

SEEDS OF EDEN

by

Jerod Brennen

Jerod Brennen
2324 Glencroft Drive
Hilliard, Ohio 43026
614.657.9336
jerod.brennen@gmail.com

EXT. COUNTRY GARDEN - MORNING

Behind a cottage in a small midwestern town, CONNOR, a young man of nineteen or twenty, weaves among the Babylonian paradise of an elaborate, well-tended SUMMER GARDEN.

Trees of all shapes and sizes dot the yard. Flowers bloom in a myriad of colors. The garden is random, sprawling, but well-tended and cared for.

Connor is looking for something, and he just found it.

STRAWBERRIES.

Connor's eyes flick around the garden, nervous.

Good. No one's watching.

He fills a tiny basket with strawberries and runs.

As Connor hops the fence, LILLY steps out from behind a tree, watching him run. Wisps of white hair peek out from beneath her straw hat as she sips her glass of ice cold lemonade.

LILLY
(to herself)
Ah. To be young and in love.

Her eyes FLASH RED, and her serene smile fades into a frown wrought with sadness.

EXT. COUNTRY HILLTOP - AFTERNOON

Connor's car sits beneath a shade tree atop a hill overlooking the town. Music from the car stereo blares through the open windows

Connor and his girlfriend, ELIZABETH, dance to the music. They're alone, uninhibited, and in love. A romantic picnic lies on the ground near the car.

The song ends, and Elizabeth falls to the picnic blanket, laughing. Connor reaches in one windows and turns the music down before joining her.

ELIZABETH
You're too good to me, Connor
Adams.

(CONTINUED)

CONNOR

Yeah. I know.

They laugh. Elizabeth searches the spread before her.

ELIZABETH

Wait! Looks like I spoke too soon.
No strawberries?

CONNOR

I tried three grocery stores, plus
that little market in Adams
Mills. No strawberries.

Elizabeth is disappointed. Connor crawls toward her,
pressing his lips close to her right ear.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

(whispering)

I had to drive nearly 45 minutes
out of my way, but I wasn't about
to bring you here without
strawberries.

He slides one arm around the small of her back, and returns
it with the strawberry basket in hand.

Elizabeth's eyes light up. Connor winks and hands her the
little treasure.

ELIZABETH

Oh, Connor!

Connor nods, smirking. That's right, the look says. I win.

Elizabeth's expression shifts from playful to adoring.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

No one's ever treated me the way
you do, Connor. Why do you do
things like this?

CONNOR

Today needs to be perfect.

Elizabeth cocks her head, curious. Connor nods down at the
basket.

Elizabeth looks again, and catches the sparkle of another
treasure beneath the strawberries. She moves one strawberry
aside...

An enormous marquis cut DIAMOND RING gleams in the afternoon
sunlight.

(CONTINUED)

She lifts the ring from the basket like she was handling a newborn child. Connor touches one of her legs.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

Elizabeth Evans, I knew from the day we first met that I wanted... needed to spend the rest of my life with you. When I try to remember a time without you in my life, I can't. I don't want to. I can't imagine my future without you by my side. I just can't.

She looks from the ring to Connor, tears welling up in her eyes.

CONNOR (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Will you marry me, Beautiful?

ELIZABETH

(laughing)

What took you so long?

She sets down the basket and wraps her arms around her new fiancé. Connor pulls back just enough to slip the ring on her finger.

Elizabeth reaches into the strawberries and takes one for herself. She hands another to Connor and gestures for a toast.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

To us.

CONNOR

To our future.

They bite down at the same time.

Their eyes FLASH RED as a roll of THUNDER carries them into another place and time.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Connor and Elizabeth stand holding hands just outside of a small country church. A crowd moves near the church doors, but their sound is muffled, their movements surreal.

The young couple witnesses this scene from a distance, somehow there but not there.

(CONTINUED)

They see THEMSELVES emerge from the church doors, newlyweds. The crowd cheers. Adults throw birdseed. Children blow bubbles.

This is their future.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Time shifts, but they remain the same. Their future selves are walking down a beach at sunset, holding hands. Honeymooners.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

They're in a hotel room overlooking the beach. The honeymooners undress each other, first with their eyes, then with their hands.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Future Elizabeth is in the kitchen, loading the dishwasher. She's pregnant, maybe seven or eight months. She reaches for a plate in the sink, and her belly bumps gently against the counter.

Future Connor walks up behind her with a hug, laughing. She feigns anger but can't resist joining in.

Present day Elizabeth smiles wide. Her hand drifts unconsciously to her own flat belly.

INT. HOSPITAL DELIVERY ROOM - DAY

Future Elizabeth gives birth to their first child, a son. Future Connor laughs through tears of joy. His laughter fades as one of the nurses hustles him out of the room.

