

# The Hidden Garden

By Ethan Kapoor

The city never stops. It never stops creating, buying, and selling, *moving*. It glows down upon bustling crowds, all energy and momentum, the thrill of the place visible in the air. The clatter of the traffic collides with the chatter of passing pedestrians and the buzz of a thousand deals made and broken has everybody excited and on edge. Blaring horns of cars and the loud screech of the underground trains come together in a symphony of noise. Vendors cut deals with people along the sides of the streets and tourists hustle to catch unforgettable memories on their cameras.

Now, follow me. There is a paradise that few people see in the middle of this busy metropolitan city, away from crowding skyscrapers and breakneck cars. Just there, through the alley and down the boulevard, past the stoops and beyond the corner store. This is an abandoned garden that hasn't been touched by time, tucked between buildings, and concealed behind an overgrown, rusting gate.

Come, I will show you. Follow the path. The sound of the city subsides with every step you take, giving way to a soft murmur from the trees, the twittering of birds and the scurrying of squirrels. The aroma of flowers permeates the air as a gentle breeze twirls through overgrown vegetation.

Nature is king here in this remote haven. Trees reach upward, their leaves a canopy reflecting sunlight and dappled patterns on the ground below. Wildflower petals quiver in the wind, blazing colours that contradicts the city grey.

Shh. Time has stopped here. No deadlines, no schedules, no bosses, no burdens. This secret jewel provides a break from the frenzy of the city for those who are fortunate enough to know it. Take a moment... relax, breathe. Reconnect with the surrounding natural environment. You know this place now, too. The garden is good at hiding its secrets. You know you are here, but no one else need know. It is a whisper, a rumour, a breath on the wind.

The trees stand as silent guardians, their branches outstretched like welcoming arms. Here, you can lose yourself in the labyrinth of winding paths, each turn revealing a new wonder. A small stream gurgles merrily, cutting through the underbrush, its clear waters a stark contrast to the murky depths of the city's river. Butterflies flit from flower to flower, their delicate wings a kaleidoscope of colours.

In this hidden oasis, time seems to slow to a crawl, allowing you to savour every moment, every sensation. The worries of the world fade into insignificance as you immerse yourself in the tranquillity of nature. You may spot a rabbit darting between the bushes or a family of deer grazing in a sunlit clearing.

The beauty of the garden lies not only in its flora and fauna but also in its sense of mystery. Who tended to these plants before they were abandoned? What stories do the weathered benches and crumbling statues hold? The air is thick with the weight of history, and each step feels like a journey into the past.

As you wander deeper into the heart of the garden, you may stumble upon hidden alcoves and forgotten nooks, each one offering a new perspective on this enchanted world. Perhaps you'll find an old fountain, its stone basin cracked and dry, or a vine-covered gazebo where lovers once sought refuge from the outside world.

But beware - for all its beauty, the garden is not without its dangers. Tangled roots trip the unwary traveller, and thorns lurk amidst the foliage, eager to draw blood from careless fingers. And though the city may seem like a distant memory, its presence is never far away. The distant hum of traffic serves as a constant reminder of the world beyond these ivy-covered walls.

Yet despite its flaws, the garden remains a sanctuary for those seeking solace from the chaos of urban life. It is a place of quiet contemplation, where the soul can find rest amidst the clamour of the outside world. And though its existence may be known to only a select few, its magic touches all who enter its hallowed grounds.