

## Wilderness House Literary Review 7/1

Pam Rosenblatt

### The Gray Wooden House

The flower seeds are packaged in individual envelopes inside a white cardboard box. There are at least one hundred packets filled with tiny round seeds: marigolds, pansies, sunflowers, birds of paradise, blue bonnets, etc.

The girl picks up a pile of the enveloped seeds and drops them back into the box. *These seeds will be easy to sell*, she thinks, holds her little brother's hand.

*Let's go to the neighbors' houses and see if anyone will buy some of these flower seeds*, Jackie, she urges, heads towards the nearest neighbor's home.

A few minutes later, the neighbor's doorbell rings. An elderly man peaks out from behind the door. *Yes?* He queries.

*I'm selling flower seeds. Would you like to buy some packages?*

He asks, *For what organization? And how much?*

*It's for the Girl Scouts. And each package is \$1.00.*

*Not interested. But please come by when you're selling those chocolate mint cookies. Boy, do we love those!* He smiles, pushes the door shut.

The two siblings wander to the next neighbor's home. The doorbell rings, and two young boys answer the door. *Whatcha want?* the tallest boy asks, then calls out, *Mommy, it's the Shaws's kids. Come here, Mommy. Come here quickly!*

A woman appears at the door, wiping her hands on a cloth apron. *Hello, you two. What can I do for you?*

The girl stutters, *I...I...I'm selling flower seeds for the Girl Scouts. Would you like to buy some?*

*Sure, honey*, she replies, *Do you have any pansies, purple and white ones?*

The girl looks and finds them. *How many packages would you like?*

*Let me think. How much are they?*

The girl says, *One dollar per package.*

*I'll take four. Please wait here, and I'll get the money*, the mother says, ushers her children away from the door, heads into the kitchen, and returns with the money.

The girl and her brother walk away from the house, towards a gray wooden house with a staircase that leads to the front porch.

*I'm not going up there*, whines Jackie. *It's creepy!*

The girl takes Jackie's right hand and leads him up the staircase. She opens the porch door. Towels, shoes, tennis racquets, tennis balls, a sled, and empty soda cans are scattered on its wooden floor and against the sides of the porch.

## Wilderness House Literary Review 7/1

*I'm getting out of here, cries Jackie.*

*Stay, Jackie, please stay! I bet we can make some money here!*

The young boy wails, *I'm leaving! Let go of my hand.* The girl keeps squeezing Jackie's hand, pushes the rusty metal doorbell button with her left elbow. *I'm going to tell Daddy on you, Sister! Let me go.*

The girl still holds on tightly to Jackie's hand with her right hand and to the box of flower seeds in her left. *Wait. I hear something creaking. Wait. But no one's answering the door...Peak inside, Jackie, Please peak inside and let me know if someone's coming to answer the door.*

*No!* he says.

*Then I will,* she says.

Jackie struggles to escape. The girl bends towards an open space in the dirty beige curtains attached to the glass window framed by a gray wooden door.

*Oh, my gossh!* she screams, drops the flower seeds box, releases her brother's hand, pushes open the porch's screen door, and sprints down the steps, yelling, *Oh, my gossh....*

Behind her bolts Jackie who cries out, *It's an eyeball! There's a floating eyeball in that house!*

The girl screams, *No, it's a Vampire or something! Let's get out of here!*

A door slams shut, and heavy footsteps echo from the porch towards the two children, who look at each other then run towards their home, with Jackie leading the way.