

Garden of Enough

A Retirement Parable of Trust, Faith, and

Abundance

Ecclesiastes 3:1-2

*There is a time for everything, and a season for every
activity under the heavens:*

*a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and
a time to uproot*

SharonAnn Hamilton

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20 Business Loop Park – 1151

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ISBN:

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This book is intended for educational and informational purposes only. It reflects the author's experience, research, and opinions surrounding journaling for balance and well-being. It is not a substitute for professional advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the guidance of a qualified professional regarding any mental, emotional, or physical health concerns.

First Edition 2025

Printed in the United States of America

Author's Note

I wrote *The Garden of Enough* as both a story and an invitation. Retirement, and any new season of life, can feel like a sudden quiet after years of busyness. For many of us, that quiet can be unsettling. But I believe God gives us gardens of friendships, purpose, and faith to remind us that life is never finished growing. Melody Beattie once wrote, “*Gratitude turns what we have into enough.*” That truth underlines my drive to write this book. We don’t need more to be whole, we need eyes to see what is already before us, hands to tend it, and hearts to give thanks.

This parable is not meant to give answers as much as to plant seeds. The reflection questions and Scriptures are here to help you pause, listen, and notice where God is already at work in your life. As you turn these pages, you begin to see that *enough is not a number, it is a statement of trust.*

Thank you for walking through the garden with Tom, Mary, Ruth, Elias, and even Archie. May their story become part of yours.

With peace and gratitude,

SharonAnn Hamilton

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Introduction

Dear Reader,

Thank you for picking up *The Garden of Enough*. This book is more than a story—it is an invitation.

As you turn these pages, you'll meet Tom, a man stepping into retirement with more questions than answers. He wonders if he has done enough, if he is too late, if what he planted in life will ever bear fruit. His garden becomes the ground where he wrestles with doubt, comparison, and scarcity—but also where he discovers beauty, community, and a Gardener who tends more than soil.

Perhaps you carry some of those same questions. Many of us do, especially in seasons of transition, when life feels quieter than before. We wonder if there is still time, still purpose, still enough.

This book offers space for you to bring those questions.

How to Use This Book

The Garden of Enough is part story, part journal. Each chapter begins with Tom's journey, then invites you to reflect through:

- **Reflection Seeds** – short thoughts to help you pause and notice what the story stirs in you.
- **Journal Prompts** – guiding questions to write your own reflections, prayers, or memories.
- **Simple Activities & Challenges** – practical steps you can try, whether in your home, your relationships, or your inner life.

You don't need to rush. You may read one chapter in an evening and spend the next few days with the journal pages. You might gather a group to share reflections together, or you might keep it private—just you and the Gardener.

Why This Matters

We live in a world that shouts: *more, faster, better*. It tells us we are behind, that we need to hurry, that what we have is never enough. This book whispers a different truth: there is still beauty to notice, still seeds worth planting, still tables waiting for laughter and bread.

Even scraps can become compost. Late plantings can still bear fruit. Even the smallest song, once shared, can change the air around us.

An Invitation

So, come. Step into the garden with Tom. Bring your questions, your hopes, and even your fears. Let the parable draw you in and let the journal guide you into deeper faith.

I hope you'll discover what Tom did: that “enough” isn't some distant number or perfect season. It's already blooming—here, now, waiting to be noticed, nurtured, and shared.

The gate is open. The Gardener is here. And there is room for you.

Chapter 1

The Gate to the Garden

“Every ending is a gate, and every gate opens to a new beginning”

The evening of Tom’s retirement came quietly, though Mary had tried to make it festive. She set the table with her best dishes, polished until they gleamed under the warm kitchen light. In the center, she arranged a mason jar of lavender and daisies she had clipped from her garden. Their fragrance floated in the air, sharp and calming at once, as if trying to carry him gently into this new chapter. A candle flickered in the middle of the table, its flame bowing and rising, throwing long shadows across the walls—shadows that seemed to whisper of endings and beginnings.

Tom eased himself into his chair with a long sigh. Forty years of clocking in, clocking out. Forty years of deadlines, meetings, and the endless hum of responsibility. Tonight, there were no more alarms to set, no more reports to file, no more meetings waiting on his attention. He should have felt free, like a bird cut loose

from its cage. Instead, the silence of it all pressed down on him, heavier than any stack of paperwork he had carried in the past.

The chair creaked beneath his weight, the sound startling in the stillness. He glanced at Mary's hands—steady, practiced, pouring cider with the same grace she had poured love into their years together. He wondered if she, too, felt the strangeness of this night.

Across from him sat Elias, his silver-haired neighbor, who had been telling stories since before Tom moved in next door. His hands bore faint streaks of suntan, as though he could never fully wash the garden off. The lines on his face ran deep, carved by sun and seasons, yet his eyes sparkled with mischief and hope. Elias grinned broadly, poured cider into Tom's glass, and said, "Here's to freedom, Tom. May your mornings be your own and your days filled with sunshine."

Beside Elias was Ruth, soft-spoken and steady, her lap covered with a clean dish towel. She never arrived empty-handed. Tonight, she carried a basket of beans and a tureen of her famous

chicken stew. She ladled it out generously, steam rising and filling the room with the scent of rosemary, thyme, and comfort.

Mary, ever the thoughtful hostess, had baked bread that crackled as she cut it. She brushed a crumb off her apron and raised her own glass. “To Tom—forty years of faithful work, and now, a new season ahead.”

They clinked their glasses together. Laughter bubbled around the table, spilling into the small kitchen. Yet to Tom, it all sounded far away, muffled, as though he were listening through a closed door.

He lifted his spoon to taste Ruth’s stew. It was good—Ruth always cooked well—but tonight it seemed flat, missing the warmth he remembered. The bread, golden on the outside, felt heavy on his tongue. Even the cider, usually crisp and refreshing, carried a sour bite. He forced himself to swallow, wondering if the food had truly lost its flavor, or if it was his own spirit that had grown dull.

“You hardly touched your plate,” Mary whispered, concern creasing her brow.

“It doesn’t have much flavor tonight,” Tom murmured.

Elias chuckled, leaning back in his chair. “Careful, Tom. I once told my wife her soup was bland. She told me it wasn’t the soup—it was my attitude. Nearly had me cooking outdoors for a week.” His eyes twinkled, and Ruth laughed softly, shaking her head at him.

The others joined in, their laughter light and easy, but Tom only half-heard them. The food, the toasts, even the joy of friends—all of it seemed muted, as if someone had turned the volume of life down low. His gaze wandered toward the darkened window. Beyond it, Thorn’s massive garden loomed, swollen with vegetables that jutted out like trophies in the dusk. The vines looked proud, almost defiant, sprawling as though they meant to swallow every neighboring plot. Tom’s chest tightened. *Is this what retirement tastes like? Hollow, flavorless, and overshadowed by someone else’s abundance?*

The question clung to him long after the plates were cleared and the laughter faded into the night.

