



CAMILLE'S  
MEADOW

*Brigitte M. Sander*

The sounds of passing carriages and voices filled the street as people strolled by, out to enjoy the unusually hot day so rarely seen in England. A young man rushed past a giggling group of young girls, bumping into one as he did so.

“Sorry,” he muttered without giving a second glance at the bewildered lady, still trying to right herself and smooth out the many layers of her perfectly tailored dress.

“Well I never...” she said to her companions, but Charlie didn't hear the rest of her sentence as he strode on. Pointlessly fussing over silly women would be an inconvenience at a time like this. Of all days for the sun to come out, making the streets crowded, it was today. His eye caught sight of the impending clocktower in the middle of the square, its face showing 12:03. The heat pounded down on him, making the layers of clothing he was wearing soak with sweat. He looked at the clock again, 12:04, basically grinning down at him. Finally, the publishing building came into view and he breathed a sigh of relief. *Five minutes late surely wouldn't be that bad*, he thought to himself. He stopped just outside the door, smoothed his unkempt hair, and walked in.



Camille sat on the bench in the blazing sun. She felt as if she were on fire as her dress stuck to her sweat soaked skin. *I should have brought a parasol with me today* she thought, *that would have at least provided some comfort from the blistering sun*. She daintily fanned herself with her hands, which only supplied her with strange looks from passer-by's. Sweat trickled down her neck and forehead, and she fetched her handkerchief from her dress and began to pat her skin. The expensive material felt luxurious against her skin, and she released a sigh of content. She let it drop to her lap and her eyes caught sight of the initials embroidered onto the pristine, white material. Her stomach lurch in a painful reminder of whom that handkerchief belonged to, who had given it to her. Tomorrow, the church would be filled with strangers, clad in fake smiles and expensive clothes, all there to see the Mayor's daughter marry that odious man. She closed her eyes as if to shut out the world and all her problems. She felt the bench shudder and her eyes flew open, in time to see a young man fling himself on the other end of it, his head in his hands. From what she could see, he was around the age of one-and-twenty, with light blonde hair that was a little too long by social standards. His clothes were creased and dirty, but not enough to be considered ratty. She should have just ignored him, but her mouth started forming words before her brain registered what she was doing.



He pressed his hands into his head, trying to remove the feeling of failure, as he sat down on the nearest park bench, which probably had splinters and germs. *The publishers must think I'm a joke* he thought miserably. His hands dropped to his papers and he looked down at the page on top. ‘Architecture through the Ages’ it read. His shoulders sagged as he was reminded again that his work would never be published, never be sold in any bookshop. He was dragged out of his depressing thoughts by a small, musical voice.

“Are you alright?” the voice asked. He looked up and saw it belonged to a young, pretty girl on the other side of the bench. She couldn't have been more than sixteen and she had a pure, angelic innocence about her. Her porcelain skin gave quite a nice contrast with her dark, almost raven coloured hair that was pulled back in a loose bun, strands of it framing her face. She had big, round eyes that were a brown colour with specks of gold throughout them, and her dress was one of the finest he had seen, a deep blue colour with gold threaded throughout it, matching her eyes. “Sir,” she asked again, her eyebrows furrowing in confusion and he realised that he had been staring.

"Y -yes, I'm quite alright," he said looking away, and then looked at her again. Her facial expression told him she didn't believe him. "I - er - my meeting did not go to plan," he said, shrugging a little as if it didn't matter, which it did.

"I'm sorry," she said after a moment. He shrugged again.

"It's not your doing," he replied. She nodded, but still looked at him with pitying eyes. "I'm Charlie, Charlie Wellings," he said, trying to change the subject. She hesitated.

"I'm Camille," she said. He waited for her to state her last name, but instead, she finished with, "It's nice to meet you." *How odd* he thought.

"What was the meeting about?" she asked. It took him a moment to remember what she was referring to.

"Oh - writing," he said. She gave him a blank look. "I'm a writer." She clasped her hands together.

"Oh, that's wonderful!" she exclaimed. "May I see some of your writing?" she asked.

His hands tightened on his papers protectively. He had never shown them to anyone besides the publishers. *What if she thinks him a fool!* Her brown eyes bore into his, silently persuading him. Without even realising it, he passed the papers over to her and she grabbed them with eager hands. He watched her eyes run over the page, her brows rising a little.

"It's all about architecture!" she exclaimed. He blinked.

"Well, yes," he said, not understanding her shock. She laughed.

"Words and writing are not meant to describe modern living, they should be about the joys of the ancient world. Why, if you started writing about nature-" He screwed up his face.

"Nature?"

"Why yes! There is so much beauty to behold in nature," she cried, "Why not write about how a flower blooms, or the way the sky looks filled with fluffy clouds, or even how the rain smells in a late afternoon thunderstorm. Words should be created in such a poetic way, capturing your heart. No one writes about these things anymore," she finished. She then looked at him with big, round eyes. "But you could," she said, hopefully. He became flustered.

"I-I'm no good with writing about such feminine things," he said. He looked at her and her face became crestfallen. He immediately chastised himself for being so blunt. "I wouldn't know where to start," he amended. Her eyes again filled with light.

"Oh, that's no problem," she said laughing, and stood up. "Come."



"Where are we going," he asked. They had been walking for a little over half an hour and she could tell that he was beginning to tire.

