

RABBIT

Written by

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EXT. GARDEN - DAY

An old Italian man (mid 70s), LORETO, is out in his garden tending to his plants. He is dressed in a ribbed tank top (which compliments his beer belly), shorts and a belt, and mid calf white socks with white sneakers. He has a dishrag tucked into his back pocket, smudged with dirt.

He is singing a tune to himself, but suddenly stops when he notices a few plants nearby have been chewed through and uprooted.

LORETO

Mannaggia!

He goes to get a closer look, and tries to salvage what he can of the wreck.

LORETO

Son of a gun!

We catch a glimpse of Loreto's granddaughter, MIA (age 7), watching him from behind a tree, not too far away. We focus on her as Loreto mutters curses and worries to himself. She is giggling to herself, clutching a STUFFED RABBIT in her arms. (It looks handmade and is wearing a dress with pockets).

Loreto notices Mia, and she comes out from hiding. He wipes sweat off of his brow with his dishrag.

MIA

Nonno, what happened?

LORETO

I think a rabbit is eating my garden. Look at this!

Mia observes the damage.

MIA

She was probably very hungry Nonno. Your garden gave her a nice dinner.

LORETO

Mia, Rabbits are not supposed to eat from my garden. I don't care how hungry they are!

MIA

You have lots of vegetables, you can share some with the rabbit.

LORETO

No, I can't. That rabbit needs to stay away, or Mrs. Vitale is going to win all of the gardening prizes at the fair this year.

Just then, Loreto sees something out of the corner of his eye. The rabbit is nibbling on a head of lettuce.

He waves his arms and hurries over to shoo the rabbit away.

LORETO

Mamma Mia! Get out of here!

MIA

Awww!

The rabbit runs off, and Mia watches it go.

MIA

That rabbit was so cute. Why'd you scare her away?

LORETO

That rabbit is ruining my garden. How am I going to win at the fair if all of my vegetables are gone?

MIA

But Nonno-!

LORETO

Rabbits are no good. They just destroy everything. I'm gonna fix this.

MIA

How?

LORETO

I'm gonna make that rabbit stop eating my garden.

MIA

How?

LORETO

Traps.

MIA

Are you gonna kill the rabbit?

LORETO
I need to, Mia. She's ruining
everything!

MIA
You can't!

LORETO
Yes I can.

MIA
I won't let you.

LORETO
Madonna mia...

Loreto walks away to go inside the house. Mia hugs her stuffed rabbit, and looks at the garden. She sees the rabbit hiding behind a rock, then cautiously making its way back to the lettuce.

Mia smiles, and skips back to the house.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Mia enters the house through the back door.

INT. KITCHEN - DUSK

Mia is sitting at the dinner table finishing up a bowl of pasta. Loreto is sitting at the head of the table drinking wine, with an empty bowl in front of him. His wife, RITA (mid 70s), is tossing a salad at the counter.

RITA
Loreto, Mia, you want insalata?

LORETO
Yeah sure.

MIA
No thanks!

RITA
Mia, mangia. You can't just have
pasta. Have a little bit of salad.

Rita scoops some salad into Loreto's bowl.

MIA
I don't want any.

Loreto takes a bite of his salad. Mia watches him.

LORETO
Why not? It's good.

MIA
I want to make it last longer so we don't have to worry so much about the rabbit eating the garden.

LORETO
You won't have to worry about the rabbit anymore after tonight.

MIA
Exactly! Because I'm saving my salad for tomorrow!

Rita scoops a little salad into Mia's bowl.

MIA
No, Nonna! I don't want any!

RITA
Just a little bit.

MIA
Fine!

Mia quickly eats the salad in her bowl.

MIA
Can I go play outside now?

RITA
Yes but clean up your plate first.

LORETO
And come back inside before the sun goes all the way down! It's gonna get dark soon.

MIA
Okay okay!

Mia puts her dish on the counter by the sink. She hugs her Nonna and thanks her for dinner, picks up her stuffed rabbit, and goes outside.

EXT. GARDEN - DUSK

Mia sits on a rock and watches the garden. She observes the rabbit snares her Nonno has set up to trap the rabbit. She picks up a rock, and throws it at a snare. She misses.

She tries again, but misses. She searches for other things to throw, and finds a large stick under a tree. She snaps it in two, and puts one piece in a snare. It snaps, and she jumps back.

She sets her stuffed rabbit down on a rock, positioning it so it can watch her. She takes the other piece of the stick, and puts it in another snare. It snaps closed, and she flinches. She grins.

She picks up another stick and breaks it. She sets off the rest of the traps, flinching a bit every time. Just as the last snare snaps, we hear someone open the door to come outside.

RITA
(offscreen)
Mia, come inside! It's getting dark
out!

Mia picks up her stuffed rabbit, smiles, hugs it close, and starts to run back inside.

