

The Blue Lettuce

By

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FADE IN:

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

DAVID GIVEN (65), a small man with a kind face, who is capable of sticking up for himself, dressed in dirty farming clothes, limply paces around the table, occasionally takes a glimpse at his watch in agitation.

An empty money jar sits on the counter next to a rent eviction letter.

A quote picture frame hangs on the worn wall reads: "A fool is a fool. A farmer is no fool."

The sparse food cupboards are damaged and some of the tiles on the floor are missing or cracked.

Next to a bag of rusty gardening tools on the table, a newspaper headline reads: "ENVIROTECH HELPS SMALL FARMS."

David watches as a hand on his watch ticks over a minute, and then picks up his bag of gardening tools and heads outside.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - MORNING

David's farm is the only functioning one in the area. The others are abandoned and lifeless with dead crops.

David's small isolated farm consists of six vegetable patches, half of which are diseased or dead.

A battered wooden fence surrounds the house and farm.

A broken wooden gate leads to a dirt road towards a futuristic city in the distance.

A far cry from the farm.

David heads towards his lettuce patch, while ritualistically glancing over at the field adjacent to his farm.

MAGGIE ROSE (67), a tall stern, confident and domineering woman, wearing a shabby dress with a threadbare straw hat walks her Shih Tzu, DAFFODIL (3).

David reaches his lettuce patch.

MAGGIE (O.S.)
Good morning, David!

DAVID
Good morn-

David eyes his lettuce patch with confusion and fear.

Maggie picks up Daffodil and hurries over.

Maggie pants as she and David's eyes are fixated on the patch.

Maggie's mouth opens wide, opens, closes and then opens again.

Her confusion turns to anger.

There are ten lettuces: six of which are dead, three of them are greenish-brownish, and in the middle, a blue lettuce.

David and Maggie are speechless.

Maggie holds onto Daffodil tightly, clearly concerned for the well-being of her pet.

David takes out his gardening gloves from the tool bag and places the bag on the ground.

David carefully moves onto the plank running through the middle of the patch.

He slowly bends down to examine the blue lettuce, without touching it.

He sees no sign of green on the lettuce, just blue.

His hand slowly moves closer to the lettuce.

Maggie can see what is about to happen.

She carefully moves onto the plank next to David while holding gently onto Daffodil with one hand, and with the other slaps David's hand, preventing him from touching it.

David observes Maggie's scared face, infatuated with the lettuce, in a trance-like state.

David gets up and heads into the house with Maggie following.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - AFTERNOON

The sun is higher in the sky as David and Maggie impatiently scrutinize the path leading to the city.

They stand by the blue lettuce, giving it a precarious glint occasionally.

Daffodil rests in Maggie's arms.

DAVID
I appreciate this, but you don't
have to stay-

MAGGIE

The CEO'S son, David! Just you wait until he gets here! Enough is enough, I want my say. These big corporations think they can do what they want, to whom they want!

David nods gratefully.

A BMW-I8 soars towards the house sending dirt swirling into the air, the backdrop of the big city prominent.

Daffodil has now woken due to the sound of the loud BMW engine and loud music coming from the car.

INT. BMW-I8 - MOVING CAR - AFTERNOON

CHARLES WINTON (28), a tall immature snobbish suited man with the word "EnviroTech" on his suit wears expensive sunglasses, listens to 50 Cent: In Da Club on full blast.

He confidently nods to the music and taps his hands on the steering wheel.

His phone rings and he lets go of the steering wheel as the car continues towards the farm.

He takes the phone out from his suit pocket.

The screen says "Father" with a picture of CHARLES WINTON SR (58), another snobbish man wearing a suit with the word "EnviroTech" on it.

The music continues to play loudly as Charles answers it.

CHARLES

(into phone)

What up, Dad?

Charles starts to excitedly move his head from side to side, jamming to the music.

FATHER (V.O)

(into phone)

Where are you? I need you to run an errand for me before the press gets here...

CHARLES

(into phone)

Alright, alright. I'll be done with this old man soon. He sounded like a nutter, I shouldn't be too long.

Charles hangs up the phone and puts it in his pocket.

Not bothering to put his hands back on the steering wheel, he continues to dance to the music using his hands.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - AFTERNOON

Charles exits the car.

He does up his suit button, surveys the area in distaste, takes out a comb from his pocket, and combs his stylish and lavish hair, almost as if to protect it from the environment of the farmland.

As he prowls over to David and Maggie, he takes out a handkerchief, covering his mouth.

Daffodil barks sharply at Charles.

Maggie simply pats her.

David holds out his hand.

DAVID
Thank you for coming on such short
notice, Charles.

Charles pockets his handkerchief.

He eyes the hand but doesn't take it.

Charles stares at his watch, then frowns at Maggie and Daffodil in confusion.

He sighs impatiently and turns to the blue lettuce, smirking.

CHARLES
Well-

MAGGIE
Now, you listen to me, you.

Charles yawns at Maggie and raises his eyebrows.

He takes off his sunglasses, a menacing pair of eyes.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Your tech, gadgets, and gizmos have
ruined too many farms! You fiddle
with nature, you break the natural!
Did you ever think about us? Now,
look at what you have done!

