

IN FLORE

Written by

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EXT. SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF BRIARLY'S HOUSE - DAY

In front of the white picket fence of an idyllic suburban home, BRIARLY, 10, a short, round-faced, rosy-cheeked girl in a school uniform, slings her backpack over her shoulder.

She's green as a flowers stem, with grassy hair and leaves on her skin. A single, long BLADE OF GRASS sprouts from the top of her head.

She looks to the right down the sidewalk, waiting.

Behind her, DAPHNE, 15, equally green, same uniform, walks down the garden path, and tousles Briarly's hair. Briarly shakes off Daphne's hand and sticks her tongue out at her.

Daphne playfully sticks her tongue out at Briarly. Daphne has a LARGE PINK GARDEN ROSE sprouting from the top of her head.

As Daphne walks left down the sidewalk, ZAHARA, 10, same uniform bigger hair, bounds toward Briarly from the right. A plump GREEN BUD sprouts from her head.

Zahara stops and quickly brushes Briarly's hair back into place with her hands. They hustle away down the sidewalk.

2

EXT. SUBURBAN SIDEWALK - DAY

2

Briarly and Zahara joyfully walk through an idyllic neighborhood. MUSIC PLAYS.

Every teen and adult has a FLOWER SPROUTING FROM THEIR HEAD: daisies, roses, or bluebells-- not much biodiversity.

Neighbors chat over fences, soccer moms power walk, elders get their mail, teens walk with their noses in their phones.

Other elementary schoolers walk on the sidewalk, each of them sporting a little bud like Zahara.

Preschool kids play with toys in their yards. These children have the same long blade of grass that Briarly has.

Briarly and Zahara laugh and goof along the sidewalk until they reach the school yard. They enter the big school gate.

Title card above the school; 'In Floré.' SCHOOL BELL.

4

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

4

Kids CHATTER and file into the classroom. TEACHER, a slight woman with bluebells on her head, writes on the board.

Briarly, the shortest student, takes her seat in the front row. Zahara sits two rows back off Briarly shoulder.

Behind Briarly, CAMILLA, 10, looks at Briarly's bud-less sprout and GIGGLES with two other girls. They all have buds.

Camilla reaches up and quickly twirls Briarly's sprout around her finger, then snaps back the curl with a TWANG.

Briarly YELPS. Camilla and friends LAUGH. Zahara frowns, leans forward, and SMACKS Camilla's friend upside the head.

Teacher TAPS the board with a ruler; time for math.

As the class quiets, Briarly curls into herself, embarrassed. She gently THUNKS her head down on the desk.

Zahara looks at Briarly sympathetically. She looks to Teacher and raises her hand. She SNEEZES. The light around her goes a shade more golden and her EYES GO WIDE.

Around Briarly, kids OOH, AHH, and TITTER. They leave their desks and crowd around Zahara. As Teacher rushes past her, Briarly lifts her head to see the crowd. Alarmed, she jumps to her feet and follows.

Briarly weaves into the crowd of students. As she reaches the center, her eyes widen. Golden light pours over her face.

Zahara sits in the middle, cheeks bright red. A big, BRIGHT ZOHAR SUNFLOWER blooms on her head.

Teacher shoos kids back to their seats, Briarly last.

Briarly takes her seat and looks back at Zahara, gingerly touching her new flower. Briarly faces the board.

Sadness covers Briarly's face, her cheek twinges as she tries not to cry, totally betrayed.

EXT. SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF BRIARLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A crescent moon hangs over Briarly's home.

INT. DAPHNE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Daphne sits at her vanity and sculpts her large rose. She trims it narrower and sticks green FLORIST TAPE at the base.

Next to the mirror, pictures of women sporting petite, crimson, old-fashioned tea roses.

Daphne traces her finger along the shape of one of their roses, then tries to trace the same shape along her own. She trims and tugs and tapes.

The door behind her CREAKS open and Briarly pokes her head in. Daphne doesn't look away from the mirror.

Briarly stops at the vanity and points to the FLORIST TAPE, requesting it. Daphne raises her eyebrows and points to Briarly little sprout. Daphne shakes he head.

Briarly folds her hands to beg.

Daphne holds up a finger, wait. She plucks an old Instax picture from the edge of the mirror and shows it to Briarly.

PHOTO: Daphne at age 11, same Garden Rose just a bit smaller, with three other girls: two with buds, and one girl with a lumpy and OBVIOUSLY FAKE BUD made out of tape.

Daphne points to this girl with the fake bud. She makes the hand across her throat gesture: kill this idea, don't do it.

Briarly begs even harder.

Daphne puts the picture down and shrugs. She offers Briarly the tape. Her face says 'Okay, but I warned you.'

Briarly snatches the tape and runs out of the room. Daphne returns to pruning her flower.

7

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

7

Briarly stands against the wall outside the classroom doorway. She wears a cute little knit hat. She takes a breath and removes the hat to reveal a LUMPY, OBVIOUSLY TAPE BUD.

She starts to turn into the doorway, but stops at the sound of girls' LAUGHTER down the hall. She frantically pulls her HAT BACK ON and looks around for the source of the laughter.

Camilla and friends walk closer, laughing and gesturing over their heads: A fist that pops into outstretched fingers, like a big flower. They pose, mockingly, with their 'big flower.'

Zahara appears beside Briarly, Briarly JUMPS. Zahara makes the two-finger 'I'm watching you' gesture to Camilla, with an unamused expression. Briarly pulls Zahara into the classroom.

