

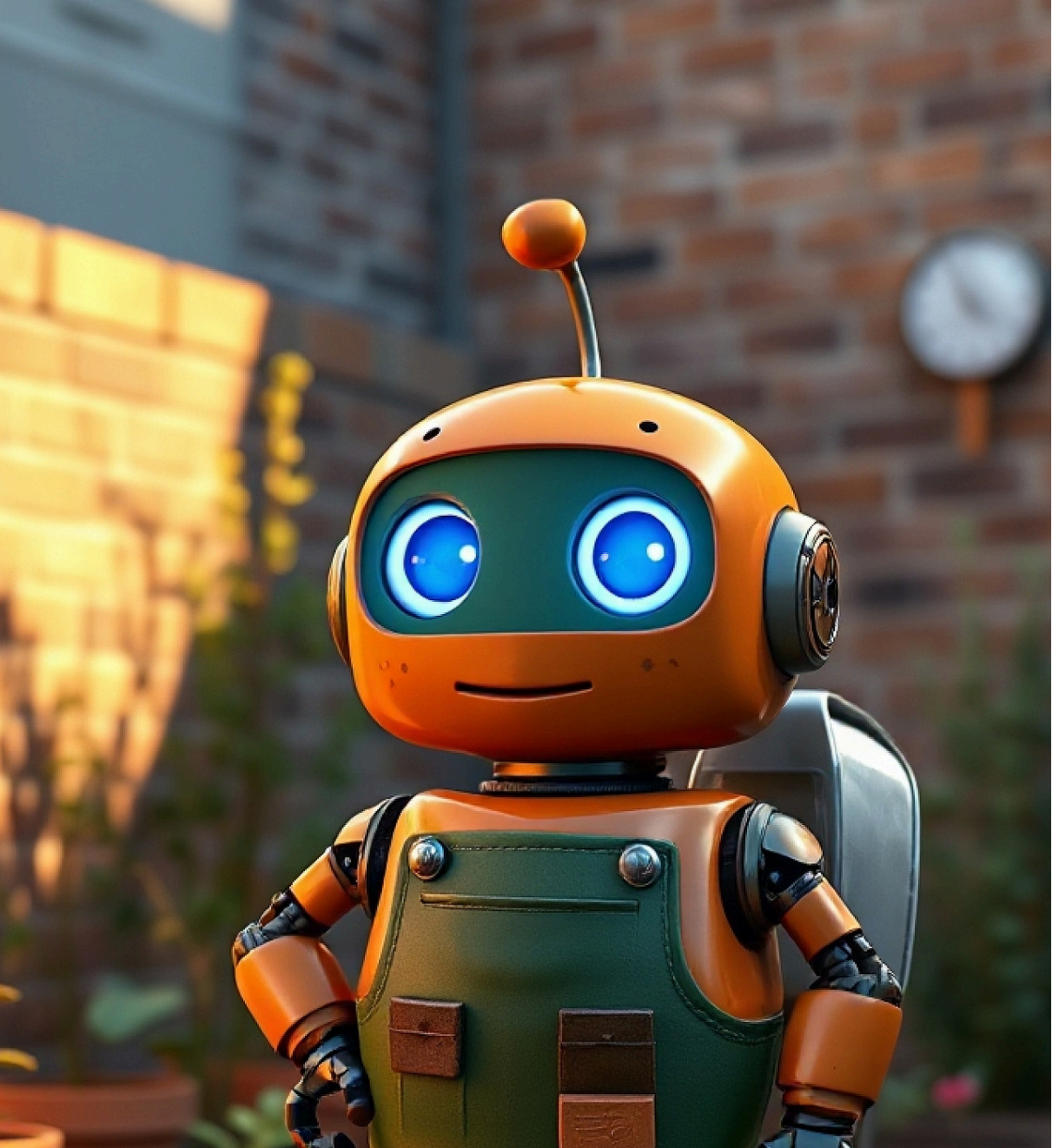
The Robot Gardener



Yavuz DEMİRKİRAN

The Robot Gardener

Yavuz DEMİRKİRAN



In a sunny corner of town, there was a small courtyard with a tall brick wall. Inside lived Rusty, a cheerful robot with a copper-orange body and glowing blue eyes. He wore a green gardening apron and had a tiny watering can on his back. Rusty loved his garden more than anything else in the world. Every day, he measured water and sunlight with perfect precision, certain that rules would make every flower grow.



Rusty's garden was neat and tidy. Rows of flowers stood like little soldiers, each getting exactly the same amount of water and sun. 'Water: one hundred milliliters. Sunlight: six hours. Soil: perfect,' Rusty would say, checking his gauges. He believed that if he followed the rules, every flower would bloom beautifully. But lately, something strange was happening. The flowers were starting to droop, and Rusty could not understand why.



