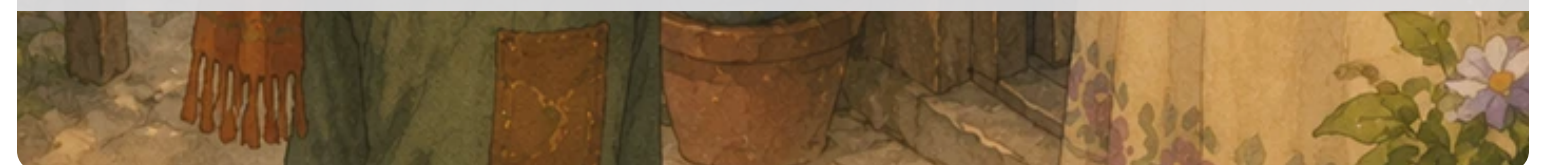




Zayd's Garden of Kindness

Ali Mon





In a cozy courtyard home surrounded by green palm trees and vibrant flowers, young Zayd loved helping his grandfather tend to their small garden. Every morning after dawn prayers, Zayd would carefully water the tiny green sprouts with his silver watering can. His grandfather taught him that caring for nature and living things was a blessed act of gratitude. Today, Zayd noticed the very first golden fig ripening on the branch.



Zayd watched proudly as the single fig grew plump and sweet under the warm morning sun. He could hardly wait to pick it for his own afternoon treat after school. However, while playing near the courtyard wall, he heard his elderly neighbor, Mrs. Amina, coughing softly as she sat alone outside. Zayd remembered his parents telling him that looking after one's neighbors brings deep warmth and blessings.



Zayd paused in the garden path, looking back and forth between the juicy golden fig and Mrs. Amina's courtyard wall. A gentle struggle filled his heart as he wavered between keeping the special fruit for himself or sharing it. Whispering a quiet prayer for guidance, Zayd smiled as a warm feeling of joy replaced his hesitation. He realized that sharing with others brings far greater happiness than keeping things for oneself.



With gentle hands, Zayd carefully plucked the ripe fig from the branch and placed it on a clean woven plate. He decorated the dish with fresh mint leaves and a small wooden cup of local honey. Carrying the gift with both hands, he walked softly down the dusty path toward Mrs. Amina's gate. Every step felt light and peaceful as he anticipated her smile.



Mrs. Amina opened her wooden gate, pleasantly surprised to see young Zayd standing there with a radiant smile. When Zayd offered her the sweet fig, her eyes lit up with deep appreciation and happiness. She placed her hand over her heart and showered Zayd with warm prayers and gentle words of thanks. Seeing how much the simple gesture meant to her filled Zayd's heart with joy.



Later that evening, Zayd sat with his family around the dinner table under the soft glow of a brass lantern. He shared the story of his day and described how happy Mrs. Amina was to receive the sweet fig. His grandfather beamed with pride and reminded everyone that acts of charity and kindness only increase one's inner happiness. The whole family gave thanks together, feeling blessed by the peaceful evening.



The next morning, Zayd woke up early and ran back out to check on the quiet garden trees. To his utter surprise, he found three new tiny green fruit buds growing where the single fig had been harvested. His grandfather walked over with a warm smile, explaining that when we share our blessings, good deeds bloom into even greater wonders.



Determined to spread more joy, Zayd and his grandfather spent the afternoon planting new seeds and berry bushes along the edge of the property. Zayd dug small holes in the rich soil while his grandfather carefully placed the fragile seedlings. They worked together with shared laughter, planning to create a community garden that anyone in the village could enjoy.



A few weeks later, the neighborhood children joined Zayd in the flourishing garden, helping to water the growing plants and harvest fresh vegetables. The once quiet courtyard had transformed into a vibrant community gathering place filled with teamwork and laughter. Children shared baskets of fresh produce with elderly villagers and travelers passing through the town.



As the sun set, painting the sky in beautiful shades of gold and purple, Zayd sat near the thriving garden, watching his friends play under the shade of the trees. He felt a deep sense of contentment and peace in his heart for the simple lessons of kindness and generosity he had learned. Zayd knew that planting seeds of love would continue to bring sweetness to the community for years to come.