CASSETTE AVAILABLE

THE SECRET GARDEN

Little Mary Lennox is a bad-tempered, disagreeable child. When her parents die in India, she is sent back to England to live with her uncle in a big, lonely, old house.

There is nothing to do all day, except walk in the gardens – and watch the robin flying over the high walls of the secret garden . . . which has been locked for ten years. And no one has the key.

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STAGE 3 1000 HEADWORDS

Frances Hodgson Burnett THE SECRET GARDEN



The Secret Garden

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THE SECRET GARDEN
Stage 3

'We're alike, you and me,' old Ben Weatherstaff said to Mary. 'We're not pretty to look at and we're both very disagreeable.'

Poor Mary! Nobody wants her, nobody likes her. Her parents have died, and she is sent home from India to live in her uncle's house in Yorkshire. It is a big old house, with nearly a hundred rooms, but most of them are shut and locked. Mary is cross and bored, and lonely. There is nothing to do all day, and no one to talk to, except old Ben Weatherstaff, the gardener.

But then Mary learns about the secret garden. The door is locked and hidden, and the key is lost. No one has been inside the secret garden for ten years – except the robin, who flies over the wall. Mary watches the robin, and wonders where the key is . . .

And then there is that strange crying in the night, somewhere in the house. It sounds like a child crying . . .

Frances Hodgson Burnett was born in 1849 and died in 1924. From the age of sixteen she lived mostly in the USA, but often returned to England. She was a writer all her life and wrote many books, but *The Secret Garden* is her most famous story.

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The Secret Garden

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Illustrated by
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1
Little Miss Mary

Nobody seemed to care about Mary. She was born in India, where her father was a British official. He was busy with his work, and her mother, who was very beautiful, spent all her time going to parties. So an Indian woman, Kamala, was paid to take care of the little girl. Mary was not a pretty child. She had a thin angry face and thin yellow hair. She was always giving orders to Kamala, who had to obey. Mary never thought of other people, but only of herself. In fact, she was a very selfish, disagreeable, bad-tempered little girl.

One very hot morning, when she was about nine years old, she woke up and saw that instead of Kamala there was a different Indian servant by her bed.



Mary saw that there was a different Indian servant by her bed.

'What are *you* doing here?' she asked crossly. 'Go away! And send Kamala to me at once!'

The woman looked afraid. 'I'm sorry, Miss Mary, she – she – she can't come!'

Something strange was happening that day. Some of the house servants were missing and everybody looked frightened. But nobody told Mary anything, and Kamala still did not come. So at last Mary went out into the garden, and played by herself under a tree. She pretended she was making her own flower garden, and picked large red flowers to push into the ground. All the time she was saying crossly to herself,

'I hate Kamala! I'll hit her when she comes back!'

Just then she saw her mother coming into the garden, with a young Englishman. They did not notice the child, who listened to their conversation.

'It's very bad, is it?' her mother asked the young man in a worried voice.

'Very bad,' he answered seriously. 'People are dying like flies. It's dangerous to stay in this town. You should go to the hills, where there's no disease.'

'Oh, I know!' she cried. 'We must leave soon!'

Suddenly they heard loud cries coming from the servants' rooms, at the side of the house.

'What's happened?' cried Mary's mother wildly.

'I think one of your servants has just died. You didn't tell me the disease is *here*, in your house!'

'I didn't know!' she screamed. 'Quick, come with me!'



'You didn't tell me the disease is here, *in your house!'*

And together they ran into the house.

Now Mary understood what was wrong. The terrible disease had already killed many people in the town, and in all the houses people were dying. In Mary's house it was Kamala who had just died. Later that day three more servants died there.

All through the night and the next day people ran in and out of the house, shouting and crying. Nobody thought of Mary. She hid in her bedroom, frightened by the strange and terrible sounds that she heard around her. Sometimes she cried and sometimes she slept.

When she woke the next day, the house was silent.

'Perhaps the disease has gone,' she thought, 'and everybody is well again. I wonder who will take care of me instead of Kamala? Why doesn't someone bring me some food? It's strange the house is so quiet.'

But just then she heard men's voices in the hall.

'How sad!' said one. 'That beautiful woman!'

'There was a child too, wasn't there?' said the other. 'Although none of us ever saw her.'

Mary was standing in the middle of her room when they opened the door a few minutes later. The two men jumped back in surprise.

'My name is Mary Lennox,' she said crossly. 'I was asleep when everyone was ill, and now I'm hungry.'

'It's the child, the one nobody ever saw!' said the older man to the other. 'They've all forgotten her!'

'*Why* was I forgotten?' asked Mary angrily. '*Why* has nobody come to take care of me?'

The younger man looked at her very sadly. 'Poor child!' he said. 'You see, there's nobody left alive in the house. So nobody *can* come.'

In this strange and sudden way Mary learnt that both her mother and her father had died. The few servants who had

not died had run away in the night. No one had remembered little Miss Mary. She was all alone.

Because she had never known her parents well, she did not miss them at all. She only thought of herself, as she had always done.

'Where will I live?' she wondered. 'I hope I'll stay with people who'll let me do what I want.'

At first she was taken to an English family who had known her parents. She hated their untidy house and noisy children, and preferred playing by herself in the garden. One day she was playing her favourite game, pretending to make a garden, when one of the children, Basil, offered to help.

'Go away!' cried Mary. 'I don't want your help!'

For a moment Basil looked angry, and then he began to laugh. He danced round and round Mary, and sang a funny little song about Miss Mary and her stupid flowers. This made Mary very cross indeed. No one had ever laughed at her so unkindly.

'You're going home soon,' said Basil. 'And we're all very pleased you're leaving!'

'I'm pleased too,' replied Mary. 'But where's home?'

'You're stupid if you don't know that!' laughed Basil. 'England, of course! You're going to live with your uncle, Mr Archibald Craven.'

'I've never heard of him,' said Mary coldly.

'But *I* know about him because I heard Father and Mother talking,' said Basil. 'He lives in a big lonely old

house, and has no friends, because he's so bad-tempered. He's got a crooked back, and he's horrid!'

'I don't believe you!' cried Mary. But the next day Basil's parents explained that she was going to live with her uncle in Yorkshire, in the north of England. Mary looked bored and cross and said nothing.



'He's got a crooked back, and he's horrid!'

After the long sea journey, she was met in London by Mr Craven's housekeeper, Mrs Medlock. Together they travelled north by train. Mrs Medlock was a large woman, with a very red face and bright black eyes. Mary did not like her, but that was not surprising, because she did not usually like people. Mrs Medlock did not like Mary either.

'What a disagreeable child!' thought the housekeeper. 'But perhaps I should talk to her.'

'I can tell you a bit about your uncle if you like,' she said aloud. 'He lives in a big old house, a long way from anywhere. There are nearly a hundred rooms, but most of them are shut and locked. There's a big park round the house, and all kinds of gardens. Well, what do you think of that?'

'Nothing,' replied Mary. 'It doesn't matter to me.'

Mrs Medlock laughed. 'You're a hard little girl! Well, if *you* don't care, Mr Craven doesn't either. He never spends time on anyone. He's got a crooked back, you see, and although he's always been rich, he was never really happy until he married.'

'Married?' repeated Mary in surprise.

'Yes, he married a sweet, pretty girl, and he loved her deeply. So when she died—'

'Oh! Did she die?' asked Mary, interested.

'Yes, she did. And now he doesn't care about anybody. If he's at home, he stays in his room and sees nobody. He won't want to see *you*, so you must stay out of his way and do what you're told.'

Mary stared out of the train window at the grey sky and the rain. She was not looking forward to life at her uncle's house.

The train journey lasted all day, and it was dark when they arrived at the station. Then there was a long drive to get to the house. It was a cold, windy night, and it was raining heavily. After a while Mary began to hear a strange, wild noise. She looked out of the window, but could see nothing except the darkness.

'What's that noise?' she asked Mrs Medlock. 'It's – It's not the sea, is it?'

'No, that's the moor. It's the sound the wind makes, blowing across the moor.'



'It's the sound the wind makes, blowing across the moor.'

'What is a moor?'

'It's just miles and miles of wild land, with no trees or houses. Your uncle's house is right on the edge of the moor.'