8

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

8

The bell rings, kids CHATTER and take their seats.

Briarly sits. Camilla reaches towards the hat and slowly tries to tug it off, but Briarly swiftly pulls it on tighter.

A little boy behind Zahara flicks her sunflower. Startled, Zahara clutches her flower and scowls at him. He makes the same rude gesture as Camilla, palm over his head.

Briarly, on seeing him do so, raises her hand emphatically.

Teacher writes on the board, oblivious.

Briarly waves her hand, futilely.

Zahara leans away from the boy and glares over her shoulder at him. The girl in front YANKS on her petals. Zahara YELPS.

Teacher turns around. Zahara clutches her flower in pain.

Teacher plucks a pass from the board labeled 'Nurse' and holds it out to Zahara. Zahara, tears welling in her eyes, runs toward her, grabs the pass, and runs out the door.

Briarly jumps to her feet to follow her, but as she does Camilla snatches the hat from her head, revealing the mangled, lumpy, tape bud. Briarly freezes.

Slowly, Briarly turns to face Camilla and her classmates Small GASPS. SILENCE. Lead by Camilla, the class LAUGHS.

Briarly looks mortified. She hangs her head.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Briarly and Zahara sit against a wall under a "NURSE" sign. They hang their heads. Briarly's sprout is back to normal and Zahara has a bandaid on her petal.

KERFLOP. Briarly glances up.

Daphne flops into the chair next to her holding an ice pack on her flower with one hand and a loose pink petal with used florist tape in her other. She avoids Briarly's gaze.

Briarly, horrified, turns to Zahara, who contemplates Briarly's hat in her lap. Briarly looks back and forth between her sister and friend, then SIGHS, defeated.

CLICK, CLICK of high heels approaching. Briarly looks.

Down the hallway strides, GRANDMA, a svelte, refined, old woman with a pristine LITTLE RED TEA ROSE on her head. She has a THICK BOOK in her hand. She radiates glamour.

Briarly's face lights up. She nudges Zahara and Daphne.

Grandma stops and triumphantly produces a plastic gift card 'Ice Cream, \$25.' She beckons the girls toward her.

Briarly and Zahara smile and hop up from their chairs. Daphne reluctantly follows.

EXT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - DAY

Outside on a BUSY CITY BLOCK, the girls and Grandma sit around a table. Briarly and Zahara each lick a cone, two ice cream dishes sit empty. Grandma THUNKS the book on the table.

The cover reads 'Von Rouge Family Photo Album.'

Grandma opens the book and points.

PICTURE: an old portrait of a teen girl with a TEENY-TINY BUD, labeled "Ruby, Age 16."

Grandma gestures to herself. Briarly smiles, delighted. Daphne's eyes wander the pages.

A scrapbook spread of young Grandma and her perfect little rose at graduation, on vacation, etc.

Daphne glances sadly at Grandma and her perfect little rose. Grandma flips a few pages then stops.

PICTURE: a girl hanging upside down in a tree with a giant English rose dangling from her head. Grandma, now mid 30s, spots her. Underneath it reads 'Ruby and Viola, age 11.'

Zahara grins, delighted. Daphne looks unconvinced.

Briarly's eyes wander the pages.

Rose women of all ages, shapes and sizes with all manner of roses smile reassuringly back at her.

Briarly smiles. Grandma pulls Daphne and Briarly's heads in for kisses. She gathers their trash and steps away. The girls lean together and flip to a new page.

A scrapbook page of women with small roses.

Briarly watches Daphne purse her lips and gingerly touch her mangled rose. Briarly pensively looks away.

Grandma returns, clasps her hands, and conducts the girls like an orchestra to rise and walk on.

14

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

14

Briarly and crew walk down the sidewalk among people of all builds with every kind of flower as cars glide by. Briarly and Zahara stare with delighted fascination at each passerby:

A young man with cherry blossoms cruises by in a car.

Twin teenagers with violets have a photoshoot on a stoop.

A quirky person with an artichoke dances in the crosswalk.

Briarly turns around to share her smile with Daphne, but her smile drops when she sees Daphne engrossed in her phone.

Briarly marches back to Daphne and grabs her hand, which jolts her from her distraction. As Briarly pulls her along, she gestures broadly to the people around them.

A cactus flower and baby's breath couple romantically stroll.

A tall woman with a purple allium walks her mossy dog.

An old man with poppies sits peacefully on a plastic chair.

A woman with a big passion flower jogs by with a stroller.

Daphne smiles gently, in contemplation. They halt.

They look up at a billboard: 'Now In Theaters' over a woman with an ENORMOUS HOT PINK MEDALLION ROSE poses like Elle Woods on the Legally Blonde poster.

Daphne is taken aback. Her little smile grows into a grin.

Briarly forcefully hugs her. Daphne, caught off guard, hugs her back. Zahara hugs Briarly from behind. They each smile.

The quirky artichoke person exuberantly dances by.

15

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15

Briarly's yearbook pictures stack up. Each reads 'Briarly Von Rouge, Xth grade' from 5th to 12th:

Current Briarly, Briarly with a bud, Briarly with braces, Briarly with a new haircut, Briarly in an emo phase, Briarly mid-sneeze, Briarly with a bud barely beginning to sprout, and finally, senior-year Briarly with a cluster of little pink Polyantha Roses (Fairy Roses) atop her beaming head.