



FAMILY COMPANION

The Night the Garden Went Quiet

Parent & Caregiver Guide

A story about listening closely

Maya knows the sounds of Grandmother Marigold’s garden. When the humming, fluttering, chirping, and whirring disappear, she begins asking questions. With patience and careful observation, Maya discovers that the garden needs flowers for different visitors at different times - and then helps welcome them back.

How to use this guide

- Read the book together first, or return to favorite pages as you try the activities.
- Follow your child’s questions. The goal is curiosity, not getting every answer right.
- Use a porch, yard, garden, park, sidewalk, or even a window view. You do not need a large garden.
- Repeat activities on different days. Gardens and outdoor spaces change with weather, time, and season.

Ideas to notice while you read

SOUNDS Which sounds make the garden feel alive?	CLUES What does Maya notice when the garden becomes quiet?
QUESTIONS How does Maya’s thinking change as she learns more?	WELCOME What does the garden eventually provide for its visitors?

Conversation Prompts

Use these questions during or after reading. There are no “perfect” answers - encourage your child to explain what they noticed.

Before the garden goes quiet

- What sounds do you think Maya hears every morning?
- Which garden visitor would you most like to watch: a bee, butterfly, hummingbird, or moth? Why?
- Why do you think Maya keeps a notebook?

When something is wrong

- What is the first clue that tells Maya the garden has changed?
- How do you think Maya feels when her first ideas do not bring the pollinators back?
- What does Maya do instead of giving up?
- Why is “The pollinators are not lost” an important discovery?

When Maya learns about the nectar gap

- Why did the garden become quiet even though many plants were still there?
- What is different about flowers that bloom in spring, summer, autumn, daytime, and nighttime?
- Why might different visitors need different flowers?

After the garden begins to sing again

- Which part of Maya and Grandmother Marigold’s new garden plan helped the visitors return?
- What does it mean to make a garden “a welcome for someone”?
- What could we change in our own outdoor space to make it more welcoming?

A gentle family connection

Maya solves the mystery by listening, observing, asking questions, checking old information, and trying again. When your child gets frustrated by a problem, connect back to Maya: “What clue could we look for next?”

Try this: Tell the story in five moments

1	The garden sings: Name or imitate the sounds Maya knows.
2	The garden goes quiet: Describe what has disappeared.
3	Maya investigates: Choose one clue she follows.
4	The garden makes a new plan: Name something Maya and Grandmother add.
5	The visitors return: Describe one sound or visitor that comes back.

Simple Backyard & Neighborhood Activities

These activities mirror Maya's way of learning: notice first, record clues, compare, and wonder.

1. Take a Listening-Bench Minute

Sit quietly together for one or two minutes. You can use a bench, porch step, blanket, or open window.

- Count how many different sounds you hear.
- Sort them: animal, plant/wind, people, or machines.
- Ask: "Which sound would you miss if it disappeared?"

2. Become Garden Detectives

Bring a notebook like Maya. Draw or write what you notice without needing to identify everything by name.

- One flower or plant that is blooming
- One visitor you see - insect, bird, spider, or something else
- One thing that has changed since your last visit
- One question you want to investigate later

3. Make a Family Bloom Calendar

Choose a few plants you can see regularly. Once a week, mark whether each one has buds, open flowers, fading flowers, or no flowers. Over time, your child can see that blooming happens in seasons rather than all at once.

4. Compare Day and Night

Maya learns that daytime and nighttime visitors may depend on different flowers. Compare the same outdoor space at two different times.

- What is open? What is closed?
- Which sounds are louder or quieter?
- Which visitors are present?
- What stays the same?

5. Make Maya's Water Station

Use a shallow dish and smooth stones, like the water dish Maya adds to the garden. Place the stones so there are dry landing spots above the water. Check the dish with an adult and refresh it regularly.

Keep it child-led

If your child wants to draw instead of write, invent names for mystery insects, count petals, or simply sit and listen, that still fits the spirit of the story. Maya begins with attention, not a worksheet.

Ways to Support Pollinators at Home

The book's solution focuses on creating a garden that offers food, water, and shelter across different times.

Build a “welcome” in three parts

FOOD	WATER	SHELTER
Choose flowers that do not all bloom at the same time. Maya and Grandmother plan early blossoms, summer flowers, late-blooming asters, trumpet-shaped flowers, and moonflowers.	Add a shallow water dish with smooth landing stones, following the idea Maya uses in the story.	Leave some dry stems and fallen leaves in a small patch, just as Maya does to create shelter in the restored garden.

A one-week family garden challenge

- ☐ **Day 1:** Listen for one minute and write down three sounds.
- ☐ **Day 2:** Find one flower and draw it in a notebook.
- ☐ **Day 3:** Watch for a garden visitor without touching or chasing it.
- ☐ **Day 4:** Look for a plant with buds, open blooms, or fading blooms.
- ☐ **Day 5:** Check the same place at a different time of day.
- ☐ **Day 6:** Add or refresh a shallow water station with an adult.
- ☐ **Day 7:** Choose one way your family can make the space more welcoming.

Our family garden promise

We will keep listening.

We will notice what is blooming, watch for visitors, care for water and shelter, and remember that a healthy garden does not have to look or sound the same every day.

One last question for your child

“What do you think our outdoor space is trying to tell us today?”

Return to this question through the seasons. Like Maya, your child may notice something new each time.