Mary listened to the strange, frightening sound. 'I don't like it,' she thought. 'I don't like it.' She looked more disagreeable than ever.

2
Mary in Yorkshire

They arrived at a very large old house. It looked dark and unfriendly from the outside. Inside, Mary looked around the big shadowy hall, and felt very small and lost. They went straight upstairs. Mary was shown to a room where there was a warm fire and food on the table.

'This is your room,' said Mrs Medlock. 'Go to bed when you've had some supper. And remember, you must stay in your room! Mr Craven doesn't want you to wander all over the house!'

When Mary woke up the next morning, she saw a young servant girl cleaning the fireplace. The room seemed dark and rather strange, with pictures of dogs and horses and ladies on the walls. It was not a child's room at all. From the window she could not see any trees or houses, only wild land, which looked like a kind of purple sea.

'Who are you?' she asked the servant coldly.

'Martha, miss,' answered the girl with a smile.

'And what's that outside?' Mary continued.

'That's the moor,' smiled Martha. 'Do you like it?'

'No,' replied Mary immediately. 'I hate it.'

'That's because you don't know it. You *will* like it. I love it. It's lovely in spring and summer when there are flowers. It always smells so sweet. The air's so fresh, and the birds sing so beautifully. I never want to leave the moor.'

Mary was feeling very bad-tempered. 'You're a strange servant,' she said. 'In India we don't have conversations with servants. We give orders, and they obey, and that's that.'

Martha did not seem to mind Mary's crossness.

'I know I talk too much!' she laughed.

'Are you going to be *my* servant?' asked Mary.

'Well, not really. I work for Mrs Medlock. I'm going to clean your room and bring you your food, but you won't need a servant except for those things.'

'But who's going to dress me?'

Martha stopped cleaning, and stared at Mary.

'Tha' canna' dress thysen?' she asked, shocked.

'What do you mean? I don't understand your language!'

'Oh, I forgot. We all speak the Yorkshire dialect here, but of course you don't understand that. I meant to say, can't you put on your own clothes?'

'Of course not! My servant always used to dress me.'

'Well! I think you should learn to dress yourself. My mother always says people should be able to take care of

themselves, even if they're rich and important.'

Little Miss Mary was furious with Martha. 'It's different in India where I come from! You don't know anything about India, or about servants, or about anything! You . . . you . . . ' She could not explain what she meant. Suddenly she felt very confused and lonely. She threw herself down on the bed and started crying wildly.



Martha stopped cleaning, and stared at Mary.

'Now, now, don't cry like that,' Martha said gently. 'I'm very sorry. You're right, I don't know anything about anything. Please stop crying, miss.'

She sounded kind and friendly, and Mary began to feel better and soon stopped crying. Martha went on talking as she finished her cleaning, but Mary looked out of the window in a bored way, and pretended not to listen.

'I've got eleven brothers and sisters, you know, miss. There's not much money in our house. And they all eat so much food! Mother says it's the good fresh air on the moor that makes them so hungry. My brother Dickon, he's always out on the moor. He's twelve, and he's got a horse which he rides sometimes.'

'Where did he get it?' asked Mary. She had always wanted an animal of her own, and so she began to feel a little interest in Dickon.

'Oh, it's a wild horse, but he's a kind boy, and animals like him, you see. Now you must have your breakfast, miss. Here it is on the table.'

'I don't want it,' said Mary. 'I'm not hungry.'

'What!' cried Martha. 'My little brothers and sisters would eat all this in five minutes!'

'Why?' asked Mary coldly.

'Because they don't get enough to eat, that's why, and they're always hungry. You're very lucky to have the food, miss.' Mary said nothing, but she drank some tea and ate a little bread.

'Now put a coat on and run outside to play,' said



'I don't want it,' said Mary. 'I'm not hungry.'

Martha. 'It'll do you good to be in the fresh air.'

Mary looked out of the window at the cold grey sky. 'Why should I go out on a day like this?' she asked.

'Well, there's nothing to play with indoors, is there?'

Mary realized Martha was right. 'But who will go with me?' she said.

Martha stared at her. 'Nobody. You'll have to learn to play by yourself. Dickon plays by himself on the moors for hours, with the wild birds, and the sheep, and the other animals.' She looked away for a moment. 'Perhaps I shouldn't tell you this, but – but one of the walled gardens is locked up. Nobody's been in it for ten years. It was Mrs Craven's garden, and when she died so suddenly, Mr Craven locked it and buried the key – Oh, I must go, I can hear Mrs Medlock's bell ringing for me.'

Mary went downstairs and wandered through the great empty gardens. Many of the fruit and vegetable gardens had walls round them, but there were no locked doors. She saw an old man digging in one of the vegetable gardens, but he looked cross and unfriendly, so she walked on.

'How ugly it all looks in winter!' she thought. 'But what a mystery the locked garden is! Why did my uncle bury the key? If he loved his wife, why did he hate her garden? Perhaps I'll never know. I don't suppose I'll like him if I ever meet him. And he won't like me, so I won't be able to ask him.'

Just then she noticed a robin singing to her from a tree on the other side of a wall. 'I think that tree's in the secret garden!' she told herself. 'There's an extra wall here, and there's no way in.'

She went back to where the gardener was digging, and spoke to him. At first he answered in a very bad-tempered way, but suddenly the robin flew down near them, and the old man began to smile. He looked a different person then, and Mary thought how much nicer people looked when they smiled. The gardener spoke gently to the robin, and the



Just then she noticed a robin.

pretty little bird hopped on the ground near them.

'He's my friend, he is,' said the old man. 'There aren't any other robins in the garden, so he's a bit lonely.' He spoke in strong Yorkshire dialect, so Mary had to listen carefully to understand him.

She looked very hard at the robin. 'I'm lonely too,' she said. She had not realized this before.

'What's your name?' she asked the gardener.

'Ben Weatherstaff. I'm lonely myself. The robin's my only friend, you see.'

'I haven't got any friends at all,' said Mary.

Yorkshire people always say what they are thinking, and old Ben was a Yorkshire moor man. 'We're alike, you and me,' he told Mary. 'We're not pretty to look at, and we're both very disagreeable.'

Nobody had ever said this to Mary before. 'Am I really as ugly and disagreeable as Ben?' she wondered.

Suddenly the robin flew to a tree near Mary and started singing to her. Ben laughed loudly.

'Well!' he said. 'He wants to be your friend!'

'Oh! Would you please be my friend?' she whispered to the robin. She spoke in a soft, quiet voice and old Ben looked at her in surprise.

'You said that really nicely!' he said. 'You sound like Dickon, when he talks to animals on the moor.'

'Do you know Dickon?' asked Mary. But just then the robin flew away. 'Oh look, he's flown into the garden with no door! Please, Ben, how can I get into it?'

Ben stopped smiling and picked up his spade. 'You can't, and that's that. It's not your business. Nobody can find the door. Run away and play, will you? I must get on with my work.' And he walked away. He did not even say goodbye.



Ben stopped smiling and picked up his spade.

In the next few days Mary spent almost all her time in the gardens. The fresh air from the moor made her hungry, and she was becoming stronger and healthier. One day she noticed the robin again. He was on top of a wall, singing to her. 'Good morning! Isn't this fun! Come this way!' he seemed to say, as he hopped along the wall. Mary began to laugh as she danced along beside him. 'I know the secret garden's on the other side of this wall!' she thought

excitedly. 'And the robin lives there! But where's the door?'

That evening she asked Martha to stay and talk to her beside the fire after supper. They could hear the wind blowing round the old house, but the room was warm and comfortable. Mary only had one idea in her head.

'Tell me about the secret garden,' she said.

'Well, all right then, miss, but we aren't supposed to talk about it, you know. It was Mrs Craven's favourite garden, and she and Mr Craven used to take care of it themselves. They spent hours there, reading and talking. Very happy, they were. They used the branch of an old tree as a seat. But one day when she was sitting on the branch, it broke, and she fell. She was very badly hurt and the next day she died. That's why he hates the garden so much, and won't let anyone go in there.'

'How sad!' said Mary. 'Poor Mr Craven!' It was the first time that she had ever felt sorry for anyone.

