

THE GARDEN

Written by

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EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Snapdragons, marigolds, and red roses wave in the wind. A weathered hand carefully touches the stalk of a rose and caresses the petals.

MICHELANGELO (74) holds a pair of garden shears. He feels out a single small branch and clips it decisively. He lifts it in front of his blind and milky eyes and smiles.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Michelangelo opens a can of tuna. The kitchen is small and stained. Dishes are piled in the sink and food is everywhere. He reaches decisively and grabs a loaf of bread.

Michelangelo drops the can of tuna fish into a box full of empty cans of tuna; all are the same brand.

He opens the fridge. There are half filled bottles of jams and condiments, little bits of butter and cheese, and 50 cans of sparkling lemonade. Michelangelo takes a lemonade.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Michelangelo shuffles into the living room, sandwich plate in one hand, lemonade in the other. He rounds the couch.

The room is small and cluttered. The pictures on the walls are all crooked. There is a mountain of mail on the coffee table. Michelangelo carefully makes his way between the couch and the coffee table without touching either. He begins to sit and then falls backwards, flopping onto the couch.

He reaches for a radio and presses the 'ON' button, and OPERA MUSIC fills the room. Michelangelo takes a bite of the sandwich. He chews thoughtfully as the music plays loudly.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Michelangelo waters one of the flower plots. HARRY (11), who has shorts and messy hair, watches Michelangelo from the sidewalk. He has a bruised eye and is a bit dirty.

Michelangelo stops for a second and wipes sweat from his forehead. He turns his head towards Harry. Harry crouches down behind a bush. When Michelangelo looks away, Harry walks down the sidewalk, looking backwards several times.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

The sun rises over the garden. Michelangelo steps outside and stretches his arms. Birds SING and bees BUZZ.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Harry is walking down the sidewalk, his bruise smaller. Suddenly, a SHOUT is heard behind him.

BULLY
Hey! Hey Shrimpy!

Harry begins to run. He is being chased by three other boys, who shout and begin to throw rocks. Harry starts crying. He turns a corner and approaches the garden. He looks around.

BULLY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You can run, but you can't hide!

Harry looks at the garden. Harry looks back at the bullies, who round the corner. Harry leaps over the fence and into the garden. He runs for the house. Michelangelo, who was kneeling, stands up and turns towards Harry.

The bullies stop outside of the fence. Harry drops to the ground. Michelangelo turns towards the bullies. They turn nervously and walk away. Harry waits, but Michelangelo crouches back down in the garden.

Harry carefully removes one worn tennis shoe and then the other. He leaves them on the stone path. His socks sink into the dirt as he goes from the path and into the garden plots.

Harry stands several feet in front of Michelangelo. Harry waves his hands wildly. No response. Harry makes a terrible face. No response.

Harry sits several yards in front of Michelangelo and watches him weed the garden plot.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Michelangelo sleeps smiling on the sofa. An empty plate and bottle of sparkling lemonade sit on the coffee table.

EXT. HARRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Harry sits on a concrete back step. Through curtained windows we can see the silhouettes of two adults, HARRY'S MOM (36) and HARRY'S DAD (39). Harry, alone, looks up at the moon.

HARRY'S MOM

...just don't understand it, Alex.
He's got a five minute walk from here to the school and he manages to get his socks muddy! He is definitely your son...

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Tulips are flecked with morning dew, and Michelangelo steps out on to his porch. The screen door SLAMS.

Michelangelo kneels by a pea plant and begins to slowly feel out the peas, plucking the good ones and PLUNKING them in a bucket. The bees HUM.

The gate OPENS. Michelangelo cocks his head. Harry's socked feet tread the grass gently. He sits down in front of Michelangelo to watch him work.

Michelangelo smiles and turns back to the peas. The flowers SWAY gently in the breeze.

Harry absentmindedly begins RIPPING up small handfuls of grass from the lawn. Michelangelo cocks his head in Harry's direction. Harry stops.

Harry stands quickly, grabs his sneakers, and rushes through the gate. Michelangelo turns towards him and CHUCKLES as Harry runs down the sidewalk in his socks.

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

A light from Michelangelo's window, Opera MUSIC plays.

INT. HARRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Harry is asleep on the couch. The bruise on his eye is still there.

HARRY'S MOM (O.S.)

...well I know that, but I'm still worried about him. You saw his face...he didn't just fall over.

(MORE)

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HARRY'S MOM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Miss Miller says he doesn't have
too many friends at school...

