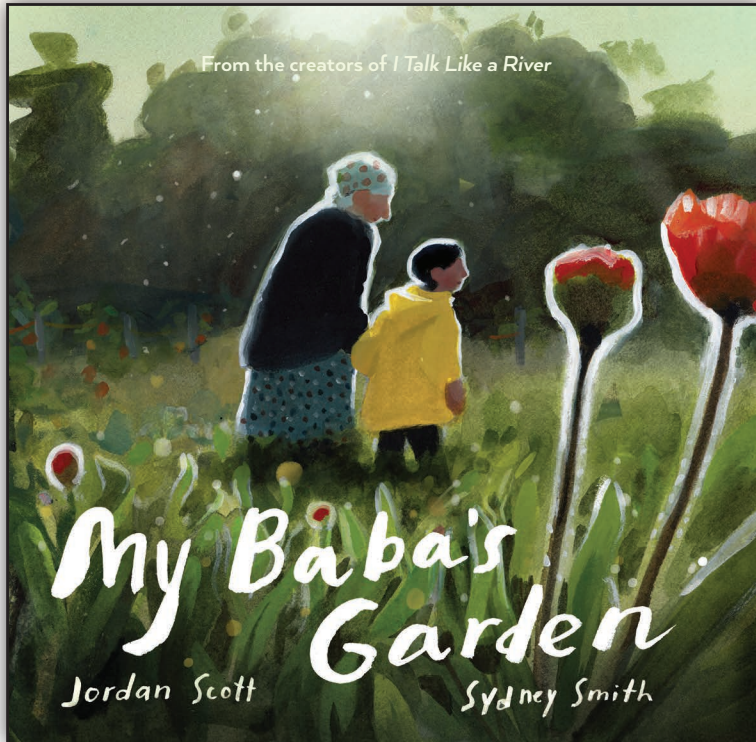


HOLIDAY HOUSE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



My Baba's Garden

by Jordan Scott

illustrated by Sydney Smith

ABOUT THE BOOK

The special relationship between a child and his grandmother is depicted in this sumptuous book by an award-winning team.

Inspired by memories of his childhood, Jordan Scott's *My Baba's Garden* explores the sights, sounds, and smells experienced by a child spending time with their beloved grandmother (Baba), with special attention to the time they spent helping her tend her garden, searching for worms to keep it healthy. He visits her every day and finds her hidden in the steam of boiling potatoes, a hand holding a beet, a leg opening a cupboard, an elbow closing the fridge, humming like a night full of bugs when she cooks.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Study the cover art and title of the book. Identify the person telling the story. Who is the other character? Read aloud "My Baba" at the beginning of the book. Explain what this reveals about the story. Remember that mood is a feeling one gets from reading a story. What is the mood of this story?
- The author explains that Baba is from Poland, and that her family suffered during World War II. Describe Baba's chicken coop. How does she make use of the small space? Discuss whether the way she lives is shaped by her life in the war zone of Poland.

- Look closely at the first double-page spread. Whose hands are holding the picture? Who drew the picture? Locate the picture later in the book. Discuss the importance of where the boy hangs the picture. What does the picture reveal about the boy's relationship with Baba?
- Describe the things that Baba grows in her garden. Why does she collect worms? What does the boy learn from Baba about growing things? Explain why he plants the seeds of the sun-gold cherry tomatoes outside Baba's window. Why does the boy walk in the rain at the end of the book? Discuss the meaning of the last sentence in the book: "I pick up every worm I can."
- Study the illustration on p. 28 & 29. Why does the boy look so sad? Note the big buildings in the background. Symbolism is an idea that is represented by something else. It appears that a tree is growing from the top of the boy's head. What do you think this illustration symbolizes? Discuss the meaning of the pages with no words.
- The boy and Baba don't talk very much. How does she speak to him with gestures? Explain how he knows exactly what her gestures mean. At the end of the book, the boy helps take care of Baba. Why does he kiss the apple slice?

Guide created by Pat Scales, retired school librarian and independent consultant, Greenville, South Carolina.

ABOUT THE CREATORS



Jordan Scott is a poet whose work includes *Silt*, *Blert*, *Decomp*, and *Night & Ox*. *Blert*, which explores the poetics of stuttering, is the subject of two National Film Board of Canada projects, *Flub* and *Utter: a poetic memoir of the mouth* and *Stutter*. Scott was the recipient of the 2018 Latner Writers' Trust Poetry Prize for his contributions to Canadian poetry. He lives in the Comox Valley on Vancouver Island with his wife and two sons.



Sydney Smith is an illustrator of picture books whose work includes *Sidewalk Flowers* by JonArno Lawson, *The White Cat and the Monk* by Jo Ellen Bogart, and *Town Is by the Sea* by Joanne Schwartz, which was awarded the 2018 Kate Greenaway Medal and the 2018 TD Canadian Children's Literature Award. He both wrote and illustrated *Small in the City*, which *Kirkus Reviews* called "Extraordinary, emotional, and beautifully rendered" in a starred review. His accolades include two Governor General's Awards for Illustrated Children's Books and four successive *New York Times* Best Illustrated Children's Book of the Year citations.