Just then, as she was listening to the wind outside, she heard another noise, in the house.

'Can you hear a child crying?' she asked Martha.

Martha looked confused. 'Er – no,' she replied. 'No, I think . . . it must be the wind.'

But at that moment the wind blew open their door and they heard the crying very clearly.

'I told you!' cried Mary.

At once Martha shut the door. 'It was the wind,' she repeated. But she did not speak in her usual natural way, and Mary did not believe her.

The next day it was very rainy, so Mary did not go out. Instead she decided to wander round the house, looking into some of the hundred rooms that Mrs Medlock had told her about. She spent all morning going in and out of dark, silent rooms, which were full of heavy furniture and old pictures. She saw no servants at all, and was on her way back to her room for lunch, when she heard a cry. 'It's a bit like the cry that I heard last night!' she thought. Just then the housekeeper, Mrs Medlock, appeared, with her keys in her hand.



Just then Mrs Medlock appeared.

'What are you doing here?' she asked crossly.

'I didn't know which way to go, and I heard someone crying,' answered Mary.

'You didn't hear anything! Go back to your room now. And if you don't stay there, I'll lock you in!'

Mary hated Mrs Medlock for this. 'There *was* someone crying, I know there was!' she said to herself. 'But I'll discover who it is soon!' She was almost beginning to enjoy herself in Yorkshire.

3

Finding the secret garden

When Mary woke up two days later, the wind and rain had all disappeared, and the sky was a beautiful blue.

'Spring'll be here soon,' said Martha happily. 'You'll love the moor then, when it's full of flowers and birds.'

'Could I get to the moor?' asked Mary.

'You've never done much walking, have you? I don't think you could walk the five miles to our cottage!'

'But I'd like to meet your family,' Mary said.

Martha looked at the little girl for a moment. She remembered how disagreeable Mary had been when she first arrived. But now, Mary looked interested and friendly.

'I'll ask Mother,' said Martha. 'She can always think of a good plan. She's sensible and hardworking and kind – I know you'll like her.'

'I like Dickon, although I've never seen him.'

'I wonder what Dickon will think of you?'

'He won't like me,' said Mary. 'No one does.'

'But do you like yourself? That's what Mother would ask.'

'No, not really. I've never thought of that.'

'Well, I must go now. It's my day off, so I'm going home to help Mother with the housework. Goodbye, miss. See you tomorrow.'

Mary felt lonelier than ever when Martha had gone, so she went outside. The sunshine made the gardens look different. And the change in the weather had even made Ben Weatherstaff easier to talk to.

'Can you smell spring in the air?' he asked her. 'Things are growing, deep down in the ground. Soon you'll see little green shoots coming up – young plants, they are. You watch them.'



'Soon you'll see little green shoots coming up.'

'I will,' replied Mary. 'Oh, there's the robin!' The little bird hopped on to Ben's spade. 'Are things growing in the garden where he lives?'

'What garden?' said Ben, in his bad-tempered voice.

'You know, the secret garden. Are the flowers dead there?' She really wanted to know the answer.

'Ask the robin,' said Ben crossly. 'He's the only one who's been in there for the last ten years.'

Ten years was a long time, Mary thought. She had been born ten years ago. She walked away, thinking. She had begun to like the gardens, and the robin, and Martha and Dickon and their mother. Before she came to Yorkshire, she had not liked anybody.

She was walking beside the long wall of the secret garden, when a most wonderful thing happened. She suddenly realized the robin was following her. She felt very pleased and excited by this, and cried out, 'You like me, don't you? And I like you too!' As he hopped along beside her, she hopped and sang too, to show him that she was his friend. Just then he stopped at a place where a dog had dug a hole in the ground. As Mary looked at the hole, she noticed something almost buried there. She put her hand in and pulled it out. It was an old key.

'Perhaps it's been buried for ten years,' she whispered to herself. 'Perhaps it's the key to the secret garden!'

She looked at it for a long time. How lovely it would be to find the garden, and see what had happened to it in the last ten years! She could play in it all by herself, and nobody would know she was there. She put the key safely in her pocket.



It was an old key.

The next morning Martha was back at Misselthwaite Manor, and told Mary all about her day with her family.

'I really enjoyed myself. I helped Mother with the whole week's washing and baking. And I told the children about you. They wanted to know about your servants, and the ship that brought you to England, and everything!'

'I can tell you some more for next time,' offered Mary. 'They'd like to hear about riding on elephants and camels, wouldn't they?'

'Oh, that would be kind of you, miss! And look, Mother has sent you a present!'



'They'd like to hear about riding on elephants and camels, wouldn't they?'

'A present!' repeated Mary. How could a family of fourteen hungry people give anyone a present!

'Mother bought it from a man who came to the door to sell things. She told me, "Martha, you've brought me your pay, like a good girl, and we need it all, but I'm going to buy something for that lonely child at the Manor," and she bought one, and here it is!'

It was a skipping-rope. Mary stared at it.

'What is it?' she asked.

'Don't they have skipping-ropes in India? Well, this is how you use it. Just watch me.'

Martha took the rope and ran into the middle of the room. She counted up to a hundred as she skipped.

'That looks lovely,' said Mary. 'Your mother is very kind. Do you think I could ever skip like that?'

'Just try,' said Martha. 'Mother says it'll make you strong and healthy. Skip outside in the fresh air.'

Mary put her coat on and took the skipping-rope. As she was opening the door, she thought of something and turned round.

'Martha, it was your money really. Thank you.' She never thanked people usually and she did not know how to do it. So she held out her hand, because she knew that adults did that.

Martha shook her hand and laughed. 'You're a strange child,' she said. 'Like an old woman! Now run away and play!'

The skipping-rope was wonderful. Mary counted and



Mary skipped and counted until her face was hot and red.

skipped, skipped and counted, until her face was hot and red. She was having more fun than she had ever had before. She skipped through the gardens until she found Ben Weatherstaff, who was digging and talking to his robin. She wanted them both to see her skip.

'Well!' said Ben. 'You're looking fine and healthy today! Go on skipping. It's good for you.'

Mary skipped all the way to the secret garden wall. And there was the robin! He had followed her! Mary was very pleased.

'You showed me where the key was yesterday,' she laughed. 'I've got it in my pocket. So you ought to show me the door today!'

The robin hopped on to an old climbing plant on the wall, and sang his most beautiful song. Suddenly the wind made the plant move, and Mary saw something under the dark green leaves. The thick, heavy plant was covering a door. Mary's heart was beating fast and her hands were shaking as she pushed the leaves away and found the key-hole. She took the key out of her pocket, and it fitted the hole. Using both hands, she managed to unlock the door. Then she turned round to see if anyone was watching. But there was no one, so she pushed the door, which opened, slowly, for the first time in ten years. She walked quickly in and shut the door behind her. At last she was inside the secret garden!

It was the loveliest, most exciting place she had ever seen. There were old rose trees everywhere, and the walls were covered with climbing roses. She looked carefully at the grey branches. Were the roses still alive? Ben would know. She hoped they weren't all dead. But she was *inside* the wonderful garden, in a world of her own. It seemed very strange and silent, but she did not feel lonely at all. Then she noticed some small green shoots coming up through the grass. So something was growing in the garden after all! When she found a lot more shoots in different places, she decided they needed more air and light, so she began to pull out the thick grass around them. She worked away, clearing the ground, for two or three hours, and had to take her coat off because she got so hot. The robin hopped around, pleased to see someone gardening.



It was the loveliest, most exciting place Mary had ever seen.

She almost forgot about lunch, and when she arrived back in her room, she was very hungry and ate twice as much as usual. 'Martha,' she said as she was eating, 'I've been thinking. This is a big, lonely house, and there isn't much for me to do. Do you think, if I buy a little spade, I can make my own garden?'

'That's just what Mother said,' replied Martha. 'You'd enjoy digging and watching plants growing. Dickon can get you a spade, and some seeds to plant, if you like.'

'Oh, thank you, Martha! I've got some money that Mrs Medlock gave me. Will you write and ask Dickon to buy them for me?'



'Dickon can get you some seeds to plant.'

'I will. And he'll bring them to you himself.'

