

From Math by Don Zolidis

From Math (2F 1M)

MS. WILLIAMS
DAHLIA'S FATHER
DAHLIA'S MOTHER

MS. WILLIAMS
Hi there. I'm Jocelyn Williams, Dahlia's Algebra teacher.

DAHLIA'S FATHER
Uh huh.

MS. WILLIAMS
I know we met briefly at the back to school night, but that was a while ago.

DAHLIA'S MOTHER
Seems like ages!

MS. WILLIAMS
Right. Um... well Dahlia is doing okay in class, but lately she's had a bit of an attitude.

DAHLIA'S FATHER
Oh an attitude? You think she has an attitude?

MS. WILLIAMS
Right.

DAHLIA'S MOTHER
I don't know where she would've gotten an attitude.

MS. WILLIAMS
I'm just trying to get her to a place where she'll get excited about learning algebra.

DAHLIA'S FATHER
Let me tell you something – Because I looked at that so-called “assignment” you gave out. When I was growing up, numbers were numbers and letters were letters.

DAHLIA'S MOTHER
Exactly.

MS. WILLIAMS
Well – um... in Algebra... a letter denotes a variable.

DAHLIA'S MOTHER

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We don't like variables. At one point in her homework, X equals six. Then in another question, X equals negative fourteen. You can't just *decide* to be a different number if you feel like it. It's unnatural.

MS. WILLIAMS

I don't think you're understanding the point of Algebra –

DAHLIA'S MOTHER

And why are they X, anyway? What are they trying to hide?!

DAHLIA'S FATHER

Why don't these numbers come clean and explain themselves?

MS. WILLIAMS

Algebra is a tool –

DAHLIA'S FATHER

To do what? Mix numbers and letters together to create some kind of freakish half-number, half-letter. That's not how it works!

DAHLIA'S MOTHER

You know what happens if you put three X's together?! Triple X. That's not a coincidence.

MS. WILLIAMS

Well, it can really be any letter, honestly. It doesn't have to be X.

DAHLIA'S MOTHER

It seems like it's always X. I see X all the time.

DAHLIA'S FATHER

And we don't like it. We didn't raise our daughter to be exposed to all these X's in school.

MS. WILLIAMS

Look, I'm sorry that you have problems with certain letters. But Dahlia still needs to do her homework in order –

DAHLIA'S MOTHER

Math makes her upset.

DAHLIA'S FATHER

Thank you.

DAHLIA'S MOTHER

It impacts her self-esteem.

DAHLIA'S FATHER

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Yup.

DAHLIA'S MOTHER

Therefore, we don't think she should have to do homework at all.

DAHLIA'S FATHER

Algebra is painful for our daughter. We don't think she should be exposed to it at all. It is dangerous and deceitful. You know what she was learning about last week? Radicals. You're teaching our daughter about radicals.

MS. WILLIAMS

A radical is a square root or –

DAHLIA'S FATHER

I know what a radical is! And I sure as heck don't want my daughter becoming a radical!

MS. WILLIAMS

It's literally a square root.

DAHLIA'S FATHER

No thank you. What are you doing in school teaching about radicals?

MS. WILLIAMS

Guys, I think this is a misunderstanding. Algebra is just a system –

DAHLIA'S FATHER

Oh it's a *system* – listen to this. You're teaching our daughter a *system*.

DAHLIA'S MOTHER

I am uncomfortable with all of this. X's, radicals, systems. It sounds you're like corrupting our child. Who knows what she's learning about?

MS. WILLIAMS

I post my lesson plan every week on the website so you can see.

DAHLIA'S MOTHER

Oh sure so we can learn about these math concepts too?

DAHLIA'S FATHER

That's how they get ya. Right there. Pretty soon we're learning about x and z and radicals. Nope.

MS. WILLIAMS

You know what, guys? I think we're done here. I actually have a class to teach, so I'll talk to you later. Thank you for being invested in Dahlia's education. A lot of parents wouldn't even have bothered to come in here and yell at me for a while.