Later, when sleep finally claimed him, it carried him into a dream.

He found himself in a radiant garden unlike any he had known.

Blossoms glistened with dew, fruit hung low and heavy, and light shimmered on every leaf. The air itself seemed alive with song, a music too pure to be written down. Tom felt the stirring of melody deep within him, the way he had once sung in the church choir as a boy. Hope rose with the rhythm, and he opened his mouth—but no sound came. His chest ached with silence.

He tried again, desperate, but the harder he strained, the emptier the air became. The song was locked inside him. Around him the garden still glowed, lush and alive, but he could not step into its music.

Tom woke with a start, the image lingering like morning mist. His chest felt hollow, his throat tight. He sat up, heart heavy, and stared at the bare patch of soil behind his house. Empty, waiting. Silent.

Reflection Section

Reflection Seeds

1. What does your own “retirement table” feel like right now—full of flavor, or a little bland?
2. Where in your life are you sensing silence instead of song?
3. When you look “across the fence” at others, does comparison steal the flavor of your own life?
4. What new “gate” might God be inviting you to step through, even if it feels uncertain?

Companion Verse

“The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.” —Isaiah 58:11

Chapter 2

The Seeds We Forget

*“A single seed holds more than itself—it carries a whole harvest
inside.”*

The next morning, Tom lingered at the garden gate before entering, his hand resting on the weathered wood as though it might swing open to more than soil—perhaps even to the answers his restless heart longed for. The hinges creaked faintly when he leaned against it, a sound that reminded him how long the gate had stood, faithful and enduring through seasons of bloom and drought.

Inside, Mary was already on her knees in the soil. Her wide-brimmed hat tipped forward, shielding her from the early sun as she pulled at the few stray weeds that had crept in overnight. The brim trembled with each gentle tug, and the earth gave up its invaders willingly under her practiced hands. She hummed softly while she worked—a tune that drifted between hymn and lullaby,

the kind of sound that seemed stitched into the rhythm of the garden itself. Tom found himself listening, not to the words, but to the steadiness in her tone. She worked as though time were her companion, not her enemy.

Tom lowered himself to the bench with a sigh, rubbing his knee, stiff from years spent behind a desk. The ache was sharper now that he no longer had an office routine to distract him from it. His gaze wandered across Mary's wildflowers, their petals catching the morning light in bright defiance of yesterday's shadows. *Why does her garden seem alive while mine sits barren?* he wondered, frustration gnawing at him. *What secret does she know that I've missed all these years?*

A familiar creak came from the gate behind him. Elias shuffled in, carrying a small burlap sack slung casually over one shoulder. His boots were dusted with soil, each step leaving a faint trace of the fields he loved. His rolled sleeves revealed arms strong and corded from decades of work yet softened by the kindness that lingered in his voice. He tipped his hat toward Mary and dropped

onto the bench beside Tom with a groan that turned into a chuckle.

“Mercy, these knees,” Elias muttered, stretching his legs out before him. “If the Lord wanted me kneeling in the dirt much longer, He’d have issued me new joints by now.”

Tom smiled faintly. Elias had a way of breaking the silence open, scattering it like sparrows startled from a tree.

The old man loosened the drawstring on his sack and poured a handful of seeds into his palm. Tiny specks tumbled across his weathered skin, fragile as freckles and yet carrying the weight of entire harvests. He lifted his hand slightly toward the light. “Look at these—small as dust, but inside each one is dinner for a family.” His voice was part reverence, part wonder. Then he let them trickle back into the sack. “The miracle isn’t that they grow—it’s that we forget to plant them.”

Mary leaned back on her heels, brushing soil from her gloves. “You always did have a way with seeds, Elias.”

Elias wagged a finger, his grin stretching wide. “Only after I learned the hard way. My first year farming, I ate through winter with nothing but potatoes because I planted late and harvested early. Starved the pantry and the stomach both.” His laughter rumbled like gravel, softened by time. “That mistake still rattles in my bones.”

Tom bent down and picked up one of the small seeds Elias had dropped, rolling it between his thumb and finger. It weighed almost nothing, yet his chest grew heavy as he stared at it. *So small. So full of promise. And yet—* his thoughts stumbled. *Seeds don't grow instantly. What if there isn't enough time? What if the money runs out before the harvest comes? What if I've already waited too long to begin?*

He swallowed his unease and let the words die in his throat. Instead, he sighed. “Feels like I’m too late.”

Mary looked up at him, her face soft but firm with the kind of conviction born of seasons in the soil. She shook her head gently. “No one’s too late to plant something.” She pointed toward her wildflowers, their stems bending lightly toward the morning sun.

“These started from a packet of seeds I almost threw away. And look at them now.”

Elias pushed himself to his feet with a grunt and a chuckle. “Son, you’re looking at dirt and calling it empty. I’m looking at dirt and calling it dinner. The difference is what you believe is buried there.” He pressed a few seeds into Tom’s palm and folded his hand closed around them with surprising strength. “Start small. Sing while you sow, if you dare.”

Tom stared at his closed fist. He felt the weightless seeds pressing into his skin like a quiet dare. His throat tightened with that old unspoken hymn he hadn’t sung in years. The words *I’m scared* swelled at the back of his throat but stayed buried, like the seeds themselves.

Instead, he watched Elias stride toward the edge of his own plot, whistling a tune that wobbled cheerfully between hymn and joke, as if to prove that planting wasn’t solemn business at all but joy.

Mary reached out and touched Tom's shoulder. Her voice was soft, almost a prayer. "Remember Jeremiah," she said. "The plans are already made. We just need to plant into them."

Tom closed his hand tighter around the seeds. He still didn't know how to sing, but for the first time, he wondered if perhaps he could begin—by planting.

Reflection Section

Reflection Seeds

1. What “small seed” could you plant today—an action, habit, or conversation—that might grow into something bigger tomorrow?
2. Have you ever chased after Thorn-like “big cucumbers”—impressive but hollow—while overlooking the small, faithful gifts in your life?
3. How does remembering your *enough* (financial, emotional, or spiritual) change the way you view what you already hold?

Companion Verse

“And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.” —Philippians 4:19

Chapter 3

The Villain in the Weeds

“Weeds grow fastest where no one is paying attention.”

Tom rose early, restless from another dream of the radiant, unreachable garden. The vision clung to him like dew, shimmering just beyond his reach. He could still feel the ache in his chest from the silence that had stolen his song.