'Oh! Then I'll see him.' Mary looked very excited. Then she remembered something. 'I heard that cry in the house again, Martha. It wasn't the wind this time. I've heard it three times now. Who is it?'

Martha looked uncomfortable. 'You mustn't go wandering around the house, you know. Mr Craven wouldn't like it. Now I must go and help the others downstairs. I'll see you at tea-time.'

As the door closed behind Martha, Mary thought to herself, 'This really is the strangest house that anyone ever lived in.'

4
Meeting Dickon

Mary spent nearly a week working in the secret garden. Each day she found new shoots coming out of the ground. Soon, there would be flowers everywhere – thousands of them. It was an exciting game to her. When she was inside those beautiful old walls, no one knew where she was.

During that week she became more friendly with Ben, who was often digging in one of the vegetable gardens.

'What are your favourite flowers, Ben?' she asked him one day.

'Roses. I used to work for a young lady who loved roses, you see, and she had a lot in her garden. That was ten years ago. But she died. Very sad, it was.'

'What happened to the roses?' asked Mary.

'They were left there, in the garden.'

'If rose branches look dry and grey, are they still alive?' asked Mary. It was so important to know!

'In the spring they'll show green shoots, and then – But why are you so interested in roses?' he asked.

Mary's face went red. 'I just . . . wanted to pretend I've got a garden. I haven't got anyone to play with.'

'Well, that's true,' said Ben. He seemed to feel sorry for her. Mary decided she liked old Ben, although he was sometimes bad-tempered.

She skipped along and into the wood at the end of the

gardens. Suddenly she heard a strange noise, and there in front of her was a boy. He was sitting under a tree, playing on a wooden pipe. He was about twelve, with a healthy red face and bright blue eyes. There was a squirrel and a crow in the tree, and two rabbits sitting on the grass near him.



There was a squirrel and a crow in the tree, and two rabbits sitting on the grass near him.

'They're listening to the music!' thought Mary. 'I mustn't frighten them!' She stood very still.

The boy stopped playing. 'That's right,' he said. 'Animals don't like it if you move suddenly. I'm Dickon and you must be Miss Mary. I've brought you the spade and the seeds.'

He spoke in an easy, friendly way. Mary liked him at once. As they were looking at the seed packets together, the robin hopped on to a branch near them. Dickon listened carefully to the robin's song.

'He's saying he's your friend,' he told Mary.

'Really? Oh, I am pleased he likes me. Can you understand everything that birds say?'

'I think I do, and they think I do. I've lived on the moor with them for so long. Sometimes I think I *am* a bird or an animal, not a boy at all!' His smile was the widest she had ever seen.

He explained how to plant the seeds. Suddenly he said, 'I can help you plant them! Where's your garden?'

Mary went red, then white. She had never thought of this. What was she going to say?

'Could you keep a secret? It's a great secret. If anyone discovers it, I'll . . . I'll die!'

'I keep secrets for all the wild birds and animals on the moor. So I can keep yours too,' he replied.

'I've stolen a garden,' she said very fast. 'Nobody goes into it, nobody wants it. I love it and nobody takes care of it! They're letting it die!' And she threw her arms over her face and started crying.

'Don't cry,' said Dickon gently. 'Where is it?'

'Come with me and I'll show you,' said Miss Mary.

They went to the secret garden and entered it together. Dickon walked round, looking at everything.

'Martha told me about this place, but I never thought I'd see it,' he said. 'It's wonderful!'

'What about the roses?' asked Mary worriedly. 'Are they still alive? What do you think?'

'Look at these shoots on the branches. Most of them are alive all right.' He took out his knife and cut away some of the dead wood from the rose trees. Mary showed him the work she had done in the garden, and they talked as they cut and cleared.

'Dickon,' said Mary suddenly, 'I like you. I never thought I'd like as many as five people!'

'Only five!' laughed Dickon.

He did look funny when he laughed, thought Mary.

'Yes, your mother, Martha, the robin, Ben, and you.' Then she asked him a question in Yorkshire dialect, because that was his language.

'Does tha' like me?' was her question.

'Of course! I likes thee wonderful!' replied Dickon, a big smile on his round face. Mary had never been so happy.

When she went back to the house for her lunch, she told Martha about Dickon's visit.

'I've got news for you too,' said Martha. 'Mr Craven's come home, and wants to see you! He's going away again tomorrow, for several months.'

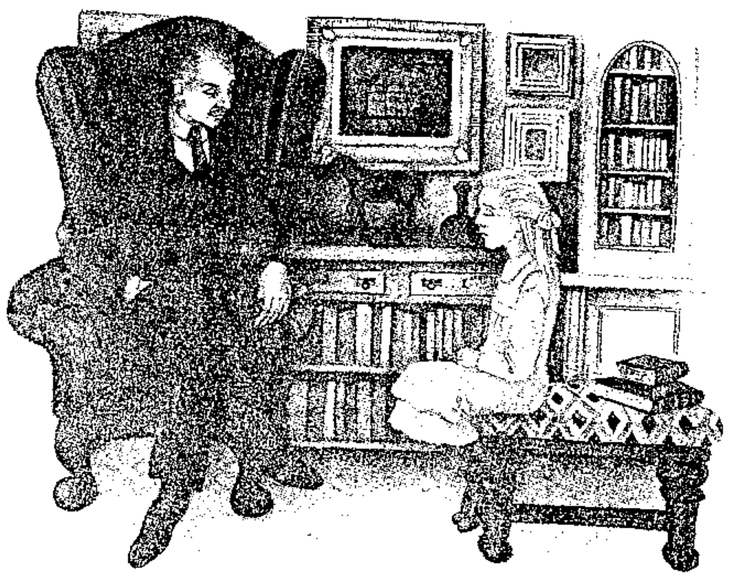
'Oh!' said Mary. That was good news. She would have all summer in the secret garden before he came back. But she must be careful. He mustn't guess her secret now.

Just then Mrs Medlock arrived, in her best black dress, to take Mary down to Mr Craven's room.

Mary's uncle had black hair with some white in it, and high, crooked shoulders. His face was not ugly, but very sad. During their conversation he watched her in a worried way. Perhaps he was thinking of other things at the same time.

He looked at the thin child. 'Are you well?' he asked. Mary tried to keep her voice calm as she replied,

'I'm getting stronger and healthier.'



Mary's uncle had black hair with some white in it, and high, crooked shoulders.

'What do you want to do, in this big empty house?'

'I . . . I just want to play outside – I enjoy that.'

'Yes, Martha's mother, Susan Sowerby, spoke to me the other day. She's a sensible woman – and she said you needed fresh air. But where do you play?'

'Everywhere! I just skip and run – and look for green shoots. I don't damage anything!'

'Don't look so frightened! Of course a child like you couldn't damage anything. Play where you like. Is there anything that you want?'

Mary came a step nearer to him, and her voice shook a little as she spoke. 'Could I – could I have a bit of garden?'

Mr Craven looked very surprised.

'To plant seeds in . . . to make them come alive!' Mary went on bravely. 'It was too hot in India, so I was always ill and tired there. But here it's different. I . . . I love the garden!'

He passed a hand quickly over his eyes. Then he looked kindly at Mary. 'I knew someone once who loved growing things, like you. Yes, child, take as much of the garden as you want.' He smiled gently at her. 'Now leave me. I'm very tired.'

Mary ran all the way back to her room.

'Martha!' she shouted. 'Mr Craven's really a nice man, but he looks very unhappy. He said I can have my own garden!'

