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CHAPTER 14 · GOOD THINGS GROW SLOW

The Impatient Gardener

A story about learning to wait

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The day Rafael planted the tomato seeds, he expected tomatoes by the weekend.

His grandmother had given him a small plot of the garden — three square metres of earth along the south wall — and helped him dig it and add the dark compost and press the seeds in at the right depth. "Now we wait," she said.

"How long?" Rafael asked.

"Months," she said.

He looked at the flat, featureless soil. "Months?"

"Good things grow slow," his grandmother said. "Bad things grow fast. Weeds, mould, rust. The things worth having take their time."

He went back the next morning and stared at the soil. Nothing.

He went back three days later. Still nothing.

After a week, he stopped looking every day. It felt pointless. Something so slow it couldn't be watched — what was the satisfaction in that?

Then one morning at the end of the third week he walked past the bed on his way to something else and stopped.

Green. The faintest thread of green, so thin he had to crouch down to be sure. Two of them, side by side, barely thicker than a piece of string.

He called his grandmother.

She came out and crouched beside him, and something in her face when she looked at the seedlings made him feel like he had won something.

"They took their time," she said.

"They really did," said Rafael.

He started checking again after that, but differently — not impatiently, waiting for an outcome, but curiously, wanting to see what had changed since yesterday. He began to find he liked this kind of watching. The plant had its own pace, its own ideas about what it was going to do and when.

By August, he had more tomatoes than the family could eat.

He ate the first one standing in the garden, warm from the sun, and it tasted like nothing he had ever had from a shop. He thought it tasted like waiting. Like something that had been given exactly the time it needed.

"Well?" his grandmother said.

"It was worth it," he said.

She didn't say *I told you so*, which he appreciated.

*The things that matter most cannot be rushed. Patience is not
waiting — it is trusting.*

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A companion to “Good Things Grow Slow”

Contributions help fund The Invisible Roots Scholarship —
supporting students who carry invisible roots.

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