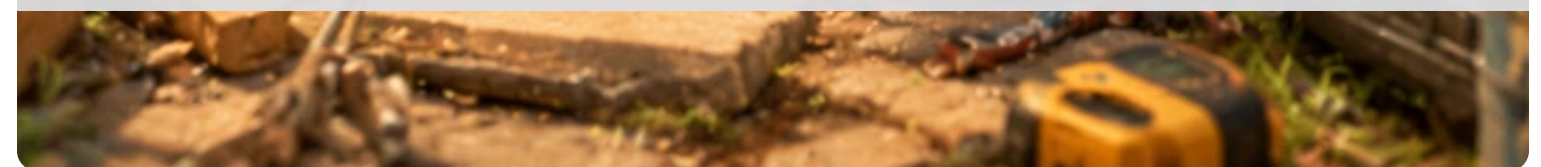




If You Give a Papa a Project

Kenzie





Papa Pete stands in his sun-drenched backyard, proudly holding a blueprint for a grand birdhouse. He wears a dusty tool belt over his plaid shirt, looking ready to conquer his big Saturday project with a determined smile.



Inside the cluttered garage, Papa Pete discovers his workbench is hidden beneath a mountain of old newspapers and tangled garden hoses. He sets his blueprints aside, realizing he must clear the mess before any real work can begin.



As he stacks the newspapers, Papa Pete spots a cabinet door hanging precariously by a single, loose screw. He forgets all about the cleaning and begins searching for a screwdriver to fix the wobbly hinge immediately.



He heads into the kitchen to check the utility drawer, but the rhythmic drip-drip-drip of a leaky faucet stops him in his tracks. He decides the birdhouse can wait while he tackles the annoying plumbing problem right then and there.



While peering under the kitchen sink with a flashlight, Papa Pete realizes he needs a new rubber washer from the hardware store. He grabs his car keys from the counter, determined to make a very quick trip to get the part.



On his way to the driveway, Papa Pete notices the lawn has grown into a miniature jungle of tall grass and yellow dandelions. He pulls the lawnmower out of the shed, thinking a five-minute trim is exactly what the yard needs before he leaves.



Before he can start the engine, a vibrant monarch butterfly flutters past his nose and leads him toward the colorful flower beds. Papa Pete follows the winged visitor, completely forgetting about the lawnmower and his car keys in the grass.



In the garden, he sees that the tomato plants are wilting under the warm afternoon sun. He picks up the green garden hose and begins to give the thirsty vegetables a refreshing soak, watching the water sparkle in the light.



His children come running outside with a plate of chocolate chip cookies and a pitcher of cold lemonade. Papa Pete drops the hose and joins them on the porch, laughing as they share treats and talk about their favorite parts of the day.



As the sky turns shades of pink and orange at sunset, Papa Pete looks at his unfinished birdhouse plans and smiles warmly. Although the project isn't done, he realizes that a day filled with small fixes and family moments is the best project of all.