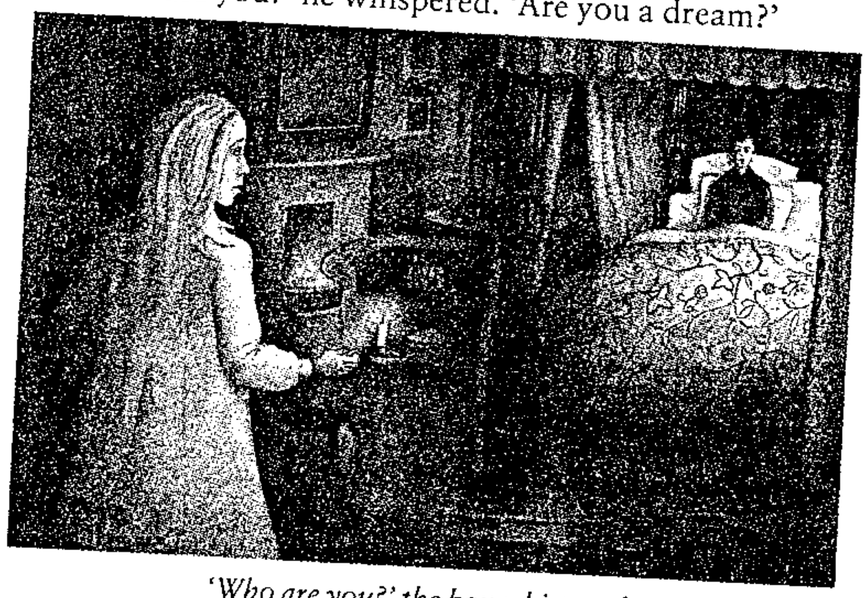
She was planning to work in the garden with Dickon every day, to make it beautiful for the summer.

5
Meeting Colin

In the middle of the night Mary woke up. Heavy rain had started falling again, and the wind was blowing violently round the walls of the old house. Suddenly she heard crying again. This time she decided to discover who it was. She left her room, and in the darkness followed the crying sound, round corners and through doors, up and down stairs, to the other side of the big house. At last she found the right room. She pushed the door open and went in.

It was a big room with beautiful old furniture and pictures. In the large bed was a boy, who looked tired and cross, with a thin, white, tearful face. He stared at Mary.

'Who are you?' he whispered. 'Are you a dream?'



'Who are you?' the boy whispered.

'No, I'm not. I'm Mary Lennox. Mr Craven's my uncle.'

'He's my father,' said the boy. 'I'm Colin Craven.'

'No one ever told me he had a son!' said Mary, very surprised.

'Well, no one ever told me you'd come to live here. I'm ill, you see. I don't want people to see me and talk about me. If I live, I may have a crooked back like my father, but I'll probably die.'

'What a strange house this is!' said Mary. 'So many secrets! Does your father come and see you often?'

'Not often. He doesn't like seeing me because it makes him remember my mother. She died when I was born, so he almost hates me, I think.'

'Why do you say you're going to die?' asked Mary.

'I've always been ill. I've nearly died several times, and my back's never been strong. My doctor feels sure that I'm going to die. But he's my father's cousin, and very poor, so he'd like me to die. Then he'd get all the money when my father dies. He gives me medicine and tells me to rest. We had a grand doctor from London once, who told me to go out in the fresh air and try to get well. But I hate fresh air. And another thing, all the servants have to do what I want, because if I'm angry, I become ill.'

Mary thought she liked this boy, although he seemed so strange. He asked her lots of questions, and she told him all about her life in India.

'How old are you?' he asked suddenly.

'I'm ten, and so are you,' replied Mary, forgetting to be

careful, 'because when you were born the garden door was locked and the key was buried. And I know that was ten years ago.'

Colin sat up in bed and looked very interested. 'What door? Who locked it? Where's the key? I want to see it. I'll make the servants tell me where it is. They'll take me there and you can come too.'

'Oh, please! Don't – don't do that!' cried Mary.

Colin stared at her. 'Don't you want to see it?'

'Yes, but if you make them open the door, it will never be a secret again. You see, if only *we* know about it, if we – if we can find the key, we can go and play there every day. We can help the garden come alive again. And no one will know about it – except us!'

'I see,' said Colin slowly. 'Yes, I'd like that. It'll be our secret. I've never had a secret before.'

'And perhaps,' added Mary cleverly, 'we can find a boy to push you in your wheelchair, if you can't walk, and we can go there together without any other people. You'll feel better outside. I know I do.'

'I'd like that,' he said dreamily. 'I think I'd like fresh air, in a secret garden.'

Then Mary told him about the moor, and Dickon, and Ben Weatherstaff, and the robin, and Colin listened to it all with great interest. He began to smile and look much happier.

'I like having you here,' he said. 'You must come and see me every day. But I'm tired now.'

'I'll sing you a song. My servant Kamala used to do that in India,' said Mary, and very soon Colin was asleep.

The next afternoon Mary visited Colin again, and he seemed very pleased to see her. He had sent his nurse away and had told nobody about Mary's visit. Mary had not told anybody either. They read some of his books together, and told each other stories. They were enjoying themselves and laughing loudly when suddenly the door opened. Dr Craven and Mrs Medlock came in. They almost fell over in surprise.

'What's happening here?' asked Dr Craven.

Colin sat up straight. To Mary he looked just like an Indian prince. 'This is my cousin, Mary Lennox,' he said calmly. 'I like her. She must visit me often.'

'Oh, I'm sorry, sir,' said poor Mrs Medlock to the



To Mary he looked just like an Indian prince.

doctor. 'I don't know how she discovered him. I told the servants to keep it a secret.'

'Don't be stupid, Medlock,' said the Indian prince coldly. 'Nobody told her. She heard me crying and found me herself. Bring our tea up now.'

'I'm afraid you're getting too hot and excited, my boy,' said Dr Craven. 'That's not good for you. Don't forget you're ill.'

'I *want* to forget!' said Colin. 'I'll be angry if Mary doesn't visit me! She makes me feel better.'

Dr Craven did not look happy when he left the room.

'What a change in the boy, sir!' said the housekeeper. 'He's usually so disagreeable with all of us. He really seems to like that strange little girl. And he does look better.' Dr Craven had to agree.

6
Colin is afraid

Because it rained all the next week, Mary went to talk to Colin every day instead of visiting the garden. But she woke early one morning to see the sun shining into her room, and she ran out to the secret garden at once. She did not even wait to have her breakfast. It was beautifully sunny and warm, and a thousand more shoots were pushing their way out of the ground. Dickon was already

there, digging hard, with the crow and a young fox beside him.

'Have you seen the robin?' he asked Mary. The little bird was flying busily backwards and forwards as fast as he could, carrying pieces of dry grass.

'He's building a nest!' whispered Mary. They watched the robin for a moment. Then Mary said,

'I must tell you something. You probably know about Colin Craven, don't you? Well, I've met him, and I'm going to help him to get better.'



'He's building a nest!' whispered Mary.

'That's good news.' There was a big smile on Dickon's honest face. 'We all knew he was ill.'

'He's afraid he'll have a crooked back like his father. I think that's what's making him ill.'

'Perhaps we can bring him here and let him rest under the trees. That'll do him good. That's what we'll do.'

They had a lot of gardening and planning to do and Mary did not have time to visit Colin that day. When she came back to the house in the evening, Martha told her that the servants had had trouble with Colin.

'He's been very bad-tempered all afternoon with all of us, because you didn't come, miss.'

'Well, I was busy. He'll have to learn not to be so selfish,' replied Mary coldly. She forgot how selfish *she* had been when she was ill in India. 'I'll go and see him now.'

When she went into his room, he was lying in bed, looking tired. He did not turn to look at her.

'What's the matter with you?' she asked crossly.

'My back aches and my head hurts. Why didn't you come this afternoon?'

'I was working in the garden with Dickon.'

'I won't let that boy come to the garden if you stay with him instead of talking to me!'

Mary suddenly became very angry. 'If you send Dickon away, I'll never come into this room again!'

'You'll have to, if I say so. I'll make the servants bring you in here.'

'Oh, will you, prince! But no one can make me talk to

you. I won't look at you. I'll stare at the floor!'

'You selfish girl!' cried Colin.

'You're more selfish than I am. You're the most selfish boy I've ever met!'

'I'm not as selfish as your fine Dickon! He keeps you playing outside when he knows I'm ill and alone!'

Mary had never been so furious. 'Dickon is nicer than any other boy in the world! He's like an angel!'

'An angel! Don't make me laugh! He's just a poor country boy, with holes in his shoes!'

'He's a thousand times better than you are!'

Colin had never argued with anyone like himself in his life, and in fact it was good for him. But now he was beginning to feel sorry for himself.

'I'm always ill,' he said, and started to cry. 'I'm sure my back is a bit crooked. And I'm going to die!'

