

Flower Power

(The One Act Play)

Written by Caitlin Mayernik

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Setting: Chrysanthemum's dystopian polluted garden

Time: Past the point of reversing climate change damage.

Synopsis: Mum's dystopian garden, where chemical fertilizer treatments are needed to grow, human-flowers exist in a world plagued by pollution and climate destruction. The traditional Picking Season celebrated in Mum's Garden invites Pickers to horrifically pick flowers in a pageant each season in hopes to bring beauty back into the dying world. *Flower Power* follows buds like Dani, Mum, Daisy, Rose, and Lily throughout the interruption of Picking Season, where Dani works to save the garden from pollutant death before it's too late. Dani's revolution reveals how far desperate flower buds will go for their beauty, and the sacrifices required to keep petals powerful.

Expected Run Time is 30 minutes.

Character Breakdown:

MUM:	Chrysanthemum. A Stubborn Traditionalist Boomer. Doing what she believes is best. Pageant mother vibes.
DANI:	Dandelion. The passionate next generation of buds. Knowledgeable. College student at a family dinner vibes.
DAISY:	Daisy. Pure. Trying to improve their dark life by finding sunshine in this new garden.
ROSE:	Rose. A beautiful product of a selfish society. GenZ Influencer vibes.
LILY:	Lily. A mentor for Dan who has lost hope in the garden's cause. Millennial Big sister vibes.
PICKER:	Large, male build. Figure of the outside world.
FLOWERS:	Ensemble of flowers participating in the Picking.

Character Note: Character pronouns are up to the interpretation of the director, and can be altered in the script. Representation of all forms of beauty is encouraged. These are not people, and these are not Disney cartoon flowers. All the beauty is a little horrific. Commit to the world.

Gardening Note: When a chrysanthemum is Picked, they must be aggressively dig out by the roots to remove the entire plant from the soil. This is a physically grueling process.

“Story Worthy” Notes:

Art imitating life, or life imitating art? The original production of this show at The Raymond Lane Memorial One Act Festival at The Pittsburgh Playhouse in Pittsburgh, PA was canceled due to the covid-19 pandemic after only one rehearsal. A play about living in and fighting a climate and social pandemic was originally canceled because of the covid-19 health pandemic.

FLOWER POWER: The One Act Play
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SCENE ONE

LIGHTS UP on Mum's Garden. The garden's soil is polluted, flower carcasses are hidden under commercial beauty. Flowers are growing, blooming, using fertilizer before the Picking. There is excitement like a beauty pageant dressing room. LILY is getting ready at the beauty vanity, spraying bottles of product while looking in the mirror. LILY finishes a bottle and throws it into the soil. LILY opens a new bottle. DANI enters, finds LILY.

DANI

Ew, I never thought I'd find you here with all of these *perfect* petals. Hope you get Picked!

LILY

Dani, you're so bitter. It's an honor to be a part of Picking season.

DANI

Lily, stop growing up! You were supposed to help me save the soil. What happened to cleaning the fertilizers and breathing clean air again? We can still be hopeful! You know how detrimental Picking season is, I can't fix this chemical deathbed alone. Once you're Picked, I'll be the only one left and you know Mum doesn't care.

LILY

The world is beyond repair, we can't pretend we're fixing the garden anymore, Dani. I'm doing what's best for me and what's best for the reputation of this place.

DANI

Reputation will mean nothing when the garden dies.

LILY

I can't be here anymore Dani, Picking season will never change with Buds like Mum around. There will always be fertilizer, there will always be Pickers pulling our roots. The garden is too damaged for me to stay, my Picking is what's best for the garden right now. I can be an example of pursuing a better life, outside of this soil.

DANI

Lily, what happens to everyone left in the garden that you helped destroy?

LILY

I know what I'm doing. This is everything Mum's wanted, and I'm making her proud. I need to grow beyond the garden.

DANI

Fine, get Picked. You won't escape our problems when you're outside though! This is where they start.

LILY

Dani, come with me. Let's get Picked, leave the garden together! We'll find somewhere else to bloom. We'll have sun and nutrients again. Come with me!

