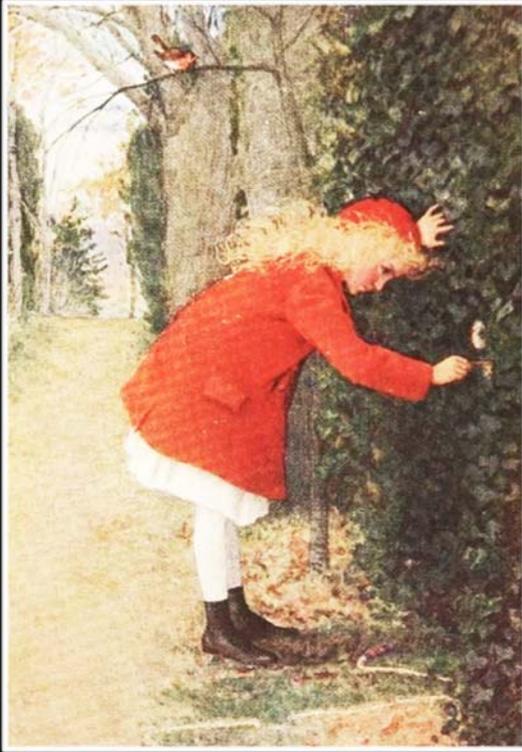


# *The Secret Garden*



**C. Edward Wheaton**

Adapted from the 1911 novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Illustration by M.B. Kork

**BIG DOG PUBLISHING**

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Norman Maine Publishing  
P.O. Box 1400  
Tallevast, FL 34270

## *The Secret Garden*

**CLASSIC.** Adapted from the 1911 novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett. After her parents die of cholera in India, Mary Lennox is sent to live with her rich uncle, Archibald Craven, at his sprawling estate in Yorkshire, England. At the manor, Mary is confined to two rooms and told that she must amuse herself. She learns that her uncle, who is still grieving the death of his late wife, has locked her garden and hidden the key. With the help of a robin, Mary discovers the key to the Secret Garden and sets to work caring for the neglected plants. One night, Mary hears a child's distant cries and follows the noise into a bedchamber. To her surprise, Mary discovers Colin Craven, her cousin, who has been bedridden since birth and who has been neglected by his father. Mary visits Colin every day and cheers him up by telling him stories about her life in India and the Secret Garden. Mary convinces Colin to visit his mother's Secret Garden, and Colin and Mary soon discover the garden's magical healing powers.

**Performance Time:** Approximately 120 minutes.



Frances Hodgson Burnett

### *About the Story*

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1849-1924) was born in Cheetham, England, and later emigrated to the United States, where her family settled in Knoxville, TN. In Knoxville, Burnett started to write stories and publish them in magazines to earn money for her family. In the 1880s, Burnett traveled to England and bought a home in Kent, England. *The Secret Garden* is inspired by Burnett's expansive flower garden there, which included a large rose garden. At the time of her death in 1924, Burnett was best known for her novel *Little Lord Fauntleroy*; however, *The Secret Garden* is now considered her most prominent work and is considered today to be one of the best children's books of the 20<sup>th</sup> century of which several film, TV, and stage adaptations have been produced.

## *Characters*

(6 M, 7 F, 1 flexible)

(With doubling: (5 M, 5 F))

**MARY LENNOX:** Spirited, curious girl born in India to wealthy British parents who died from cholera and has been sent to live in Yorkshire, England, with her rich uncle, Archibald Craven; female.

**DICKON SOWERBY:** Charming Yorkshire boy who spends many hours playing on the moor and has several wild creatures he has made into pets including a fox, a crow, and two wild squirrels; two years older than Colin and Mary; male.

**MARTHA SOWERBY:** Dickon's older sister who works as a servant at Misselthwaite Manor; wears an apron with a pocket.

**COLIN CRAVEN:** Mary's cousin and heir to Misselthwaite Manor who was born shortly after the death of his mother and has been treated like an invalid since birth; he is afraid he will develop a hunchback and is certain he will die; same age as Mary; male.

**ARCHIBALD CRAVEN:** Mary's uncle and Colin's father; after his wife suffered an unfortunate accident 10 years ago, he locked up her garden and buried the key and still cannot bear to see Colin because he resembles his mother; wears expensive clothes and has a hunched back; male.

