



The Garden Door Series Book 1 - Part 1

Author: Siddharth Tanikella

Illustrator: Sam van Riet

Level 4

Joe Animo - A ten year old boy with pitch black hair and a crooked nose who loves comic books and shoes. An unusual person who spends his time locked inside his room trying to figure out which comic book he should read for the twelfth time. He is afraid of only one thing. That is a flapper hopper from a comic book. It has 5 eyes and 10 legs. A long neck and a fat head.

Mia Animo - The nine year old troublesome sister of Joe. She loves barbie dolls and spoiling Joe's comic books. She never likes to stay inside which is the complete opposite of her brother. Sometimes she even sleeps outside. She is a fearless and unique girl.

Vedant Agarwal - A curious and abnormal boy whose liking falls on science more than fun. He knows everything though he doesn't admit it. He is eleven years old and spends his time lost in books on space and dictionaries in his window.

Kill Jay Hopper - Despite his name, Kill Jay, a boy of ten is scared of almost everything and wastes his time trying to calm himself from seeing the grinder make a sound. The only person that can calm him down is Cameron, who blabbers out facts about different things that are calm.

Chapter 1 - Party Gone Amiss

'Hey guys! Party at my place in 10 minutes! Don't be late!' declared a short, slightly bony boy to his friends from out the window. Joe Animo had pitch black hair that was set in unmovable curls and he kept trying to move it out of his face. 'Stupid hair.' he muttered under his breath while he trotted back to his room to make preparations for his two friends.

'Ding-dong!' rang the bell. Joe dashed for the door, dreading his friend's arrival. He opened the door and there stood two boys, both who were much taller than his short frame. One held an encyclopedia in a hand and a magnifying glass in the other. The second boy was wiping his wet glasses on his already soaked shirt and he cried and cried without a stop.

'So, what happened to you, Kill Jay? Why are you crying?' asked Joe to the boy with a shirt immersed in water and glasses. 'Well, he started crying after he looked at the stop sign on the road.' answered the other boy called Vedant Agarwal. 'Thank you Cam.' Grumbled Joe signalling something to him which he understood as - I wanted to make Kill Jay talk. 'Oh.' sighed Vedant, looking the other way to avoid Joe's frowns. 'Ok then let's start the party!' roared Joe so hard that Kill Jay already started to cry harder. 'Oh Kill Jay.' sighed Joe as they walked out of the hall and into the air conditioned room.

'Ah, I love the AC on a summer day.' remarked Joe. 'I agree with you.' spoke a finally calm Kill Jay in a satisfied voice. 'Oh here's the cake I ordered for us.' bragged Joe with a smirk. 'Strawberry with our favourite Greg's Gooseberry icing.' he added, which brightened the already glowing smile of the two boys.

'Ya know guys, this might be the best cake that I have ever eaten.' exclaimed Joe, with a full mouth. 'Though maybe the...'. But he was cut off. 'The time when we stopped at a railway shop and had a raspberry cheesecake.' snapped an innocent little girl standing right outside the door. She had black hair and greasy curls just like her brother. That's right. She was the annoying and mischievous sister of Joe. Mia Animo.

'What are you doing here?' asked Joe in a disgusted and irritated tone. 'Well no need to be so rude.' she spoke in a guilt-free style. 'I was just walking to my room when I heard someone talking. I guessed it was your friends so I popped in to say hello to them. Hello!' they waved back. 'Then I remembered the time on the platform and finished your sentence for you.' 'Ok, you said hi to them. Now shoo!' grumbled Joe still furious about her entrance.

'What do you have against her?' asked Vedant. 'She is not that beastly.' he added. 'Oh you haven't seen her real form.' muttered Joe darkly.

'So, won't you give me some cake?' asked Mia. 'No I won't.' growled Joe but Kill Jay was already trying to cut a piece off. 'Oh my god. I just touched a butter knife. Oh no!' howled Kill Jay as Vedant took the knife and cut a piece out for her. As she took it, there was a twink of deceit in her small grey eyes.

What happened next was so sudden, that no one watching it would have believed it. Mia made a swift move of climbing over Vedant, flying over the table, grabbing the cake and dashing for the door. All the three could say was, 'Oh My God!' Then they came to senses and raced out the door following Mia.

'I have searched the whole kitchen, the storeroom, the bedrooms and the hall.' choked out Joe. 'The dining room and terrace were surveyed too.' wheezed Vedant. Kill Jay could only nod. Where could she be? Then it struck Joe! 'THE GARDEN!' he bellowed as he scurried past his shouting mother, out the door and into the backyard.

