"Flowering Love"

Nobody ever wants pain.

But, what if your pain blossomed from one of the most beautiful things on earth?

What if your pain bloomed from love?

——

Davin was rudely awoken by his alarm clock, the buzzing noise loud enough to be heard by astronauts. He slammed the snooze button down and slowly sat up.

As he was stretching, he could feel the all too familiar scratching in his throat and he ran to the bathroom. He leaned over the toilet just in time to catch the white rose petals that he'd been coughing up for a week.

Whilst roses are normally used to symbolize love, it was almost ironic, in a sadistic and painful way. He wiped his mouth on his sleeve, a small line of blood left on his once pristine white shirt.

He sighed, flushing the bloodied petals down the drain.

"*Well, time to get ready for school*," He thought, standing up and trudging back into his bedroom and over to his drawers. "*Not like missing school is gonna make me better*."

He begrudgingly started to change, putting on his school uniform, struggling to tie his tie, and pulling on his shoes.

"*Let's just get this over with, it won't be all bad at least*." He thought, a small smile growing on his face as he reached for the door.

"*At least I get to see her.*"

——

Ella Grace felt the sun beaming through her window, and she woke up with a yawn.

She rubbed her eyes and walked to her bathroom. She brushed her teeth and combed through her hair. She applied light makeup, then walked back to her wardrobe and grabbed her uniform.

As she changed, she thought about her friends. "*Maybe I can even give Nina the note*," she blushed, "*Or not…*"

——

Davin walked to his first class of the day, feet dragging behind him. His eye lids were drooping from the lack of sleep he's been experiencing recently.

As he walked, he noticed another person walking. It was her.

Ella Grace.

He felt the petals in his throat clump together, his breathing thinning. "*Not now, not now! Please*!" He thought, holding his throat. He quickly turned into a small crevice in the hallway and tried to regulate his breathing.

"*Please… not today*." He thought anxiously, coughing. He felt the petals fall into his open palms, their soft, white glow littered with drops of dark, crimson red blood. His irregular breathing subsided, and he carefully carried the bloodied petals to a nearby trash can.

His hands were shaking, and overhead, the bell rang. Davin looked around, and saw that nobody else was in the hallway. He was late.

He quickly rushed off to his first period, praying that his teacher hadn't taken attendance yet.

——

Ella Grace walked to her class, occasionally waving to her friends in the hallways. As she walked, the crowds of students started to diminish as the first bell drew closer and closer.

She reached her first period just in time, sitting at her desk just as the bell rang out. "*Oh no, Davin is late again*," She thought, after looking around. "*I hope something isn't wrong, he's been late for the past few days*."

Her teacher, Mr. Callow was marking off the absent students just as someone burst through the door. It was Davin, and he looked out of breath.

"I-I'm sorry sir," He spoke, walking to his seat in the back of the classroom. "I got caught up with… something this morning." Mr. Callow just sighed and nodded.

"Mr. Sawyer, if you keep showing up late, I'm going to have to start marking it. Please, try to be on time tomorrow." Mr. Callow said, rubbing the bridge of his nose.

Davin nodded. Ella Grace could see the eye bags under his eyes, the way his hair was slightly ruffled, and how he dragged his feet when he walked. He looked sickly.

"I should ask him about it after class." Ella Grace decided, sitting up in her seat. Mr. Callow walked to the whiteboard, grabbing the Expo marker and starting to write math equations.

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As the first period ended, Davin noticed Ella Grace looking at him out of the corner of his eye. She had a look of confusion on her face. "*Probably because I'm always late…*" He thought.

He grabbed his belongings, feeling the all too familiar itching in his lungs. He made headway to the hallway and tried to push and jostle his way through the crowds to his next class.

He made it to his next class, science. "*At least she isn't in this class*," He thought somberly, compelled between the feeling of relief that his disease wouldn't start up again, but also feeling upset that he wasn't close to his crush anymore. "*No matter how much it hurts, I can't stop thinking about her*."

He slowly sat down at his two-person desk, his friend Colton already sitting there. Colton was his oldest friend, and only. They met in pre-school and became inseparable after that.

"How're you doing today?" Colton whispers to him, noticing the blood streak on his shirt. "Is it getting worse?"

Colton was the only one who knew of his condition. It was called Hanahaki. A rare condition that forms flowers in the lungs of a person with a crush. The only cure is admitting your crush and your crush liking you back. The more someone waits, the worse the condition gets. After too long, the flowers overwhelm your lungs and kill the person affected.