**LILIAS CRAVEN:** Archibald's late wife whose portrait hangs in Colin's room shrouded by a curtain and who loved to spend time in the Secret Garden; voice only.

**DR. CRAVEN:** Archibald's brother and Colin's uncle; monitors Colin's health but is ineffective when it comes to healing him; male.

**NURSE:** Cares for Colin, who has been confined to his bed since birth; female.

**BEN WEATHERSTAFF:** Gruff old gardener at Misselthwaite Manor who befriends Mary and has a special fondness for the Secret Garden; wears a cap and work overalls; male.

**MR./MRS. ROACH:** Head gardener at Misselthwaite Manor; flexible.

**MR. PITCHER:** Archibald Craven's servant; male.

**MRS. MEDLOCK:** Head of the servants at Misselthwaite Manor; obedient and rigid but kind; female.

**SARAH:** Servant at Misselthwaite Manor; female.

**SUSAN SOWERBY:** Dickon's and Martha's kind, nurturing mother who lives on the moor; though the family is large and has little money, she buys Mary a jump rope; wears a blue hooded cloak; female.

*Options for Doubling*

**LILLIAS/SARAH** (female)

**NURSE/SUSAN** (female)

**MR. PITCHER/MR. ROACH** (male)

## *Setting*

Misselthwaite Manor, Yorkshire, England.

## *Set*

The sets may be as simple or elaborate as your budget allows.

**Mary's room.** One of the 100 rooms in the 600-year-old Misselthwaite Manor. The walls are covered in tapestry and portraits. There is a bed, chairs, a small table, writing desk, and wardrobe. Rugs cover the floor. There is a window USR, a door SR, and a fireplace with a grate USL. There is mention of another room adjoining this one, but it is never seen.

**Kitchen garden.** A grey wall surrounds the garden and there are some bushes and trees. There is a green door CS and a door that opens USL.

**Garden next to the Secret Garden.** A wall extends from USLC to DSL and is covered with ivy. There are shrubs and trees present.

**Park Garden.** There is a tree and a gate (opt.) present.

**Secret Garden.** The garden is surrounded by a gray wall. There is a green door CS of the wall. There are gray trees with gray creepers climbing over them and hanging from the tree branches. Gray creepers are tangled on the walls and among the grass. There are evergreen alcoves with stone seats and tall flower urns.

**Mr. Craven's study.** There is a fireplace and an armchair.

**Colin's room.** A large bedroom. There is a four-poster bed with bed curtains, a sofa, a chair, a large footstool, and a nightstand by the bed with a nightlight on it. A portrait covered with a silk curtain hangs on the wall above the fireplace.