Determined to break the heaviness, he stepped outside with a spade in hand. The morning air was cool and damp, carrying the faint sweetness of Mary’s wildflowers and the darker scent of turned earth. He walked toward his rows, the soil lying quiet, bare except for the faint marks where he and Elias had pressed seeds the day before.

He bent low to check one row, brushing the dirt with his fingertips. His voice came out in a whisper, barely audible, as if speaking too loudly might shatter his fragile hope. “Grow.” It sounded less like a command and more like a prayer.

Behind him came a sharp laugh—dry and brittle, like thorns snapping underfoot.

“Seeds don’t grow overnight, old man.”

Tom spun around, startled. Leaning against the garden fence was a tall, wiry figure dressed in dark clothes. A wide-brimmed hat shadowed most of his face, but the glint of his eyes was unmistakable—sharp, mocking, hungry. His arms were folded across his chest, and in one hand dangled a long stem of weed, already knotted with burrs that clung to everything they touched.

“Who are you?” Tom asked, his voice unsteady.

The man smirked, rolling the weed stem between his fingers like a weapon. “Name’s Thorn. I keep watch over the corners folk forget. Funny thing about gardens—if you don’t fill them with something useful, I will.” He flicked the stem, scattering burrs into the soil with a careless snap.

Tom felt his stomach twist. Something about this stranger felt less like a man and more like a shadow given flesh.

Just then, Mary appeared from her patch, a watering can balanced in her hands. Her steps slowed when she saw the figure at the fence. Her brow furrowed. “You’ve no business here,” she said firmly.

Thorn gave a mocking bow, his grin curling. “Oh, but I do. I’ve got the oldest business there is—doubt, debt, delay. I work for free, and I pay in weeds.” With a flick of his wrist, he tossed a handful of seeds into Tom’s empty rows. They were black and shriveled, lifeless yet threatening, as though even decay had power.

Tom stepped back, his chest tightening. His heart pounded so loudly it seemed to echo in his ears. The words Thorn spoke—*doubt, debt, delay*—pierced deeper than any insult. They were his own secret fears, the ones he had buried under silence. *What if he’s right? What if all I’ve planted is too little, too late?*

Mary’s eyes flashed. She lifted her watering can and poured, washing the black seeds deep into the mud before they could settle. Her voice was steady, though her hands trembled slightly.

“Enough of you. We planted good seed yesterday, and good seed will rise.”

Thorn laughed, low and sharp, shaking his head. “We’ll see. I’ve choked stronger men than him.” His eyes fixed on Tom, piercing and cruel, like briars pressing into tender skin. “All it takes is neglect.”

And then, just as suddenly as he appeared, he slipped back through the fence. The morning mist swallowed him whole, leaving only the faint rustle of weeds behind.

Tom sank onto the bench, shaken. His hands trembled against his knees. “He’s not wrong,” he whispered, his voice hoarse. “What if... what if it’s not enough? What if the weeds outgrow what little I have?”

Mary set the watering can aside and knelt in front of him. Her touch was gentle as she placed a hand on his chest. “Listen to me,” she said softly. “Thorn isn’t the gardener. You are. And you’re not alone.” Her palm pressed lightly over his heart. “The

seeds in here,” she tapped gently, “are stronger than anything he throws.”

Tom closed his eyes, trying to believe her. But the shadow of Thorn’s words still lingered, curling like weeds around his thoughts.

Just then, Elias ambled through the gate, his hoe slung casually over one shoulder. He paused when he saw Tom’s pale face and the damp rows. “Well now, did I miss the party?” His eyes narrowed slightly, then he nodded knowingly. “Hmm. Thorn came by, did he?”

Tom blinked in surprise. “You know him?”

Elias chuckled as he settled onto the bench beside him. “Son, everyone who’s ever planted anything knows Thorn. He visits every season, whispering that nothing will grow, that it’s all wasted effort.” He leaned forward, resting his hands on his hoe. “But here’s the truth—he’s only got one trick: he thrives on neglect. Keep tending, keep watering, and he starves.”

Tom let out a long, shaky breath. The fear hadn't vanished, but the sight of Elias and Mary, standing steady in the garden, anchored him like roots pressing deeper into soil.

Elias pointed to the rows with a crooked grin. "Now, you want to scare Thorn off? Sing while you work. He hates joy."

Tom shook his head, his voice catching in his throat. He couldn't imagine singing, not yet. But somewhere inside, a small part of him wondered—just wondered—if Elias might be right.

Reflection Section

Reflection Seeds

1. What “weeds” in your life—habits, worries, or spending—are growing because you’ve ignored them?
2. How does comparison, like Thorn’s mocking, choke your peace and blind you to your own progress?
3. What one weed could you pull this week to clear space for something better to grow?

Companion Verse

“See to it that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and through it many become defiled.” —Hebrews 12:15

Chapter 4

Soil of the Soul

“The richest soil is made from yesterday’s compost.”

The morning sun lit the garden in golden slants, warming the soil and coaxing steam from the earth. Mary had already tied back her wildflowers with twine, their colors spilling like a patchwork quilt. Tom crouched near his rows, poking at the dirt as if checking a sleeping child. No sprouts yet—only brown, waiting ground.

Elias lumbered through the gate carrying a dented tin pail that smelled faintly... unpleasant.

Tom wrinkled his nose. “What on earth is that?”

“Compost,” Elias said proudly, setting it down with a thud.

“Black gold.” He lifted the lid and stirred with his trowel. A sour tang drifted out.

Mary waved a hand in front of her face. “Smells more like old socks.”

Elias grinned, his beard twitching. “Aye, but that’s the thing about soil—it thrives on yesterday’s mess.” He scooped up a handful of dark, crumbly earth and let it fall through his fingers. “Rotten peelings, coffee grounds, eggshells... all the scraps we’d rather forget. Give ’em time, they turn into food for tomorrow’s harvest.”

Tom frowned, uneasy. “So, you’re saying all the mistakes... all the waste... it somehow helps?”

Elias chuckled. “Not somehow—always. Though it took me a long time to trust it.” He sat on the bench, leaning back with a sigh. “You want to hear a sorry tale?”

Mary smirked. “When don’t we?”

Elias wagged a finger. “Watch your tongue, girl. I was twenty-five and headstrong. Thought I could grow the finest tomatoes in the county. Planted row after row, strutted

around telling everyone to wait for my prize crop.” He shook his head. “But I was too proud to listen when old Mrs. Parker said, ‘Work the soil first, boy.’ I just planted in hard ground, straight as it was.”

Tom raised an eyebrow. “What happened?”

