

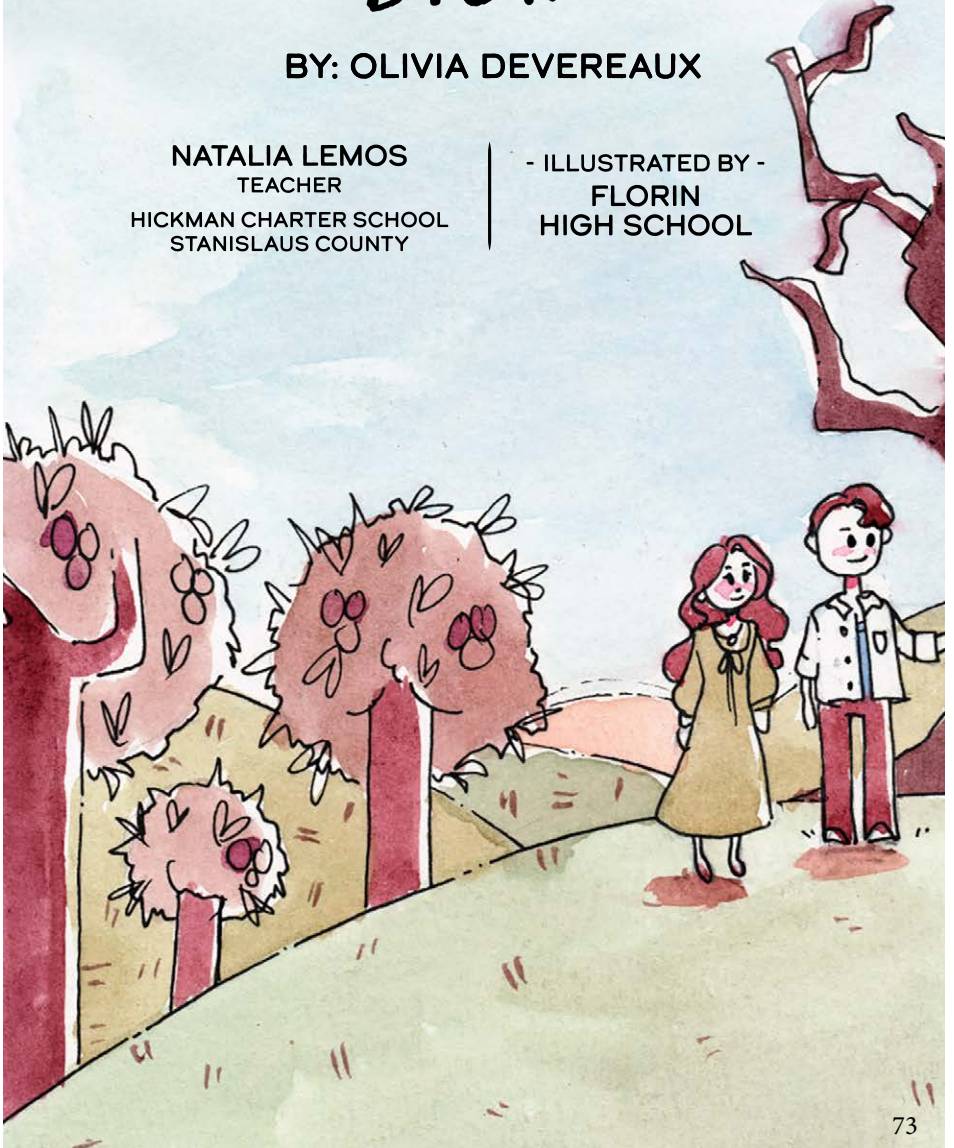
EIGHTH GRADE STATE WINNER

# Her Mother's Dream

BY: OLIVIA DEVEREAUX

NATALIA LEMOS  
TEACHER  
HICKMAN CHARTER SCHOOL  
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- ILLUSTRATED BY -  
FLORIN  
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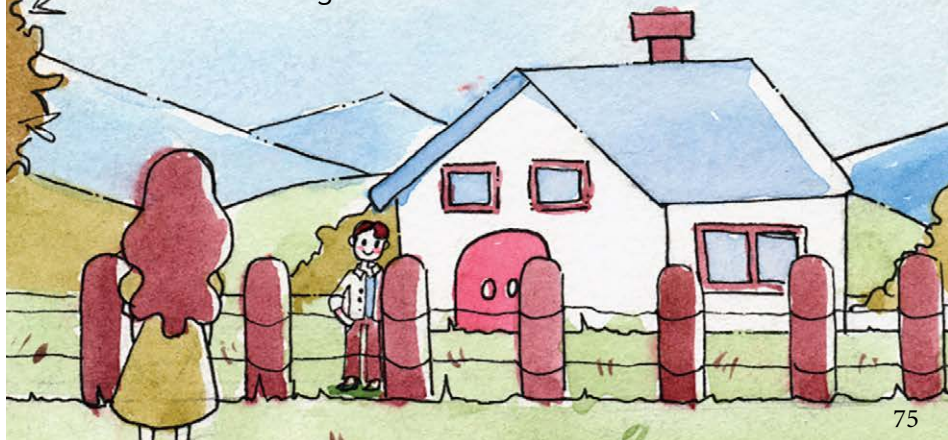
“Do you want to go back to Chicago or stay here with me in Los Olivos?” Katerina walked up the hill along the fence of her new property, the question her father asked her the night before ringing through her mind. Two small birds hopped in