

Second Place Prose – Elementary School

My First Friend

By: Grace Broz

Grade: 5

School: Central Elementary School

“DAAAAARCY! DAAAAARCY! DAAAARCY!”

I can hear everyone talking, shouting, and calling me. I can see them, too. The only problem is that I was born unable to talk. I have plenty to say, but I just can't. Nobody wants to really be friends with me, either. My one goal for middle school is to make a friend. It doesn't matter if I myself have to construct her, or find her in an alleyway alone. My parents moved me away from my lab and all of my friends when they dumped me into boarding school. My teacher is sure I'm just shy. I am trying to find a seat when I see a girl all alone. I want to go talk to her but she can't hear me anyways, so I find a seat in the back of the classroom. I unload my school supplies and the 8:10 bell rings. My teacher, Ms. Donna, calls me and the strange girl, up to the front of the classroom. “Clara and Darcy, thank you. Everyone, this is Darcy,” she points to me, “and this is Clara. They are both very special and brave. Please treat them so.”

So her name is Clara..... I wonder if we'll be friends. Our teacher's relentless monotonous voice is killing me. I wonder how Clara is. I peek over and see her reading a perfect pink velvet covered book. I wonder what it is. Lunchtime doesn't come soon enough. Everyone in class is snickering because Logan Kellerman got detention but I don't understand what's so funny about grown-up time out. I pace out of the classroom after the lunch bell rings and I fly to the cafeteria. I spot an empty table and make myself look as friendly as possible. 15 minutes with the Hollywood smile plastered on my face. Oh shoot! My face is stuck. Just my luck. Oh! I'm a poet and I don't know it! I laugh out loud and some people stare at me like I'm from a different planet. There are some days when I wish I was from a different planet. It'd be a planet where I'd be normal. Suddenly, I snap out of my imagination land. There she is! Clara! I jump up and down as she walks into the cafeteria. My eyes widen as she sits down next to me and says, "This is my table. Scat."

I can feel my eyes well up with tears as I get up and search for an empty table. I soon find myself in the fifth stall of the girls' bathroom eating canned sweet potatoes and lima beans with applesauce. Someone knocks on my stall door and I jump. I catch my tray but my water ricochets off of the floor and somehow soaks me from head to toe. The door creaks open and I'm face to face...with Clara. She says, “I'm sorry. I hope we can be friends and start over.” Clara runs out of the bathroom and my smile

stretches to my ears. I wish I could call after her and say, “It’s okay! I forgive you for everything and want to be friends with you as much as I would love to be able to talk!” but I can only imagine being able to wail, let alone talk, to Clara fluently.

My imagination land is interrupted by Logan’s uncanny laugh outside with his I’m-trying-to-be-manly-and-cool voice ringing in my ears. He shouts loud enough to shake the planet Earth. “Look at the “brave” freaks trying to be frieeeends!” then something comes over me and I leave my lunch by the sink. I march out of the bathroom with my head up high and slap him. I pull out a notepad and pencil that somehow is always in my pocket. I write 4 words. When I finish, I take the paper and give it to him. Suddenly, I consider what I wrote. Nobody teases my friends. I smirk but watch Logan’s face as he reads the paper. The evil king type of grin creeps across his face. “This one has feelings! The other doesn’t, I’m sure. Her little pet!” Logan speaks all sing-songy, like he’s talking to a dog.

A crazy sensation begins as a hacking sound in my chest, but then somehow evolves into a growl that rises in the back of my throat. I ball my fists and clench my teeth. A sound comes out. Out of me! I never tried growling. Go figure. The one sound I can do I had never before tried. Logan suddenly whirls around. Clara shuffles farther away from Logan and I. He takes two bounding steps towards her and shoves her. I rush to her side and she smiles. She points to the crowd that has uselessly gathered and Clara screams, “WHY AREN’T YOU HELPING US YOU USELESS PEOPLE?!?”

I help Clara up and she says quietly, “All of you who can actually hear and speak, use your voice to spread love and use your ears to be touched by the love others speak. Logan, I can understand why you get detention each day, but someday you’ll be quoting this moment. You can be the one to spread the love if you choose good now. I forgive you all.”

Clara grabs my hand. I open my mouth and try to mouth words but Clara pulls me away from the mob. “I’m deaf anyway. It doesn’t matter what you can’t say because I couldn’t hear it anyway. Because of this moment, we’ll be friends forever.”

For once, I’m not faking a smile.