"What do you think?" Davin asked, rubbing his eyes. "I can't even get close to her without my throat clogging up. How would I tell her I like her if I can't even stand near her?"

"Okay! Everyone, quiet!" Mrs. Krones said, clapping loudly to get the class' attention. The kids all quieted down as she started teaching.

———

Ella Grace walked into her second period class, english. She sat at her desk in the front of the classroom, right in front of her best friend Nina.

"Hello class!" Ms. Donivic said, sitting at her desk. "Please sit down and get out your books. We'll be reading in pairs today. I'll let you pick your partner."

Ella Grace felt a tap on her shoulder and she turned around to see Nina. "Hey, want to be my partner?" Nina whispered.

Ella Grace nodded, feeling a wave of serenity at the thought of alone time with her crush. "Of course."

Nina cheers softly, and Ella Grace turns back to the front of the class. "*Yes! I can finally give her the note!*" She thought hopefully. "*I think she likes me, right? I'm like… 99% sure*."

"Okay, get into your pairs! Try and read to chapter 7 before class ends." Ms. Donivic said. The class immediately began to spread out, and Nina skipped over to Ella Grace.

"Let's see if we can go to the library since it's more quiet there." Ella Grace said, finally ready to confess.

——

Davin was in the library. He was just trying to check a book out, but he noticed Ella Grace and her friend walking to the chairs in the back of the library.

He could feel his throat clench up, but he walked closer, hiding behind a shelf to find a moment to finally confess his love.

He watched attentively, feeling slight aggression towards the girl sitting next to Ella Grace. "*Who's she?*" He thought with disdain.

He watched as Ella Grace handed the girl a letter. He watched the girl carefully open and read it. He watched as the girl hugged Ella Grace.

He felt the petals catch in his mouth, blocking his airflow. He quickly rushed to the bathroom, leaning over a toilet and vomiting up a mix of petals, blood, and thorn-covered vines.

"*That girl… Who is she? Why is she getting more attention from **her** than me*?" He thought with exasperation. He stood up, wavering on his feet. His head felt dizzy and he wiped his mouth with his sleeve. The blood seeping into his sleeve made his head rush.

——

The last bell of the day sounded, and Nina was packing her bag by her locker. She was meeting up with Ella Grace later. "*I need to go home and freshen up. Oh my gosh! I'm so excited*!" She thought, her face lighting up. She packed her bag with haste, throwing it over her shoulder and jogging down the hallway.

She didn't notice Davin ominously hiding behind lockers on the other side of the hallway, brandishing his Swiss Army knife.

He followed after her, creeping behind her and trying to find the right moment.

Nina reached her house, still unaware of her impending doom. Since she lived alone (like most kids in their school), she wouldn't have anyone else around to help. She unlocked her front door and, before she could close it, Davin lunged forward and slammed the door open.

Nina screamed, and Davin brought his knife down on her, repeatedly stabbing her in the throat. A devilish smile contorted across his face as blood gushed from her, now lifeless, body.

He laughed, placing his hands in the puddles of blood leaking from his once-living classmate. "You won't take *her* from me anymore." He said to the body, which was almost unrecognizable after his attack.

——

Ella Grace was starting to get worried. She had asked Nina in her note if she wanted to go to a café, and Nina seemed really excited. But, now she was sitting at the café all by herself. Nina was half an hour late.

Ella Grace decided to just go and check if Nina was okay. "*I could just go to her house. Maybe she just stood me up, but even then, I want to check.*" Nina thought, standing up from the table and walking out of the café. She walked to Nina's house.

"*I'm sure she's okay,*" Ella Grace thought, "*I would also feel awkward if my friend asked me out, maybe she just felt uncomfortable and said yes. But it isn't like her to lie…*"

As she neared Nina's house, she saw the door wide open. Her eyes widened in confusion and she sped up. When she had a clearer view, she faltered.

Lying in the entrance, was the dead body of Nina. Blood was splattered across the floor and the stab wounds in her neck and chest were repugnant and gruesome. Ella Grace felt tears prick her eyes and she pulled out her phone to call the police.

Then, she heard footsteps. Davin emerged from the corner, his hands were covered in blood. He stepped towards her with an almost meandering pace, a wide, unsightly smile plastered across his face.

"What did you do?" Ella Grace demanded, taking a step back.

Davin walked closer to her, stepping in the puddle of blood. "I did what I had to. For us."