Elias spread his arms wide. “Happened? The plants sprouted tall and green, but come July, not a tomato in sight. Just vines—lush, useless vines. The whole town laughed at me. I ate boiled potatoes and crow that year.”

Mary laughed aloud. “Oh, Elias. Even your failures are legendary.”

Elias chuckled, slapping his knee. “And that, Tom, was the day I learned pride doesn’t make soil fertile. Humility and compost do. You’ve got to take the scraps, the regrets, even the stinky bits of life, and work ’em back into the ground. That’s where the sweetness comes from.”

Tom looked down at the earth between his knees. Memories surfaced—late nights at the office, missed family dinners, words he wished he could take back. All the waste he wished he could throw away. Could it really feed something new?

Mary rested her hand on his shoulder. “Maybe this season isn’t about running out, Tom. Maybe it’s about re-using what you already have.”

Elias nodded. “Exactly. Don’t curse the scraps. Compost them.” He leaned closer, lowering his voice conspiratorially. “And for heaven’s sake, don’t skip the soil work. You’ll end up with vines and no tomatoes. Ask me how I know.”

They all laughed. Even Tom let out a small chuckle, the sound loosening something inside him. For the first time, the garden didn’t feel empty—it felt waiting.

Reflection Section

Reflection Seed

1. Where have you been “over-fertilizing” your life—adding more fear, more striving, more noise—when a gentler feeding would do?
2. What regrets or leftovers could you **compost**—turning yesterday’s scraps into tomorrow’s nourishment?
3. Where do the “numbers already add up” for you (financially, relationally, spiritually), and what daily practice of gratitude might help you feel it?

Companion Verse

“Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit.”

John 15:2

Chapter 5

Water for the Weary

“Water is more than necessity—it is blessing poured into thirsty ground.”

The morning dawned bright but dry. A thin film of dust clung to Tom’s rows, and the leaves of Mary’s wildflowers drooped as if weary from holding themselves upright. The sky stretched cloudless and hard, a dome of blue that gave no promise of rain. Even the birds seemed subdued, their calls sharp and fleeting as they darted toward distant hedges. Tom frowned, feeling the weight of thirst not just in the soil, but in his own chest. His tongue stuck slightly to the roof of his mouth as though echoing the earth’s silence.

Elias appeared with two tin pails sloshing heavy at his sides. Drops spilled onto the grass, darkening it in spots like sudden jewels. The water hissed faintly as it met the hot metal rims. “Look here,” he puffed, setting one pail down with a thud. “Black gold feeds the soil, but water—ah, water keeps it alive.”

He dipped a ladle and poured it slowly at the base of Tom's bean row. The soil darkened, drank deep, and softened almost instantly, as though sighing with relief. "See that? Water makes room for roots to stretch. No water, no growth."

Tom knelt closer. The soil no longer looked brittle—it looked welcoming, almost tender. He ran his fingers through the damp patch and felt the coolness sink into his skin. The sensation startled him, like touching life itself. "Feels like me some days," he admitted quietly. "Cracked. Hard. Dry."

Elias gave him a long look, his tone gentler now. "You've been living off duty and deadlines for decades. No wonder your soul feels parched. Water isn't just for beans, Tom. It's for men, too."

Mary appeared then, balancing her copper watering can with practiced ease. She tipped it toward her flowers, her face serene as the water streamed out in a shining arc. Droplets clung to the petals before rolling down, magnifying each color—red turned ruby, yellow burned gold, violet deepened into velvet. She closed her eyes a moment, listening. "Do you hear it?"

Tom tilted his head. The sound was faint, almost hidden: the hush and trickle of water soaking into dry places. It reminded him of prayers whispered at night, of tears he never admitted to shedding.

Mary's voice carried over the rows. "Every drop is blessing. You can't see the roots rejoicing, but they are."

Tom swallowed hard. His throat tightened, as though it too had been waiting for a drink.

Elias chuckled, breaking the heaviness. "Reminds me of my first well. Dug it too shallow, thought I'd struck treasure. Come midsummer, it ran dry. Had to haul water from a neighbor for weeks while he laughed at my foolishness. Nearly broke my back—but I learned. A shallow well won't carry you through a drought. Dig deep, Tom. Deep into God's promises. That water never runs dry."

Tom looked down at the soil again. "What if the rain never comes?"

Elias shrugged, shoulders broad with both labor and wisdom. “Then you learn to store water when it’s plentiful. Rain barrels, cisterns, buckets under every roof edge. Wise gardeners prepare when skies are generous.”

Mary added, her tone practical but tender, “That’s why we saved carefully all those years. Not to hoard, but to carry us through lean times. Remember what our advisor said—‘five percent and Social Security, and you’ll have enough until you’re a hundred.’ It’s our barrel. We can drink without fear.”

Tom nodded slowly. The parallel sank in as steadily as the water itself. Saving and trust weren’t cages—they were lifelines, reservoirs that freed him from constant worry.

Ruth arrived then, carrying a clay jug patched with wire and tar. She set it down carefully, the sides beaded with condensation. “Cracked last year,” she said, patting it with affection. “Thought it was ruined. But with care, it holds enough again. That’s what water teaches us—broken things can still carry blessing.”

She tipped it gently, and clear water poured into the rows. The soil sighed as it drank.

The four of them stood together in reverent silence, listening to the trickle, watching the earth come alive. Though the sky above remained cloudless, Tom felt something cool and living seep into him, as if water had found the cracks of his own soul. For the first time in weeks, he exhaled without heaviness.

That night, Tom dreamed again.

He was walking through the radiant garden. At first, it was parched and cracked like his own rows, dust rising in choking puffs around his feet. Each step left a hollow mark that seemed to whisper failure. Then a stream appeared, winding through the paths, clear and bright. Wherever the water touched, the soil darkened, sprouts unfurled, blossoms opened as if awakened from sleep.

Tom bent to drink, and the water was cool, alive, and sweet. It washed his mouth, his chest, his spirit. As it flowed into him, he heard a sound—not thunder, but singing, like a river of voices

coursing through the garden. It rose and fell in waves, carrying both joy and sorrow, yet whole.

For the first time, Tom opened his mouth and hummed along. The note was low and unsure, but it joined the current. The song didn't need perfection—only presence.

He woke with dampness on his cheeks and a strange refreshment in his chest, as though some thirst had been quenched overnight.

Reflection Seeds

Reflection Seeds

1. What are you holding onto that may look alive but is stealing your energy or joy?
2. How can pruning—releasing possessions, obligations, or old habits—become an act of mercy for your future self?
3. What “watch” or symbol of your past role could you lay down to lighten your next season?

Companion Verse

“Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” —John 4:14

Chapter 6

The Gift of Light

“Without water, nothing roots. Without light, nothing sweetens.”

