

# THE ANNUAL DSC SHORT STORY COMPETITION

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*If you could go anywhere...  
If you could be anything...  
What would you choose?*

**2021**

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**WINNING ENTRY**

**Abigail Ou, Year 8E**



**DONCASTER**  
SECONDARY COLLEGE

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# TITLE: FALLING LILIES

## GENRE: ROMANCE

In his opinion, flowers were superior to any person. Elliot thought that saying someone was like a flower was ridiculous. Why would one say that? Flowers never complained and they listened dutifully. They didn't need much maintenance, and their beauty could not be compared. People didn't deserve to be compared to such beautiful plants.

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Elliot loved flowers, enough to open a small flower shop on the corner of the streets. It was burst of colour amongst the grey buildings. The inside of the store had a gentle aroma that somehow felt affectionate and caring. It was a little place that reminded the customers of home, a gentle loving environment, as loving as a mother's touch. Although larger stores surrounded it, it was never short of customers.

It was a particularly slow day and Elliot stood at the lilies and began watering them. Just as he finished up, the jingle of the little bell on the door alerted him of a customer. It was a young lady with light-blond hair. She was undeniably pretty, but overall, unremarkable. He said hello and she

responded accordingly. He didn't really take notice of her features until she started walking around, examining the flowers and contemplating which to buy.

Her face changed into a new emotion whenever she looked at a new flower. Her admiring look at the roses, her affectionate look at the peonies, her slightly tilted look at the tulips, she was beautiful. At that moment Elliot realised he loved her smile. Not the little polite one she gave when she said hello, but the warm, almost doting smile she gave when she gazed at the lilies. With every step she took it felt like another part of his world lit up. She somehow made the flowers shine with more beauty.

Elliot knew why they called people flowers then, looking at her face, he knew that he'd fallen for her, and he had fallen deep. When she walked up to request a bouquet, he made special care to make it as beautiful as possible. While making the bouquet, he engaged in small-talk, and found out that the bouquet was for her mother. Before she left, he asked for her name. She was confused, but obliged.

*"My name is Antheia."*

Elliot quietly whispered her name and as she left, he hoped to see her come again. Luckily for him, it wasn't long, a mere two days. She had returned full of compliments from her mother, and a warm thanks. He had engaged in conversation with her, before balling up his confidence and asking her on a date. Antheia was perplexed but accepted with the same smile he adored so dearly.

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Throughout the entire affair, Elliot's eyes lay only on her visage, and even a fool could recognise that he was a man in love. The two agreed to meet up again later, and it only went uphill from there. They met up at restaurants, cinemas, parks, anywhere that a date could be held. On one particular date, Antheia told him that her father used to call her 'his little lily' and that it had stuck with her since. Elliot quietly agreed with her father and found her wistful nostalgic look beautiful. He felt that beautiful came up in his head a lot when he was thinking of her.

Barely a month later, he asked her to be his girlfriend. Antheia agreed, and thankfully she wasn't confused this time, only happy. Happy seemed like such a simple word to describe her expression, but it fit. She was quite simply, happy.

They'd been going out for a while now, and never had one seen a couple so in love as them. Antheia's love of baking paired with his love for flowers filled the loft that they shared with a homey scent of flower petals as well as the sugary chocolate smell of home-made cookies. One just had to enter their apartment to feel at home with the loving couple.

However, no matter how sweet Antheia acted, no matter how cheerful she was, Elliot was painfully aware that she wasn't in good health. She was always had a horrible migraine after work and had felt light-headed after even a little bit of exercise. One particularly bad day had led to her collapsing and Elliot rushing her to the hospital. She had brushed it off as anaemia paired with stress, but he was still concerned. Antheia wouldn't accept any questions, and even with her gentle demeanour, she was stubborn. They had carried along with little issue, but there was still a little nagging thought in the back of Elliot's mind that it was more to it than just anaemia.

Little by little, she seemed weaker by the day. And in one day, it all came crashing down. She collapsed in a heap by the floor, and although it seemed like her earlier 'anaemia', there was a crushing feeling in Elliot's stomach, making his heart sink and shatter.

The hospital felt so much worse than last time, with the walls seeming overly white and the antiseptic stinging just a little more. Antheia was constantly falling in and out of sleep, and whenever she woke, she would repeat the same words, **"I love you, Elliot."** Though it seemed touching, it hurt him as he knew that she was

repeating those words in fear of them being her last. Elliot refused to cry, for he felt that he had to stay strong for her.

Then for one miraculous day, she was awake for longer than usual. He came to talk to her for a bit, and she listened dutifully, and for a second, he could imagine that they were sitting on the couch, laughing over a movie or such. He was trying to stay happy for her, but eventually, he just couldn't. His shoulders hunched over as his quietly whispered, "It will all be okay, you'll be just fine I swear," but tears dripped down his face anyways. Antheia reached up and gently stroked his face. "Don't cry, don't cry. I love you, okay? Don't cry." Elliot managed a shaking smile and nodded. "Good, good. I love you." And with that her eyes shut. Elliot could barely register what had happened before doctors rushed to desperately save her from flatlining. His grief-ridden screams filled the air as the beeping of the machines covered the background. Elliot's sobs were intertwined with screams so painful that even the doctors had to pull him out.

The wait outside seemed to end in a flash, with the doctors coming out solemnly to tell him what he already knew.

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For days he felt numb and empty, as if something had been carved straight out of his heart. Sometimes, he would think he heard her voice calling out for him to try a new recipe, and for a second, just a second, he thought that everything was alright and that nothing had happened. Then that moment would pass, and he would come to the realisation that he would never hear her voice again. Sometimes when he felt truly hopeless, he would call her phone and let it run to voicemail, just to hear her voice again, even if it wasn't her speaking to him, but a mere remnant.

Elliot oversaw her funeral, they said that he knew her best. He had to choose a photo. As he looked through the photo albums, it's as if little memories of her danced over each page, each photo trying so hard to capture her warmth. He collapsed, clutching what seemed to be a mundane photo of her watering some flowers. He cried softly while he tried to recall the experiences they had been through, desperately trying to catch the memories that were already flickering out of his reach.

The funeral went over blindingly quickly, although it had in fact been hours. Elliot left, feeling hollower than ever, seeing her corpse dressed up so prettily.

Over a while, Elliot found glimpses of her in even the most mundane actions. He would see her in the dresses that she used to admire in the department store windows. And he refused to go near bakeries, he didn't think that he was prepared to be hit with a raw rush of just her.

With each day, it came closer to her birthday in August. And as if God wished for him to suffer more, the months went blindingly fast. The day had come, and the day was a solemn affair. Most people ignored him, allowing him time to grieve. Elliot tried to bake his own cake, and he went to her grave. It was a quiet affair at first, until he lit the candle. With choking sobs, he struggled through a weak happy birthday song, his tears pattering onto the headstone. And almost as if Antheia was there with him, the wind blew out the candle.



*By Abigail Ou*