

## FORGET-ME-NOT

A troubled inner city youth liberates a forgotten community garden, unlocking a magic that reconnects his neighbors with their lost loved ones.

FADE IN:

EXT. COMMUNITY GARDEN - INNER CITY -- DAY

Overgrown. Forgotten. A vacant lot. Short-cut from the tenements below to the brownstones above.

One small section, tilled and weeded. A pale blue forget-me-not grows there.

An ambulance, an old woman on a gurney. A crowd has gathered.

A group of five boys on the path from the tenements. One of them stops. Watches the work of the paramedics.

MICHAEL is sixteen years old. Dressed like his friends, colors that say keep the hell away.

A WOMAN moves out of the crowd.

WOMAN

You were her friend, right? Do you know what happened?

Michael's buddies crowd closer.

MICHAEL

Hell you talking about? I don't know no flower lady.

His friends smirk, satisfied. They move off.

The door to the ambulance slams shut. Michael watches it drive off.

EXT. GARDEN -- NIGHT

Michael stands in front of the forget-me-not. He makes sure he's alone.

Reaches down and plucks a petal from the flower.

INT. HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

Visiting hours are over. The hallway is dark and silent. Michael creeps from door to door, peeking in.

Footsteps. A NURSE. She sees Michael. He couldn't look more out of place here.

NURSE

Excuse me. Can I help you?

Michael turns and heads the other way. Fast.

NURSE

Hey!

A burley SECURITY GUARD gives chase. Catches him.

GUARD

What are you doing kid?

MICHAEL

Nothing. Looking for a friend.

GUARD

What friend?

MICHAEL

I don't know her name.

He tries to slip away.

GUARD

Right. Come with me.

The guard grabs the collar of Michael's jacket. Hauls him toward the nurses station.

GUARD

Get some help up here.

The nurse picks up the phone. She looks at Michael. His fingers wrapped tenderly around the blue flower.

NURSE

Who did you say you were you looking for?

MICHAEL

A neighbor. She came in today. I don't know what happened.

She drops the phone back in it's cradle.

NURSE

Wait here.

She moves down the hallway. The guard wants to protest, but holds his tongue.

The nurse comes back a minute later.

NURSE  
(to the guard)  
It's okay.

She leads Michael to a patient room. Inside is an old woman, oxygen tubes in her nose.

NURSE  
Mrs. Friedman? Your visitor.

MRS. FRIEDMAN smiles at Michael. The nurse leaves them alone.

Michael walks to her bedside. Hands her the flower. She smells it. It brightens her face.

MICHAEL  
What happened?

FRIEDMAN  
I got old. It happens, sometimes.

MICHAEL  
My name's Michael, by the way.

FRIEDMAN  
I know. Thank you for this.  
(the flower)  
You don't know what this means to me. They were Stanley's favorite.

MICHAEL  
No problem.

Silence. Michael is uncomfortable. He looks around the room, at the medical equipment, the flashing lights, the beeps, and the buzzes.

FRIEDMAN  
Well, thank you again. You should run along.

MICHAEL  
I guess so. Get better.

Before he gets out the door.

FRIEDMAN  
Michael? One favor? Look after the plant for me. Keep it watered.

MICHAEL  
Okay. Cool.

FRIEDMAN

You remember how I showed you?

MICHAEL

Yeah.

FRIEDMAN

Good boy.

EXT. GARDEN -- MORNING

Michael has a paper cup full of water. Pours it around the base of the flower.

People pass by on the sidewalk. No one looks in his direction.

It's the path to the tenements he's worried about. Clear so far, down that way.

He shoves the paper cup in his backpack. Hoists the bag to his shoulder. Turns to leave. Stops.

There's a weed growing near the flower. He bends down, pulls it.

Catches the scent of the flower. Pulls it to his nose. Takes a deep breath. Frowns.

MICHAEL

That's weird.

Four shadows appear. His buddies. He's caught.

NIX, the leader, steps forward.

NIX

What the hell is this?

MICHAEL

Nothing, man...

NIX

Check it out, guys. We got us a little flower fruit. That what you are? A little pansy?

They laugh. Pick up the chant. Michael's new nickname.

Nix steps forward, kicks the plant. The stalk snaps.

Michael pushes him away. The entire group converges.

WOMAN

Hey!

They turn. Michael recognizes her. The neighbor.

NIX

Mind your business, bitch!

WOMAN

I'll call the cops.

NIX

What did you say to me?

Her face goes white. She scurries off. Shouts back over her shoulder.

WOMAN

Go back down to your slums!

They laugh.

NIX

(to Michael)

Yo, man, we got a meet down at the Eight Ball. Tonight. Eleven. Don't bother showing.

MICHAEL

Thought you was through with that.

NIX

Later pansy.

Nix and his crew saunter off.

MICHAEL

You're brother be real proud, man.

They ignore him.

