

March, the month of change

It’s the last week of February, and in Clara’s village, the mornings still smell of scarves. When she opened the window, the air pinched her nose, but by midday the sun was already warmer than it had been a few days earlier.

“Mom, what strange weather!” she said one morning, as she buttoned up her coat. “I’m cold… but I also want to take my jacket off.”

Her mother laughed.

“That’s what happens when we’re entering March. It’s still winter, but spring is already starting to make its presence felt.”

Clara liked that idea. The idea of spring “making its presence felt” sounded to her like a secret visitor knocking very softly on the door.

That same day, at school, the teacher arrived with a box full of small envelopes.

“Today we’re going to start something special,” she announced. “Now that March is approaching, each boy and girl will plant a seed. We’ll observe it throughout the month.”

Clara’s eyes widened.

“A seed of what?”

“Sunflower, lettuce, bean… I have many,” said the teacher. “But remember something: in March we still have to be patient. There will be sunny days and windy days, and maybe even a shower. The plants, like us, need to get used to the change.”

When it was her turn, Clara chose a packet that said “peas.” She liked that word, round and fun.

At home, she put the seed in a small pot by the kitchen window. She added a little soil, a little water, and, after thinking about it a lot, a name.

“You’ll be called Verdeta,” she said softly. “Because when you sprout, you’ll be very green.”

Her little brother, Biel, who always wanted to touch everything, tiptoed over.

“Has it sprouted yet?”

“No,” Clara said. “Seeds don’t sprout in a minute.”

“In two minutes?”

“No, not even that.”

“In three?”

Clara sighed, but ended up laughing.

“They need time. And March is just beginning.”

The next morning, Clara got up and ran to check the pot. Nothing. Just damp soil.

“Verdeta, come on…” she whispered. “You can sprout a little.”

That day it was windy. A playful wind that made the branches of the trees on the street dance and pushed the clouds up and down. In the afternoon, it even drizzled for a while.

“With this weather, it’ll never grow!” Clara grumbled.

Grandpa, who was peeling an apple in the kitchen, looked at her over the top of his glasses.

“This is precisely the time of year in March,” he said. “One day it feels like winter, the next like spring. The countryside knows it, and so do the seeds.”

“But I’m not very good at waiting,” Clara confessed.

Grandpa gave her a small piece of apple.

“Well, this month you’ll learn two things: how plants grow… and how patience grows.”

Three days passed. Then four. Every morning, Clara looked at the flowerpot. Every afternoon, a little water. Not too much, not too little, just as the teacher had said. Biel stood beside her and acted as commentator.

“There’s nothing today either.”

“I can see that,” Clara said.

“Maybe Verdeta is sleeping.”

“Maybe so.”

“Maybe she’s snoring.”

On the fifth day, when Clara approached the flowerpot with her usual expression, she suddenly stopped.

“Mother! Mother! Come here!” Come quickly!

A tiny green shoot, as small as a cat’s claw, was sticking out of the soil.

Mom dried her hands with a cloth and smiled.

“Look at her… She’s awake.”

Biel opened his mouth.

“It’s Verdeta!”

Clara bent down so low her nose almost touched the soil.

“Hello…” she said softly, as if she didn’t want to scare her.

From that day on, looking at the flowerpot became the best part of the morning. Some days Verdeta barely changed, and Clara grew impatient. Other days it seemed as if it had secretly grown during the night.

One Saturday in March, the sun was shining brightly, and it was nice on the balcony. Clara put the flowerpot outside for a while so it could get some light.

“Not too long,” said her mother, “it’s still chilly.”

“And why is the weather like this in March?” asked Biel. Sun… cold… wind… rain… all mixed together!

The mother pointed to the sky.

“Because we’re still between seasons. Winter hasn’t completely left, and spring hasn’t quite arrived yet. It’s like when you trade one toy for another and you have both in your hands at the same time.”

Biel looked thoughtful.

“So, March has two hands.”

“Exactly,” Clara said. “One cold hand and one warm hand.”

That afternoon, it suddenly started to rain, with large drops pattering against the railing. Clara quickly brought the flowerpot inside and placed it on the windowsill.

“Don’t worry, Verdeta,” she said. “I’ll take care of you.”

On Monday, in class, the teacher asked how the seeds were doing. Some students hadn’t seen anything yet and were a little sad; others already had a small stem.

Clara raised her hand.

“Mine has sprouted, but I had to wait a long time.”

“When is ‘a long time’?” the teacher asked, smiling.

Clara thought about it.

“Five days… which felt like fifteen.”

The whole class laughed.

The teacher nodded.

“That’s also what March is about. It teaches us that new things don’t all arrive on the same day. But when they do, we value them more.”

That night, as the sky turned orange and the birds made more noise than usual, Clara looked out the window. Small buds were appearing on the trees along the street. Yellow flowers had bloomed in the neighbor’s flowerbed. And in her pot, Verdeta already had two small leaves that looked like ears.

“Mom,” Clara said, “I think I can feel spring.”

Mom kissed her on the head.

“Yes, but still slowly. It’s still March.”

Clara looked at her plant and smiled.

“I like it that way. It’s like a surprise that lasts for many days.”

And from that year on, every time March arrived and the weather was a bit unpredictable, Clara no longer said it was strange. She said it was the month of two hands: a cold hand saying goodbye to winter and a warm hand inviting spring in.

And here is a seed, here is a March, this story has ended… but Verdeta continued to grow a little more each day.