



Seedfolks by Paul Fleischman

Subjects: Gardens—Juvenile fiction; City and town life—Juvenile fiction; Neighborhood—Juvenile fiction

Awards: Best Books for Young Adults

Book Lists: America, Gifted, Middle School, North America, Reluctant Readers

Props: Lima beans, watering can, container with water

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Thirteen, the number thirteen, an unlucky number, right? Would you agree? Some would say yes, others perhaps no. But in this book of thirteen chapters, thirteen stories of thirteen different people—thirteen turns out to be a lucky number. For these thirteen people will come together to make something out of nothing. How did it begin? Was it fate or luck or chance? No, it was love, a small, simple, private act of love. The love of a small Vietnamese girl for her father.

The little nine-year-old girl, Kim, planted six lima beans (*Hold up beans*) in a vacant lot in the middle of Cleveland for her father. He had passed away two months before she was born. She had not known him and he had not known her. In Vietnam, her father had been a farmer. So, she planted the beans to help her father know her. As he looked down on her, he would see that she too was a farmer. (*Put beans down*) She had chosen her spot carefully. The beans were her special project and no one could see her. She had walked bravely into the vacant lot and hadn't been scared when the rats surprised her. She had found her way past the torn couch and behind the rusty refrigerator. She cleared the trash away, and dug into the ground to make six holes. She planted the beans, covered the holes with dirt, and watered them. (*Hold up watering can*)

That's how it began, the birth of something wonderful was a small girl's act of love. For across the street, in

one of the run down apartments was an old Rumanian woman, Ana, who saw Kim tending to her plants. Ana and her downstairs neighbor, Wendell wanted to help. So Wendell carried water (*Hold up water container*) and then Wendell started his own small garden. He borrowed a shovel from the school where he worked as a janitor and he cleared the trash and planted seeds. And so it grew, almost by accident, completely unplanned. People just happened by, on their way home from work, or school, or because they lived near by, or because they had heard something. They walked by, stopped, stared, smiled, and joined in. For working in the soil, running the dirt through your fingers, filling your nose with its strong, clean scent, seeing those small plants peek up through the dirt, was changing lives. It was healing old wounds, restoring faith in the goodness of life, and bringing people together.

Thirteen different people with different stories, from different countries, of different colors and ages will find joy in planting, in protecting, in helping. Learn who these people are, read their stories, watch their seeds grow and watch as folks come together to build a "paradise", to build something from nothing. (*Hold up book*) *Seedfolks* by Paul Feischman.