the morning light. She could feel a gentle breeze rustling through the olive trees, her dark curly hair moving in the wind.



“What am I going to do?” She asked herself out loud, holding her mother’s necklace around her neck with one hand, her long green dress with the other. She then spun around, shocked to see her neighbor from the next property over, Ash.



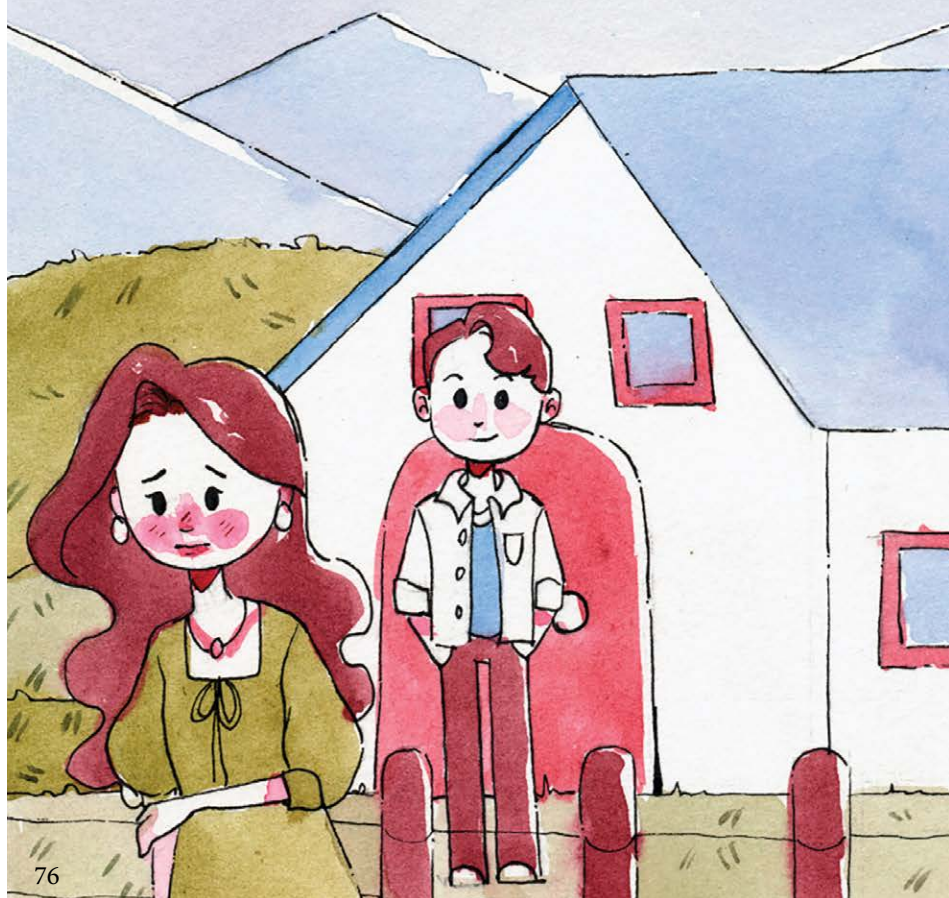
He stood there, hands in his jean pockets, the sleeves of his button-down shirt rolled up. He was just beyond the low-slung wire fence between them. “What’s wrong?” He asked.



