The Stone Garden
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**Genre**

Realistic fiction takes place in a setting that seems real. This story takes place in a yard in a big city.

**Question of the Week**

What can happen when someone has a new idea?
Momoko sat on the steps of her new home. “This yard needs a garden,” she told her dog Pochi.

The yard was bordered on all sides with homes like hers. Except for three old tires and a few empty crates, it was as cold and bare as the moon.
May I do something with it?” Momoko asked.

Mr. B. shrugged. “Why not? As long as it does not make more work for me.”
The first thing this poor, unwanted yard needed was a cleaning, Momoko decided. So she picked up every bit of litter. She swept and reswept the ground clear.

Then she and Pochi made a game of piling the tires in one corner and taking the crates to another.

Next, she filled her pockets with all the stones they could carry.
Now she was ready to plant. She used an old spoon her mother gave her to dig a furrow. Into the furrow went the stones, *plop, plop, plop.* She gently covered the stones with earth and watered them with a coffee can. Then she sat down and wished and waited.

By now everyone in the complex was watching her. From behind their curtains, some called her “that silly girl.” But they were curious. One by one they came outside. “I’ve planted a stone garden,” Momoko answered anyone who asked.
“A stone garden! Ha!” said one man. Momoko smiled and kept working. The man returned a while later.

“Here,” he said gruffly and handed her a potted yellow pansy.

Momoko thanked him. She replanted the pansy in the ground, and they both stood back to admire it.
Later, a young woman stopped by and asked Momoko what she was doing.

“I’ve planted a stone garden,” she said.

The young woman laughed. But as Momoko continued to weed and water, she too went away and returned with a gift. “They’re tulips,” she explained, as she offered a bag of bulbs.

Momoko thanked her and planted the bulbs all over the yard.
One morning, Momoko found that someone had buried the three unused tires along one side of the yard. Inside each tire was a tiny rosebush.

The next day, she found two empty crates refilled with dirt. One crate held several young tomato plants. The other had two markers in it. One said “carrots.” The other said “peas.”
And so it went. Every day something was different. Mr. B. lent Momoko a hose. A pair of little apple trees appeared. One day a neighbor left a butterfly bush with red blossoms. A basket of herbs showed up beside the vegetable crates with a small stone lion to protect it.

As the stone garden grew, Momoko met more and more of her neighbors. Chairs popped up like mushrooms outside people’s front doors. In the evenings, people would sit and visit. Some would help Momoko take care of the garden.
Momoko loved the trees and shrubs and flowers. But she was most excited about the vegetables. She almost burst with happiness when one mild morning, it happened. A tender sprout unwound itself and poked its head out of the soft dirt.

“Oh,” Momoko cried. She ran to share the news.

Everyone came out to see this small miracle.
“Who would have believed it?” said Mr. B. “Who would have believed you could grow such a garden here?”

Momoko knelt down to gaze at all the living green things. Who would have believed what you could grow from a pocketful of stones?