Maggie madly points at the blue lettuce and then at the abandoned farms in the area.

Daffodil barks as if she were egging Maggie on.

Charles ignores them.

David notices that Charles' impatience is bordering on the edge of departure as he stares at his BMW, clearly wishing to get into his car and drive away from this place.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Now-

David intervenes.

DAVID

Thank you for your support, Maggie.

Maggie knows this is a polite cue for her to leave and kindly nods to David.

She then stares at Charles, lifts her head high and moves away, with Charles half-irritated, half relieved.

Charles notes his watch and then turns his attention to the blue lettuce for a mere second.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Look, when I signed up for this tech programme I was promised pristine crops.

Charles takes out of his suit pocket a small iPad and loads up Da Streets, a shoot-em-up game.

David peeks deeply concerned at the blue lettuce.

CHARLES

Promised is a bit of a strong word.

DAVID

Yes, you promised. I trusted your company. My farm is now a wreck.

David and Charles observe the farm, which is dying and then at the blue lettuce.

David and Charles' eyes meet.

Charles finds the exchange funny.

He goes back to the game, killing four civilians with a shotgun.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Not only my poor farm but dear Maggie's farm, too.

Charles doesn't stare up from his game.

He sees a farmer character and brutally kills him with his shotgun and shoots him a few more times, even after he has been killed.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I wish I hadn't got the product
installed.

Charles rolls his eyes, unconcerned by David's complaint.

CHARLES
That's not my fault, is it?

DAVID
But you lied. EnviroTech was
supposed to be the best
technological crop development out
there. A blue lettuce and a dying
farm are what I get.

Charles, annoyed, has had enough of David's complaining.

CHARLES
Well, I don't think there's
anything I can do here. Much more
pressing issues to be dealing
with...

A message pops up on the screen of his iPad from his father
saying, "Hurry up...the PRESS!"

Charles replies to the message, "On my way."

Charles puts his sunglasses back on and pries at his car.

David stares concernedly at the blue lettuce.

Then turns his attention to his dilapidated farmhouse and the
failed crops around him.

Charles pockets the iPad and stomps toward his car, ignoring
David's desperation.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
(under his breath)
That's enough nutters for one
day...

Charles reaches his car.

He presses a button on his keys.

The stylish door to the BMW-I8 opens.

Charles is about to step into the BMW, as David calls:

DAVID
(O.S.)
I think the press would find this
blue lettuce very interesting,
don't you think?

An unexpected change in Charles' posture, who stops halfway getting into the car, paralysed.

He frowns and steps out.

He strides over to David, his demeanour very different.

He shows worry for the first time.

CHARLES
What did you say?

DAVID
You heard me.

Charles prospects David.

CHARLES
You're bluffing.

David smiles.

Charles grows red.

DAVID
I'm not.

Charles scoffs.

David strides toward his house.

Charles glances at his car, then at his phone, then to the house, and then to the city.

David keeps walking.

Charles grows redder and runs his hands through his stylish and lavish hair, ruining it.

Charles hears a PING from his suit pocket.H

He takes out his phone.

Another message from his father, "HURRY UP! THE PRESS!"

Charles gazes at David walking away and then glances back at the message on his phone.

David has reached his house.

Charles peers back at his car.

David puts his hand on the doorknob and turns it slowly.

Charles, frustrated, runs his hands through his hair again, marks David and then at the city, and then at David.

David turns the doorknob further.

CHARLES (O.S.)

Wait!

Charles is defeated.

David smiles.

He takes his hand off the doorknob.

He turns to check back at Charles.

Charles has taken out his chequebook from his suit pocket and leans on his car to hastily write out a cheque, swearing under his breath as he does.

He pockets his chequebook.

David reaches Charles.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

This should settle it.

Charles reluctantly hands the cheque to David, who speculates the amount.

DAVID

I was thinking triple this,
actually.

David ogles directly into Charles' eyes.

Charles squints impatiently back at him while a vicious rage of annoyance crosses his face.

His hair is no longer stylish and lavish, but a mess; his face radiates like a tomato.

Charles no longer appears like the man who came to David's farm, the arrogance and coolness gone.

Charles sighs angrily and takes his chequebook out of his pocket again, but this time with aggression ripping part of his suit jacket, without caring.

He quickly writes out the cheque for triple the previous amount.

He forces it into David's hand, examining him with vengeance.

David nods and stares at Charles.

Charles hurries back to his BMW and gets in.

Within seconds, he's speeding away towards the city where a storm brews in contrast to David's farm, a beautiful sunset rests on the horizon.

David doesn't take his eyes off the car until it is gone.

David studies the cheque amount again and then at the blue lettuce, smiles, and turns to go inside.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

David places the cheque safely in his pocket.

He then goes to the quote picture frame "A fool is a fool. A farmer is no fool" and opens it, revealing a hidden compartment.

David goggles up at the compartment.

A bottle of blue paint sits next to a bottle of gold paint.

He picks out the bottle of blue paint and nods happily at it as if congratulating it for a job well done.

He puts the blue paint back into the compartment.

He takes out the gold paint.

He then scopes towards his green spinach patch, then back at the gold paint and smiles.

FADE OUT.

THE END