She hesitated, and stepped toward the fence. She hadn't known why, but when she first met him a few weeks ago, she instantly felt that she could trust him. "I have a chance to go back home... My friends are there." She said, trailing off. He stood, listening.

"A few weeks ago, I would have given anything to go back home. But now, I'm not so sure. Things have changed so fast; I don't know where I belong anymore."

Ash furrowed his brow, his dusty brown hair moving with the breeze.



“It was my mother’s dream to have an olive grove; to make olive oil,” she said, gazing at the ground, “Now we have the grove, but she’s gone. It’s like we got what we wanted, but as soon as we did, everything was stripped away.”

Her voice cracked, “I feel alone without her. I don’t know what to do.” Ash hopped the fence, walking toward her. She looked up at him.

“I can’t say I know what you’re going through,” he stated, “But when my mom had cancer, working on the olive grove with my dad really helped.”



She hesitated, turning away, “My dad seems to think that if we stay here and work on the olive grove, things will get better,” she whispered, almost to herself, “But I’m not as sure.”

Ash reached out and took her by the arm, walking with her.

“Olives are small, cream-colored blossoms that bloom by the end of spring.” He started, “The fruit develops in summer. So by fall, the olives are fully developed, ready for harvest.” Listening to him made her feel better.

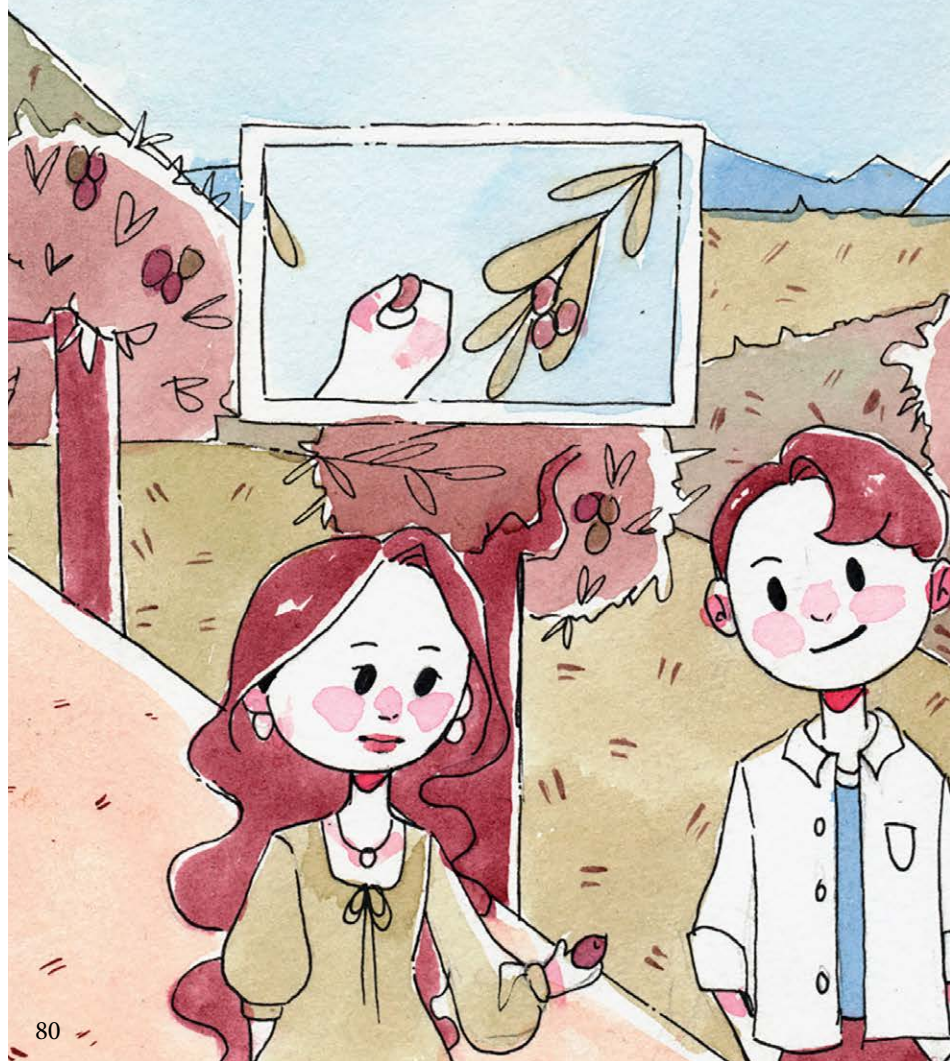


“Olives turn darker as they ripen. The best time to harvest is when there are both green and purple fruit on the branches.”

He reached up, picking an olive from a branch and handed it to her. “As olives ripen, they develop more oil, but their flavor is weakened. The less oil in the olive, the stronger the flavor. It’s about finding the right balance.”



They stopped and she rolled the olive between her fingers, looking back at him. “When they’re harvested, they’re taken to the mill and are crushed into a paste. You have to do this as quickly as possible so the oil won’t oxidize. Oxidation will take away the beautiful and complex flavors that nature gives.”





“The paste goes through a machine called a malaxer, popping little droplets of oil to make the separation process easier.”



They came to the top of the hill, where there was a giant, gnarled tree and stood under it, the sun behind them. He reached out and touched the tree's bark. "Some of these trees are over a hundred years old."

"A while ago, there was a fire and this tree was badly burnt," he said, trailing off. "Olive trees can be burnt, neglected, broken, diseased. All they really need is hard work and loving care to come back. Olive trees are resilient."

"That's why my Mom wanted us to have this grove," she whispered to herself. "I think I understand."



