GARDEN *of* AYDEN

BY SUKAIYNA GOKAL



ALONE

The Heritage of Luca and Scintilla

A GARDEN OF AYDEN STORY

Foreword

Some people's lives aren't as easy as others. Some people are not treated as kindly as you. Or maybe you aren't treated as kindly as others. We are writing this book to help these people or perhaps maybe you. You probably feel alone most of the time and you want to be peaceful the same as others, but what if these people are bullied everyday. Maybe you are one of these unlucky people or maybe you know somebody who is experiencing the same experience.

You might think that you are unlucky not to have many friends or maybe you feel unlucky to have nobody at all. Perhaps they're both good for a reason and perhaps they're both bad. Who are you? Why are you reading this? Before you continue reading answer these questions.

You're never alone for " You are your own best friend."

Alone

The Heritage of Luca and Scintilla

I sit down on the warm, yellow sand. I stare at the dark blue sea. Every wave is different, just as every person is different. I toss rocks into the sea and wonder about the morning of the next day. I watch the sunset. It's the best one I've seen this week. I think about the day's events. The sun vanishes and the sky is filled with stars. I search for my star and sense that Scintilla is next to me. "I was wondering where you were. Every night I stand here on the beach looking for the most beautiful of stars, but it was only tonight that I find you."

"It was only tonight that I felt you really needed me." replies Scintilla. I can feel her smile. Suddenly the night sky is filled with sparkling light.

I wake up this morning. I feel happy, " Today's a good day," I say as I eat my breakfast. I get into the car with my mom wondering what adventures I will have at school today.

I walk towards the classroom. When I enter, the kind-hearted teacher greets me. I sit at my desk and start to sketch. The room echoes with the joyous voices of children in groups talking, laughing.

I feel alone, I am the only one in class who has nobody to talk to.

At break time I walk alone. Nobody wants to join me. I feel sad and perplexed. Why does nobody want to join me? I am envious of the people who have friends and are always happy. Why don't these people want me to join them? Why don't they allow me to play with them? I hear the whistle; it's time to eat our snacks. Nobody sits with me. I wonder why they don't. Maybe it's my fault. Maybe there is something wrong with me.

When we work in class I am the first one to finish, the first one to answer, the last one to leave. When I leave the classroom at lunchtime, I feel happy about all the things I did in class today. I go out to the play area. I notice some people looking at me and whispering into their friends' ears. I wonder what Niko told them. I am furious.

When we enter the canteen, I find a nice spot to sit down at and start to eat. I sit alone for twenty minutes. I look at all the people around me, everyone is laughing and having fun. Some are playing cards; some are chatting. I feel left out. Why can't I be a happy person like

everybody around me? Why am I me? I hate myself.

I am filled with dirty thoughts and mean feelings. I want to go home. When I get out of the canteen, I notice people pointing at me and whispering all sorts of things. I hate them. Niko passes by me. I stare at him until he disappears. Luckily he doesn't notice me, or there would have been a horrible fight. I detest him. I am filled with a sense of hatred.

At home, I see kind people who want to be with me, siblings who want to play with me. Nice people. It seems like I live in two different universes! One is super kind and happy: the other is unkind and dreadful. It feels like I have to travel between two different planets everyday. I don't want to make anybody at home sad or angry, so I keep quiet about the day's events. Today wasn't a good day.

Before I go to bed I go to the beach. I lie down on the sand and look up at the sky. All the stars but one are in their places. Only. That star is the most incredible star. No other star could ever replace it. That ball of light is my superhero. I wonder why that star did not appear. I go to bed. I dream about the day's events.

I wake up, stretch, and go to the breakfast room. I have hope that today will be a great day; but once I enter the car with my mom, that hope begins to fade.

"Don't give up." I think. No, I won't. I am determined that it will be a great day. My aim today is to play with people and to have fun; and to begin with, I accomplish my goal. I am joyful. Then, after a couple of minutes I feel weary. Really? So is this how it feels like when you sit with people? I really wanted to sit and have fun with people all my life; but this is really boring. I think sitting myself and thinking good things is so much better. My thoughts are so much more interesting. What they are saying is nonsense. I'm really bored. I walk away. It's better to be by myself, anyways. It is like I'm invisible when I sit with them. In the middle of lots of people, I remain completely alone.