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

A patch of watermelon glows in the sun. Harry opens the gate. He moves slowly. He has tears in his eyes, and his nose runs. One of his knees is badly scraped. He takes a seat on a wooden bench in the garden.

Michelangelo, crouching by a plot of soil, places seeds one by one in the earth. He stops and listens. He turns and stands, with Harry behind him, but he does not turn.

MICHELANGELO
What's the matter?

Harry stops SNIFFLING.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)
Come on now, I may not see the
greatest, but I've got a pretty
good ear. Now, what's the matter?

Harry is still. Michelangelo shrugs.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)
You like to garden?

Harry looks at the ground, then nods. He thinks for a second, embarrassed that he nodded. He rubs his nose on his sleeve.

HARRY
Yes.

MICHELANGELO
You ever pruned roses?

Harry smiles timidly.

INT. HARRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A glass soda bottle holds a rose on the table. Harry's Mom walks back and forth behind the table, talking loudly.

HARRY'S MOM
Did you teach him this? I don't
believe it, he's only eleven, where
does he see this, TV? When was the
last time you gave me a flower?

EXT. HARRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Harry sits on the concrete step. He pulls a sparkling lemonade from his pocket and opens the soda.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Michelangelo hands some hedge clippers to Harry while talking. Harry takes a few happy clips. Michelangelo laughs.

EXT. GARDEN - DAYS LATER

Michelangelo steps down on a shovel and removes some dirt. Harry holds a plant and places it carefully in the hole.

From the bushes by the fence, the bullies are looking on. One of the bullies smirks and begins to whisper to another.

EXT. GARDEN - DAYS LATER

Harry waves to Michelangelo and leaves through the gate. Michelangelo goes to the side of the shed and feels the garden hose. It is wrapped carefully. He smiles and nods.

INT. HARRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

FIREWORKS EXPLODING. A full bouquet of pansies sits in a vase on the table. Kids run around with sparklers in the backyard.

INT. MICHELANGELO'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Michelangelo sits, sparkling lemonade in hand. He is smiling and listening to the FIREWORKS.

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

The gate opens. The bullies run in to the garden.

EXT. HARRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Harry sits on the back step next to his parents, his face illuminated by firework explosions.

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

The bullies begin to swing hoes and rakes violently at the garden plants.

EXT. HARRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Harry's Mom kisses him on the head as he looks up. A particularly large and loud firework EXPLODES.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

The birds begin to SING as the sun rises.

INT. MICHELANGELO'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Michelangelo rises slowly from his couch and rubs his head.

EXT. GARDEN-DAY

Harry comes through the gate. He gasps. Many of the garden plots have been totally destroyed, and uprooted flowers are strewn about the whole yard. Harry runs for the door of Michelangelo's house. He KNOCKS furiously.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Michelangelo stands with Harry, who has tears welling.

HARRY
They destroyed it.

Michelangelo takes some dirt and crumbles it in his fingers.

HARRY (CONT'D)
Why do they do this? People suck!

Harry picks up a hoe and SLAMS it into the dirt. He strikes again, and dirt sprays. He flails about, hitting the dirt and throwing and kicking things.

HARRY (CONT'D)
Stupid stupid jerks! Idiots! I hate them! I hate them!

Michelangelo sits silently. Harry turns to him, crying.

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HARRY (CONT'D)
Aren't you MAD?! They destroyed
your garden! It's all gone!

Michelangelo nods slowly. Harry falls to the dirt.

HARRY (CONT'D)
I'm sorry...it's my own stupid
fault.

MICHELANGELO
Come here. I wanna show you
something.

Harry raises his head, SNIFFLING, and walks over.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)
Sit down.

Harry sits cross legged by Michelangelo.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)
Hold out your hand.

Michelangelo finds his hand and forms it to a cup, palm up.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)
Now close your eyes.

Harry closes his eyes. The breeze RUSTLES the leaves.
Michelangelo take a handful of dirt, and runs it over Harry's
fingers. Harry sighs. The dirt trickles through his fingers,
leaving a seed. The birds SING. Bees BUZZ.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)
It's not all destroyed.

EXT. GARDEN - EVENING

Michelangelo and Harry sit on the porch, drinking sparkling
lemonade and eating tuna fish sandwiches.

MICHELANGELO
Tomorrow we plant the zinnias?

HARRY
Mmmhmm

EXT. SIDEWALK - Night

Harry walks home with a sparkling lemonade. Crickets CHIRP,
and he looks up at the RUSTLING trees.

EXT. HARRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Harry looks at the stars. Mom sings playfully in the kitchen.
Pans CLINK and crickets CHIRP. Harry closes his eyes.

THE END