'There you are, you little brute!' bawled Joe, both his friends glaring at her back with red eyes. She turned. Vedant gasped. Joe opened his mouth with no sound. Kill Jay burst into tears. Her face, now dirtied by bits of cake, was fatter than before with pink cream all over it. In her hand was the empty cake plate from which she now and then licked, to finish the remaining crumbs.

'YOU STUPID GIRL! WAIT TILL MOM HEARS ABOUT THIS!' roared Joe in such a high tone, the birds all over the street flew away and the fathers sitting in the garden drinking tea ran inside spilling it all over their newspapers.

'MOM!' gasped Joe, holding his sister by the hand and dragging her towards the kitchen where his mother and father were sitting, drinking coffee. 'Oh my god Joe! Release her now!' ordered his mother Katherine with a furious look. Joe obeyed. 'Now what is this all about!?' asked his father Lucas. Joe recited the story of how she stole the cake and ate it. In between his parents asked Vedant and Kill Jay if it was true. Vedant nodded but Kill Jay could only mourn and moan.

At the end, Joe's mom looked at her daughter in a serious way and asked her, 'Is this true?' She replied, 'Yes it is mom.' Mrs Animo was fuming with rage. 'Why have you done it?' she asked calming herself down. 'Well I wanted to have some fun and they were not offering me any cake.' she said in an innocent voice. 'As if! We gave her a nice big slice. She just took the whole thing. She lies!' intervened Joe. 'Ok you boys just go from here. Just take this money and go to the shop. Get me some flour and get yourselves treats.' said Mrs Animo, still shaking. 'Fine!' grumbled Joe. As he turned there was a glint of happiness in his eyes.

'Ah, what a charming day it is today. First, having some of that cake, then getting to see mom scolding Mia and now happily having a sundae.' mumbled Joe, his eyes fixed and his mouth filled on a double chocolate, mint and hazelnut ice cream. 'Kill Jay shrugged but Vedant nodded. He was happily filling over cookies and cream. Kill Jay on the other hand was too scared to touch the ice creams and sat there drooling over the others. 'Why don't you get one Kill Jay? So you can stop salivating all over the table.' suggested a nauseated Vedant. 'NO!' he bellowed backing away so hard that he almost toppled off his chair. 'Careful Kill Jay!' yelled Joe.

'That was amazing!' shrieked Vedant as they ran back home, pushing each other to reach first and see what happened to Mia. BAM! They dashed through the door and saw Mia, sweating, tired and walking towards the garden carrying a large sack which smelled almost like a skunk that bathed in dino dung. 'Yuck!' howled Kill Jay, closing his nose and mouth with the first cloth he could find. 'Yuck again!' squealed Vedant, running as far away as possible. 'Yuck again!' screeched Joe, pulling the red faced Kill Jay along to find Vedant.

'Ha Ha!' cheered Mia. 'You people can't even stand this smell. 'Vedant gulped. Was she even human? Living with that smell around her. 'Kill Jay started to weep again. 'YOU! I AM NOT GOING TO LEAVE YOU NOW!' screamed Joe as he paced towards her, whamming his foot onto the floor every time he took a step.

Suddenly, something unexpected took place. Mia started to cry loudly with tears flowing down her eyes like rain in June. 'What in the world?' asked Vedant as Joe started over to her puzzled by this sudden action. 'What's wrong now?' moaned Mr Animo. 'These boys are ganging up on me. Then Joe even hit me!' cried Mia. Then it all came into sense to Joe. She was acting. He immediately replied, 'No I wasn't and I didn't even hit her. I was standing right here!' 'Well it's hard to get who is right but....' He put on his pondering face and thought.

Finally after about ten minutes he replied, 'I think I should believe Mia. It all comes together. I heard some thumping sounds and a few screeches. Then she cried so it adds up.' 'What in the world? Dad! This is injustice to us! We didn't do anything.' pleaded Joe. Kill Jay and Vedant nodded. 'I'm sorry boys, but this just comes together. SO, let's make it a point not to repeat this and help Mia in transporting the compost to the garden.' 'But Dad!' begged Joe. Before he could continue Mr Animo said, 'This is my final decision. Now do it! Next time I hear something like this from Mia, you will clean the attic.' Joe and his friends shivered. The attic was one place that could give even an adult nightmares. It was full of bats and rats. The last time Joe went in was to find his grandad's old CD player. He found many different things like old letters, mouldy shelves and folders that could be mistaken for piles of dust. After that visit, he was not able to sleep alone for at least a week.