Once back at home, I feel relieved. That was definitely a good day. I had a good time being with myself. When I reach home, I have a huge grin on my face. Today was a good day. Even though I was sitting by myself, I actually was not alone: I was with my thoughts and imagination.

I eat my dinner. I'm not as annoyed as normal, I feel perfect. It's like I was with a bunch of people the entire day. I don't feel like I had to travel between two different planets. I lie down on the sand and look at the wonderful stars.

"Thank you Scintilla," I whisper.

I wake up in the morning; today will be a fantastic day. When I enter the school doors, I don't feel as comfortable as yesterday. I wonder why I am angry when Niko passes by me in the school corridor. He smiles and goes away.

When I go outside, I notice a really fun game that the boys are playing. When I ask them if I can join them, they stare at me and answer "no". Niko is part of the group. Just because Niko is part of the group it doesn't mean I can't play with the group of friendly people.

At lunchtime, I go to the canteen. I see Niko whispering to somebody and looking at me. That person whispers to somebody else who whispers to somebody else... until half of my age group knows what Niko said... I detest them. Why do they all belittle me? I never did anything to them. I find a table and sit by myself. Niko is always whispering and talking about me.

I go to the last class of the day. I work as hard as possible. I answer all the questions and finish all the questions first. Everybody stares at me, I feel like some people hate me. It's probably what that bully Niko told them. When I enter the car, I'm not as happy as yesterday. I feel like I have to go to two different planets in different universes again. Seriously, why is Niko such a bully?

Tonight, I go to the beach and lie down. I'm not as happy.

Then, suddenly, I feel the presence of dear old Scintilla.

"Why is Niko such a bully? Just today he was whispering about me to half of my grade. I felt terrible, horrible, furious and under-estimated."

"Are you sure he is bullying you, my dear Luca? Are you sure he was even talking about you?" There is a silence for a while. Then, suddenly, all is a beautiful bright light.

When I enter the car with my parents, I think about Scintilla's question and before I know it I am at school. When it's break time, a kid comes over to me and tells me that Niko called me a donkey yesterday. Anger circulates through my body. For the first time, I'm going to tell a teacher about that.

After break, I go to my homeroom teacher and I tell her what the little child told me. She calls Niko straight away. Niko looks like he's sad. The teacher asks us what's going on. Niko

swears that he didn't say that. The teacher tells me that it's not okay to believe what somebody else tells you, it's only fair if you witness or hear the thing yourself. Niko looks at me sadly.

I feel super angry that I believed the kid. I shouldn't be naïve. That kid was just trying to cause trouble. When I go back home, I feel ashamed. I shouldn't have been so mean to poor Niko. The teacher tells me to apologize, I apologize then we both go away. We're both human, we both have feelings. I don't go to the beach tonight, I've done something wrong.

When I go to school today, I notice that Niko is kind to every single person in the school. Why is it only me that he hates? I wonder for several minutes. Then I give up and go to my cubbyhole. Why is Niko only mean to me? It makes me smile when he does good things to other kids. It makes me sad when I realise that Niko is just mean to me. I enter the classroom still wondering about why he is so rude.

When the first class starts, the teacher asks a question. I raise my hand. She looks around to see another hand up in the air, but my hand is the only one that's up. I answer the question. The teacher smiles at me. Then I realise that I know why the kids don't like me, I'm like a teacher's pet. I don't feel like answering the next question. I don't answer many questions although I really want to. I answer a couple, and then I stop.

In the next class, we have a workshop that we need to attend. I am put in a group with two kind people. Then we get to work. I share some of my ideas. Then we write and draw out everything on a planning page. I feel good. I draw and write on a couple of pages in the real copy. We then put it on the computer; we are ready to show the class. One person in our group has to go to another class so we are just two people now. When we go to present, the person sits down and refuses to come and present with me saying: "It's him who did all the work, I did nothing." I present myself feeling uncomfortable.

