

“But can we just try? Can I just ask Poppy? Please Nana.”

“I guess we can try,” she said.

Poppy agreed, and the next week I arrived to find a greenhouse constructed. The best part about it was the inside of the walls: there was lattice from top to bottom.

“This is the perfect home for zucchini plants,” I said.

“And tomatoes,” Nana added.

We planted zucchini on one side and tomatoes on the other. Week after week, the zucchini plants looked better and better. Nana’s tomatoes were just as good. Then the fruit came, and we both realized that this greenhouse worked perfectly.

“Look, Nana,” I said. “I have a little zucchini here and hundreds of flowers. These plants are going to be the best ever.”

“What a fabulous idea you had,” Nana said, squeezing my hand.

“Nana,” I said, “I think you should remember something.”

“What’s that?”

“There is always a way if you want something bad enough.”

Nana turned and looked at me. I saw a tiny tear in her eye and for a moment, I thought she was going to cry. Then she smiled the biggest smile I have ever seen. She shook her head slightly and squeezed my hand again.

“Thank you, darling,” she said. “I will remember that.”

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I Will Remember

Until I was eight I thought Sunday was called Sunday because you had to spend it in the sun. I thought that because I spent every single Sunday outside in the garden with Nana. The zucchini plants quickly became my favorite. It was the way the tiny little delicate tendrils reached out and wrapped around the lattice, like tiny fingers holding on as tightly as they could. They seemed so helpless. I would sit on the ground and tend to them, sensing that they needed me. Nana would sit there, perched on her gardening stool, looking at the tomatoes in the same way.

“Nana,” I asked one day, “should I take off all these little yellow flowers?”

“Why would you take the flowers off?” she asked gently.

“Well, I thought they might attract the bugs and then the bugs might eat them.”

“No, darling,” she said with a little laugh, “those flowers will turn into zucchini soon.”

“Really?”

“You just wait. Soon you’ll see that little things can turn into wonderful things. You should remember that.”

“Little things can turn into wonderful things,” I repeated.

“That’s right,” she said.

Every Sunday I returned to the garden to check on the zucchini plants, and each time I saw more and more zucchini.

“Do you think there are so many because I take good care of the plant?” I asked.

“Yes,” Nana said, “when you look after things, good things tend to grow. You should remember that.”

“When you look after things, good things tend to grow,” I repeated.

“That’s right,” she said.

I looked after the zucchini plants even better after that. I removed brown leaves, and if one of those tiny tendrils couldn’t reach the lattice, I moved it a little closer. Nana did the same to the tomatoes. Then one Sunday I watched as she took the clippers and cut off one whole branch of the plant.

“Nana!” I put my hand over my mouth in shock. “What did you do that for?”

“The plant isn’t strong enough to have two good branches full of tomatoes,” she said. “I had to get rid of one so the plant could make the most of the other one.”

“Oh.”

“You might have to make the same kind of choice some day,” she said.

“What do you mean, I’ll have to get something chopped off?”

“No dear,” she said with a giggle, “but you might have to make some decisions, because sometimes you just can’t have everything.”

“I’ll remember that,” I said.

For months I returned every week to Nana’s to see how my plant was doing, and each time I was proud to see more zucchini. Until one day, when they stopped appearing, and a few weeks later, there were none.

“Nana, what’s wrong with my plant?” I asked tearfully. “It’s not growing anymore.”

“That’s what happens, darling. Things grow but then they stop. Nothing lasts forever.”

“But I was so good to it.”

“Yes,” she said, “but things end so new things can start.”

“And is there something I should remember?”

“Yes,” said Nana. “Seasons change, but for everything that ends, something new will take its place.”

“I’ll remember that,” I said.

I helped tend other garden plants, but one day I admitted, “I really miss the zucchini plants.”

“I know, darling.”

“I was thinking, Nana, what if we got Poppy to make a greenhouse? Then we could have zucchini plants all year.”

“I don’t know,” she said. “Maybe we should just wait for the right season.”