DANI

The Picker's world is decaying just like ours, they are the ones responsible for this damage. Look around, buds can't breathe here, and it's worse up there. This world is plagued because of Pickers and plastic petals just like you! Now, excuse me, I have to go save this garden!

LILY

I hope you do.

MUM enters. DANI goes to tend the garden.

MUM

Lily! Honeybug, you are beautiful. My very own bud is being Picked, what a crowning moment for my garden. Every bud everywhere will be watching this perfect Picking. Here, try some more fertilizer. Yes, Suck in a tad more. Yes, Purse your petals. There, you're almost as perfect as me. Lily, you are changing the garden, changing Picking season forever. Every bud will now look up to you as the standard of how beautiful flowers can be, and they will all come to Mum's Garden for their Picking. What a glorious moment for me, and for my garden. This is your time, Lily. Let's get Picked.

Flowers line up, prepping themselves and perfecting their petals. PICKER comes onstage and slowly, violently Picks flowers. LILY is Picked last, in the most glorious horrific way of them all. MUM beams. DANI is watching with a fearful, broken heart. The Picking ends.

DANI

Mum, you are horrific! You planted Lily, you helped her grow, and then you sent her out to be Picked by hands creating the chemicals that kill our roots. The Pickers are destroying us and our soil with their machines and their smog, and you encourage them with the Picking! You let the Pickers come into this garden and they stomp on our stems and pour poison into our soil, and take any beauty we have left in this dark place. You let them Pick the buds who are saving the garden! Mum, you are disgusting!

MUM

Dani, go back to your soil. Pleasing the Pickers is how we stay alive. You may not understand the importance and beauty of Picking, do not let your experience as a dandelion plague your excitement about the celebration of this season. A flower's beauty is the reason Pickers keep our gardens in their world. Picking season *must* be celebrated, and it must be *beautiful*. In the beginning of Picking traditions, the world Picked flowers to aid the outside beauty around, but when the Picker's world got dark, Picking season, and the flowers that go out into the world, became the sole root of beauty for everyone else. Beauty is our job as flowers. The world depends on us. With this heat, your generations need fertilizer to grow to the fullest potential. So go, get busy blending the fertilized soil, and do your part in supporting your garden.

DANI

If we don't start changing our ways, there will be nobody left to Pick but *you*.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE TWO



LIGHTS UP. The next Picking season. The garden is even worse than before. DANI is in the soil,

*cleaning plastic containers. ROSE
begins growing from the newly
cleaned soil. DANI tends the garden.*

ROSE

Hello, this is Mum's garden, right?

DANI

Yea, bud, turn back while you still can.

ROSE

Perfect. You're funny. Is there anything left in those cans? I need a little more oomph.

DANI

The Picker's world is worse than our soil, so you should probably start caring. The fertilizer goes straight into the world's water supply. We used to be natural, and now we're literally burning from chemicals and nobody is doing anything about it. Have fun up there.

ROSE

Listen. I don't have time for your hobbies. All of my energy goes into being Picked. It's harder work than you can imagine as a weed, but as a flower, I require the best product and environment for the Picking. This is life or death. I need to be Picked.

DANI

Yea, okay bud. Don't stress, I'll save the soil for the both of us. Mum, there's a Bud here for Picking Season! This one has thorns!

ROSE

Why are you so bitter?

DANI

Listen, bud, fertilization seems good, right? Wrong. It's superficial growth. Too many sprays gives a false sense of strength and weakens your roots. This beauty culture promoted by these Bloomer's Picking tradition is depleting the nutrients necessary for anything to grow and actually live in the garden. Buds use bottles of single-use fertilizer for a single Picking, and it's not healthy. Our soil doesn't need any more pollution.

ROSE

It's too depressing to think about all of that stuff, please stop before I wilt.

DANI

Ignoring the soil doesn't stop the problem. Have fun destroying yourself and this planet!

ROSE

I need to find Mum.