MIA
I'm coming!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

Loreto confidently approaches his garden, but stops in his tracks when he sees all of his snares snapped shut and empty, and even more plants destroyed.

LORETO
Mamma mia! Un'altra volta?! How the
hell - ugh!

He trails off, muttering and cursing to himself. He bends down to tend to his plants and see what he can salvage from the rabbit wreck.

Mia approaches him.

MIA
Nonno, did the rabbit come back?

LORETO

Yes she did, and she outsmarted all
of my traps!

Mia giggles.

MIA

Good! I told you, you can't kill
the rabbit!

LORETO

I have to! Do you see how much is
ruined here?

MIA

It's not that bad. We still have
some good vegetables left.

LORETO

Almost all my lettuce is gone, and
half of the radishes are uprooted!

MIA

We can just stop eating from the
garden and save what's left for the
contest.

LORETO

That won't help. At this point we
don't even have enough to sell
anymore. We barely have what we
need for the contest. I need to
kill this rabbit soon or I'll lose.

MIA

You can't kill her! She doesn't
know she can't eat your garden!

LORETO

I need to put an end to this. I
don't care if she doesn't know, she
picked the wrong garden to feast
on.

MIA

What are you gonna do now if your
traps didn't work?

LORETO

Maybe some poison will work.

MIA

You can't poison her! She'll get
hurt!

Loreto looks down at his granddaughter as she tightly clutches her stuffed rabbit. He hesitates for a moment.

LORETO
 (gets down on his knee, to
 Mia's level)
 I promise you it will be quick and
 painless.

MIA
 I don't believe you.
 (beat)

LORETO
 Go get Nonna for me. I need some
 help saving what we can from this.

Mia skips off to find Rita. Loreto shakes his head and surveys the damage.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Mia is sitting at the counter, doing her homework, while Rita rolls some cookies onto a baking sheet.

Loreto enters, carrying a plastic shopping bag. He takes out RABBIT POISON PELLETS, crumples up the shopping bag and shoves it in a cabinet under the counter into a plastic bag full of other plastic bags.

He exits through the back door.

MIA
 Nonna, can I go outside with Nonno?

RITA
 Yes, but give him some space. He
 seems very mad at that rabbit.

MIA
 Okay.

Mia exits the kitchen.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Loreto is laying out pellets of rabbit poison in each row of his garden. Mia sits on a rock with her stuffed rabbit, watching him.

Loreto finishes, gets up and wipes sweat off of his head with his dishrag.

LORETO

I'm gonna go wash up.

MIA

Okay I want to play outside for a little.

LORETO

Don't go near that rabbit poison!
And come inside soon. It's almost
time for dinner.

MIA

Okay Nonno.

Loreto leaves to go inside. Mia observes the garden. She sees the rabbit in the corner, and quickly gets up to shoo it away.

MIA

(whisper-yelling)

No! Don't go near the poison!

The rabbit runs away, and Mia contemplates what to do with the poison.

She picks up her stuffed rabbit and walks around the garden, stuffing the rabbit's dress pockets with rabbit poison pellets. She inspects the garden and decides she has collected every pellet.

EXT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

She runs back toward the house, and empties her stuffed rabbit's pockets into a garbage can before going inside.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Loreto, Rita and Mia sit at the kitchen counter. Loreto reads the newspaper. Rita eats some fruit. Mia eats a bowl of cereal.

Loreto folds up his newspaper, and walks to the door to go out to the garden. Rita picks up the newspaper and reads it while she eats her fruit. Loreto puts on his shoes and goes outside.

Mia gets up and follows him outside.

EXT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Loreto and Mia walk to the garden together. Mia drags her stuffed rabbit behind her.

EXT. GARDEN - MOMENTS LATER

Loreto examines the garden, and sees that all the poison is gone, and even more plants have been eaten.

LORETO

Fangul! Non lo credo! Mia, do you know what happened to all the rabbit poison?

MIA

Yes.

LORETO

What happened?

MIA

I threw it away.

LORETO

Mamma mia...you threw it away? Why?

MIA

Because I didn't want the rabbit to die.

LORETO

Managgia... that's it. I'm going to kill this rabbit right now. Today.

MIA

How?

LORETO

I'm going to get my pellet gun.

Loreto leaves to go inside. Mia surveys the garden nervously, and sees the rabbit standing in the corner. She looks back to see if her Nonno is gone, and then quietly shoos the rabbit away.

MIA

Get out of here! Nonno's gonna try to kill you if you don't!

The rabbit runs away. Mia leaves to go back to the house.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Loreto sits at the counter with a PELLET GUN and a BOX OF PELLETS. He is polishing off the gun when the phone rings. Mia sits in the chair next to him.

LORETO
Rita, can you get the phone?

The phone rings again.

LORETO
RITA!

The phone rings another time.

LORETO
RITA! Ugh. I'll get it.

Loreto gets up to go get the phone. Mia examines the pellet gun and the pellets. She takes the box of pellets and exits the kitchen.