"You'll see," she said laughingly, lifting her skirt to step over a fallen log. She heard him stumble after her, tripping over tree roots and uneven ground. She still couldn't quite grasp the concept that he did not know who she was, who her father was. This had never happened before, never in her whole life, and she was not going to waste it. She had made the mistake before, telling people who she was, causing her to have few friends. *Well, I do have one friend* she thought. That friend was currently trying to regain his balance as his feet stumbled over the foreign ground. She grinned as she hopped over another tree root. She moved through

the forest as if she was part of it, gliding through the trees. After another few minutes, the trees began to part and she grew more excited as she saw the familiar patch of light up ahead.

“This is what I wanted to show you,” she said, stopping at the edge of the clearing. He looked past her and froze.



The meadow was breathtaking. The two stood for a moment, admiring it. The lush grass was a deep green, with hundreds of flowers peeking through, spreading colour everywhere you looked. The late afternoon sunlight enhanced these colours, making them vibrant and playful. Trees surrounded the area, closing the place off from the outside world, hiding it from unworthy eyes. It was as if the place was created just for the two of them.

“What do you think?” Camille asked tentatively. “I first found it after I ran away from a particularly awful governess when we were walking through the forest. I’ve always come back ever since, it’s like my own, personal place that I can come to when I need to think,” she babbled, nervously looking up at him beneath dark eyelashes. Charlie didn’t say anything, the sight had still knocked the breath from him. “We can share it if you like? I won’t be coming back here much anyway, not after I get married...” she trailed off into silence. Charlie spoke.

“Its... beautiful,” he breathed, and Camille’s face lit up. But he wasn’t looking at the meadow any more. He did think it was nice, he really did, but it was her who was beautiful. No - she was exquisite. She made the meadow around her seem like the dirtiest street in London. The way her face lit up when she talked, how her eyes seemed to dance, and her smile, that smile, the one that could make any person believe in love, even himself. *She’s getting married you idiot* he thought.

“Oh! I hoped you would like it,” she said, clasping her hands together “See, you can write about the different kinds of flowers and their beautiful colours. Or you could write about how the sun shines through the trees, creating different tones of colour. Or the grass-” she cut herself off again as she saw Charlie staring at her. “What?” she asked puzzled. Charlie opened his mouth to answer, but no sound came out. There was no way he could describe in words how he felt. “Is there something wrong?” she asked, coming over to him.

“I’m going to write about you,” he blurted out and then blushed as he realised what he had said. She looked at him for a moment, and then she smiled.



*5 years later*

The crowd around her murmured in excitement as the line grew shorter and shorter, bringing them ever closer to the front. People watched with envious eyes as young ladies pushed past them, out of the shop, carrying their newly signed book. Camille looked down at her own book, waiting to be signed. The pages were fresh and crisp with that ‘new book’ smell. Her hands clutched them tightly, hands that bore no rings. She flipped it over to the front and re-read the words which had brought tears to her eyes the first time she saw it. *Camille’s Meadow*. She looked up and realised she was next in line. The young man at the desk had his eyes down as she slid her book towards him. He opened it and started to write in it, his blonde hair falling in his face

“And what was your name?” he asked, still not glancing up.

“Camille,” she said. At that, he looked up, his eyes round. “Hello Charlie,” she said, tears welling in her eyes. His mouth curved into a smile.

*The feeling of love at first sight, is what makes it so thrilling to many a young person. This spark between two people is quite uncommon in society, but our two lovers seemingly overcame this. One, a lowly writer, whom never noticed the daily joys of life, let alone the beauty of it. One might expect him to write beautiful stories full of love and appreciation, but his mind only produced words of which would make even the most tolerant of souls question their patience. Our other lover was the beautiful daughter of the Mayor. She spread an almost angelic light into every room in which she entered, and her words were laced with great intelligence and spirit that it gave her the disposition of one with an appreciation of life, who saw the joy in it. It would seem that these two people would forever stay in their own worlds, but fate decided against this, and instead, brought them colliding together.*

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## Rationale

Camille's meadow is a short story about two young lovers in the early 1800s. It was written in the form of prose as this was the most appropriate way to switch between the two characters perspectives whilst carrying on the story. The piece explores the theme of Romanticism which is conveyed through the reoccurring symbolism of nature, love at first sight and the time period the story is set in. These romantic conventions are quite common in the theme I chose. Love at first sight, is seen as pure, rather than foolish, the early 1800s was a time full of instant love and romantic tendencies, and a common view as a romantic is nature against industry. All of these conventions I tried to weave throughout my story to enhance the romanticism theme.

The context is historical as romanticism during this time was more prevalent. This also gave me the chance to use a more traditional type of writing, fitting in with the error it was set in. I enjoyed including some behaviours which were quite common in that time period, for example, "...she fetched her handkerchief from her dress and began to pat her skin" – Camille. It was quite common for people to carry around handkerchiefs in that time period and the context in which the story was written gave me the chance to explore these historical aspects.

When I first started writing, I used traditional language which was similar to what Jane Austen used in her books. She was my main source of inspiration as her novels explore the type of love commonly seen in the time period I decided to write about. I have also presented a speech about her and it delved into the different themes and contexts of her books. This helped me strengthen the historical aspects of the story. This older type of writing I first used proved itself to be quite a challenge, and I decided to switch to a more modern-day English as I feared that my ideas would not be conveyed the way I wanted them to. To keep the traditional tone, I chose to write my blurb in an older type of language and use some of that terminology in some phrases, for example, "...he was around the age of one-and-twenty". This piece was written mainly for a young adult audience. This is because some of the phrasing may be a little difficult for some younger children to understand but the piece does not use any adult themes to make it inappropriate for a younger audience, so the piece can be read by anyone of any age if needed.

I enjoyed writing about these two characters, Camille and Charlie, and exploring their relationship was very interesting. I hope to expand on their story in the future.