The evening shadows stretched long across the garden, stretching like dark fingers across the rows. The last of the sun bled gold across the horizon, painting the soil in warm and fading light. Tom sat on the old wooden bench, a notebook open in his lap. He had drawn careful rows, numbers, and dates across the page, scribbled arrows and harvest estimates. But the longer he studied them, the tighter his chest grew. The columns didn't add up to peace—they added up to panic.

“What if it's not enough?” he muttered, tapping the page with his pencil. His voice was thin in the quiet. “Even if the seeds sprout... what if the harvest comes too late?”

A low whistle drifted from the hedgerow, sliding into the silence like smoke. Thorn slipped into view, leaning lazily against a fence post, his grin sharp as the crescent moon rising behind him. His

shadow stretched unnaturally long, wrapping across the soil as if to claim it.

“Late?” Thorn’s chuckle carried the brittle snap of dry twigs. “It’s already too late, gardener. You wasted your best years pushing papers indoors. You think you’ve got decades left to play in the dirt?” He shook his head slowly, mockingly. “Bah. You’ll run out of time before you ever taste a single tomato.”

Tom’s chest tightened, the words sinking deep because they echoed the very fears that haunted his sleepless nights. His hand trembled as he slammed the notebook shut, the clap of paper too loud in the hush of evening. “I’m not done yet,” he said. But his voice wavered, and even to his own ears, it lacked conviction.

From the far side of the garden, Mary’s voice floated across the rows. She was on her knees, planting bright marigolds in careful lines between the vegetables. Her hat slipped low over her brow as her hands pressed flowers into soil. “You know, Tom,” she called gently, “flowers keep pests away. A little beauty mixed in with the beans goes a long way.”

Thorn sneered, his teeth flashing in the dim. “Beauty won’t buy you time. Tick, tick, tick—that’s the only song left for you.” He tapped his wrist with a bony finger as though wearing a watch, each tap echoing like a countdown.

Tom flinched.

The garden gate swung open then, its hinges creaking with Elias’s familiar weight. He strode through, wiping his hands on a rag that smelled faintly of oil and soil. “Talking to shadows again, Tom?” he said, his voice warm but knowing.

As Elias approached, Thorn’s outline flickered, dimming at the edges. Tom swallowed hard. “He said...” His throat caught. “He said I’ve run out of time. That it’s too late to enjoy anything.”

Elias lowered himself onto the bench beside him, the wood groaning under his weight. He chuckled softly, not unkindly. “Son, time is like the sun. You can curse the hours it’s already burned—or you can sit in the warmth of what’s still shining.”

Mary rose, dusting her knees with her gloves, her marigolds already glowing in the fading light. “Besides, you’ve got more

time than you think, Tom. Remember when the doctor told me I'd never walk without pain again? That was ten years ago. Look at me now—still planting marigolds.” She lifted one gently in her palm, its orange petals burning like a flame.

Elias nodded, his beard twitching with approval. “Thorn wants you counting hours. I want you to count moments.” He pointed across the rows to where Mary had paused, laughing at a bird tugging worms from the soil. The bird flapped wildly, triumphant, a wriggling worm dangling from its beak. Mary clapped her hands, delighted as a child. Elias leaned closer, his voice dropping low. “See that? That’s a harvest already. Doesn’t take ten years to enjoy—it’s here now.”

Tom followed their gaze. For a moment, the garden seemed to breathe around him—alive, unhurried, whole. The scent of marigolds mingled with the sharp greenness of tomato vines, and somewhere, a cricket began its evening song.

Thorn scowled, his form flickering like a shadow fighting against the last light. “Enjoy your scraps,” he spat. “Time always wins.”

Then, with a final hiss, he slipped back into the dusk.

Tom leaned back against the bench, his hands loosening on the notebook. The tightness in his chest eased, if only a little. He exhaled deeply. “I don’t know if I can ignore him.”

Elias placed a steady hand on his shoulder. “Don’t ignore him. Answer him. Every morning, answer with a song, a prayer, a planting. Thorn can’t steal what you fill.”

Mary crossed the rows, slipping her hand into Tom’s. Her eyes were steady, kind. “Time isn’t gone, love. It’s just waiting to be lived.”

Tom closed his eyes and let her words sink in. For the first time, he wondered if maybe he hadn’t lost time at all. Maybe it had been waiting for him, here, in the garden.

Reflection Section

Seeds for Thought

1. Where in your life are you “wilting,” and what steady water source could help you root again?
2. Are you growing in the light, or are you surviving in the shade—green but unsweet?
3. How does wise preparation (budgeting, saving, sharing) act like stored water that sustains you in dry seasons?

Companion Verse

“For the LORD God is a sun and shield; he bestows favor and honor.” —Psalm 84:11

Chapter 7

Season of Growth

“Winter is not death—it is rest preparing for spring.”

The air carried a hint of crispness, though summer’s warmth still lingered, wrapping the garden in a restless hush. Tom sat on the bench with his sharpening stone, pulling the blade of his shears back and forth in short strokes. The rhythm calmed his hands, but not his thoughts. A quiet unease pressed in on him—the kind of tension that had no clear name, only the weight of *not enough*. From the gate came Mary’s bright voice. “Tom, we’ve company.” He looked up to see a tall woman striding toward them, her wide straw hat shading a strong, weathered face. Silver hair spilled down in a long braid over her shoulder, and her laughter arrived before her words, tumbling across the rows like a warm breeze. Her arms were filled—herbs tied with twine in one hand, a basket of apples balanced on her hip.

“Mary Hamilton!” she called, her voice lively with mischief. “Still planting wildflowers where vegetables ought to be?”

Mary hurried forward with a delighted cry, embracing her.

“Better wildflowers than weeds. Ruth, it’s been too long.”

Turning, Mary motioned toward Tom. “We have a new gardener.”

Ruth gave him a frank once-over, her eyes sharp but kind. Then she plucked an apple from her basket and pressed it into his hand.

“You look like a man who needs to taste what’s ripe instead of worrying about what isn’t.”

Tom blinked, startled by her boldness. The apple glowed red and gold in the light, its skin smooth and cool against his palm. “You grew these?”

“Of course,” Ruth said, setting her basket on the bench. “And don’t let Elias fool you—my pies won the county fair three years running. He only ever got second place.”

From across the rows, Elias raised his hoe in mock protest, his voice booming. “Lies and slander!”

Ruth shot him a wink. “Truth hurts, old man.”

Tom managed a small laugh, biting into the apple. The flesh cracked crisp beneath his teeth, juice running warm down his chin. The sweetness startled him. He chuckled despite himself, wiping his mouth with his sleeve.