*ROSE goes to the vanity and sits
down. MUM enters.*

MUM

Oh hello honeybug, happy Picking Season! You're *beautiful*. I'm Mum. I know what you're thinking--how am I blooming this well in the Spring if Autumn's chrysanthemum's growing season? It's just that this garden's fertilizer works *that* well! Also, It's personally packaged for cleanliness. Here, try a spritz. Let's get started on your Picking.

MUM begins working on ROSE at the beauty station. DAISY begins growing and blooms. DANI is working in the soil.

DAISY

Hi there?

DANI

Go back home.

DAISY

Excuse me?

DANI

Picking season is fake. I recommend you stay away from fertilizer. It's irreversible.

DAISY

Uhm, I'm here to, uhm, well, uhm, I'm here to grow. My other garden wasn't really supportive of my growth because it was so dark all the time, and I wanted something different. Seasonal depression hits hard and I've dreamed of growing in a better garden, and everyone seems to come here. So, here I am! Ready to grow.

DANI

You're not here for the Picking?

DAISY

Picking? Uhm, I picked this garden, I guess.

DANI

Do you know who Mum is?

DAISY

Mum?

DANI

You must come from one shaded garden. Well, I'm Dani, and I'm the only one who cleans up around here.

DAISY

Daisy. Uhm, is there any open soil?

DANI

Just plot down anywhere. Actually, since you mention soil--

MUM

Dani, come quick! I need you to record Rose's Picking for the before and after on our Picker's Public Picture Page!

DANI

To Daisy

I'll be right back. Here, use this when you find your patch. It ventilates the chemicals.

DANI hands DAISY a garden tool.

DANI goes over to MUM and ROSE.

ROSE lines up and PICKER comes

onstage and Picks ROSE. ROSE and MUM revel in how horrific it is.

DANI

Mum, I'm not impressed.

MUM

This is a lovely season, Dan. We're doing the right thing.

DANI

We aren't doing anything. Picking Season is your thing.

DANI begins going back towards DAISY. MUM follows.

MUM

Dani, there is nothing wrong with a little growth. Fertilizer can be a positive thing for the garden, and the flowers enjoy their beauty. I honestly don't see a problem with what we're---

Notices Daisy.

Oh Honeybug! Who is this?

DANI

That's Daisy. Leave her alone, she's just beginning to grow.

MUM

Daisy, I'm Mum. Has anyone ever told you how beautiful you are? What fertilizer do you use? I'd love to order some. I'm in charge of the springtime Picking Season, and I'm always looking for self growth ideas to share with the garden.

DAISY

I don't use any fertilizer.

MUM

Shocked.

You're natural?

DAISY

Yes. We didn't have fertilizer in my other garden.

MUM

And tell me honeybug, was your other garden as beautiful as mine?

DAISY

My other garden was kinda like this one, but nobody was there anymore. Most of the buds left or died eventually because of the darkness, and it was just me in the end. I figured springtime is a good time to move, it's easier to shift your roots before you bloom.

MUM

Oh that's absolutely heartbreaking, we're so happy to have you here. You're beautiful! Were any of your little friends Picked in the other garden? I do the springtime Pickings in this garden. We're pretty acclaimed over here, we're a top Picking garden. Honeybug, you could be a great candidate for the next Picking.

DAISY

Uhm, no thank you Mum. I'm picking myself before someone else Picks me.

DANI

*DANI pulls MUM away from
DAISY.*

Mum, not this one.

MUM

To DANI.

Daisy is beautiful.

DANI

That doesn't matter.

MUM

Imagine if a bud *that* beautiful was Picked from my garden. This is great for my reputation, a bud coming here for a second chance to bloom in a better place? The world will go wild. Daisy is what my garden needs.

DANI

Mum, leave Daisy alone.

MUM

Dan, I'm doing what's best for my garden. You should be supporting this, I won't even have to use fertilizer, you can be excited about that.

Lunging towards Daisy.

Daisy, honeybug, I'd like to recruit you to be in my Picking season.

DAISY

I'm not interested. Uhm, I'd like to work on my own growth.

