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Support Inferences About Theme

In a short story, the theme, or the underlying message, usually develops and emerges through inference. An inference is a logical conclusion based on clues in the text as well as on your own experience. To uncover the theme, begin by analyzing the story's title. Then, look for clues in the text that indicate what the title might mean. Be aware of the possibility that the title may have multiple meanings. By keeping a list of clues. You can create a summary of supporting inferences that will help you to determine the story's theme.

Read the following excerpt and answer the questions.

The Forgotten Garden

Maya discovered the abandoned garden behind her grandmother's house during her first summer visit. Hidden behind tall hedges and a rusty gate, the once-beautiful space was now overgrown with weeds and wild roses that climbed the crumbling stone walls.

"This was your great-grandmother's pride," Grandmother explained, her eyes reflecting memories from long ago.

"After the war, when everyone had lost so much, she created beauty from nothing. People came from all over town to see it, to remember that life continues even after great sorrow."

Maya spent her days clearing paths and uncovering stone

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benches. As she worked, neighbors began to stop by. Mr. Jenkins brought cuttings from his prized dahlias. Mrs. Patel shared seeds from vegetables that had grown in her family's garden for generations.

"This garden connected us all once," said old Mrs. Wilson, who brought Maya lemonade one hot afternoon. "We'd forgotten what it meant to be a community until your great-grandmother showed us how to grow things together."

By summer's end, the garden bloomed again. On the evening before Maya returned to the city, her grandmother hosted a gathering in the garden. Under string lights hanging from ancient oak branches, neighbors shared stories of the past and made plans for keeping the garden alive.

"You've done more than restore plants," Grandmother whispered to Maya. "Some things, once remembered, can never truly be forgotten again."

1. How does the author use the garden as a symbol in the story?

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2. What theme is suggested by the neighbors' contributions to Maya's garden restoration?

3. What inference can you make about the story's theme regarding memory and community?

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Support Inferences About Theme-**Answer Key**

1. How does the author use the garden as a symbol in the story?

The theme of community connection and shared healing is suggested by neighbors contributing plants and supporting Maya's efforts to restore a once-meaningful space.

2. What theme is suggested by the neighbors' contributions to Maya's garden restoration?

The garden symbolizes renewal, healing after hardship, and the power of community memory. It represents how beauty and connection can emerge after neglect and isolation.

3. What inference can you make about the story's theme regarding memory and community?

The theme suggests that remembering shared history can rebuild community bonds and that meaningful traditions, once revived, can continue to unite people across generations.