

Nomenclature

by
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SETTING

A community garden.

CAST

SANDY - 60-ish, divorced

AARON - 17, vaguely menacing goth/gang attire

NOMENCLATURE

Sandy is in a community garden with geranium (pelargonium) clippings. She is weeding her bed. She has a big water bottle nearby. She works in gloves.

SANDY

Things are more divided now. Used to be, everyone would just grow vegetables and some flowers in a community garden. And everyone had tomatoes and beans. No one ever heard of native plants. We'd heard of *natives*, but not native *plants*. That's very big now - "natives -" I'm sorry but I can't get a certain image out of my mind. Also big right now is "organic" which used to mean you don't use chemicals, which we never did much of, but now it means purple and green tomatoes, yellow beans, like that. It's still hippies where you get your seeds from, only now they're clean shaven and look more normal. I don't think it makes a big difference in the world, but some of these folks around here are pretty hepped up about it and they just want to *share* it all with you. Share what they have and where it's from and why it's good. They think they're trying to be nice. If you saw them, you might think they were nice. But they're assholes.

I've always liked plants that have a good look and feel and smell, and I'm not real patient for seeds. A lot of plants - these geraniums - they're *not* geraniums; they're pelar - pelo - pel something, I forget but they have another name - anyway they grow right from clippings. I suppose they - propagate - in the wild - by things moving past them and breaking them off, things moving fast and rough, and just tearing parts of them off and then maybe one of the pieces gets stepped on and it gets ground into the dirt and it just takes root, right there. They also tend to spread, so once they do get started, they just go and good luck trying to get them out later. Sages, ivy, geraniums. Who knows how they first came here, but I say if they can grow here, with all that they're up against, I say they earned it.

(referring to her clippings)

These are not "natives" - and they're not the common peppery-smelling, fragile, lipstick colored bloomed, geraniums spilling out of window boxes in Germany or Solvang. These here are so elegant they have no flowers, really, and they smell gorgeous, like roses, like Mr. Lincoln roses. So that's what I'm planting.

She starts to dig and stops.

SANDY

(gesturing to different beds)

That's Native's box and that's Foodie's.

Aaron enters, wearing an MP3 player -- checks messages on cell phone. Checks texts, etc. over the following...

SANDY

Oh God, there's foodie's son. Why would anyone want to have a son? I'm sorry I never had a kid, but thank God I never had a son! Usually he doesn't come inside. He meets his creepy little friends outside where they sell drugs or something, I don't know. At least he doesn't talk much. That's why I like to come here when no one's around. Because I don't need the chat. Native and Foodie like to chat it up. Native says, "Oh I just got this new native!" - how can you have a new native?!?--"the indians used it in a tea." She's trying to come off all friendly small talk, but it's her passive-aggressive way of dictating that anyone who's not planting natives is killing us all. She's an idiot.

(gestures to separate bed)

But Foodie, Foodie's something else. She's in a state of panic about everything breaking down and there being no food. How much can she grow in a 4 foot by 8 foot box? She wants everyone to be growing food so we can all *share*. She wonders out loud if one can make geranium tea. I just shake my head and keep digging. You can make tea out of my white cotton underpants, I want to say, shut the hell up, nothing's growing in your damn box, anyway!

Aaron looks at her, then turns away, preoccupied with his problems. She feels him check on her then turn away. Sandy keeps digging.)

The dirt that's here drains really poorly. So they give us this stuff.

Aaron ducks a passing car. As Sandy sits up sharply, alarmed at her thoughts. Moves bag in front of her, so as not to draw attention of Aaron.

The bag says it's from a company in Watsonville, which seems like a harmless place, but you don't know. The bag is probably made in China. I don't think there even are any companies left in the United States that make plastic bags. I don't. Everything I have comes from so far away and you don't know anything about it!

(trying to calm herself)

I guess if you just try to make your own dirt from stuff nearby, after a few years, if you're the only one who puts anything in it, then you can *know*, a little.

(remembering the cuttings)

I have to get these in.

Aaron is clearly avoiding "shed" area.

SANDY

Is he looking at me? Him and his Foodie mom just both make me completely anxious. Plus, Foodie looks a little too much like the woman my ex met on the computer. You look at some folks and you just know they're the computer type. Look button-downed but scattered and needy. I showed her my clippings and she just said 'they smell a little lemon, are they lemon?' No, they're not *lemon!* Ass!

Aaron moves closer. He is uncomfortable in this place. Sandy works in garden, trying to be unnoticeable. She takes out a garden tool and gets it ready in case she needs it.

AARON

There's no place to sit.

Sandy says nothing.

AARON

Excuse me? I was just looking for my mom's planter box. Do you know Janet? Do you know which one is hers? I'm her son. I'm Aaron.

SANDY

(pointing to "Foodie's" box)

I think that's hers, there.

He walks around it. As though to hide something? To bury something? Looking for answers. He's not one to get dirty.

AARON

Is there anywhere to sit down?

SANDY

Oh, well, no, I guess maybe on the edge or on the ground.

He doesn't care to sit there.

AARON

You should get some chairs.

Sandy gathers things, pretends she doesn't hear.

AARON

I said, you should get some chairs.

SANDY

Oh, yes, that would be a good idea!

AARON

So, you plant stuff here.

SANDY

Yes.

AARON

I don't know why my mom does it; she always comes home all dirty, and guilty - like she's not doing it right. Do you know my mom?

SANDY

Not really, I don't see her here that much.

Aaron is looking at the box. He pokes around in the dirt.

AARON

What's this?

SANDY

Some beans, I think. They were.

AARON

Beans?! We don't eat beans!

Sandy nods.

AARON

Beans! That's it?

SANDY

I think...she's been working a lot to make the soil right.

AARON

The 'soil right.' Typical. Typical! Everything has to be *right* before anything *starts* and so nothing ever...starts! Do you have any seeds?

SANDY

No.

AARON

If you just put some seeds in and water it, won't it grow?

SANDY
Probably. Where is your mother?

Aaron doesn't answer.

SANDY
There might be some seeds in that shed.

AARON
(beat)
There should be something growing out here if you're going to be out here. Can't just be dirt. What are those? How do you grow those if you have no seeds?

SANDY
You cut these and they grow in the ground from the center stems that root.

AARON
Just stick them in the ground?

SANDY
Yes.

AARON
Could I have one? They smell nice. They smell like, um, like roses.

SANDY
Your mom might not like them.

AARON
Let me have one.

He picks up the scissors to cut it off.

SANDY
Wait! Right there, at an angle, one clean cut so it's fresh.

She shows him. He cuts it.

SANDY
Then just make a hole, snug it in. Water it. Aaron.

AARON
That's better. If something's growing here, I think she'll be pleasantly surprised. She needs to be pleasantly surprised. And if I did it, I think she'll appreciate it.

He puts one of them in and then stops.
He sits down on the ground, in the dirt.