MUM

Just come with me for a minute. We don't have to make any decisions yet. Let's just test out what happens if I start a tiny process with you, and then you can decide before you're Picked.

DAISY

Uhm, will I see the sun?

MUM

If you're Picked by the right Picker, you could spend all of your days in the sun!

DAISY

Okay, uhm, I guess I'll try it out.

MUM

Wonderful. Come with me.

MUM guides DAISY to her vanity.

DANI

Mum, you're ruining this garden!

MUM

Ignoring DANI, who goes back to tending the garden. MUM begins working on DAISY.

So you uprooted from your other garden and came over here?

DAISY

Yes, it was really lonely, so I guess I'm happy to be here with other buds. I don't know what I want to do yet, but I think I'm passionate about helping others.

MUM

You have a lot of ambition for someone so beautiful.

DAISY

Uhm, thanks? I just don't want to see flowers in bad situations. A lot of flowers don't know how to support their own growth, and I'd like to help them out with that.

MUM

That's so wonderful, that's kinda like what I do. I believe the Picking process is one of the best ways to help a flower bloom, and the best way to save the garden. Pickers only want the most beautiful buds, and this season is the best time to experience life outside of this soil. Look, here comes a Picker. Let's just go say hi.

PICKER enters.

DAISY

Mum, I'm not sure if I'd like to be---

MUM

They're going to love you! Think about all of the beauty you're sharing with the Pickers. Honeybug, being Picked is your best way to help others, and help my garden.

DANI notices the Picker.

DANI

Daisy, get away from there!

DAISY

What?

DANI

They're going to Pick you!

MUM

Oh, Honeybug, you're so beautiful! They're going to love you.

PICKER comes to DAISY and tries to Pick her. DAISY resists.

DAISY

No no no no! Where are you taking me? No! I am growing for myself. I want to grow!
Dani? Dani, help me! GET OFF OF ME! I am not just something for you to Pick!

DANI

Daisy, I can't stop the Pickers.

DAISY

Let me go! I don't want to be Picked! Let me go! No no no no no!

PICKER Picks DAISY.

DANI

Going towards MUM, who watched the Picking with pride.

You knew she didn't want to be Picked! How could you let that happen?

MUM

I can't control the nature of beauty, Dani. Springtime Picking is an important season. We needed Daisy's beauty for my garden's reputation.

DANI

You don't get it! Daisy didn't want to be Picked. Daisy was going to help us clean and save the garden. You don't care enough about this garden to see how Picking Season is ruining this soil!

MUM

Daisy helped the garden in the best way any flower can; by being beautiful enough to be Picked by the Pickers who keep gardens in their world.

DANI

Beauty doesn't give anyone the right to Pick somebody.

MUM

She asked for it by coming into this garden. Blame the season Dan, not me. Nobody's interested in your whole "save the garden" environmentalist thing you're doing. My soil is fine. Fertilizers aren't going anywhere. Your generation of buds knows nothing about the beauty within these traditions.

DANI

That's ridiculous! These traditions are demeaning and are creating all of this pollution. The garden isn't just yearning for popularity, Mum, it's struggling to stay alive. How do you expect buds to plant down and come here if the soil's so unhealthy?

MUM

Just put a little fertilizer on the soil.

DANI

That's the problem! Everyone is using so much fertilizer that our world is basically dead now, and you're just making it worse because of this Picking Season! Traditions need to change. Look at this!

Dani brings Mum to the grotesque soil to look at the damage. Mum finally sees the damage for the first time.

MUM

Dan, I didn't realize what the soil looked like without the chemical clean beauty treatment. What can we do?

*DANI hands MUM a garden tool.
DANI and MUM begin working on the soil.*

DANI

Start with this. Just move it in the soil like this. Good. We need to turn over the soil so that the surface can breathe again. There's too much fertilizer in the water supply, and we need to compost organic products to fix the deficient vitamin mutation caused by the chemicals.

MUM

Oh, how depressing. Where did you learn all of this?

DANI

Lily told me everything when I first bloomed here. We were working together until she got Picked. Saving the soil is a process, and we just need to help before it's too late.