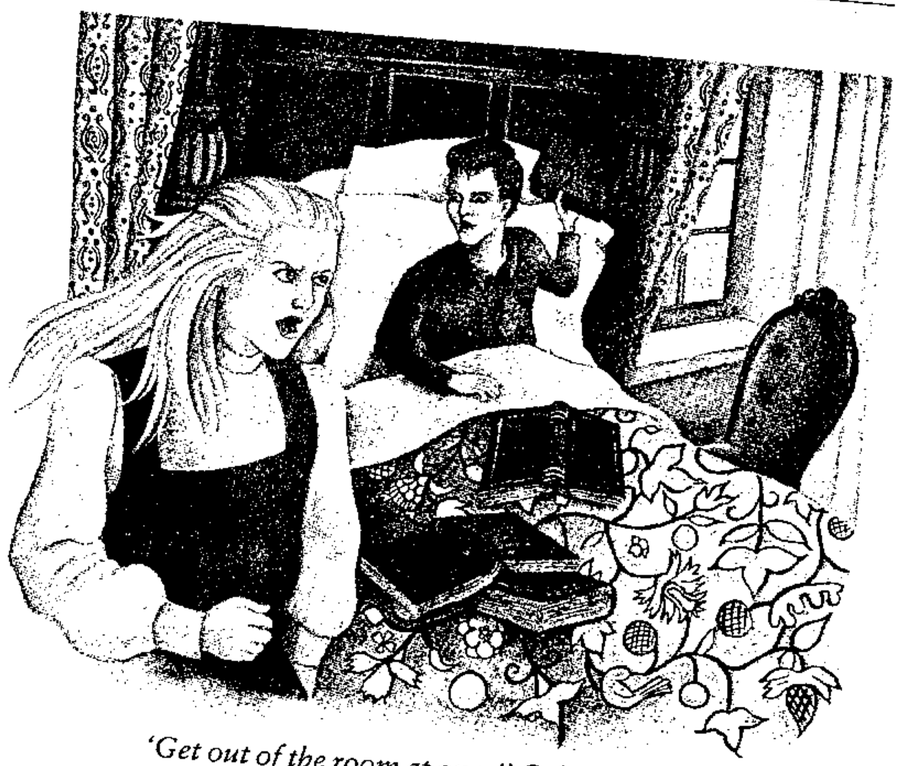
'No, you're not!' said Mary crossly.

Colin opened his eyes very wide. Nobody had said that to him before. He was angry, but a bit pleased at the same time. 'What do you mean? You know I'm going to die! Everybody says I'm going to die!'

'I don't believe it!' said Mary in her most disagreeable voice. 'You just say that to make people feel sorry for you. You're too horrid to die!'

Colin forgot about his painful back and sat up in bed. 'Get out of the room at once!' he shouted, and threw a book at her.

'I'm going,' Mary shouted in reply, 'and I won't come



'Get out of the room at once!' Colin shouted.

back!' The door banged shut behind her.

When she reached her own room, she had decided never to tell him her great secret. 'He can stay in his room and die if he wants!' she thought. But soon she began to remember how ill he had been, and how frightened he was, frightened that one day his back would become as crooked as his father's. 'Perhaps . . . perhaps I'll go back and see him tomorrow!'

That night she was woken by the most terrible screams that she had ever heard. Servants were opening and shutting doors and running about.

'It's Colin!' thought Mary. 'He'll go on screaming until he makes himself really ill! How selfish he is! Somebody should stop him!'

Just then Martha ran into the room. 'We don't know what to do!' she cried. 'He likes you, miss! Come and see if you can make him calmer, please!'

'Well, I'm very cross with him,' said Mary, and jumped out of bed. 'I'm going to stop him!'

'That's right,' said Martha. 'He needs someone like you, to argue with. It'll give him something new to think about.'

Mary ran into Colin's room, right up to his bed.

'Stop screaming!' she shouted furiously. 'Stop at once! I hate you! Everybody hates you! You'll die if you go on screaming like this, and I hope you will!'

The screams stopped immediately. This was the first time that anyone had spoken so angrily to Colin, and he was shocked. But he went on crying quietly to himself.

'My back's becoming crooked, I can feel it! I know I'm going to die!' Large tears ran down his face.

'Don't be stupid!' cried Mary. 'There's nothing the matter with your horrid back! Martha, come here and help me look at his back!'

Martha and Mrs Medlock were standing at the door, staring at Mary, their mouths half open. They both looked very frightened. Martha came forward to help, and Miss Mary looked carefully at Colin's thin white back, up and down. Her face was serious and angry at the same time. The room was very quiet.



'There's nothing wrong with your back!' Mary said at last.

'There's nothing wrong with your back!' she said at last. 'Nothing at all! It's as straight as mine!'

Only Colin knew how important those crossly spoken, childish words were. All his life he had been afraid to ask about his back, and his terrible fear had made him ill. Now an angry little girl told him his back was straight, and he believed her. He was no longer afraid.

They were both calmer now. He gave Mary his hand. 'I think – I'm almost sure I will live, if we can go out in the garden together sometimes. I'm very tired now. Will you stay with me until I go to sleep?'

The servants went out very quietly.

'I'll tell you all about the secret garden,' whispered Mary. 'I think it's full of roses and beautiful flowers. Birds like making their nests there because it's so quiet and safe. And perhaps our robin . . .'

But Colin was already asleep.

The next day Mary met Dickon as usual in the secret garden, and told him about Colin. Mary loved Dickon's Yorkshire dialect and was trying to learn it herself. She spoke a little now.

'We mun get poor Colin out here in th' sunshine – an' we munnot lose no time about it!'

Dickon laughed. 'Well done! I didn't know you could speak Yorkshire! You're right. We must bring Colin to the garden as soon as we can.'

So that afternoon she went to see Colin.

'I'm sorry I said I'd send Dickon away,' he said. 'I hated you when you said he was like an angel!'

'Well, he's a funny kind of angel, but he understands wild animals better than anyone.' Suddenly, Mary knew that this was the right moment to tell him. She caught hold of his hands. 'Colin, this is important. Can you keep a secret?'

'Yes – yes!' he whispered excitedly. 'What is it?'

'We've found the door into the secret garden!'

'Oh Mary! Will I live long enough to see it?'

'Of course you will! Don't be stupid!' said Mary crossly. But it was a very natural thing to say, and they both laughed.

Colin told Mrs Medlock and the doctor that he wanted to go out in his wheelchair. At first the doctor was worried the boy would get too tired, but when he heard that Dickon would push the wheelchair, he agreed.

'Dickon's a sensible boy,' he told Colin. 'But don't forget—'

'I've told you, I *want* to forget that I'm ill,' said Colin in his prince's voice. 'Don't you understand? It's because my cousin makes me forget that I feel better when I'm with her.'

7

Colin and the garden

Of course, it was most important that no one should see Colin, Mary, or Dickon entering the secret garden. So Colin gave orders to the gardeners that they must all keep away from that part of the garden in future.

The next afternoon Colin was carried downstairs by a man servant, and put in his wheelchair outside the front door. Dickon arrived, with his crow, two squirrels and the fox, and started pushing the wheelchair gently away from the house, and into the gardens. Mary walked beside the chair.

Spring had really arrived now and it seemed very exciting to Colin, who had lived indoors for so long. He smelt the warm air from the moor, and watched the little white clouds in the blue sky. In a very short time he heard Mary say, 'This is where I found the key . . . and this is the door . . . and this . . . this is the secret garden!'

Colin covered his eyes with his hands until he was inside the four high walls, and the door was shut again. Then he looked round at the roses climbing the old red walls, the pink and white flowers on the fruit trees, and the birds and the butterflies everywhere. The sun warmed his face, and he suddenly knew he felt different.

'Mary! Dickon!' he cried. 'I'm going to get better! I'm going to live for ever and ever and ever!'

As Dickon pushed the wheelchair all round the garden,

he told Colin the names of all the plants. The sun shone, the birds sang, and in every corner of the garden there was something interesting to look at. The three children talked and laughed, and by the end of the afternoon all three were speaking Yorkshire together.

'I'll come back here every afternoon,' said Colin. 'I want to watch things growing.'

'Soon you'll be strong enough to walk and dig. You'll be



Dickon pushed the wheelchair all round the garden.

able to help us with the gardening,' said Dickon kindly.