At break, I play alone wishing for a bit of company. It's not nice to kick a ball by yourself. I feel bored and alone. I walk round the field a couple of times, alone and annoyed. It's not that I want just any company: I want good company that I can be happy with. Times up, I go back to class.

When I reach the class, I work as hard as possible. It's the only thing that calms me down. When we are about to go to lunch, Niko comes to me and tells me his dad will tie up my dad and hurt him. I feel scared and hurt. I don't want that to happen to my dad. I go and

tell my teacher. She calls the boy and pulls his ear. He begins to cry. His ear turns really red, I think that she cut a bit of the bottom of the ear off. Since it's the end of the day, my guardian and I go back home, I feel bad. I also feel sad. I don't want to tell a teacher anymore.

Why do all the people who have friends want more? I don't have any friends at all. Aren't they grateful for what they have? Feeling confused and angry, I enter the car. When we reach home, I stay on the beach till night time. Scintilla never appears, I am furious. I go to bed and don't enter my imaginary garden.

"Why Scintilla, why?"

Then I hear a gentle voice: "We should not be attached to the outcome."

I fall fast asleep thinking about the voice.

When I wake up in the morning, I feel happy. I go to school. It's like I am light. When I enter the class, I work the hardest I can. In break time, I nap with my thoughts. I feel like Scintilla for I am a courageous adventurer who is free and independent.

When I go to the beach, I feel happy and content. This is when Scintilla appears.

It seems that Scintilla only appears when I am happy. Scintilla suggests I think about this more deeply. I ask Scintilla "What did Niko say to the class?"

"I cannot tell you. We all perceive life and its events differently. What we think is reality is often far from the truth. No two people see exactly the same visions or perspectives."

I close my eyes, go to my imaginary garden and reflect on her words. When I open my eyes, Scintilla is no longer there – yet I feel the light of Scintilla within me. I begin to understand that only by making my mind quiet can the truth come to light.

I walk into the house, into my room and find a note. It says,

"Forgive me Yours truly,

Niko."

I put the note under my pillow and go to bed, thinking about it. I am not certain how I feel about it. I should feel happy but this is not the case. I wonder why.

When I go to school the next day, Niko looks at me, smiles, and turns away.

Feeling odd, I go to class. I feel lightness while I work and time passes quickly. During the break, my thoughts are interrupted by a group of boys who want to kick a ball around. I play with them but feel aloof. The boys are being rough and Niko is being rough and tough. I do not want to be like him. I am me. Just because he says sorry does not mean I have to be his best buddy. We respect each other because we are both human but I realise that there is no necessity for more than that.

I feel stronger and comfortable with myself.

I walk away after break, smiling. You don't need anyone to be with you to feel loved.

At lunchtime, I think positive thoughts and relax in my imaginary garden. I play with the dolphins and swim under the waterfall. Feeling comfortable, I go to the canteen and find a boy sitting by himself. I join him and we chat. He is also being bullied so I stay with him, guarding and protecting him. I realise that there is good purpose to the lessons I have learned: I am able to help others who are feeling the same things I have gone through.

When it's time to leave, we go back to class chatting along the way. It's the first time I feel comfortable speaking to someone. I realise that you never need to find a friend: they will find you. You work differently when you have somebody next to you to chat with you.

When my guardian picks me up, I feel happy, I feel relieved. I have found the perfect planet in between the two universes. At dinner, I chat about the day's events to my family. They all congratulate me; we all sleep well that night. I sleep in my imaginary garden, happy.

I wake up in the morning feeling as light as light; I am willing to go to school. The classes finish quickly for I had worked as hard as possible. When we go to break, I meet up with my friend Lambart. Lambart is waiting for me on the field with a ball. We play football and people start joining us. It becomes a big game and I meet new people. When it's time to eat at break, I eat with them. Most of them have experienced hard times. A couple of people just want to be friends. We are five people. I feel calm and relaxed. We all talk about our imaginary gardens and spend time calming down in them. Then we begin to chat again. We do the same at lunch. It's fun.