Ruth’s eyes softened. “See? That’s what’s waiting for you if you stop worrying about tomorrow long enough to taste today.”

She reached into her bundle and pulled out a sprig of rosemary, holding it under his nose. The sharp, piney scent filled his senses, cutting through the fog in his thoughts. “This little herb thrives best in heat and hardship. Autumn brings the apples to shine. Winter gives us rest—soup simmering, fire crackling, the hush of snow. And spring?” She smiled, her face creasing with memory. “Spring forgives everything. Whatever failed, whatever withered—it all gets another chance.”

Tom studied the herb, then glanced down at the half-eaten apple in his hand. “But what if autumn means I’ve already missed spring?” His words came out quieter than he intended.

Ruth tilted her head, then sank onto the bench beside him, her basket of apples between them. Her voice softened, carrying the weight of her own story. “When my James passed, I thought the seasons had closed for me. I almost let the orchard die, convinced I’d missed my planting years. But grief is a season too—and when it passed, I found the trees still waiting. That year the apples were smaller, yes, but they were sweeter than I’d ever tasted. Autumn wasn’t the end, Tom—it was a feast I never would have known in spring.”

Mary slipped her arm through Tom’s, her eyes glistening. “That’s why Ruth’s here. She knows how to celebrate.”

Elias leaned on the fence, grinning wide. “And how to outtalk everyone, too.”

Ruth swatted at him with her straw hat, laughter spilling from her chest. “Don’t be jealous, Elias. Your beans are fine, but no one remembers beans ten years later. They remember pie.”

Mary laughed, and even Elias joined in, shaking his head with mock defeat.

Then Ruth turned back to Tom, her gaze steady and tender. “The secret, cautious gardener, is this—keep planting joy, no matter the season. Some crops are for eating, some for fragrance, some just to make you smile. None of them are wasted.”

Tom looked down at the apple again, its bite mark gleaming in the golden light. For the first time, the word *autumn* didn’t sound like decline. It sounded like richness—like a table already set, waiting to be enjoyed.

Reflection Section

Seeds for Thought

1. What storms have flattened parts of your life, and what new strength might grow from what remains?
2. How have you seen “winter seasons” in your past prepare the soil for fresh beginnings?
3. Where in your life do you already have a “lean season plan” (financial, emotional, or spiritual), and how does it help you rest when storms come?

Companion Verse

“Let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.” —Galatians 6:9

Chapter 8

The harvest of enough

“Enough is not measured in baskets but in contentment.”

By late afternoon, the garden had transformed. The air hummed with the slow settling of day—crickets tuning their chorus, the apple tree rustling in a gentle breeze. A rough plank table had been dragged beneath its branches, covered with a patchwork of old quilts stitched with fading blues and reds. Upon it, Mary and Ruth laid a feast, their hands moving in cheerful rhythm, laughter spilling between them like flour dusting a counter.

Baskets overflowed with roasted vegetables, their skins blistered and sweet, while loaves of bread, still warm, cracked open to release the scent of yeast and butter. Jars of pickles glistened green and gold, bowls brimmed with berries that stained fingertips red, and pies sat cooling, their crusts latticed and sugared, sending up curls of cinnamon steam.

Ruth fussed over the arrangement like a general surveying her troops. “Stew here, bread there, cider in the middle for easy reach.” Elias, meanwhile, sampled freely—until Mary smacked his knuckles with a wooden spoon.

“Save some for the rest of us,” she scolded, though her smile betrayed her amusement.

Tom stood back, hands at his sides, overwhelmed. He had spent weeks staring at bare rows, convinced they held nothing. He had measured his worth by the emptiness of dirt. And yet here, before his eyes, was food—plenty of it. More than plenty. It was abundance, and it laughed at his calculations.

“Sit, Tom!” Ruth called, waving him over with her wooden ladle.

“Food doesn’t eat itself.”

Still hesitant, he lowered himself onto the bench. Mary ladled stew into bowls, the steam carrying the fragrance of thyme, garlic, and slow-simmered comfort. The first spoonful warmed Tom’s chest like a fire stoked against winter’s chill.

Elias raised his glass of cider high, his voice booming with cheer.

“To soil, seed, sun, and rain—and to the hands that bring the harvest home.”

Their glasses clinked together, the sound bright against the dusk.

“And” Ruth added, leaning across the table with her eyes twinkling, “to friends who remind us that enough isn’t someday—it’s now.”

They ate, and as the food passed, so did the stories. Elias launched into the tale of the year goats escaped into his orchard and stripped every pear tree bare. He described chasing them with a broom while his wife scolded from the porch to the great delight of everyone listening.

“Never saw a goat climb that high again,” Elias concluded, shaking his head, though his grin suggested pride in the chaos.

Ruth countered, wagging a fork. “At least goats are useful. My cow once chased the postman down the lane for daring to carry a red satchel. Poor man leapt the hedge like a rabbit. Didn’t come back for weeks.”

Mary laughed so hard tears rolled down her cheeks. “Oh, Ruth—your animals always sound half-wild.”

“They are,” Ruth replied with mock seriousness. “They’ve simply inherited their owner’s personality.”

Elias rolled his eyes, and the whole table erupted with laughter.

Tom found himself chuckling too, the tight band around his chest loosening with every bite and every story. The bread was soft, the stew hearty, the cider crisp. But more than the food, it was the faces—the light in Mary’s eyes, Ruth’s booming cheer, Elias’s twinkling mischief—that fed him.

Between mouthfuls of bread, he finally spoke. His words surprised even himself. “I always thought enough meant... savings in the bank. Years ahead. Some number that proved I’d be safe.”

Ruth’s laughter gentled. She leaned forward, her voice low and steady. “Enough is safety, yes. But it’s also laughter over stew, the warmth of bread, a hand to hold. You can miss it if you spend your life chasing numbers.”

Mary reached across the table, her hand finding Tom's. "This is enough."

Tom looked around, the lantern light flickering over quilt and wood, faces and food. The table groaned beneath dishes, the apple tree above them whispered in the evening breeze, and the air was heavy with the scent of rosemary and ripening fruit. He drew a long breath, and for the first time in years, he felt it.

Enough wasn't later. Enough was here.

At the hedge's edge, a shadow lingered. Thorn stood silent, watching, his eyes glinting with quiet malice. He did not speak—for what could doubt say against laughter, or fear against joy? The music of their voices drowned him out. And so, with a hiss of leaves, he faded back into the night.

Reflection Section

Reflection Seed

1. What are you harvesting in this season—tangible or intangible—and how can you savor it instead of rushing past it?
2. Where is “hollow abundance” tempting you (big but bitter), and where do you see the quiet sufficiency of enough?
3. What portion of your harvest—time, money, skill, kindness—will you preserve for lean days, and what portion will you share this week?