MUM

I miss Lily. Such a passionate bud.

Saving the garden together.

Oh look! Look at this! Oh the soil looks so fresh and clean!

DANI

That's what we want.

MUM

Oh this is so great. I wonder how we could brand this for the garden's publicity page.

DANI

We could just share the problems. Everyone needs to hear about the fertilizer before it's too late. Not enough buds even realize their impact and just talking about it with them might help shift lifestyle decisions that can better the environment.

MUM

Picking Season is such an annual celebration, it's hard for buds to just give that up.

DANI

Organic fertilizer is a step towards change.

MUM

It's so expensive.

DANI

You could make your own.

MUM

Buds come to my garden because I am the best. Pickers love the beauty from the current fertilizer, it's hard to change that while maintaining our reputation.

DANI

We have to do something before it's too late.

MUM

Dani, you're so passionate. And so beautiful. You're *so* beautiful. You could make someone happy if they Picked you.

DANI

Mum, I don't want to be Picked. I'm saving this soil.

MUM

Dani, think about what's best for this garden. The Picking Season is necessary for us to afford our soil plots. If you were Picked using organic fertilizer, then I could prove to the rest of the buds that natural beauty is back in this season!

DANI

I'm not getting Picked.

MUM

Dani, you should be the first to test out our organic fertilizer! Come with me, let's try a blend.

MUM coaxes DANI to the vanity and begins working. PICKER enters.

DANI

Mum, get away from me! I have work to do in this garden!

MUM

Oh just a little bit. Just try it out and see how the Pickers like the organic product!

DANI

Mum, Stop.

MUM

This new product is perfect, Dani.

MUM continues.

DANI

It feels weird to have petals like this. Let's go back to the soil, together we could clear some new patches by morning.

MUM

Dani, just look at yourself. You are blooming.

PICKER begins lurking.

DANI

I'm blooming? Like a flower?

MUM

Dani, honeybug, you're blooming more beautiful than any flower. Look.

DANI

Wow! I'm blooming! This is beautiful, every bud needs to switch to organic----GET AWAY FROM ME!

MUM

It's time, Dani. Congratulations on being Picked. Go grow beyond the garden, make Mum proud!

PICKER begins Picking DANI.

DANI resists.

DANI

No! No! NO! Leave me alone!! YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS DEAD WORLD. DO NOT PICK ME. NO! GET OFF OF ME! YOU DISGUST ME!

PICKER sees DANI is a weed, and doesn't think DANI is good enough or worth the resistance. PICKER leaves DANI on the ground. DANI was Picked, and thrown back into the garden.

DANI

Traumatized.

I said no! They Picked me, they destroyed my petals, they threw me back, and for what? For you to test out some new organic fertilizer? For a tradition rooted in commercial beauty for Pickers who expect us to grow for *them* without caring about how much we hurt ourselves trying to reach their precious beauty standards? I said no, and the Picker didn't even care! This season is disgusting. Mum, you disgust me. Enjoy your perfect Picking Season, I'm done! It's hard to breathe here. There's too much in the air.

MUM

Dani, honeybug, I didn't know they would do that. We can try the other fertilizer. They'll pick you and keep you. You'll be so beautiful! Dani!?

DANI Picks herself, leaving a petal carcass behind.

MUM

AHUGHH. DANI! You've never cared about me!

MUM is alone with the polluted garden that she created. The environment dies. The flower carcasses, empty cans, stench and smog of fertilizer are all stronger than ever.

MUM

Dani!? What did we do to our world?

MUM has a frantic breakdown. MUM goes to her vanity and tries to overcompensate with beauty. MUM goes to DANI's garden tools and tries to fix the damage, MUM moves around the space using fertilizer to try to save the soil. PICKER comes on stage looking around for flowers, and there are none left besides the many plastics, pollutants, and carcasses. PICKER tries to Pick

MUM but struggles to catch her in the manic. PICKER catches her, and Picks MUM slowly by the root. She is dug out. It is horrific. The garden is left empty.

BLACKOUT.