THE CHRYSANTHEMUM GARDEN
Audience: Adult / Female / Male / International / Multicultural
Genres: Drama / Romance / Spiritual / Psychological / Tragedy / Rebirth / Inspirational
Tone: Lyrical, restrained, emotionally immersive, visually poetic
Settings: Present Day – Suburban America, Silicon Valley, Kyoto Past – Tokyo during WWII, Imperial Gardens

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LOGLINE
After her new husband is killed in a jealous act during the pandemic, a widowed Japanese woman isolated in America spirals into an alcohol-fueled misery, until a prayer delivers an elderly gardener who teaches her before new life can bloom, the dead must be uprooted, forcing her to pick despair or the miracle growing within her.

THE STORY
Misaki leaves Kyoto for Silicon Valley seeking independence, reluctantly accepting the proposal of her wealthy childhood friend, Shota. At a company event she meets Jack, an American client whose warmth and integrity awaken a love rooted in equality and shared reverence for nature. As their relationship deepens, Shota's affection curdles into obsession – surveillance, control, possession. When Misaki ends the engagement and chooses Jack, humiliation hardens into vengeance.

As the Covid pandemic seals borders and Misaki's mother dies overseas the night before she marries Jack – in a fragile ceremony suspended between grief and hope. Days later, Shota stabs Jack to death in the nwewly planted chrysanthemum garden – a memorial for her mother. Lockdown traps Misaki alone in a silent house, unable to return home. Guilt and isolation pull her inward. Alcohol dulls the ache as Jack's garden withers into neglect. Faith feels distant. The world feels closed.

Staring into the abyss, Misaki whispers a final desperate prayer. The next morning, Yomo – an elderly gardener and survivor of wartime Tokyo – arrives to tend the dying garden Jack once entrusted to him. Through the patient ritual of uprooting dead roots and replanting living ones, he teaches Misaki that healing requires courage, not forgetting. When she discovers she is pregnant – a miracle once thought impossible – she must decide whether to follow death into silence or nurture the fragile life within her. As spring emerges, a single green stem breaks through dark soil. The garden blooms in defiant color. And Misaki blossoms with it.

WHY IT STANDS OUT
- Cross-cultural love story shattered by obsession, restored through faith
- Female-centered study of grief, choice, rebirth
- Pandemic isolation as an intimate emotional trial
- Visually poetic garden metaphor anchoring the emotional journey

MAIN CHARACTERS
- **Misaki** – Resilient, independent who overcomes love, control and devastating loss to begin again.
- **Jack –** His quiet strength, humor, smile offers partnership rooted in respect, nature, admiration.
- **Shota** – Wealthy, entitled, emotionally fragile; wounded pride escalates into deadly obsession.
- **Yomo** – An elderly nurseryman and WWII survivor whose wisdom bridges her grief and renewal.

EMOTIONAL CORE
- The silence of widowhood
- Isolation during collective crisis
- Faith born from desperation
- Motherhood as renewal, not replacement
- Blooming in the darkest soil

THEMES
- Love vs. possession
- Death and rebirth
- Faith through suffering
- Healing as a deliberate act

COMPARABLES (POSITIONING)
- **Minari** – land as survival, intimate cultural storytelling
- **Manchester by the Sea** – devastating grief rendered with restraint
- **Blue Valentine** – portrait of love fractured by loss
- **Pieces of a Woman** – female-centered psychological unraveling after tragedy
- **The Secret Garden** – restoration of land mirroring renovation of self
- **Nomadland** – quiet resilience after loss

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