Michael tries to prop the plant upright. It falls over. It's a goner.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

Mrs. Friedman looks much worse. Michael has an empty can of Pepsi, filled with water, what's left of the flowers stuck in it.

He sets it on the bedside table. Mrs. Friedman struggles to turn her head.

MICHAEL  
I screwed up. Sorry.

She smiles. Sucks oxygen through a tube. An EKG monitor beeps.

NURSE  
Have to cut this short, kiddo.

The nurse preps the bed, rolls Mrs. Friedman toward the door.

MICHAEL  
I'm really sorry.

FRIEDMAN  
Remember the water.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL -- DAY

The grounds are deserted. A bell rings. Michael sprints toward the front door.

INT. CLASSROOM -- LATER

A teacher tries to engage his audience. It's July 4, 1776. The Second Continental Congress meets in Philadelphia.

Nothing but a drone.

Michael sits in the back. Stares out the window.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL -- AFTERNOON

Kids pour from the school. Michael sees Nix and his buddies. Turns and tries to lose himself in the crowd before they spot him.

Too late.

NIX  
Where you going, bro? My favorite little guy in the world. I need you.

MICHAEL  
I don't do that no more.

NIX  
Good meeting last night. We're all set. An hour's work, worth a grand each.

MICHAEL

Not interested.

He turns to leave, but Nix's crew has him boxed in.

NIX

Do it for free, then. We need to  
borrow your old man's garage.

Michael tries to squeeze through the circle, but rough hands  
force him back inside.

Nix signals to his boy's and they let Michael through.

NIX

Fine. A "G" and a half.

Michael takes off, doesn't look back.

EXT. GARDEN -- AFTERNOON

Michael cuts through the vacant lot. Feet dragging, head  
hanging. Ashamed to even look at the spot where the flower  
grew.

That patch of dirt. That symbol of his failure.

Stops dead in his tracks. The flower is back. Standing  
tall, in full bloom.

And now there are two.

A second forget-me-not grows right next to the first one.  
He goes to them. Touches them, confirms they're real.

He sees the neighbor lady on the sidewalk.

MICHAEL

Did Mrs. Friedman come home?

WOMAN

No, I don't think so.

MICHAEL

Oh. I thought... Somebody planted  
more of her flowers.

WOMAN

I haven't seen anyone out here.

INT. HOSPITAL -- LATER

Michael runs down the hall. A fresh bouquet of flowers clutched in his fist. His steps are light. A grin on his face. He sticks his head in the room.

Finds an empty bed. Fresh sheets.

Looks for the nurse. When she see him, her eyes soften. A sad little smile.

Michael lowers his head. Turns and walks away.

EXT. GARDEN -- EVENING

Michael sits cross leg in front of the two flowers.

The sounds of the city bounce off the surrounding buildings. That world doesn't matter. Not here. Not in this little oasis.

The dirt around the flowers is clean, free of weeds. The rest of the lot is a mess.

That just won't do.

He pulls a clump of the tall grass. Yanks it out by the roots. Reaches for another.

Clears a patch around the flowers, several feet wide and all the way back to the brick building next door.

Still not satisfied.

Goes for more. Grabs another clump.

A flash of color.

A tiny blue petal. A forget-me-not, struggling to survive.

He brushes the crab grass away. Pulls the strands, one by one. Clears a space for the flower. Frees it from the weeds.

Keeps working. Finds another flower. Liberates that one too.

He doesn't stop. More, a dozen at least. All pale blue. All forget-me-not.

He doesn't notice the line of boys heading his way.

NIX  
You shitting me? You really are a  
little pansy.

His boys laugh. Michael stands his ground.

MICHAEL  
I won't help you.

NIX  
(to his crew)  
From now on, he got a new name.  
Pansy. Everybody know that, come  
tomorrow.

A voice calls out. A COP on the sidewalk.

COP  
Hey! Get away from there!

Nix and his crew take off.

Instinct kick in. Michael doesn't think, just runs.

The cop starts to give chase, won't follow them down into  
the projects.

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

The drone continues. It's 1789 now. The Articles of  
Confederation are replaced with the U.S. Constitution.

Michael is a million miles away.

EXT. GARDEN -- AFTERNOON

Something's going on. People milling about the garden.

The woman, Michael recognizes. He doesn't know the others.

He sees the fuss. A dozen forget-me-nots, full sized and  
fully bloomed.

WOMAN  
You did this? You planted these?

MICHAEL  
I just gave them water.

Some in the crowd just stand and take it all in. Others  
kneel in front of specific flowers.

A smile on every face. A few tears.

The woman has a rake. She hands it to Michael, smiles and moves off.

Michael gets to work. Clears the remaining grass and weeds. Everywhere he goes, finds more flowers. Exposes them to the warmth of the sun.

EXT. GARDEN -- EVENING

Michael throws a clump of grass on a pile. The last of it. The lot is clear.

A dozen blue plants.

