

**Mother of Blossoms;  
Killer of Flowers**

Alone, sitting on a large rock, the largest in the clearing of an evergreen forest, surrounded by smaller rocks of the same variety, a young boy wipes his nose and rests his head in his lap. The boy wiggles his toes, fidgets his fingers, then he pouts.

*I don't understand. I'm doing everything I can, he frets, but I can't get them to stay the way I want them too. I can't get them to stay beautiful.* The young boy, consumed by his worries, barely notices the shadow of a tall, familiar figure sneaking up on him.

“Moe!” A voice calls, belonging to the shadow that the boy is now aware of.

“Moe, are you in here?” Poking through the branches of a sparse tree, the face of a woman named Kit appears. Soon thereafter, with more trouble than she would have liked to admit, the woman has emerged from a wall of prickly, green boughs. “Your mother’s looking for you, you know.” She says, giving the boy a little smile and crouches down to meet eyes with him.

The boy, still feeling upset, decides he’s not up for small talk.

“Go away, Kit.” He mumbles softly. So softly that she might not have heard. Truth-be-told, Moe’s not all that sure he’d want for her to quit pestering him, for him to be companionless again.

“You can’t get rid of me that easily, little guy. C’mon, what’s bothering you?” She smirks, attempting to lean over and ruffle his hair. This backfires, however, when she loses her crouched footing and stumbles directly onto the ground, missing his head completely.

The effect is Moe letting out a faint, but substantial chuckle. Kit giggles too, happy to have made the distraught boy laugh. After one more private fit of laughter – at the dirt and dusty gravel now covering Kit’s good clothes, the young boy feels better, and decides he can share some thoughts with his friend.

“Okay,” he says through a sigh. “I’ll tell you...but you can’t tell anyone else! Ever!” He demands, dramatically holding out an upturned pinky finger, a gesture he believes to be used only for the most top-secret and highly confidential matters.

“I won’t tell a soul.” Kit replies, extending a hand and locking her smallest finger in his.

Moe breathes for a moment, then with seeming difficulty, he speaks. “I’m a killer. I’m a killer of flowers.” He states, looking at the older of the two with wide, teary eyes. “No matter what I do, Kit, all the water and the sunlight I could give ‘em, but they always get old, Kit. They always

shrivel up, always go brown. Their leaves fall off, petals too, and they always die.” Moe concludes.

With this, there is a moment of stillness between them, Kit thinking of the right words to say. A gust of wind blows some dirt that had been scuffed up and kicked around by the two’s trek into nature through the air. It ricochets off a rock pile Moe had built earlier that day, burying the remains of a beautiful auburn coloured bud, one that he had failed to grow into the ever-lasting bouquet he dreamed it to be. The shards of rock tipped, tapped, and tapped some more as even the larger pebbles, ones also carried by the wind, hit the blossom’s cairn.

Kit studied Moe, noticing the way his face crumpled and eyes scrunched as some of the dust blew towards him. When her reflection was done, Kit shared something she believed to be new to Moe.

“Moe, hun, you know flowers don’t last forever. Especially when they’ve been picked. They need to have roots, they need a way to grow.” She expresses the importance of this knowledge. “But sometimes, even when they are planted, the flowers, any plant really, they can’t be endless.” Kit, not wanting to let Moe down, doesn’t want to tell him the eventual wilt and the rot of even the most magical floret is unpreventable.

“Sometimes,” she continues, leaning in closer to the unassured boy. “We try to prevent the inevitable, sometimes, it’s really hard to let go.” The woman suggests, crouching once again. “But we must learn to enjoy the beauty that we do have, when we have it, while still

understanding that, one day or another, it will come to an end. Learning to cherish what you have, while it is with you, but not expecting it to last forever, Moe, that's what you must do."

Another moment passes between them, Moe taking in what Kit has shared. More wind, more tip-tap-tapping, more thoughts running rapidly in the boy's head. He gouges out some soil stuck beneath his jagged fingernails.

"Is there really no way I can stop it? To stop the flowers from shriveling up?" Moe asks, finding a nervousness in his chest as he awaits for the answer, hoping he has misunderstood Kit's explanation.

"No, Moe, there's nothing you can do. Not when they've been picked, hun." Kit replies, finding a sincere solemnness for having to break the boy's ambition, for having to tell him the truth.

"Even when they have water? Water *and* sun? That's all they need outside, Kit!" Moe tries to reason, not quite believing what he's been told. He looks, again, at Kit, with large, waiting eyes.

"They need their roots, Moe. I've told you this. They need the right conditions, too." She reminds him gently, holding one of his small hands. "It's not something you've done wrong, it's not something you can change. It's just the way it is." Kit finishes, polishing her point, still softly.

Moe looks to the rocks on his left, the grave of the prettiest flower he'd ever seen. Then, he looks at his surroundings. "The trees," he remarks, "how come these trees never wilt? I've been coming here for all my life and they've never once lost their leaves. They've never gotten old."

"They are old, Moe. They're evergreens. They lose their needles, too...but, you know what, Moe?" Kit rhetorics, having a slight positive change in demeanor, already knowing the answer.

"What?" Moe questions, still ruffled and frankly disappointed. The boy has not yet picked up on Kit's subtle grin.

"They've never wilted and they're not going too." She smiles through her words, knowing what this will mean to the boy. "Not in this lifetime, at least." The woman supposes a little good news won't hurt.

Almost instantly, Moe, who had previously been slouched and watching Kit intently, stands tall. He stares at the trees, looking at each like they've just personally told him that they love him. The boy's eyes water, and he feels that familiar sting in the back of his throat, having had too many occurrences of it for one day. Only this time, that sting is swallowed down with a simple breath of fresh air.

"They're so beautiful." He declares, not looking away from the sea of green branches and sturdy, constant, brown bark. "I've never noticed it before, Kit." Still peering into the woodland, he

spots a baby fern. A little evergreen that hasn't grown its roots yet, not so snugly emerged in the ground that it would be harmful to move.

“You think, do you think I could take one home, Kit?” He inquires, only now breaking eye contact with the humble forest. “I could plant it, I'd put it in a pot.” His tone indicates his next idea, one apparent to Kit for just-more than one moment. “That way, Kit, it could grow its roots.”

“I think you certainly can, Moe.” Kit says with bliss, then elaborating. “In fact, I'd be glad to help you. To bring it home and to take care of it, I mean.” She corrects her words, wrapping an arm around Moe's shoulder.

Though many other emotions from the day still resided, the two found themselves giggling as Kit remembered suddenly that Moe's mother had been searching for him. Urging them to hurry, Kit briefed Moe that their rush was for the purpose of getting the proper tools to bring home the miniature tree and ‘for no other reason’. Yet, Moe found himself biting down a smirk as Kit had hastily mumbled that she hoped his mother wasn't fuming, distressed, or both.

So, when they were finally home, after a second trip to the forest and back, Moe found himself content with the little thing, though it'd grown too far to be considered a blossom and not quite the flower he'd once dreamed of. Kit had placed it in a sizable little pot, speckled with doodles of petite orange daisies and their accompanying verdant stems. With the addition of this, well, Moe thought that it was as exquisite as any flower he'd ever seen – and he was certain that it would live up to its name as an *evergreen*.

