

## Life on the Farm

A small girl awakens one fine morning to find birds chirping, the sun shining, and to hear the soft sound of a babbling brook not too far from the farm.

"Emily Rose!"

"Yes Ma?", the girl questions.

"Come downstairs and get your porridge! It's gettin' cold! If your lookin' for me, I'll be in the coop collecting eggs from 'em chickens."

"Be down in a minute!"

Emily swiftly pulls on a pair of overalls; slightly dirtied at the knees from a mishap tending the garden, a lime green tee underneath, a pair of striped ankle socks, and her favorite pair of black rubber rain boots.

Slightly turning the corner, Emily ties the loose ends from her hair into a multi-clumped ponytail, and walks down the narrow, rickety wooden stairs.

A dim light shown a pathway which guided her through the halls of the farmhouse. It continued to glow through the living room, and straight to the parlor. Emily walked in to see her Pa reading the daily paper. He seemed like he was in his own isolated world, similar to Oz behind the curtain in Emerald City.

"Mornin' Pa!"

"Hey Em! How are you? Have you thought of an idea for Ma's birthday present yet? Surely it won't be able to top last years gift of yours!"

She had gotten her Ma the pair of ruby-red earrings that she had shown an interest in from the *Times Magazine*. Ma wore them every day since then. When Emily sat down at the uneven kitchen table, she stared down at her porridge. *It doesn't look that appetizing*, she thought to herself. "Yeah. I was up all last night finishing it up. I put a lot of time and effort into it so I hope that she will really enjoy it!"

"I'll bet 'ya 5 bucks that it'll be somethin' she will treasure forever."

"Fingers crossed," Emily held her hands up in the air and crossed her pointer and middle fingers on both hands. "Once is bad luck, twice is good luck," she motioned as Pa mirrored her gesture. "Where's Sydney? Shouldn't she be down here by now too?"

"Last time I checked, she was doing her makeup."

"Maybe she's trying to impress a boy!"

"Or maybe she's trying to impress your Ma. It is her birthday after all. Syd might want to dress up for her, which is pretty special if you ask me."

"I guess," Emily remarked unconvincingly.

"Cut her some slack! She's a teenager ya' know."

"I'm gonna go help Ma in the coop and wish her a happy birthday."

"Have fun sweetie!" And with that, Pa fluffed his paper like a pillow and held it back up in front of his face. Emily could just see the top of his head as she poured her porridge down the drain and put the spoon and bowl into the crowded dishwasher.

She then ran back through the house and up the stairs to her room to get her Ma's present: a scrapbook she had made with all of their family memories. On the front was a picture of the four of them from a trip to California. Smiling down at the cover, Emily ran back downstairs and out of the farmhouse. She was so excited to show her Ma the scrapbook, that she forgot that there was a rock sticking up between the garden and the coop. Emily slipped and fell right into a mud puddle created from the hoses that watered the crops. The scrapbook also landed in the puddle which ruined the interior pictures and ripped some of the pages in the book.

The worst part was, her Ma didn't even notice.