One morning, a girl named Maya walked past the courtyard. She had curly black hair in two puffy buns, bright green eyes, and freckles across her nose. She wore blue overalls over a striped shirt and carried a small canvas bag of gardening tools. Maya noticed the wilting flowers and stopped to look. 'Your flowers look sad,' she said gently. Rusty's blue eyes flickered. 'But I give them everything they need!' he replied, confused.



Maya stepped closer and touched a drooping rose. 'This rose needs more water than the succulents,' she explained. 'And the succulents need less water and more sun. Each plant is different.' Rusty tilted his head, his antenna blinking. 'Different? But my rules say everyone gets the same.' Maya smiled. 'Plants are like people. They all need care, but not the same kind.' Rusty's gears whirled as he tried to understand.



Just then, Grandpa Leo shuffled into the courtyard. He had white hair, a bushy moustache, and a warm smile. He leaned on his wooden walking stick and said, 'I see you've met my young friend Maya. She knows a lot about plants.' Rusty looked at Grandpa Leo. 'My flowers are wilting, and I don't know why.' Grandpa Leo chuckled. 'Maybe it's time to try something new. Maya can help you.'



Maya opened her canvas bag and pulled out a small notebook. 'Let's make a plan,' she said. 'First, we need to check each plant's leaves and soil.' Rusty watched as Maya gently lifted a leaf and felt the dirt. 'This one needs less water,' she said. 'And this one needs more.' Rusty's eyes widened. 'You can tell just by looking?' Maya nodded. 'With practice, you can too.'



Rusty and Maya spent the afternoon together. Maya showed Rusty how to test the soil with his finger and how to look for signs of too much sun. Rusty's precision helped too: he measured exactly how much water each plant needed and kept a chart. 'Teamwork!' said Rusty, his antenna blinking happily. Maya laughed. 'Yes, teamwork makes gardening easier.' They worked side by side until the sun began to set.



The next day, they started early. Rusty watered the thirsty plants while Maya gently pruned the dry leaves. 'Patience is important,' Maya said. 'Plants don't grow overnight.' Rusty nodded, though he was used to quick results. He checked his chart and adjusted the watering can. 'I will be patient,' he promised. They worked quietly, listening to the birds and the soft rustle of leaves.



As days passed, the garden began to change. The drooping flowers stood up straighter. New buds appeared on the rose bush. Rusty's blue eyes glowed with joy. 'They're growing!' he cheered. Maya smiled. 'See? When we give them what they need, they thrive.' Rusty looked at his chart and then at the flowers. 'I guess rules are helpful, but kindness and patience matter more.'



Word spread about the little garden. Neighbors peeked over the wall and smiled. Some brought seeds, and others offered to help. Grandpa Leo brought his old wheelbarrow and some tools. 'Looks like you're building a community garden,' he said. Rusty's apron pocket was full of seed packets. 'We have room for more flowers!' he said. Maya clapped her hands. 'Let's plant them together!'



One afternoon, a strong wind blew through the courtyard. It knocked over a small pot, and the little plant inside looked bruised. Rusty rushed over. 'Oh no! What do we do?' Maya picked up the pot gently. 'We give it extra care. Sometimes plants need a little help to recover.' Rusty nodded. 'Like when I needed help with my flowers.' He carefully replanted the little plant and gave it just the right amount of water.



Grandpa Leo watched from his chair. 'You two make a great team,' he said. 'Rusty, you've learned that caring for nature takes patience and understanding.' Rusty's antenna blinked. 'And kindness,' he added. Maya smiled. 'And teamwork!' They all laughed. The courtyard was no longer just a garden; it was a place where friends worked together and flowers flourished.



Soon, the courtyard was bursting with color. Tall sunflowers nodded in the breeze, and sweet peas climbed the wall. Children from the neighborhood came to help water and weed. Rusty gave each child a small task, and Maya showed them how to be gentle with the plants. 'Everyone has a part to play,' said Rusty. 'Just like every flower has its own needs.'



At the end of the summer, they held a garden party. Grandpa Leo brought lemonade, and Maya baked cookies. Neighbors admired the beautiful flowers and thanked Rusty and Maya. 'You've turned this old courtyard into something special,' said Grandpa Leo. Rusty looked at his friends and the happy flowers. 'It was teamwork,' he said. 'And patience, and kindness.' His blue eyes glowed with pride.



From that day on, Rusty was a different robot. He still measured water and sunlight, but he also listened to the plants. He knew that each one was unique. Maya visited often, and they would sit together, watching the flowers grow. 'You're a real gardener now,' Maya said. Rusty's antenna blinked. 'I had a good teacher,' he replied. The garden buzzed with life and friendship.



And so, the little courtyard became a place of joy. Rusty learned that caring for nature requires patience and understanding. He learned that kindness and teamwork make everything better. The flowers bloomed brightly, and the community grew closer. Every day, Rusty watered his garden with a happy heart, knowing that the best things in life—like flowers and friends—take time to grow.