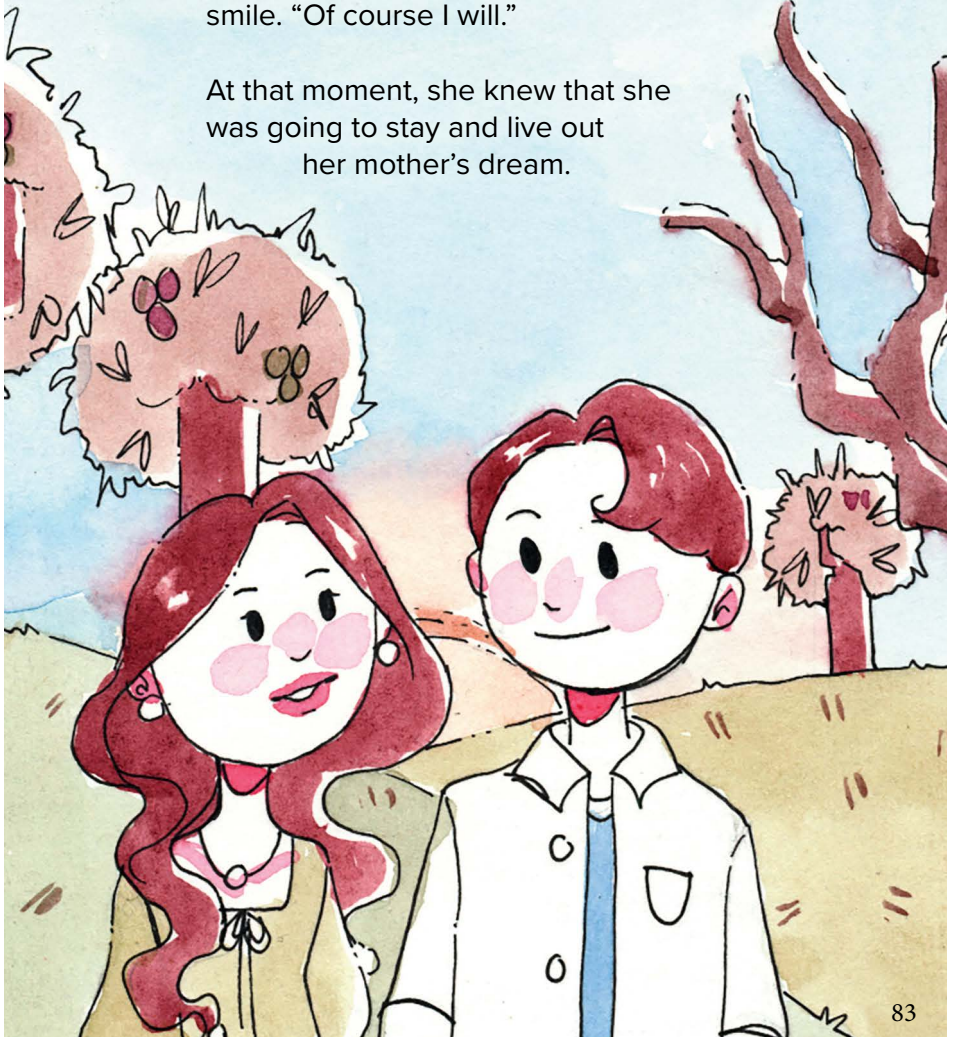
“Maybe that was her plan all along,” he said, looking in her eyes.

Katerina felt her mother’s presence all around her in the olive grove as she remembered the countless times her mother told her to never give up and that she was never alone.

Her father’s question came back to her and she looked into Ash’s green eyes. “If I stay, will you help me restore the grove?”

He looked back with a confident smile. “Of course I will.”

At that moment, she knew that she was going to stay and live out her mother’s dream.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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# Olivia Devereaux

8TH GRADE  
TEACHER: NATALIA LEMOS

Olivia has a natural attachment to olives. The name Olivia comes from the latin word “oliva” meaning olive or olive tree. Coupling this with her love of olive oil (she puts it on everything), a story idea was born.

It took Olivia seven drafts to get her story and characters right. The writing process taught her perseverance. It also taught her interesting facts, such as the need to harvest and press olives for olive oil as quickly as possible. Olivia is excited to see her story through the illustrator’s eyes, and looks forward to being a published author!

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## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATORS

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### Djefterline Jean Philippe

FLORIN HIGH SCHOOL  
ALEXANDRA PEASE, ART TEACHER

This high school senior learned a valuable lesson in the illustration process: sometimes you have to start over.

While Djefterline anticipated using acrylic paint for her illustrations, she was not satisfied with the outcome. She then tried watercolor, and was happy with the results. Before putting that paint to paper, Djefterline researched how olives grow (on trees, something she did not know!) and studied the characteristics and setting of a typical olive grove. Next, she sketched her images, finally coloring them with the watercolor.

Her favorite part of the project was how it all came together. She also enjoyed illustrating a very interesting and as she said, “well-written” story!