'Oh my god! What smell?' wailed Vedant, finally taking the cloth tied as a mask from his face and taking as deep breaths as one could take after staying underwater for five minutes. 'Right you are Vedant!' said Kill Jay with a face covered in something that looked like an old piece of tattered sponge. 'What are you staring at?' he asked. 'I thought that it would absorb all the disgusting smells. Then they wouldn't come to my nose. But there was something wrong with the one I picked. It still let some smell in. At least not as much that could kill me.'

'At least this was better than the attic.' said Joe quivering with fear in his eyes. Kill Jay and Vedant stared at him blankly. Why was he so scared about the attic? He had never mentioned it to both of them at all. His best friends too? What was so special about this attic that made a very brave and daring Joe scared to his depths. They had tried innumerable times to collect this piece of information but failed. If only he would tell them and clear the doubts they had against him.

Chapter 2 - Entering The Attic

'Somehow we have to get this thing out of Joe?' repeated Kill Jay. Vedant nodded as they trotted past the sign that showed the end of the street and the start of the street their own homes were on.

‘But how in the name of Mozart will we do that?’ asked Kill Jay. He had a rather habit of saying Mozart when he was confused. It was bothersome for Vedant but it felt kinda cool to Joe as he always smiled when Kill Jay said that, completely oblivious about the great frown that appeared on his friends face.

‘Just think then, how we can get it out of Joe.’ said Vedant, as they separated ways to their own homes. ‘Fine then. Bye!’ called out Kill Jay but Vedant had already turned his back to him. He waved his hand from behind and ran past the corner.

‘What can I do about it? How do I get it out of him?’ Vedant asked himself while trying to sleep in his small bedroom. It was a mess with a small bed on one edge and science experiments all over the floor. He loved science and was ready to make any excuse to go and mix some baking soda and vinegar. ‘Maybe I’ll leave it for today and think later tomorrow with Kill Jay.’ he said hastily before giving a huge yawn and landing with a soft creak into his bed.

‘Yes! First day of summer holidays!’ Kill Jay cried out as he remembered, to a rather still sleepy Vedant as they walked towards the lane containing the house of the Animo’s. ‘Yes yes. It is.’ repeated Vedant shakily. He was not as normal today. There was something different about his attitude. This attitude’s reason looked like a bad sleep day. In other words Insomnia. There was no talking till they reached Joe’s doorstep.

'Ding Dong!' cried the doorbell. 'Ding Dong!' 'Coming Coming!' came a muffled voice from inside that Vedant guessed to be Joe. There was the sound of a lock turning and slowly, the door opened leaving the usual opening that led through the main corridor. There was no sign of anyone there. 'Joe?' called out Vedant. Kill Jay repeated but more feebly.

Suddenly, there was a foot coming from behind the door. 'G-Ghost!' howled Kill Jay before he started to cry. 'Shut U-up!' said Vedant. But the tone of his voice said that he was scared too. Then a hand was visible. It looked just like Joe's though quite bigger. A little bit of hair was visible, which was pitch black, just like Joe's again. Before the person behind was fully visible to them both closed their eyes tightly.

They felt a pat on their shoulders. After opening their eyes, they saw... Mia! Only, she wasn't herself. There was something peculiar about her. This made her look a little different. At the end, Vedant found out. She had grown taller, much taller than even them.

Suddenly there was a creature, a large creature to them. Though it was actually only to Mia's thigh. They turned around only to see... a cat! How was this possible? A cat? Today was starting to get more and more peculiar. Had they both shrunk? Or had Mia and the cat grown?

His thoughts were disturbed by a snarl. It was the cat. Licking it's whiskers ready to pounce. Something was wrong here too. Normally it would have been Kill Jay crying and Vedant shooing the cat. Kill Jay here was acting funny. Not a tear ran down his face. He was advancing on the cat to shoo it away. Vedant felt something different on his face. Without him wanting it, drops of tears started flowing from his eyes and he started crying!

'No! No! Don't eat me! Please!' wailed Vedant as something nudged his shoulder. He turned to see... his mother? 'W-what?' he stammered. 'Oh! That was a dream.' he said realizing that he hadn't even left his room. 'Oh my god Vedant, that really scared me.' expressed Vedants' mom, still startled. 'Sorry Ma.' he whispered, looking at the clock that showed 5:45 am.

'Ahh!' Vedant uttered, waking up from a rather nice sleep after the disturbance a few hours back. He got off the bed turning his head, looking for his glasses as though blind. 'Ah there they are.' he pronounced, careful not to ram into the side table. He put them on just as something hard fell onto his foot. 'Ouch.' he whispered weakly looking around to see who threw it.

