

9<sup>th</sup> Grade

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The Seeds

Initials AG

Grade 9th

RESA 3

### ***The Seeds***

In the cascading hills of Beijing, China, there was an artist of plants. Bonsai, Lilacs, Chrysanthemums, any plant you could name, Zhiming Hua owned. Her home was an ocean of nature, ready to overflow, and was the envy of any botanist around. A wild jungle of green was all you could see for miles. It was well-known that Hua had the most beautiful garden in China. It housed the most colorful leaves, the wildest flowers, and the sweetest scents to ever be smelled. It was truly a sight to see.

Although Hua, tried her best to stay busy, the woman sometimes found herself sitting in the peaceful green of a nearby park. On this day, the sun was hidden by the ominous grey clouds covering the sky. The threat of thunder could be heard, so Hua grabbed her purse and pulled it to the top of her head to try and make it out of the park before the rain came. As she shuffled towards the exit, she bumped into a tall man with old, tired eyes.

"I'm sorry," Hua apologized bashfully, gathering herself together once more.

"It's quite alright," said the mysterious man. "I was just trying to sell a few planting seeds."

Suddenly interested Hua asked, "What kind of seeds are they?"

The man took a step back and pulled out a black pouch.

"The seeds are for no ordinary plant. These seeds are for the '*Mortis Flora*'.

Hua looked up at him with questioning eyes.

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“These are the seeds for the most beautiful flowers in the world. You can have them,” the man said. “I’ll give them to you for 3 yuan.”

Quizzically, she looked at him. “Why are you selling something so valuable for so cheap? Why to me? Who wouldn’t want such a flower?”

“Money can only bring me so much, and I’d have no proper use for it. I want to give it to you, because you are one of the most amazing botanists in the country. It’s best I give it to someone who will use its beauty to benefit others.”

Hua was dumbfounded. How did he know who she was? Yes, her garden was magnificent, but she was never enough to make headlines.

However, Hua’s greed must have gotten the best of her, as she slid her slim fingers into her purse to pull out the money.

“I’ll take it off your hands. It might just be the pinnacle of my garden.”

With that and a tired smile, the man was gone. Just as he’d disappeared the rain roared down from the skies. Hua ran home, quick not to get her clothes wet. Once settled in the comfort of her home, Hua took the seeds out of her purse and examined them. The black velvet pouch held the seeds to the most beautiful flower in the world. She sat and twiddled the tiny bag between her fingers.

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*My garden could really use something to make it more beautiful - to set it apart from the others, she thought. Anybody can have bonsai or chrysanthemums, but not everyone can have the **Mortis Flora**.*


She got up and made her way to grab a planting pot and soil. Hua didn't normally use planting pots, but this plant was an experiment. What if the flower was not as beautiful as the man claimed? What if the Calla Lilly beat it by a millennium in beauty? Nonetheless, she planted the peculiar seeds and fell asleep. This day had been an odd one indeed.

That night she slept with an itching impatience. Normally, she knew plants took time to grow and open up to their environment, but she couldn't help but think about the beauty of the flower. She awoke with a crazy amount of energy, although she found no sleep the previous night. She approached her garden and became light-headed as soon as she walked in. It really was the most beautiful flower. Everything of beauty was before her eyes. The beautiful yellows and pinks popping wholesomely on each petal, the strong but gentle green radiating from the stem, and the sweet aroma of pleasant memories swept through the room. How could a tiny seed grow something this amazing overnight?

It took a little longer, however, for Hua to realize that every other plant in the room was dead. Every green leaf was an awful shade of brown, and the beautiful life that once pumped through them was gone. At this Hua gasped, taken aback. She ran out of the room and shut the door, full of disbelief that this could be her garden. All the countless years and hours were gone. The only explanation could be that masterpiece awaiting in her living room. The radiant flower full of beauty and life had caused the rest of her plants to die. She tried to calm herself down as tears flooded her face. She could always plant new plants; new ones just as beautiful as those she had before. That same evening, she cut every rotting leaf and planted a new seed for each.

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Weeks at his point had passed and her plants seemed to show no growth. Not even the slightest green sprout came out of the soil. She picked out one of the seeds and realized they hadn't even cracked yet. At this, Hua started panicking. Her breaths sped up and she began to feel faint. She couldn't have lost her ability to grow life anymore. No, this can't be. She cried and cried and cried until she eventually fell asleep.

The next morning, she herself felt like death as she approached her bathroom mirror. She screamed at the monster standing before her. Her skin was as pale as a ghost's. Her hair was like string; clumps falling out as she swept her nimble hands through it. Her bones could be seen through her thin skin as though she hadn't eaten in days. What had she become? She ran outside and headed toward the park she'd met the man in. The sun beat down so hard on her skin she believed she couldn't make it.

She saw the man sitting on the same park bench she sat on, the day she first encountered him. She ran to him begging.

"Please, sir! Please kill the flower! It's killed everything I've loved and worked for and now it's killing me! Please!"

The man looked at her. A surprising evil glint in his tired eyes that Hua had not seen before.

"What do you mean kill the flower? The flower is death itself? How do you kill death? It stole the life out of everything you own, and you expect me to kill it?"

At this, the woman was drained. She could no longer handle the constant dysphoria she'd been feeling. Her weary body became a pile of ashes upon the ground. The man, smirking, picked up her ashes and put them in another black velvet pouch.