'Do you really think I'll be able to . . . to walk and . . . dig?' asked Colin.

'Of course you will. You've got legs, like us!'

'But they're not very strong,' answered Colin. 'They shake, and . . . and I'm afraid to stand on them.'

'When you want to use them, you'll be able to,' said Dickon. The garden was quiet for a moment.

Suddenly Colin said, 'Who's that?' Mary turned her head, and noticed Ben Weatherstaff's angry face looking at her over the garden wall.

'What are you doing in that garden, young miss?' he shouted. He had not seen Colin or Dickon.

'The robin showed me the way, Ben,' she replied.

'You . . . you—' He stopped shouting and his mouth dropped open as he saw Dickon pushing a boy in a wheelchair over the grass towards him.

'Do you know who I am?' asked the boy in the chair.

Old Ben stared. 'You've got your mother's eyes,' he said in a shaking voice. 'Yes, I know you. You're Mr Craven's son, the little boy with the crooked back.'

Colin forgot that he had ever had backache. 'My back's as straight as yours is!' he shouted.

Ben stared and stared. He only knew what he had heard from the servants. 'You haven't got a crooked back?' he asked. 'Or crooked legs?'

That was too much. Colin was furious, and it made him feel strong.

'Come here, Dickon!' he shouted, and threw off his blanket. Dickon was by his side in a second. Mary felt sick with fear. Could Colin stand?

Then Colin's thin feet were on the grass and he was standing, holding Dickon's arm. He looked strangely tall, and he held his head very high.

'Look at me!' he shouted at Ben. 'Just look at me!'

'He's as straight as any boy in Yorkshire!' said Dickon.

Tears were running down Ben's brown old face. 'They said you were going to die!' he whispered.

'Well, you can see that's not true,' said Colin. 'Now, get down from the wall and come here. I want to talk to you. You've got to help us keep the garden a secret.'

'Yes, sir,' said old Ben, as he dried his eyes.



'Look at me!' Colin shouted at Ben. 'Just look at me!'

That was the first of many beautiful afternoons in the secret garden. Colin was brought there by Dickon and Mary nearly every day, and he saw all the changes that happened there during the spring and early summer. Ben Weatherstaff, now in the secret, joined them as often as he could.

One day Colin spoke to all of them. 'Listen, everybody. I think there's something like magic that makes gardens grow and things happen. Perhaps if I believe in it, the magic will make me strong. Let's all sit down in a circle and ask the magic to work.'

So they all sat on the grass in a circle, Dickon with his crow, his fox and the two squirrels, Mary, Colin, and Ben. Colin repeated these words several times. 'The sun's shining. That's the magic. Being strong. That's the magic. Magic! Help me! Magic! Help me!'

At last Colin stopped. 'Now I'm going to walk round the garden,' he said, and took Dickon's arm. Slowly he walked from one wall to another, followed closely by Mary and Ben. And when he had walked all the way round, he said, 'You see! I can walk now! The magic worked!'

'It's wonderful!' cried Mary. 'Your father will think he is dreaming when he sees you!'

'I won't tell him yet. I'm going to keep it a secret from everybody. I'll come to the garden and walk and run a little more every day until I'm as healthy as any other boy. Then, when my father comes home, I'll walk up to him and say, "Here I am, Father. You see? I'm not going to die!" '

Now began a difficult time for Colin and Mary. Dickon told his mother about it one evening as he was digging the cottage garden.

'You see, mother, they don't want the doctor or the servants to guess that Colin can walk and is getting better. So they have to pretend he's still ill and just as disagreeable as he used to be!'

'If they're running about all day in the fresh air, that'll make them hungry, I should think!'

'Yes, that's the problem. They're both getting fatter and healthier, and they really enjoy their food now. But they have to send some of it back to the kitchen, uneaten. If they eat it all, people will realize how healthy they are! Sometimes they're very hungry!'

'I know what we can do,' said Mrs Sowerby. 'You can take some fresh milk and some of my newly baked bread to the garden in the mornings. If they have that, it'll do them a lot of good! What a game those children are playing!' And she laughed until tears came to her eyes.

One afternoon when they were all working in the garden, the door opened and a woman came quietly in.

'It's Mother!' cried Dickon, and ran towards her. 'I told her where the



'It's Mother!'

door was, because I knew she would keep the secret.'

Colin held out his hand to her. 'I've wanted to see you for a long time,' he said.

'Dear boy!' Susan Sowerby whispered, holding his hand. 'You're so like your mother!'

'Do you think,' asked Colin carefully, 'that will make my father like me?'

'I'm sure it will,' she answered warmly. 'He must see you – he must come home now.'

'You see how healthy the boy is, Susan?' asked old Ben. 'Look how strong and straight his legs are now!'

'Yes,' she laughed. 'Playing and working outside, and eating good Yorkshire food, has made him strong. And Miss Mary too,' she added, turning to Mary. 'Mrs Medlock heard that your mother was a pretty woman. You'll soon be as pretty as she was.'

'Do you believe in magic?' Colin asked her.

'I do,' she answered, 'but everybody gives it a different name. It makes the sun shine and the seeds grow – and it has made you healthy.'

She sat down on the grass and stayed for a while, talking and laughing with the children in the quiet, sunny garden. When she stood up to leave, Colin suddenly put out a hand to her.

'I wish – you were my mother!' he whispered.

Mrs Sowerby put her arms round him and held him to her. 'Dear boy! You're as close to your mother as you could be, here in her garden. And your father'll come back soon!'

8

Mr Craven comes home

While the secret garden was returning to life, a man with high, crooked shoulders was wandering round the most beautiful places in Europe. For ten years he had lived this lonely life, his heart full of sadness and his head full of dark dreams. Everywhere he went, he carried his unhappiness with him like a black cloud. Other travellers thought he was half mad or a man who could not forget some terrible crime. His name was Archibald Craven.

But one day, as he sat by a mountain stream, he actually looked at a flower, and for the first time in ten years he realized how beautiful something living could be. The valley seemed very quiet as he sat there, staring at the flower. He felt strangely calm.



But one day, as he sat by a mountain stream, he actually looked at a flower.

'What is happening to me?' he whispered. 'I feel different – I almost feel I'm alive again!'

At that moment, hundreds of miles away in Yorkshire, Colin was seeing the secret garden for the first time, and saying, 'I'm going to live for ever and ever and ever!' But Mr Craven did not know this.

That night, in his hotel room, he slept better than usual. As the weeks passed, he even began to think a little about his home and his son. One evening in late summer, as he was sitting quietly beside a lake, he felt the strange calmness again. He fell asleep, and had a dream that seemed very real. He heard a voice calling him. It was sweet and clear and happy, the voice of his young wife.

'Archie! Archie! Archie!'

'My dear!' He jumped up. 'Where are you?'

'In the garden!' called the beautiful voice.

And then the dream ended. In the morning, when he woke, he remembered the dream.

'She says she's in the garden!' he thought. 'But the door's locked and the key's buried.'

That morning he received a letter from Susan Sowerby. In it she asked him to come home, but she did not give a reason. Mr Craven thought of his dream, and decided to return to England immediately. On the long journey back to Yorkshire, he was thinking about Colin.

'I wonder how he is! I wanted to forget him, because he makes me think of his mother. He lived, and she died! But perhaps I've been wrong. Susan Sowerby says I should go

home, so perhaps she thinks I can help him.'

When he arrived home, he found the housekeeper very confused about Colin's health.

'He's very strange, sir,' said Mrs Medlock. 'He looks better, it's true, but some days he eats nothing at all, and other days he eats just like a healthy boy. He used to scream even at the idea of fresh air, but now he spends all his time outside in his wheelchair, with Miss Mary and Dickon Sowerby. He's in the garden at the moment.'

'In the garden!' repeated Mr Craven. Those were the words of the dream! He hurried out of the house and towards the place which he had not visited for so long. He found the door with the climbing plant over it, and stood outside, listening, for a moment.

