speaking in a dreamy voice.

Yeah, they definitely didn't notice me.

"Yeah. Oh, remember that time we visited a concert that turned out to be a cat playing the fiddle?" replied the spoon.

Um... hello?

"And the time that the cow said she could jump over the moon? Oh, what great adventures we've had!"

I couldn't believe my eyes. It was like a nursery rhyme coming true!

"Oh, if only we could have adventures indoors. It's just like we're objects in this house."

"That's it." I said. "I can't tolerate this anymore. I'm going to get some fresh air."

Outside, I stepped on the sidewalk. Good, no googly eyes. No mouth. I dared to hope that the day would pass as normal.

That's when I saw the birdfeeder.

"Hey, have you heard? The walnut tree across the street thinks it has more green leaves than our oak tree. In spring! How preposterous. Oh, and a little birdie told me that-"

"Nope." I muttered. "I'm going back inside."

I only caught a "how rude" from the bird feeding gossip machine on my way back to the door.

What an unusual morning... if only I could get some answers! I thought about searching this situation up on my phone, but after seeing the googly eyes on it, I had second thoughts. The encyclopedia!

I skimmed it, looking for anything helpful. Just then, I flipped to a page and almost dropped the book.

The history of googly eyes. With a diagram.

A blinking diagram.

“Hi there, Cookie.”

Ack! It knew my nickname! Well, duh, it was an encyclopedia. It probably knew everything. Startled, I shut it, panting. My face was sweaty and pale as a polar bear in a snowstorm.

“You’re awfully jumpy today.” the encyclopedia said calmly and gently.

I only managed to blink. “How? And why?”

“Sorry, but I can’t spoon-feed you all the answers. Maybe you can figure it out?”

“No,” I said, getting impatient, “you’re an encyclopedia! It’s what you exist for.”

“Sometimes, you’re more than what you’re supposed to be. Think. Soon, the answer will come, if you’re smart enough to find it.”

I wandered around the house, jotting down notes on the living objects. The alarm. The birdfeeder. The cell phone, the dish, the encyclopedia, the flip-flops. My head was spinning.

I thought. What could I possibly do to have just one day of peace?

Wait...

It dawned on me, and I had no idea why it took me so long to figure it out. The conversation between the dish and the spoon. They said they didn’t want to be treated like objects, even though they were literally actual objects. Although, were they really, if they could talk and think and feel?

I knew what I needed to do. I went in order.

First, the alarm clock. I made a pact with myself to try to wake up on time, especially on school days. I knew it wouldn't want me to be late. After all, it must be hard to try and wake me up every day, only for me to snooze it.

The slippers. I'd wash my feet from now on. And my hands, since the shower cap would like that. And my teeth. Wow, I was going to be squeaky-clean soon.

I promised myself to try and wear ALL of the clothes often. I was pretty sure they would all be happy, especially the jeans that went with everything. I had to make sure to give all of them a chance to feel like runway models on a day-to-day basis. Remembering the poor dress I had on, I also made sure to keep my clothes neat and tidy.

The comb. I would buy some detangling spray and make sure to braid my hair every evening to ensure smoothness in the mornings.

I promised the dish and the spoon that I'd eat healthier stuff, like fruit or... yes, broccoli. Less leftover food on the plate. I'll also make sure not to treat them like objects ever again, and I'm pretty sure they would be happy about that.

I'll treat my books well, especially the encyclopedia, and I gave it a nice big hug. It was surprised, but it deserved it.

I fed the bird feeder more seeds. It was happy about the seeds: more seeds mean more birds and more juicy gossip.

I guess there wasn't much left to do. The sun was setting.

"Good night, Cookie." whispered the alarm clock gently, with a wink.

I tucked myself in, excited for the next morning and *the new me*.