Something's wrong.

Future Elizabeth screams in pain.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Future Connor stands at the front of a CROWD OF MOURNERS, facing an OPEN GRAVE. He's surrounded by friends and family, yet he's standing alone.

In his hands, he holds a BABY BOY, wrapped in a BLACK BLANKET.

EXT. COUNTRY HILLTOP - AFTERNOON

The RED FLASH FADES from their eyes as the sound of thunder trails off. Connor and Elizabeth are back on the hilltop, each holding a half-eaten strawberry.

Silence overwhelms the moment. They're both dazed.

ELIZABETH

Connor?

CONNOR

Yeah.

ELIZABETH

Did you just see-

CONNOR

Yeah.

More silence.

ELIZABETH

Connor?

CONNOR

Yeah?

ELIZABETH

Where did you get these strawberries?

EXT COUNTRY GARDEN - AFTERNOON

Lilly is on her knees, tending a lilac bush. Her straw hat is pulled down to shield her eyes from the late afternoon sun.

Still, she sees TWO SHADOWS appear on the ground to her left.

She smiles, but stays focused on the task at hand.

LILLY

Hello Connor. Elizabeth.

She finishes her work and removes her gardening gloves. She squints as she turns to face the two lovers.

(CONTINUED)

Connor and Elizabeth stand together, frightened, holding hands.

LILLY (CONT'D)

Took you a bit longer than I expected, but no matter. Come on inside. I've got lemonade waiting in the kitchen.

INT. COTTAGE KITCHEN - EVENING

Connor and Elizabeth sit at the kitchen table. Connor fidgets, playing with the condensation on his glass. Elizabeth sits with her hands in her lap.

Lilly sits relaxed in a chair across from them. Her hat is off, hanging from the strap around her neck.

Lilly finishes her glass of lemonade in a thirsty gulp. She sets the empty glass to the table with a sigh, wiping her brow with the back of her hand.

She glances at the two untouched glasses of lemonade.

LILLY

You really should try some. It's magnificent, if I may be so bold. One hundred percent homemade. All those hours tending that lemon tree, paid in full.

She points out the window to one of the small trees in her garden.

Elizabeth looks at her glass in horror.

Lilly laughs softly.

LILLY (CONT'D)

I said lemons, child. Not strawberries.

Lilly pours herself another glass. Connor stops fidgeting and blurts out his confession.

CONNOR

Look, Lilly, I'm sorry. Really, truly sorry. I wanted everything to be just right, but I couldn't find strawberries, and Elizabeth loves, absolutely loves strawberries, and-

(CONTINUED)

LILLY

Hush now, Connor. I know my garden, and I know the little boy who used to sneak in and swipe apples and rhubarb and such when he thought this old girl was looking the other way. If ever you took something from my garden, boy, it's because I let you take it. These eyes may be old, but they've seen quite a bit in their time. Quite a bit...

Connor squirms at being chided.

LILLY (CONT'D)

And when you'd stop by all proper and announced, what was my one rule, hmmm? My only rule?

Connor hesitates. Lilly's eyes never leave his face.

CONNOR

(ashamed)

No strawberries.

LILLY

No strawberries.

CONNOR

But I've eaten strawberries since I was a kid, Lilly. Never from your garden, no, but they've never made me see things before?

Connor leans over the table.

CONNOR (cont'd)

(conspiratorial)

Lilly, are you growing... pharmaceuticals?

LILLY

Connor Adams!

ELIZABETH

Lilly, please. I'm scared. What happened to us?

Lilly stands and walks to the window. This time her sigh is heavy.

(CONTINUED)

LILLY

Everything I know about gardening, I learned from my mother, and she learned from her mother, and so on. Gardening has been a tradition in my family for... well... for a long time.

She turns back to the young couple.

LILLY (CONT'D)

For a VERY long time.

She takes another drink.

LILLY (CONT'D) (cont'd)

These trees and bushes and flowers... tending them is more than a way to pass the time. It's a responsibility, a charge. Do you know what I'm saying?

Connor and Elizabeth shake their heads in unison.

LILLY (CONT'D) (cont'd)

There are plants in my garden that were grown from old seeds, ancient seeds... seeds that were smuggled out of a garden tended by a young man and woman....

She nods at them pointedly.

LILLY (CONT'D) (cont'd)

... who also had problems following rules about what they could and could not do in the garden.

Connor sits back, suspicious. Elizabeth watches the older woman with rapt attention.

CONNOR

Lilly, come on now. I'm not that little boy anymore. You don't need to feed us stories to keep us from telling anyone what you're really growing out there. Please, we just need to know what was in those strawberries.

LILLY

Boy, I've half a mind to slap you hard enough to get you to pay

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LILLY (cont'd)
attention. Tell me true... Did you
see a vision, the both of
you? The same vision?