Loreto comes back, and picks up his gun. He leaves to go outside.

EXT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Loreto walks toward the garden. Mia comes outside and follows him.

EXT. GARDEN - MOMENTS LATER

Loreto approaches the garden, and lies down in a spot where he can survey the whole area and keep watch for the rabbit. Mia lies down next to him.

MIA
Nonno, what are we laying down for?

LORETO
So the rabbit doesn't see us.

MIA
What if she sees us and we scare her?

LORETO
I'll shoot her.

MIA
Please don't kill her!

LORETO

I have to, Mia. She's ruining my garden.

MIA

Nonno, she's just a cute rabbit!

LORETO

I don't care how cute this thing is. It has to go.

Mia harrumphs and cuddles her rabbit closer to her. She watches the garden and her grandpa with his gun.

Suddenly, they notice the rabbit slowly moving into the garden. Mia goes to speak, but Loreto shh's her.

Loreto aims his gun, gets ready to fire, and pulls the trigger. Nothing happens.

He gives the gun a smack and a shake, gets ready to fire again, and pulls the trigger. Nothing happens.

He scrambles to check if there are any bullets inside it, and there aren't any.

LORETO

Mannagia miseria! Mia, did you do this too?

MIA

No, you forgot to put pellets in. So I hid them. It worked pretty good.

LORETO

(throws his gun on the ground, throwing a fit)
Merda! Fanabala... mio dio what am I gonna do with this faccia a culo rabbit?

MIA

Can we keep her?

LORETO

Madre de dio - no we can't keep it!

MIA

Why nooooot? She's so cute Nonno!

LORETO

No. We're not keeping it.

MIA
Why not!?

LORETO
Because I said so.

MIA
But Nonno!-

LORETO
No buts. We're not keeping it. I'm
getting rid of it.

Mia thinks for a moment.

MIA
What if we catch her, and let her
go somewhere else?

Mia hugs her stuffed rabbit. Loreto thinks about this for a moment.

MIA
Yay, yay, yay! Thank you, Nonno!

LORETO
Hey. I didn't say yes.

MIA
Well why not?

Loreto thinks for another moment. He does not respond quickly enough for Mia's eagerness.

MIA
What if we bring her to another
garden?

Loreto raises his eyebrows. He is intrigued.

LORETO
Hmmm...

MIA
What if we put her in Mrs. Vitale's
garden?

LORETO
I like the sound of that...

MIA
So yes? We don't have to kill her,
right?

Loreto thinks for another moment. He doesn't want to give in too quickly.

LORETO
Okay. Okay let's do it.

Loreto takes Mia's hand and they walk back to the house.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Loreto and Mia sit at the kitchen counter fiddling with a RABBIT TRAP that won't kill the rabbit.

They finally assemble it, and Mia goes to the door to go outside.

MIA
Come on Nonno, let's go put the trap out now!

LORETO
Why don't we eat lunch first?

MIA
No, no, no. What if we catch the rabbit while we're eating lunch? We gotta do it now.

LORETO
Okay, okay. I'm coming.

Mia and Loreto go outside.

EXT. GARDEN - MOMENTS LATER

Loreto sets down the trap. Mia hugs her stuffed rabbit. They look at the trap for a moment, and leave to go back inside.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Mia quickly eats her breakfast.

RITA
Why are you eating so fast?

MIA
I want to go see if we caught the
rabbit!!

LORETO
Slow down, wait for me. I'm coming
with you.

Mia tries to slow down, but is too excited to go check on the
rabbit. She finishes her breakfast and drags her Nonno to the
door.

EXT. GARDEN - MOMENTS LATER

Mia runs up to the trap. The rabbit is there. She jumps up
and down, and Loreto smiles.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MRS. VITALE'S GARDEN - DUSK

Mia and Loreto sneak into Mrs. Vitale's garden quietly and
cautiously. Loreto is holding the rabbit in the cage trap.

MIA
(loudly whispering)
Where should we let it go?

LORETO
(whispering)
Right in the middle over here. Her
radishes look a lot better than
mine do right now.

MIA
(a little too loud)
Yeah! This rabbit is gonna have a
feast tonight!

LORETO
Shh! We don't want to wake up Mrs.
Vitale!

MIA
(loudly whispering)
I'm sorry!

Loreto kneels on the ground and sets the cage down.

LORETO
You ready?

Mia hugs her stuffed rabbit.

MIA

Yeah!

Loreto unlatches the cage.

LORETO

Have at it, rabbit!

MIA

Yeah, have at it!

They watch the rabbit cautiously make its way out of the cage and into the rows of radishes.

LORETO

Come on, let's go before she catches on to us!

MIA

Okay. Goodbye rabbit! Have a nice meal!

LORETO

Enjoy your feast!

Loreto takes Mia's hands, and they sneak away from the garden into the darkness.

FADE TO BLACK.