



Chapter 1

Zola Angelica lives with her mum and her Nonna Rosa.

They live in a little house, in a little street, in a little suburb, in the middle of a **big** city.

You've probably seen her house. It's number twelve Boomerang Street.

It's called **Bella Rosa**.

During the summertime,
the front garden is bursting
with red, orange, yellow, white
and blue flowers.

Most days, kids on bikes,
and dads with prams, and



mums who jog, and the lady
who delivers mail, stop to
look and smell and touch
and smile.



Zola's house has a little bedroom especially built for her upstairs. From there, she can see all the houses around them.

Zola's younger cousin Alessandro lives in the house behind her.

Most afternoons, when Alessandro isn't visiting his father's house, they play in each other's backyards.

Their Nonno Nino once

cut a little door into the fence
between their homes.

He wanted Zola and
Alessandro to always feel as if
they could be together.

Zola and Alessandro miss
their Nonno Nino.

‘I hope he can still see us,’
Alessandro says, whenever
they do something
that reminds
them of their
grandfather.



At night, they signal to each other from their bedroom windows with their solar lanterns.

Zola knows that the word **solar** has to do with the **sun**. Every day, she reminds Alessandro to put his lantern outside so the sun can give it power.

They sway the lantern first to the left and once to the right and then to the left again.

Just like Nonno Nino taught
them.

Outside, Zola's dog,
Monty, barks goodnight to
Alessandro's dog, Gigi, who
howls at the moon.



Zola is in class 2B.

Every morning her mum drops her and Alessandro off at school. Mummy has to rush off to work most days.

‘Be kind and have fun,’ she says every time.

Zola’s school is being rebuilt this year. For now, 2B is across the road.

The sign there says **St Odo’s Community Gardens.**

Zola thinks that’s strange.

There are weeds and little else.
In no way does it look like a
garden.





‘Who knows anything
about gardening?’
Ms Divis asks while
they sit having their
crunch and sip under the
Moreton Bay fig tree.

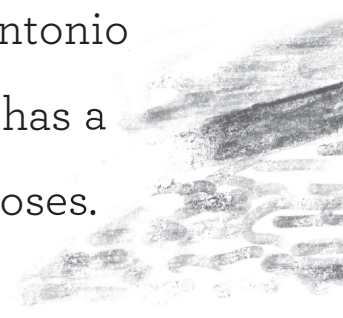
Zara puts up her hand.

‘We need seeds,’ she says.

‘And soil?’ Mia says.

‘Water,’ shouts out Charley.

‘Zola would know,’ Antonio
says. ‘Her Nonna Rosa has a
garden with beautiful roses.’





‘My mum says it’s the best
in the neighbourhood.’

Everyone in 2B looks at
Zola.

She feels her face getting
warm.



‘Zola, can you tell us
something about this garden?’

Ms Divis says.

Zola thinks for a moment.

‘When we have a shower,
Nonna makes us collect the
water in a bucket so she can
use it on her capsicums.’

Everyone laughs.

‘Yuck!’ says Giovanni.

‘Why doesn’t she use a
hose?’ Zara asks.

Zola shrugs.

Zola doesn't listen much
when her Nonna Rosa talks
about the garden.

'Because Zola's grandmother
is trying not to waste water,'
Ms Divis says.

'Can we have a garden?'
Arianna asks.

'With sunflowers!'

'Lavender!'

'Strawberries!'

Everyone calls out at once.

But Ms Divis doesn't mind.

She just smiles and says,
'Maybe.'