**A room.** Similar to Dr. Craven's study but with a table and chair instead of an armchair. A fireplace is present.

**Library.** There is a backdrop of bookshelves and misc. furniture (opt.).

## *Synopsis of Scenes*

### **ACT I**

**Scene 1:** Mary's room.

**Scene 2:** Mary's room, the next morning.

**Scene 3:** Kitchen garden.

**Scene 4:** Mary's room, evening.

**Scene 5:** Mary's room, the next day.

**Scene 6:** Garden next to the Secret Garden.

**Scene 7:** Mary's room, morning, the next day.

**Scene 8:** Garden next to the Secret Garden.

**Scene 9:** Mary's room, afternoon.

**Scene 10:** Park garden.

**Scene 11:** Secret Garden.

**Scene 12:** Mary's room, lunchtime.

**Scene 13:** Mr. Craven's study.

**Scene 14:** Colin's room.

### **Intermission**

### **ACT II**

**Scene 1:** Mary's room, afternoon.

**Scene 2:** Colin's room.

**Scene 3:** Secret Garden, early morning.

**Scene 4:** Colin's room.

**Scene 5:** Mary's room.

**Scene 6:** Colin's room, evening.

**Scene 7:** Colin's room, the next day.

**Scene 8:** Colin's room, the next day.

**Scene 9:** Colin's room, a week later.

**Scene 10:** Secret Garden.

**Scene 11:** Colin's room, that evening.

**Scene 12:** Secret Garden.

**Scene 13:** Colin's room.

**Scene 14:** Secret Garden.

**Scene 15:** A room.

**Scene 16:** Library at Misselthwaite Manor.

**Scene 17:** Secret Garden.

## *Props*

Black dress, for Mary	Coat, for Dickon
Suitcase	2 Thick slices of bread
Assorted clothes, stockings, and shoes, for Mary	wrapped up in a blue and white handkerchief
Coat and hat, for Mary	Hand bell
Cinders	Knitting
Serving tray	Books
Breakfast place setting	Velvet dressing gown, for Colin
Bushes/shrubs	Large brocaded cushion
Trees	Stuffed fox
Cap, for Ben	Stuffed
Garden spade	Clump of crocuses
Shovel	Handkerchief
Empty dinner plate	Wooden
Weed	Books about gardens
Key ring with old key attached	Pictures
Tea service and muffins	Games
Jump rope	Writing case with a gold monogram
Pen	Gold pen
Ink bottle	Inkstand
Paper	Candle
Rough wooden pipe	Nightgown, for Mary
Package	2 Stuffed squirrels
Small spade	Stuffed lamb
Small rake	Baby bottle
Small fork	2 Tin pails
Small hoe	Currant buns
Small trowel	Blanket
Seed packets	Ladder
Log	Watering can
Brown paper package tied with string	Silver salver
Plant shoot	Envelopes
Knife	
Rose bush	

## *Special Effects*

Sound of rain and wind

Gust of wind

Rapid footsteps approaching

Bell

Robin hopping or flying about

(may be suggested with  
lighting)

Bird chirping

Bird singing

Wind blowing

Gust of wind

Child crying

Banging door

Slight breeze

Clock striking

Sound of doors being opened

Children laughing and playing

Crow cawing

Knock at the door

*“I am sure there is magic in everything,  
only we have not sense enough  
to get hold of it  
and make it do things for us...”*

*—Colin*

## *Scene 1*

(AT RISE: *Mary's room, one of the 100 rooms in the 600-year-old Misselthwaite Manor. Rain and wind can be heard. Lights up to reveal servants, Martha and Sarah, making preparations for the arrival of Mary Lennox. A gust of wind hits the window. Sarah stops what she is doing.*)

SARAH: Just listen to that wind!

MARTHA: (*Sighs.*) It's a pity that the weather should be so miserable on her first night here. The poor little lass...her mother died of the cholera. When they found her, she was all alone in the house. All the servants had either died or run away.

SARAH: Poor lass. Why is she coming here?

MARTHA: Mr. Craven is her guardian. He was her mother's brother, but he's never set eyes on her before this time.

SARAH: Do you think he'll see her?

MARTHA: He's so wrapped up in his own misery, he hasn't time for anyone else.

(*Sarah pauses.*)

SARAH: You know, I ain't never seen an Indian before. What do you suppose she'll look like?

MARTHA: I hear tell that all Indians have black hair and dark skin. I suppose she'll look like that.

(*The sound of rapid footsteps approaching and echoing down the corridor is heard. Door opens. Mrs. Medlock enters. She has Mary by the arm, almost dragging her into the room. Mary is dressed all in black. Mr. Pitcher follows, carrying a suitcase. Martha and Sarah line up, almost at attention. Mary walks by without looking at them, goes to the window, stares out into the storm. Mr. Pitcher sets the suitcase down.*)

MRS. MEDLOCK: Sarah, you can go.

SARAH: Yes, Mrs. Medlock.

(*Sarah exits. Martha picks up Mary's suitcase and begins to unpack it, putting the clothes away. Mrs. Medlock and Mr. Pitcher converse off to one side.*)

MR. PITCHER: He doesn't want to see her. He's going to London in the morning.

MRS. MEDLOCK: Very well, Mr. Pitcher. So long as I know what's expected of me, I can manage.

MR. PITCHER: What's expected of you, Mrs. Medlock, is that you make sure that he's not disturbed and that he doesn't see what he doesn't want to see.

*(Mr. Pitcher exits. Mrs. Medlock swiftly approaches Mary.)*

MRS. MEDLOCK: *(To Mary, unceremoniously.)* This room and the next are where you'll live...and you must keep to them. Don't go wandering or poking about! Don't forget that!

MARY: *(Without looking at Mrs. Medlock.)* I shall not want to go poking about.

MRS. MEDLOCK: And another thing you must know right off...your uncle is not going to trouble himself about you. He never troubles himself about no one. If you need or want anything, let Martha know.