Companion Verse

“Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy.” —Psalm

126:5

Chapter 9

Sharing the Garden

“A shared harvest always multiplies.”

The afternoon leaned toward evening, warm light pouring over the yard the color of late honey. The whole garden seemed to hush as if waiting. Mary set a long board across two sawhorses under the fig tree and spread a linen cloth that once belonged to her grandmother. The fabric fluttered gently in the breeze, its hand-stitched flowers catching the last sun. The petals, no bigger than raindrops, shimmered like memory made visible, and as the cloth settled, the rough table became something sacred—ordinary wood draped in heritage and hope.

Ruth arrived first, her apron bulging with loaves still warm from the oven. “Careful, they’ll burn your hands,” she said, laying them down, the crusts crackling as they cooled. The fragrance—yeast, salt, and browned butter—rose and wrapped around them like a shawl. From her basket came jars: ruby tomato jam, amber fig

preserves, beans pickled bright as summer lightning sealed in glass. Each jar caught the light like treasure rescued from the season.

Elias followed, his stride slow but sure, carrying a basket of tomatoes so ripe they seemed lit from within. He tipped them into a wooden bowl where they rolled against each other, skins whisper-thin, their scent a burst of sunlight and pepper. He tucked sprigs of basil between them until the air smelled green and alive. “What you don’t eat tonight,” he winked, “becomes tomorrow’s story.”

Mary moved like a quiet song, setting plates, a crock of butter, a small dish of salt, and a pot of thyme and rosemary she had cut that morning. In the center, she placed a pitcher of cider, golden in the slanting light. “To anchor the evening,” she said softly, almost like a blessing.

Tom stood at the edge of it all, crate in his hands. He set down his own harvest: beans picked carefully that morning, figs cupped so they would not bruise, three late cucumbers still cool from the

soil. They looked humble beside Ruth's jars and Elias's tomatoes, yet Tom's chest swelled. For months, he had feared he had nothing worth bringing. Now here he was, hands not empty but full—and his heart, he realized with a start, felt the same.

Across the fence, Thorn's tangle loomed like a storm cloud—rows of overgrown ambition, weeds threading through stalks too heavy to hold their own fruit. In the dimming light, Tom caught a glimpse of Thorn himself moving through it, his shoulders stiff, jaw set, as though guarding something that refused to become what he demanded. Tom looked back at their table and felt the contrast sharpen: Thorn's misery weighed like shadow, while theirs shimmered like song. "Invite him over" said a voice in Tom's head. "What?" "Just do it."

Tom caught Thorn's attention and waved him over.

Thorn strode up to the table looking around then, to everyone's amazement, slumped and said "I'm sorry to have harassed you over the summer. I was envious of your friendship and laughter."

The silence was thick. Then Tom stood and held his hand out to shake, “Thank you for saying this.” He looked around the table.

“Will you join us?”

Tears in his eyes, Thorn said, “Call me Archie.”

“Sit,” Mary said, touching his sleeve, her smile gentle.

They did. Elias lifted the cider pitcher and let the light run through it like molten gold. “To what grows when we tend it,” he said, “and to what grows in us when we share it.” He poured into four cups until each brimmed and trembled.

They drank. Ruth tore bread and passed it around, her fingers quick and sure. Tom drizzled olive oil, added a pinch of salt, and bit into the slice. The simple food startled him—flavor unfolding across his tongue like something ancient, something remembered but long forgotten. He closed his eyes. “It’s like I’ve never tasted food before.”

“Flavor comes,” Elias said, chewing a fig and wiping his wrist like a boy. “When the soil, the seed, and the soul are all alive.” He

grinned. “Also, when you don’t drown the poor thing in fertilizer.” Mary laughed, her shoulders shaking.

Ruth opened her jar of preserves. The spoon dipped, glistened, spread across bread. “When we share,” she said, “the sweetness multiplies. I swear jam tastes brighter when the jar isn’t just for me.”

Plates passed, stories spilled. Elias confessed he once tried to trellis beans with fishing line. “They slipped off like eels,” he groaned, and the table roared with laughter. Ruth told of the neighbor’s cracked rain barrel that became a neighborhood project, and how now, at the first rumble of thunder, everyone checked each other’s gutters. Mary reminded them of the night she and Tom had carried home their advisor’s thin little budget as if it were armor, only to discover, piece by piece, it had become not a shield but a guide. “Enough,” she said, buttering another slice of bread, “is so often just a matter of noticing.”

The light thinned into violet. Birds grew quiet; crickets began their hymn. Tom looked at the faces around him—Mary’s gentle

hands, Ruth's quick wit, Elias's soil-stained nails—and felt something stir, rising from where it had long been buried. The old song, the one that had once lived in his chest, began to uncoil. He didn't stand. He didn't announce. He simply let the tune slip out, soft as a thread of wind. At first it trembled, uncertain, but then Mary's voice found his, sure and warm. Ruth joined, clear and steady, and Elias rumbled beneath them all like the earth itself. Four voices wove together, unpolished and unpracticed, yet whole.

Neighbors walking dogs slowed at the gate. A child on a scooter coasted to a stop, wide-eyed, listening. Even the leaves seemed to lean closer. Tom felt the tune settle inside him, no longer borrowed but his own, and a thought arrived as gently as the moth tapping the lantern glass: Maybe the song had been waiting for the table all along.

When the verse ended, silence followed, but it was the kind that brims instead of empties. Tom exhaled, realizing he had been holding his breath for years.

Mary raised her cup. “To enough,” she said.

“To enough,” they echoed, and drank.

Elias leaned back, chair balanced dangerously on two legs. He looked at the spread: not a banquet, not meager, but exactly right.

“You notice,” he murmured, almost to himself, “when you have enough. It always asks to be shared.”

Lanterns burned small halos. Stars pricked the dark like promises. They sang another tune, then another—half-remembered songs that stumbled into laughter, humming filling the gaps. Tom discovered he didn’t mind forgetting the words; the company carried him.

At last, crumbs were brushed from the cloth, jars sealed, loaves wrapped. Ruth tucked half a loaf into a paper bag and pressed it into Tom’s hand. “For breakfast,” she said. “Sweetness tastes different in the morning.”

Mary gathered cups while Tom lifted the bowl of tomatoes—now only a few remained. He marveled at the weight, modest yet miraculous. How had so much come from so little? He looked

once more at the table that had held them and thought, This is what a life is for.

They turned toward the porch. A moth circled the lantern, settling on the linen like a folded prayer. Tom cupped the flame to snuff it. Darkness fell, then stars—familiar as childhood, fresh as rain.

“Next week,” Elias said into the night, “we do this again.”

