

Years 11 & 12
1st Place: Chloe Savage
Year 11, Alta-1 College

Dandelion

Camila sat down on the soft green grass in the middle of her mother's garden taking her time to see all the new flowers her Mother had planted. They ranged from pure red roses to big goofy yellow sunflowers. Her mother always loved her garden something Camila couldn't ever quite understand. They were just an annoyance when she was playing with her football and it would roll into the crowd of flowers and she had to push through them to get it.

What was so special about these stupid flowers anyway? She stumbled her way over almost tripping on her untied shoelaces, to the edge of a row of flowers leaning down to get a better look. The red poppy flowers that were bending slightly against the wind. She followed the direction of the leaning poppies. Camila looked towards the edge of the flowerbed and spotted something, yellow and small. Left on the outside of the other well placed and well-kept flowers. Only two growing (she counted three times).

One was bent from what she had assumed because someone had stepped on. Her stomach slightly turned at the sight.

"Poor yellow."

She reached out as softly as she would and pushed against the 'yellow' trying to help lift it up. She smiled wide when it managed to stand up straight.

She wasn't smiling for long, she quickly pouted when a strong gust of wind knocked her yellow friend back down.

"That wasn't very nice."

"Honey? Where are you? I've brought home some lunch!" Camila heard her mother's voice call out from the open kitchen window. Camila quickly ran into the house getting a scolding from her Dad while doing so but she felt like this was just simply too urgent.

"Mum! Mummy!" Camila spoke up to her mother. Her mum giggled at her child jumping up and down on the spot.

"Yes, Mila?" Playing with her long black hair.

"Mummm, no. I need you to help my yellow." She pulled her head away from her Mother's hand. She grabbed her Mum's hand dragging her out the back door.

"Yellow?"

"Yes Mum, yellow my flower."

Once they made it to the flowers Camila lent down into the grass not worried about getting dirt on her pants as she pointed to her new friends.

"Those ones are so pretty."

"Dandelion? Baby, that one's not a flower that one's just a weed," her Mother said leaning down towards her child.

"Oh." Camila felt a shift in how she looked at what she had previously thought was a pretty flower. Now it doesn't look the same.

The next morning Camila heard her mother making her way into her bedroom like every other school day but Camila has decided that today she just simply wasn't

going. Camila quickly pulled the bed quilt up and over her head hoping that she wouldn't be seen.

"Camila? Honey what are you doing?" the Mother asked in such a gentle tone.

"Camila isn't here at the moment, try again tomorrow," Camila muffled out.

Her Mother couldn't help but giggle.

"Oh yeah? That's a shame, I guess I have to just throw away her favourite banana bread that I just brought her . . ."

"No! Don't!" Camila quickly shot up out of her bed pleading with her mother. Her mother reached out to smooth out her child's messed up hair.

"You have to go to school. We are going to be late if you don't get ready now."

Camila felt her heart sink into her stomach.

"But – I – why? I can't . . ." Camila shook her hands around trying to speak out an actual sentence that made sense to her mother but her urge to cry overwhelmed her to the point she simply couldn't. Immediately sensing her child's feelings she pulled Camila into her chest holding her tight till she calmed down enough to speak.

"What's going on baby?"

"I don't wanna go. No one there likes me!"

"I'm sure that's not true, you are the goofiest, cutest and kindest girl I've ever seen."

"If that's true then why won't anyone be my friend?" Camila pouted out eyes slightly red from the crying.

"Aww, I'm sorry Mila. I know you've got this, just walk in there with your head high and give them a big smile. You can't avoid school. Just be yourself and the right people will come to you."

Camila (still not wanting to go) but quickly she got ready for school and made her way into her schoolyard head down lightly kicking the small pebbles that she spotted on the walk. She heard the murmurs of the kids in the background giggling and playing. She looked over at a group of kids trying to put on her best friendly smile (she made sure to practice in the mirror this morning).

She made eye contact with some boy she couldn't remember the name of but she knew he was in her year group. He gave her a harsh look in return before turning around to his group of friends nudging them to glance over at Camila.

"Woah, what a weirdo, make sure she doesn't come near us. Run!"

The group of kids laughed as they ran away to the opposite side of the yard.

Camila felt her cheeks start to burn up in embarrassment.

Why did I do that? I look like such an idiot. I'm always going to be alone, why even try, Camila thought to herself kicking harder at the rocks and some piles of dirt in the way. She stopped herself for a second when she spotted a dandelion all by their lonesome. Sprung out in the middle of the field sticking out like a sore thumb. Most people would've seen it, it being small and fragile but Camila did.

She stomped her way over to it in frustration.

Stupid flower. That's not even a flower. Can't even be an actual flower if it tried. It won't ever blend in with the other flowers that everyone likes, she grumpily thought to herself.

Once she was one step away from the weed she lifted her right foot up ready for it to come stomping down but she was stopped when she heard a voice

"Stop! Watch out! There is a flower right there," the feminine voice called out. Camila looked up in confusion. She hadn't heard this voice around the school before. She

looked up to see a slightly taller girl with dark black long hair and bright emerald green eyes.

Camila took a step back in confusion. The unknown girl leaned down onto her knees to inspect the dandelion to make sure there was no harm.

“Are you okay, pretty flower?”

“You do know that it’s not even a flower. My Mum said it’s actually a weed.” Camila felt that it was important to tell her. The green-eyed girl looked up at Camila taking a moment to take in the information before shrugging her shoulders.

“I still love them anyway. They are beautiful in their own way. Roses are boring. Yellow is a beautiful colour. What’s your favourite colour?”

Camila stood there in shock blinking a couple of times to bring herself back.

“Umm . . . yellow actually is my favourite.”

Camila shyly looked down at her feet not used to anyone besides family taking an interest in her.

“Awesome! My favourite is blue. My name is Lauren. What’s yours?” Lauren stood up proudly close to Camila.

“My name is Camila.”

Unexpectedly Lauren pulled Camila into a tight hug.

“I’ll see you at lunchtime.”

Just on time, the school bell rang for class to begin. Lauren took off to her classroom but not before Camila gave her best friendly smile. An even bigger smile was on her face when Lauren smiled back.

Maybe Dandelion’s weren’t exactly flowers but they were just as beautiful.