

Name: _____

The Queen of the Night


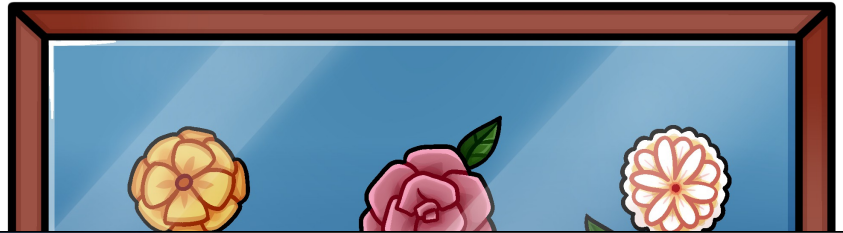
by Anita N. Amin

Grandma stared out her bedroom window. "No flowers, no trees - just concrete and cars. Time to go home." Her cane rapped the floor as she turned to face Madison and Dad.

"This is your home now," Dad said.

"And you've got lots of squished flowers." Madison pointed to the artwork Grandma had brought from her old home. Frames and frames of squished flowers sat upright on the floor against the wall.

"Pressed flowers, Madison."
Grandma pinched a flower off her
windowsill violet. She showed



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She uprooted the flower and pressed it at home. A week later, the petals were flat, brittle, and delicate like the butterfly wing she had once found on a school trip at the botanical gardens. She gently lifted the pressed flower and glued it onto paper. She framed it with cardboard and presented it to Grandma.

"It's lovely." Grandma studied it.

"I was thinking..." Madison told Grandma about the botanical gardens. The next day, they took a train there.

Grandma smiled one minute, harrumphed the next. She stopped to inspect some ivy-

wrapped trees. "They remind me of the Queen of the Night," she said. "I haven't missed her show in fifty years – until now."

Just then, the manager stopped to welcome them.

But Grandma proceeded to advise him on how to take better care of his gardens.

"We could really use your expertise," he said, offering her a volunteer job.

"I'll consider it," Grandma said.

That evening, Grandma phoned her best friend. They talked about a lot of things, including maybe volunteering at the gardens.

"Will she visit us some time?" Madison asked after Grandma had hung up.



wants to meet with us."

They drove past skyscrapers, then pastures. Finally, their car kicked up a cloud of gray dust as it wobbled and crunched down Grandma's gravel driveway.

The realtor was inside, reviewing a list. "We have a buyer with a list of demands."

Grandma stopped smiling. While Dad and the realtor talked, she drifted from room to room, her cane sinking into the carpet. Her fingers brushed a wall, a countertop, as she looked around and sighed.

The screen door creaked open, and Grandma wandered outside. Madison followed, tiny moths fluttering up out of the weeds.

Dad and the realtor were studying a vine-covered tree.

"The vine will have to go," the realtor said, checking her list.

Grandma frowned. "The Queen of the Night? We can't destroy it! One night a year, this cactus is covered with the most beautiful white, fragrant blossoms. They're as big as

honeydews. People come from miles to watch them bloom.”

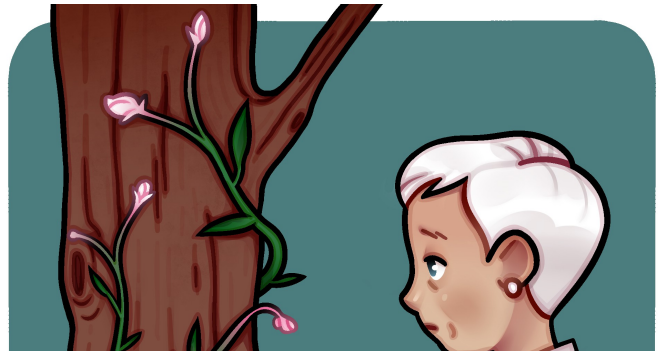
Grandma shook her head. “My grandmother passed this treasure down. I wanted my son and granddaughter to have it, but there’s no room in the city.”

“Maybe there *is* room,” Madison said, a thought suddenly striking her. “At the botanical gardens! But how do we take this whole vine there?”

We don’t - we just need part of it.” Grandma snapped a piece of cactus off and wrapped it in her handkerchief.

The next day, they visited the manager at the botanical gardens.

When he seemed unsure, Madison continued, “You could have a fundraiser and sell stem cuttings...”



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A banner featuring a cartoon superhero with brown hair, wearing a blue suit and a red cape with a white shield emblem containing the letters 'M.S.' He is flying through a blue sky with white clouds. To the right of the superhero is a white speech bubble containing the word 'Preview' in large red letters, followed by the text 'Please log in to download the printable version of this worksheet.'

“Maybe we can press one of the flowers when it blooms. You know, so it stays forever.”

Grandma nodded. She stared down for a while. Finally, she brushed off her hands. “Time to plant new roots,” she said and her cane clicked across the pavement as they headed home.

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1. In the beginning of the story, how does Grandma feel about her new home in the city?

2. Based on what you read in the story, describe one of Grandma's interests.



4. Why do Dad, Madison, and Grandma go back to Grandma's house in the country?

5. At the end of the story, Grandma says, "Time to plant new roots." What does she mean when she says this?

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Fill in the missing letters to form a vocabulary word from the article. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. f__a__r__n__

hint: having a sweet or pleasant smell

2. __nc__cl____edi__

hint: book that provides information on a variety of subjects



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hint: an event held to raise money for a cause, charity, or organization

6. e__p__ __ti__e

hint: expert knowledge

7. h__n__ __er__hie__

hint: a small square of fabric that serves the same purpose as a tissue

8. __eal__o__

hint: real estate agent

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In the story, "The Queen of the Night," Madison helps her grandma feel more at home in the city when she comes to live with her family. One of the ways Madison helps her grandma feel more at home is by helping her find a new home for the Queen of the Night flower that is so special to her grandma.



With an adult's permission, use the Internet to research three interesting facts about the Queen of the Night flower.

Write down the website you used for your research below.



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Website I used for research: _____

ANSWER KEY

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1. In the beginning of the story, how does Grandma feel about her new home in the city?

Grandma feels discontent. She doesn't feel at home. She wants to go back to her home.

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hint: a small square of fabric that serves the same purpose as a tissue

8. **r e a l t o r**

realtor

hint: real estate agent

LK