*(Mrs. Medlock quickly exits. Mary looks out the window.)*

MARTHA: *(To Mary.)* In case you haven't guessed it right off, I'm Martha. *(Pause. Trying to make conversation.)* No doubt th' weather's different here than what you were used to in India. *(Mary doesn't respond.)* Do you know anything about your uncle?

MARY: *(Stiffly.)* No.

MARTHA: Never heard your father and mother talk about him?

MARY: No. *(Turns around.)* Is it your job to keep me out of the way?

MARTHA: *(Taken aback.)* My word! What is that you are talking about?

MARY: In India, it was my ayah's job to keep me out of the way.

MARTHA: I'll be too busy with my duties. Tha'll be more or less on tha' own.

MARY: But who'll take care of me?

*(Martha helps Mary take off her coat.)*

MARTHA: You'll have to learn to take care of tha'self. Now, I'll go and get your supper. You get a good meal in tha' and a good night's rest, and tha'll feel different in the morning.

*(Mary turns back to the window. Martha exits. Blackout.)*

## *Scene 2*

(AT RISE: *Mary's room, next morning. It has stopped raining but it is still a rather dreary day. Martha is kneeling on the hearth rug noisily raking out cinders. Breakfast is on the table and Mary is in bed. Mary wakes up and watches Martha for a few moments. She then sits up and looks out the window.*)

MARY: (*Points out the window.*) What's that?

(*Martha rises and looks out the window.*)

MARTHA: (*Points.*) That there?

MARY: Yes.

MARTHA: (*With a good-natured grin.*) Tha' came across it last night. That's the moor. Does tha' like it?

(*Mary flops back down.*)

MARY: No. There's nothing there. I hate it!

(*Martha goes back to the hearth.*)

MARTHA: That's because tha'rt not used to it. Tha' thinks it's too big an' bare now. But tha' will like it.

MARY: Do you?

MARTHA: (*Cheerfully polishing away at the fireplace grate.*) Aye, that I do. I just love it.

MARY: Why?

MARTHA: It's bare now, but it's fair lovely in spring an' summer when the gorse an' broom an' heather's in flower. It smells o' honey an' there's such a lot o' fresh air...an' th' sky looks so high an' th' bees an' skylarks makes such a nice noise hummin' an' singin'. Eh! I wouldn't live away from the moor for nothin'.

(*Pause. Mary watches Martha.*)

MARY: (*Haughtily.*) You are a strange servant.

MARTHA: (*Indicating breakfast on the table.*) Tha' best get up and eat your porridge before it gets cold.

MARY: (*Makes a face.*) I don't want it!

MARTHA: Tha' doesn't know how good it is. Put a bit o' treacle or a bit o' sugar on it.

MARY: (*Turns her head away.*) I said, I don't want it!

MARTHA: Tha' didn't eat much of your supper last night. (*Sighs.*) I can't abide to see good victuals go to waste. If our children was at this table they'd clean it bare in five minutes. (*Hands on her hips, shaking her head.*) My word! Don't I wish Dickon an' Phil an' Jane an' the rest of 'em had what is here under their pinafores.

MARY: (*Turns to Martha.*) Why?

MARTHA: Because they scarce ever had their stomachs full in their lives. They're as hungry as young hawks an' foxes.

MARY: (*Indifferently.*) I don't know what it is to be hungry. If they are so hungry, why don't you give it to them?

MARTHA: It's not mine to give.

MARY: I don't care what you do with it. I am not going to eat it!

MARTHA: (*Indignant.*) It's plain that it would do thee good to go hungry. (*Regaining her composure.*) Well, if tha' is not going to eat that porridge, tha' should get dressed.

*(Martha goes to the wardrobe and takes out a dress etc. Mary gets out of bed but just stands stiff and silent. Martha holds the clothes out to Mary.)*

MARY: Those are not mine. Mine are black.

MARTHA: These are th' ones tha' must put on. Mr. Craven ordered Mrs. Medlock to get 'em in London.

MARY: (*Cool approval.*) Those are nicer than mine. I hate black things. (*Martha lays the clothes on the bed and goes back to hearth.*) Aren't you going to dress me?

MARTHA: (*Turns.*) Canna' tha' dress thyself?

MARY: What do you mean? I don't understand your language.

MARTHA: Eh! I forgot. Mrs. Medlock told me I'd have to be careful or you wouldn't know what I was sayin'. I mean, can't you put on your own clothes?

