

# 1.

All of a sudden she disappears. From her room. From her girlie-girl self. From her whole life.

She doesn't know where she is and she's very frightened.

Then she does know where she is. She's in the garden, one in a row of petunias. She doesn't know how she knows. She just does. That makes her even more frightened.

At first, all she manages is a flower howl – a steady, steamy beam of misery.

*Eeeeeeeeeeeeeee!*

Totally silent to human ears, but super-loud to those in the garden. Every other plant leans away from her.

*Eeeeeeeeeeeeeee!*

As a little girl, she spent a lot of time crying. She'd turn up the volume and get red in the face and stamp her feet and Dad would do just about anything to make her stop. But try stamping your foot when you have no feet.

Try getting your way when ... you don't know what your way is.

*Eeeeeeeeeeeeeee!*

A petunia? Why a petunia?

She is deep purple in her plummy tummy, shading to nearly lavender on her far furl.  
Quite attractive.

But she is surrounded by pretty flowers, some of them much taller than she is. She's not  
easy to see.

*Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!*

She remembers she was bored because Dad wouldn't let her watch her favorite DVD or  
anything else until she finished her math homework. He wouldn't let her use her cell  
phone or listen to her iPod or use the internet.

She HATES times tables. She refuses to learn them.

*You have to, Tonya, or you'll have to stay in the third grade forever.*

Would that be so bad?

She remembers Dad sent her to her room until she was "ready to work." She obviously  
wasn't ready yet.

She was at the mirror, trying on different outfits. She loves hot, vibrant colors. She is  
prone to preen.

She didn't like the way she looks. She went over to the open window and grabbed a  
flower from the window box. She put it in her hair and returned to her reflection.

*Oh, yuck!*

She took the flower out of her hair and threw it out the window.

Was that it? Was it a petunia she threw away so carelessly?

She remembers she saw some sort of disturbance behind her head, some sparkly, blingy thingy, all shine and flare, all glitz and glare, so silly and slight she wasn't even sure it was there.

She turned around and ...

**P**  
**O**  
**O**  
**F!**

Gone.

**2.**

So here's this scared and deeply distressed petunia, beaming her "How Could This Happen" howl.

*Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!*

How did she get to be garden-variety greenery?

Or ... purplery?

*Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!*

Here are 37 other flowers doing the plant equivalent of the “Don’t Get Me Down” boogie. Everybody on absolute overload. Even the potatoes over in the next plot are trying to get away and they’re underground.

Here’s a wilted garden waiting to happen.

*Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!*

Most flowers are so sensitive to mood, they’re uncomfortable if someone is sad. If it’s someone close to them, say in the same garden, that’s trouble. Especially if it’s another flower. That’s definitely – whoa! -- wither weather.

*Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!*

At which point, at the plant equivalent of taking a breath, this howling flower finally realizes something. She is not powerless.

The whole garden is freaked. She doesn’t know how she knows this, but she can sense the others bending away from her. That must mean something.

It means the other plants can sense or “hear” her.

If they can “hear” her, then she has to have a “voice” of some sort.

That thought is what finally – mercifully -- shuts her up.