'I'm here Vedant!' came the voice of Kill Jay from somewhere far. 'Here!' There was another stone that came in. This time he realised it was from the window. He looked down to see a stone. Hurling at full speed in the direction of his face. 'AHHHHHH!' yelled Vedant clutching his wound, in the shape of a rabbit and with colours black and blue, right below his left eye. 'Oops.' he could hear Kill Jay say.

'What was the need to throw again?!' asked Vedant grumpily on their way to Joe's house. He made sure to keep a distance of a metre from Kill Jay as they made their way to Alley 2 in North Carolina. 'Wait till Joe hears about this.' muttered Vedant repeatedly under his breath, making disgruntled glances over to the sighing Kill Jay who said the same thing as Vedant though with only lip movement.

'Ding Dong!' rang the bell. 'Ding Dong!' 'Coming coming.' came the same voice Vedant had seen in his dream. Was it going to be real now? He pinched himself. This made him realize it wasn't a dream and was reality. The door opened with the same sounds of turning of the lock and the creak of the door. 'This time Vedant closed his eyes much faster than in his dream.

'Hey Joey!' Vedant heard the voice of Kill Jay next to him. He slowly opened his eyes and saw none other than his friend Joe.

Though he looked gloomy today. Like he had heard something that he had dreaded not to. He took a step back and asked him to turn around to make a quick survey on him to make sure he was the same size. Both of them stared at him inanimately, oblivious about the frightening dream that he had observed.

'You done?' asked Joe, still having the blank face on him. 'Uh, yup.' Vedant answered feeling guilty. His doubts were cleared just as he saw a cat. A cat the size of only to his shin, a little higher than his ankle. He breathed a sigh of relief and trotted into the house.

'Joe, I was thinking and we are your best friends right? So if you would enlighten us with the knowledge of what is there so important or special in your attic-' Joe knew what he was trying to say and said, 'Attic? Oh yes you reminded me, dad said that there are a few old music tapes in the attic and he wants me, no us to go up and find them for him. Then it all made sense to Vedant. He had to go into the attic.

Kill Jay and Vedant felt sorry for Joe but also excited to see the wonders that were waiting for them in the attic. 'So can we go up into your bedroom?' Kill Jay asked. Joe replied, 'Sorry but we have to go straight up to the attic.' Kill Jay had hoped that this should not have been the answer but it was.

Joe stood on his toes and turned the wheel to a number that wasn't clearly visible, but Vedant guessed it to be 101 from the obscure signs. 'Let's go in.' said Joe, still having the gloomy attitude.

Both the boys were horrorstricken after hearing this. First the attic and now Mia coming with them? Vedant hoped the dream itself was reality. They stood there, rooted to the spot while Joe went in and brought Mia out. She was the same size alright but her face showed clear signs of being frightened. 'Let's go everyone.' said Joe, leading the way up the stairs.

After the third floor, the stairs turned darker and dirtier. It felt like no one came there for months. There was a stench of mouldy cheese in the air as they neared the entrance.

They reached the door, Kill Jay already crying. It was much darker and Joe pulled out a torch. 'You had a torch and never brought it out till now?' asked Vedant grumpily, rubbing his shin for he hit it onto an object kept to the side of the stairs. Joe didn't answer. He shone the torch at the door. It was different from the normal ones. It had funny designs all over and left an opening at the top. Vedant looked up. It was the tallest door anyone could have ever seen. He wondered how this tall room hadn't been visible from outside. Easily three times as tall as any adult, the door had no door knob at all. All it had was a very peculiar wheel with numbers written.

On the left side, there was an arrow pointing at the wheel. Being intelligent, Vedant understood what it was about. They had to turn the wheel to the correct number to open. But he also wondered why there had to be a lock for an old attic.

Joe stood on his toes and turned the wheel to a number that wasn't clearly visible, but Vedant guessed it to be 101 from the obscure signs. 'Let's go in.' said Joe, still having the gloomy attitude.

The door didn't open easily. It needed a push from all of them, except for Kill Jay, who refused to touch it, to creak open. A dark abyss was the only thing visible. Joe stepped in but reacted, pulling his foot back out. He turned, took a deep breath and led them in.



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The Garden Door Series

Book 1 - Part 1

(English)

In this part, the three boys and one girl enter the attic and find horrors within.

This is a Level 4 book for children who can read fluently and with confidence.



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