MARY: (*Indignantly.*) No. I never did in my life. My ayah dressed me, of course. It was the custom.

MARTHA: It'll do thee good to wait on thyself a bit.

MARY: (*Angry.*) In India, servants don't speak in that manner!

MARTHA: And in what manner were tha' referrin'?

MARY: As if they were equals!

MARTHA: You must forgive me as I am not acquainted with the customs of India. I didn't know anything about India at all. In fact, tha' were not what I expected when tha' arrived.

MARY: And just what did you expect?

MARTHA: I didn't expect you to be white.

MARY: (*Enraged.*) What?! What?! You thought I was a native?! You...you daughter of a pig!

MARTHA: Here, now! Who are you callin' names? You needn't be so vexed. That's not th' way for a young lady to talk.

MARY: I'll talk to you anyway I please! You are nothing but a servant. You know nothing about India! You know nothing about anything!

*(Mary begins to cry, throws herself on the bed, buries her face in a pillow, and pounds the bed with her fists like a child having a tantrum. Martha is frightened she will lose her job.)*

MARTHA: (*Begs.*) Eh! You mustn't cry like that there! You musn't for sure. I didn't know you'd be so vexed. I don't know anythin' about anythin'...just like you said. I beg your pardon, Miss. Do stop cryin'. (*Mary stops crying.*) That's better. (*Mary turns over and looks at Martha.*) I am sorry. Come on. Get out of bed and I'll help you dress. (*Mary gets out of bed and stands perfectly still while Martha does all the work.*) This reminds me of when I used to help button up my little sisters and brothers. You should see 'em all. There's 12 of us and my father only gets 16 shilling a week. I can tell you my mother's put to it to get porridge for 'em all. They tumble about on the moor an' play there all day an' Mother says th' air of th' moor fattens 'em. She says she believes they eat th' grass same as the wild ponies do. Our Dickon, he's [12 years old], and he's got a pony he calls his own.

MARY: (*Suddenly interested.*) A pony? Where did he get it?

MARTHA: He found it on the moor with its mother when it was a little one, an' he began to make friends with it an' gave it bits o' bread an' pluck grass for it. And it got to like him, so it follows him about an' lets him get on his back. (*Mary sits on the bed and Martha puts stockings and shoes on Mary.*) There, we're finished.

MARY: I never had a pet before.

*(Martha gets a coat and hat out of wardrobe.)*

MARTHA: You wrap up warm an' run out an' play. It'll do you good and give you some stomach for meat.

*(Mary goes to the window and looks out.)*

MARY: Out? Why should I go out on a day like this?

MARTHA: Well, if tha' doesn't go out, tha'lt have to stay in. Can tha' knit?

MARY: No.

MARTHA: Can tha' sew?

MARY: No.

MARTHA: Can tha' read?

MARY: Yes.

MARTHA: Then why doesn't tha' read somethin'?

MARY: I haven't any books.

MARTHA: If Mrs. Medlock'd let thee go into th' library, there's thousands of books there.

MARY: I don't like Mrs. Medlock. *(Pause.)* What do you do when it's bad weather outside? I mean, when you're at home.

MARTHA: Try to keep from under each other's feet mostly.

MARY: If I go out, who will go with me?

MARTHA: You'll have to go by yourself.

MARY: I have nothing to play with.

MARTHA: Nothin' to play with! Our children plays with sticks and stones. You'll just have to learn to play like other children does when they haven't got sisters and brothers. Our Dickon goes off in th' moor by himself and plays for hours. He's got sheep on the moor that knows him, and birds as comes an' eats out of his hand. However little there is to eat, he always saves a bit o' his bread to coax his pets. *(Mary stands quietly. Goes to window.)* Come here. *(Mary goes to the window. Points.)* If tha' goes around that way, tha'll come to th' gardens. You go through that gate there. There's lots o' flowers in summertime, but nothin' bloomin' now. *(Hesitates a moment.)* One of th' gardens is locked up. No one has been in it for ten years.

MARY: Why?

MARTHA: Mr. Craven had it shut when his wife died so sudden. He won't let no one go inside. It was her garden. He locked th' door an' dug a hole and buried the key. *(Bell rings.)* There's Mrs. Medlock's bell ringing. I must run. *(Exits. Blackout.)*

**[END OF FREEVIEW]**