“Next week,” Tom answered, and the simple promise felt like a harvest of its own.

Reflection Section

Reflection Seeds

1. Where has joy multiplied in your life when you've shared what you have—time, food, money, attention, or song?
2. Who belongs at your table in this season—and what simple meal, story, or blessing could you offer them?
3. What small practice could you adopt (weekly supper, neighbor loaf, set-aside gift fund) to make sharing a habit rather than a holiday?

Companion Verse

“They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.” —Psalm 1:3

Chapter 10

The Master Gardener

“Every garden whispers of the One who planted eternity in our hearts.”

The morning after the song, the garden was washed in dew. Every leaf glistened as if polished overnight, beads of water trembling like jewels before slipping into the earth. The air was cool and fragrant, carrying the mingled scents of rosemary, damp soil, and apples ripening in the branches above.

Tom walked slowly down the rows, his fingertips brushing bean leaves soft as velvet, marigolds bright as little suns, apple boughs bent heavy with fruit. Something inside him felt different. He couldn't name it, but it was as if the tight band that had cinched his chest for years had finally loosened. He felt lighter. Whole.

Almost without thinking, his lips parted, and a song rose—shaky at first, but steadier with each note:

“I come to the garden alone while the dew is still on the roses...”

The melody floated into the still morning, carried by sparrows lifting from the hedge. Tom paused, heart pounding, then moved into the chorus, his voice swelling with something both fragile and strong:

“And He walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own. And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.”

The words hung in the air like incense, tender and unhurried. For a moment, the whole garden seemed to lean in and listen.

At the far end of the path, the old gate stood ajar. A figure bent low there, working the soil. Not Elias. Not Ruth. Taller, cloaked in the shimmer of dawn.

Tom froze, his pulse quickening. “Hello?” he called, his voice barely above a whisper.

The figure straightened slowly. The face he saw was kind, weathered like old wood yet ageless as the morning itself. Eyes deep as wells, carrying both sorrow and joy. Hands rough with

work, yet steady, sure. The man did not speak, but his smile was warm and familiar, like recognition without introduction.

Tom's breath caught. His throat worked around the words. "Are you...?" He faltered. Gardener? Master? Lord? None seemed large enough.

The man knelt again, turning the soil with a spade. His movements were simple, unhurried, deliberate—yet each seemed to ripple with eternity. He planted something so small Tom nearly missed it. Just a seed, ordinary and fragile. He brushed the earth over it gently, pressed it firmly, and looked up.

And in that gaze, without a single word, Tom understood.

This garden—his life—was never just his own work. The seeds had never been his alone to grow. Every season he had feared, every drought, every harvest—it had all been tended by unseen hands. He was not the keeper of enough. He was the giver of grace.

Tears welled hot in his eyes. For so long he had trembled beneath the weight of scarcity: not enough money, not enough time, not

enough strength. But standing in the morning light, he saw it as clearly as the dew on the roses: Enough had never depended on him.

The Master Gardener rose and placed the spade in Tom's hand. Not as a burden, but as a gift. An invitation. A partnership. Tom's fingers curled around it, trembling. The wood felt alive beneath his touch.

And then—just as quietly as He had come—the Gardener was gone. Yet the garden pulsed with His presence, every leaf whispering it, every bird singing it.

Tom fell to his knees. He pressed his palms into the soil—warm, rich, alive—and let the tears spill freely. “Thank You,” he whispered. The words sank into the ground like seeds themselves.

From the house, Mary's voice floated across the morning. “Breakfast is ready, love.”

Tom rose, brushing the earth from his hands. He walked back through the rows slowly, seeing it all anew—the wildflowers

trembling with color, vines curling like promises, birds weaving songs through branches, laughter still lingering from last night's table.

And he knew it deep in his bones, a truth steady as the rising sun: He was not alone. He was not late. He was not empty. He was enough—because the Master Gardener was, and always would be, here.

Reflection Section

Reflection Seeds

1. Who is still standing outside your “garden gate,” and how might you invite them in?
2. Where in your life is forgiveness or reconciliation waiting, and how could it bring freedom if offered?
3. What “song” is locked in your chest—creative, relational, or spiritual—that’s ready to be released?

Companion Verse

“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life... On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit... and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.” —Revelation 22:1–2

Appendix

Biblical Passages on Gardens & Growth

Throughout the Bible, gardens appear as places of creation, encounter, loss, renewal, and promise. From Eden to Gethsemane to the Tree of Life in Revelation, gardens remind us that life is seasonal, growth requires tending, and God's presence is often experienced in quiet, cultivated spaces.

The following passages were woven into *The Garden of Enough* and are gathered here for prayer, meditation, or group study.

Seeds & Planting

- “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted.” Ecclesiastes 3:1–2
- “The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed.”
Genesis 2:8

Growth & Light

- “The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.” Isaiah 58:11
- “For the LORD God is a sun and shield; he bestows favor and honor.” Psalm 84:11
- “I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:5

Pruning & Renewal

- “Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit.” John 15:2
- “See to it that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and through it many become defiled.”
Hebrews 12:15

Harvest & Joy

- “Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy.”
Psalm 126:5
- “They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.” Psalm 1:3
- “Let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.” Galatians 6:9

Eternal Garden

- “Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.” Revelation 22:1–2

Reader's Note

Dear Readers,

Thank you for walking through *The Garden of Enough*. I hope that these pages feel less like a book and more like a gate you stepped through—into a space where gratitude, purpose, and peace can grow.

The story you just read is, of course, Tom's. But it is also mine—and perhaps, in pieces, yours. We all know what it is to face weeds, storms, and the fear of not having enough. And we all know the joy of watching a small seed, once planted, take root and flourish.

If this parable has given you even one reminder—that you are not too late, that you already have enough, that your song still waits to be sung—then its purpose has been fulfilled.

Now the garden is yours. Tend it with gratitude. Share its fruit freely. Invite others to the table. And never forget: the Master Gardener walks with you.

With joy,

SharonAnn Hamilton

Share Your Review

Dear Readers,

I'm grateful you chose to spend time with *The Garden of Enough*. I hope that Tom's path, together with the reflections in these pages, has encouraged you to slow down, notice the goodness in front of you, and embrace your own sense of "enough." Your voice matters. When you share your thoughts, it not only helps other readers decide to begin this journey, but it also encourages me as the author to keep planting words of hope. Whether it's a few lines or a more extended reflection, your review has the power to inspire someone else.

You can leave your review on:

- **Amazon** (where most readers discover new books)

Even a few sentences make a big difference.

Thank you for being part of this garden. May the seeds planted here continue to grow in your days ahead.

With gratitude,

SharonAnn Hamilton