

NOTES

When William Shakespeare wrote, “A rose by any other name would still smell as sweet,” he never dreamt anyone would ever name their child Hydrangea Flower. In her humorous, yet heart-warming short story, Regina Phelps introduces us to young girl, whose constant source of embarrassment often (excuse the pun) *stems* from her very *fragrant* family. This selection should be performed by a female and be entered in Prose Interpretation. There is a real sense of sassiness embedded in this protagonist, and Hydrangea might best be performed by using a Southern accent or dialect; however, it is important for the audience to see how the heroine matures at the conclusion of the story. The ending truly has a sense of warmth and love, so be sure to play the ending for its overall sweetness. The drama mask icons are simply visible to show the performer when to turn the pages in her manuscript.

When Mama gave birth to me, I got named Hydrangea, that’s right. *Hydrangea*—after the bush. Can you imagine naming a kid Hydrangea? I swore that when I grew up, I would never name any child of mine after a flower or a bush or anything green.



Hydrangea. My whole family had names like that. Rose, Lily, Fern, Grandma Heather, Aunt Holly, Aunt Azalea, Aunt Daisy, my two sisters, Iris and Peony, and Lilac, my Mama. The whole family was a garden.

I would have liked to have been there when Aunt Holly gave birth to a boy. Mama said all hell broke loose. Mind you, there hadn’t been a boy in the Flower family for generations. They named him Elmtree. That’s right, Elmtree Flower. He never changed it though, and he grew to be as big as a tree and as strong as an ox.

Now, Mama and her sisters were the best beauticians in Poinsettia, Georgia. They all had natural platinum blonde hair, almost white, and wore no bras. Those Flower sisters oozed southern, and their accents got thicker and harder to understand around men.



My senior year, I joined the band. I'd been smart up until then not to let Mama catch on when there was a concert or a play. Well, she got wind of it in the beauty parlor and as she put it, "she was coming to see her baby girl play that big horn."

I hoped for a tornado, anything to stop her, but I knew as the audience grew quiet that Mama and the girls had walked in. Bobby Maguire, who played second coronet, and not very well either, whistled and said, "Ang!" (Oh, I took the A-N-G out of Hydrangea and told everybody to call me "Ang" when I started high school). "Ang, would you look at what just walked in."

The boys on the band stand almost jumped out of their pants. Their mouths hung open, and it's sure hard to play a horn like that. Through gritted teeth I told Bobby that was my mother and her sisters.

"Wow, the one in white? Are you gonna look that way, Ang, when you're all grown up?"

I, being completely humiliated by now, told him to shove his horn where the sun don't shine.



By the time the concert ended, so had all my dreams about being normal. You see, everybody knew about the Flower sisters in town, but nobody knew I was one *of* the Flower girls.

"Hydrangea, aren't you going to introduce your mama to your little friends?"

Stepping in front of me, Bobby Maguire said, "Hi, I'm in the band with your daughter. It sure is a pleasure to meet you, Ma'am."

"Well, aren't you the cutest? You've actually got James Dean eyes. Hydrangea, you see that?"

Graduation couldn't come too soon. I stopped talking to Bobby Maguire, because every time he saw me he'd hum a little tune about all the flowers in the garden.