Connor is still, but Elizabeth nods.

LILLY (CONT'D)
What "pharmaceutical" do you know
that can show two people their
future?

ELIZABETH
Our... our future?

LILLY
Judging by the look on your face,
child, I'd say it's a future you're
none too happy with.

Elizabeth's lower lip trembles.

CONNOR
I'm not saying I believe any of
this, but I thought the trees in...
that first garden... I thought
their fruit made people live
forever, or helped them understand
good and evil.

LILLY
It was a big garden, boy. You
really think there were only two
trees?

ELIZABETH
So what we saw... it's really going
to happen?

Lilly shrugs.

LILLY
I confess, I ate a strawberry or
two in my younger years. Sometimes
what I saw came to be, sometimes
not.

Lilly sits at the table and takes Elizabeth's hands in her
own.

(CONTINUED)

LILLY (CONT'D)
Life is full of decisions,
dearie. This path or that. One
path might lead to the future you
saw, but another path might lead in
the opposite direction
altogether. It's up to you to
choose which path you're going to
follow.

Silence settles over the small kitchen.

EXT. COUNTRY HILLTOP - NIGHT

Connor is lying on the hood of his car, staring up at the stars. His headlights shine down on their abandoned picnic. Soft music drifts from the car stereo.

CONNOR
So, what now?

Elizabeth is leaning up against the car, her arms wrapped around her shoulders.

ELIZABETH
I don't know.

CONNOR
I think maybe we should call it
off-

ELIZABETH
I've been waiting for you to
propose for three years, Connor! I
love you! I don't want to lose
you-

CONNOR
And I don't want to lose you!

Silence.

CONNOR (CONT'D)
We could just not have kids.

ELIZABETH
You've been talking about being a
dad for as long as we've been
together. I've seen you play with
your little cousins. They look up
to you. They idolize you. You
can't tell me that you don't want

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ELIZABETH (cont'd)
that same love from a child of your
own.

CONNOR
Well, then we could adopt.

ELIZABETH
With what money? Adoptions cost
thousands of dollars,
Connor. Probably tens of
thousands! How long would it take
us to save up that much money? And
what if we wanted two kids, or
three?

Connor doesn't reply. Elizabeth continues in a hushed
voice.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
And what if I get pregnant
anyway? You know... by accident?

CONNOR
Well... we could just not have sex.

Elizabeth turns to face him and her look says it all.
Yeah, right.

ELIZABETH
I know how much you want a family,
Connor, but I want one even
more. I want to be a mom. I want
to carry a little baby, my baby, in
my belly. I want to feel him kick,
and I want to hold your hand to my
belly and then watch your face
light up when you feel it, too. I
want a little blond-haired
blue-eyed angel to look up at me
and say, "Mommy, I love you this
much," and stretch his arms out as
far as they'll reach. I want to
snuggle him when he's hurt, and let
him know that everything is going
to be okay.

Connor wants to say something, but he holds his tongue.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
I want him to know that I love him,
and that I'll always love him, and
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ELIZABETH (CONT'D) (cont'd)
that I'll always be his mommy. And
I want him to be our little
boy, Connor. Yours and mine.

She starts to cry, turning away from him so that he can't see her face.

Connor stands and pulls her close. She cries into his chest, and he starts swaying to the music, comforting her.

Before they realize it, they're dancing again.

Elizabeth nestles her head into his shoulder, looking off to the side.

ELIZABETH
Maybe Lilly's wrong, you
know. Maybe none of this will
happen. Maybe we're just getting
all worked up over nothing.

CONNOR
Maybe. But what if-

ELIZABETH
And even if... if it happens... it
might be worth it, you know. To be
with each other, even for just a
little while. To have a baby,
together.

She looks up into his eyes.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)
Everything ends, Connor. But
should we end it before it even
begins just because we don't know
HOW it's going to end?

They stop dancing as the music stops.

CONNOR
What do you want to do?

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

TWO SMALL HANDS drop a handful of SEEDS into a shallow hole. They push soft topsoil over the seeds, patting it down tight.

(CONTINUED)

A YOUNG BOY, no older than five, stands up from his work and beams with pride. The blond-haired blue-eyed angel wipes his hands clean on his jean shorts.

A pair of larger, masculine hands gently reach beneath the boy's arms and lift him from the ground. Connor's hands.

Connor holds the child against his chest, facing him, eye to eye.

CONNOR

That was a good idea, little
man. She'll love having her own
strawberry bush.

The boy wraps his arms around his dad and squeezes him tight. They start to walk away.

The soil covering the freshly planted strawberry seeds sits beside a modest granite tombstone. The stone reads:

ELIZABETH ADAMS, LOVING WIFE AND MOTHER

FADE TO BLACK