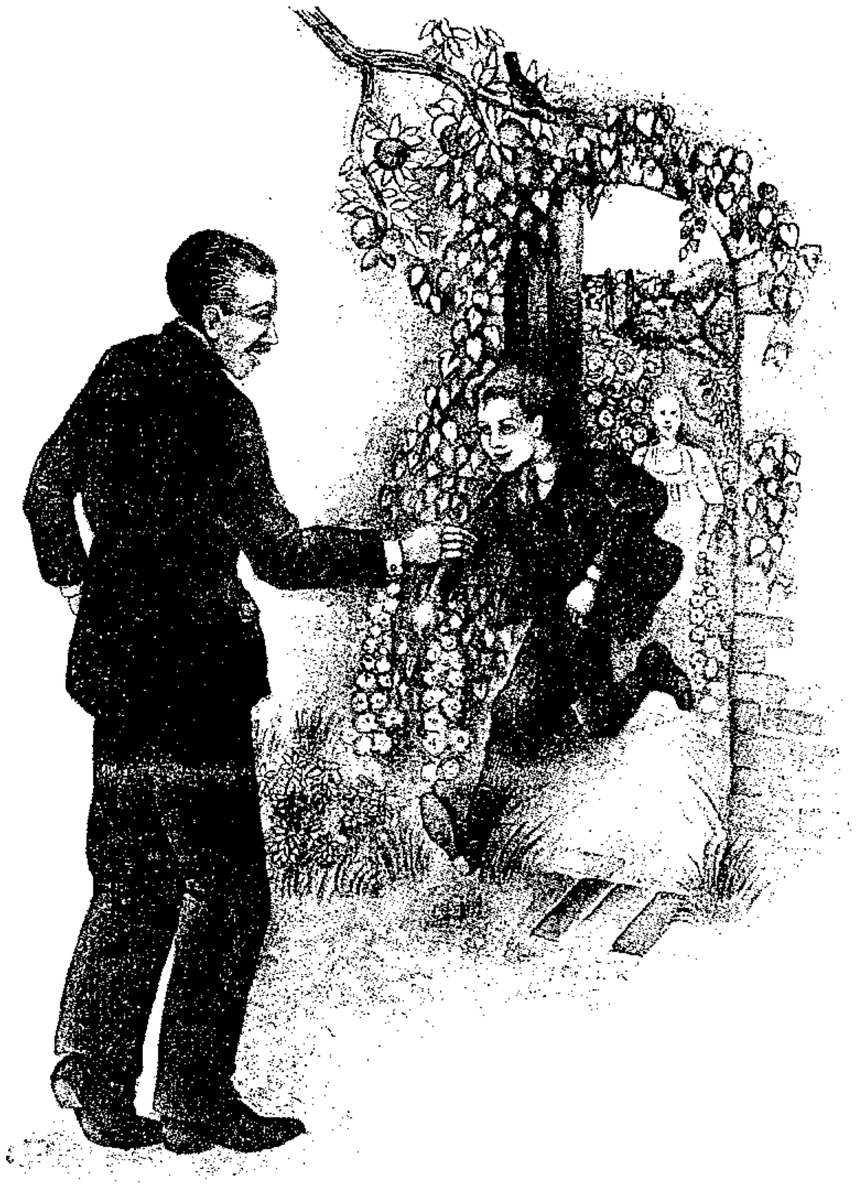
'Surely I can hear voices inside the garden?' he thought. 'Aren't there children whispering, laughing, running in there? Or am I going mad?'

And then the moment came, when the children could not stay quiet. There was wild laughing and shouting, and the door was thrown open. A boy ran out, a tall, healthy, handsome boy, straight into the man's arms. Mr Craven stared into the boy's laughing eyes.

'Who – What? Who?' he cried.

Colin had not planned to meet his father like this. But perhaps this was the best way, to come running out with his cousin and his friend.

'Father,' he said, 'I'm Colin. You can't believe it! I can't believe it myself. It was the garden, and Mary and Dickon



A boy ran out, a tall, healthy, handsome boy, straight into the man's arms.

and the magic, that made me well. We've kept it a secret up to now. Aren't you happy, Father? I'm going to live for ever and ever and ever!'

Mr Craven put his hands on the boy's shoulders. For a moment he could not speak. 'Take me into the garden, my boy,' he said at last, 'and tell me all about it.'

And in the secret garden, where the roses were at their best, and the butterflies were flying from flower to flower in the summer sunshine, they told Colin's father their story. Sometimes he laughed and sometimes he cried, but most of the time he just looked, unbelieving, into the handsome face of the son that he had almost forgotten.

'Now,' said Colin at the end, 'it isn't a secret any more. I'll never use the wheelchair again. I'm going to walk back with you, Father – to the house.'

And so, that afternoon, Mrs Medlock, Martha, and the other servants had the greatest shock of their lives. Through the gardens towards the house came Mr Craven, looking happier than they had ever seen him. And by his side, with his shoulders straight, his head held high and a smile on his lips, walked young Colin!

Exercises

A Checking your understanding

Chapter 1 *Who said these words in the story?*

1 'We must leave soon!'
2 'Why was I forgotten?'
3 'He's got a crooked back, and he's horrid!'
4 'You must stay out of his way!'

Chapter 2 *Who in this chapter ...*

1 ... was cleaning the fireplace in Mary's bedroom?
2 ... knew a lot about wild animals?
3 ... buried the key to the secret garden?
4 ... was a Yorkshire moor man?

Chapters 3–4 *Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?*

1 The door to the secret garden was locked nine years ago.
2 Martha went to visit her family for a week.
3 Mrs Sowerby bought a skipping-rope for Mary.
4 Ben's favourite flowers were roses.

Chapters 5–6 *Find answers to these questions in the text.*

1 How did Mary find Colin's room?
2 Why was the robin so busy in the garden?
3 Why did Mary look at Colin's back?

Chapters 7–8 *Write answers to these questions.*

1 Why did Colin get better?
2 Who spoke to Mr Craven in his dream?
3 Why did Mr Craven decide to come home?

B Working with language

1 *Put together these beginnings and endings of sentences. Check your answers in Chapter 3.*

1 Mary felt lonelier than ever ...
2 I like Dickon, ...
3 Are things growing in the garden ...
4 Before she came to Yorkshire ...
5 As Mary looked at the hole, ...
6 She hoped ...
7 ... she noticed something almost buried there.
8 ... where he lives?
9 ... when Martha had gone.
10 ... although I've never seen him.
11 ... they weren't all dead.
12 ... she had not liked anybody.

2 *Complete these sentences with information from the story.*

1 Mr Craven buried the key to the secret garden because ...
2 Mrs Medlock was angry with Mary when ...
3 When Mary asked her uncle for a bit of garden, he ...
4 Colin's legs were not very strong, but ...
5 While Colin was becoming healthier, his father ...
6 Colin told his father the story, and then ...

C Activities

1 You are Colin. Write his diary for the day when he first visited the secret garden.
2 Which person do you like, or dislike, most in the story? Why? Write a few sentences to describe this person.
3 What do you think will happen to Mary, Colin, and Dickon in ten years' time? Write another paragraph to finish the story. You could begin like this:
When Colin and Mary were twenty, they still lived at Misselthwaite Manor ...

Glossary

angel a messenger from God, or a very good person
bad-tempered often cross and angry
bury (past tense **buried**) to put a person or thing in the ground
confused not able to think clearly, or to understand something
cousin the child of your uncle or aunt
dialect a different way of speaking the same language in a different part of a country (e.g. Yorkshire)
disagreeable not pleasing; bad-tempered
furious very angry
handsome good-looking (usually for a boy or a man)
hop (past tense **hopped**) to jump on one foot
horrid bad, terrible, not at all nice
magic something strange that can make wonderful, unusual things happen
shocked very surprised (by something unpleasant)
skip (past tense **skipped**) to jump again and again over a rope that you are swinging
stare to look at someone for a long time
tears drops of water that come from your eyes when you cry
ugly not beautiful
wander to walk slowly with no special plan
whisper to speak very softly and quietly

YORKSHIRE DIALECT USED IN THIS STORY

Tha' canna' dress thysen? You can't dress yourself?
Does tha' like me? Do you like me?
I likes thee wonderful. I like you wonderfully.
We mun get poor Colin out here in th' sunshine, an' we munnot lose no time about it. We must get poor Colin out here in the sunshine, and we mustn't lose any time about it.