When we go home, I eat dinner then go to the beach and relax. Scintilla is there.

"How are you?" Scintilla asks.

"I am a ball of light." I reply.

I feel the smile. I love it.

"Thank you, I think I must smile more often," says Scintilla.

I turn to look. Scintilla is gone. I smile to myself and go to bed. It was a long day.

I enter the classroom and join Lambart. He is laughing with a bunch of kids from yesterday. The teacher looks at me astonished. I smile; I can feel my eyes twinkle. When it's time to work, I work as hard as possible. Time flies like a bird growing up in his nest. Today we had to write a poem about friendship. This is what I wrote:

Friendship

As joyful as the sunshine,
Oh for it is very fine,
I have so much fun,
I can run and run.
It grows everyday,
It's as beautiful as the sunshine's ray,
It is there every day,
Wonderful in every way.
Friends and family,
It all ends happily,
You can never let go,
You can never say no.

In break time, we play football again; Niko and his friends want to join us.

We begin the game: Niko with his team of five and we are five.

Niko and his team are playing rough but we don't let it bother us.

We play gently, having fun and laughing. We win the game. Niko is angry.

He wants a rematch. So we play another game. They continue to be tough, we continue to play gently, having fun. We win the game again.

Niko wants a last rematch. We are not really bothered if we win or lose. If it makes him happy, let it be. However we shall not lose purposefully as this would not be just.

We play gently again. Niko, understanding our tactic, plays gently against us.

He wins, and justice has been achieved. Slow is fast and fast is slow. There are big lessons that have been learnt.

We congratulate Niko and his team for winning. They are taken by surprise. They are beginning to realise the rules of friendship. We all have our snack together in the classroom. The teacher is stunned that we are all indulging in friendly light banter. Niko means light. Niko has become light.

From then on, we play and eat together every break. However, at lunchtime, we all play separately. Balance has been achieved.

After a few weeks, I enter the classroom and Niko greets me warmly. He takes me aside and tells me, "You know what I told everyone in the class the other day?" I shake my head, and he continues, "I told them that I was jealous of you being so smart." I stare at him blankly, and a grin slowly lightens my face. He looks at me ashamed and I put my hand on his shoulder instinctively and say, "I am sorry you felt that way. I will help you everyday after school so you can improve your grades." Niko jumps up and down so happy and grateful and runs off. I shake my head and run behind him.

Lambart joins me and we play a game of tag altogether. We are all joyful; we are all a team. Amazing how if we change our impressions everything around us changes.

When I lie down on the beach at night, Scintilla appears. I glow with her in her light. I grin and she glows brighter.

"Scintilla?"

"Yes, Luca."

"Thank you for everything. Thank you for teaching me not to judge people, for everyone is kind, and thank you for teaching me that you should love to be alone. Without you, I would have never known any of this. You have taught me a lot about friendship and how to be free, kind and happy. Thank you for showing me how to feel like light."

"But Luca, I never taught you any of this. I just tickled you here and there, and it all wiggled out of you. Thank you for being free and open. You were a ball of light already. There was always transparency within you. You can always seek the light whenever you need it because the light is within you."

I hug Scintilla.

“I love you.”

Scintilla stays with me in a halo of light and then I see a wonderful flash of light that feeds within me entirely. I sigh and feel blessed.

Epilogue

You might be a bully or you might be the one bullied, or neither nor, but all of you are balls of light. All of you need to be tickled. All of you are good. There's no such thing as bad. Don't be jealous. Don't be afraid. Question your own perspective. Don't judge and keep your thoughts positive. You are all courageous adventurers who have a journey that lies ahead of you. Ask and forgive. You can achieve anything you want. We are all human, we are all light. You are anything you want to be. The minute your thoughts change, the world around you changes colour.

"Find the light within."

GARDEN *of* AYDEN

BY SUKAIYNA GOKAL