And a hundred tiny stalks, pushing from the dirt.

More neighbors have shown up. Passers-by stop to get a better look. Everyone, drawn to the garden.

The crowd parts. Nix and his crew. The mood dampens.

NIX

This what you are now? A little green thumb pansy?

His boys laugh.

MICHAEL

Just leave.

NIX

Here, let me help.

He grabs a rake. Michael knocks it out of his hands.

MICHAEL

Guess you didn't hear me. Get the hell out.

Like the crack of a whip. Nix is in his face.

NIX

What you say to me punk?

His boys circle. Shove Michael to the ground. One of them grabs the rake.

NIX

You hearing me now?

They have Michael cornered. He tries to crawl away. A boot slams into his back. His face plastered in the dirt. The boys cackle.

The rake is grabbed away. The boys turn, ready to fight.  
Who the hell dares...

One of the neighbors. Another right behind him. More  
circling.

Stock brokers, housewives, grandfathers, neighbors.

Nix and his boys hesitate. Never faced anything like this.

WOMAN

You should do what he says. Leave.

Michael climbs to his feet.

NIX

This ain't private property. We do  
what we want.

MICHAEL

Not here. Doesn't matter what happens  
out there. In here, it's different.  
You don't belong in this place.

Nix tries to act tough.

NIX

Yeah? We'll see.

Michael doesn't bite. Stares him down.

MICHAEL

We made a promise to your brother.  
You forget that?

NIX

Yeah, well he ain't here, is he?  
See you at school tomorrow, pansy.

Nix and his buddies push through the crowd.

EXT. GARDEN -- NIGHT

Michael keeps vigil. Everyone else has gone home. Except  
the one neighbor.

WOMAN

You're exhausted. Go get some rest.

MICHAEL

They might come back.

WOMAN

You've done enough.

MICHAEL

I haven't done a thing.

She points to the garden. Hundreds of forget-me-not. Clawing their way out of the dirt.

WOMAN

What do you call this?

MICHAEL

It's not right. Feels wrong.

WOMAN

Go home. Sleep. We'll keep an eye out.

Michael doesn't argue. Too tired. He can't stay all night.

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Michael tosses in his sleep.

In his dream, he stands on a

CITY STREET

The lamp posts spill gray pools of light on the wet pavement. The tops of the buildings are lost in the darkness. Nothing above. No sky. No stars. Pitch black.

At the end of the street, a woman. Screaming. Red and blue flashing lights.

Michael runs toward the woman. He knows her. Nix's MOTHER.

She wails. Her knees buckle. Michael catches her in his arms.

MICHAEL

Where's Nix? Where's Andre?

She slides from his arms. Lies curled on the pavement.

The flashing lights are coming from just around the corner. Michael sprints toward them. Turns the corner...

Finds an empty street.

The lamp posts spill gray pools of light on the wet pavement. At the other end is Nix's mother. Screaming.

Red and blue flashing lights, from just around the next corner.

Michael runs. But the screaming and the flashing lights get farther away. The faster he runs, the more distant they become.

INT. BEDROOM -- MORNING

He shields his eyes from the light pouring through the window.

He stares up at the ceiling. Something isn't right. He scrambles out of bed.

EXT. GARDEN -- MORNING

Commotion in the garden. Packed with people.

Michael sprints up the hill. Expecting the worst. The first thing he sees is Nix.

And hundreds of flowers. In full bloom. A sea of blue.

Michael charges into the garden. Ready for a fight.

Nix is talking to the neighbor woman. She sees Michael, turns and walks away. Leaves the two boys alone.

NIX

Hey.

Michael is ready for a fight.

MICHAEL

I told you to keep the hell away.

NIX

I know.

Nix looks exhausted. There's no fight in him.

MICHAEL

What are you doing?

NIX

Nothing. Checking it out.

MICHAEL

All right, you saw. Move out.

NIX

Couldn't sleep last night.

(MORE)

NIX  
Crazy ass dream. About that night.  
You know?

Yeah. He does.

NIX  
I miss him. Was just so stupid.  
And over what? Nothing.

MICHAEL  
He wanted to do right. Keep you out  
of that life.

NIX  
This morning... I don't know. I had  
to come up here. That cool?

Michael looks into his eyes. Challenges him, searching for  
any sign of a trick.

Nix just stares back. His eyes are red. Glassy.

MICHAEL  
Yeah. Cool.

Nix walks to one of the flowers. Kneels in front of it.

From both sides of the lot, people enter. Some sit alone,  
others mingle in small groups.

Many of them neighbors for years. Speaking for the first  
time.

Someone has brought a watering can. Gloves. Garden tools.  
They set them at Michael's feet.

Offerings to the garden.

And to him. To Michael.

Overhead, the sun breaks past the roof line. The flowers,  
covered with dew, glisten in the sunlight.

Vibrant.

Alive.

FADE OUT: