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# THE SECRET GARDEN



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## CHAPTER 1

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Mary Lennox was a little girl who was born in India. Her father was a British official there. Her mother was a very beautiful woman who spent her time going to parties. An Indian woman took care of Mary, and an English governess taught her how to read and write. She saw her parents very rarely. Nobody liked her very much. She was a sickly and ugly child. She had a thin face, a little thin body and thin yellow hair. She always looked unhappy.

When Mary was nine, there was a cholera outbreak in the city. Everybody fell sick. There was panic, and people were running around, shouting and crying. Nobody thought of Mary, so she hid herself in the nursery<sup>1</sup>.

When officers came to the house the next day, they found her there alone. Mary looked at them angrily because she was hungry and tired.

‘Barney!’ called one of the officers. ‘There is a child here! She is alone! Who is she?’

‘I am Mary Lennox,’ the little girl said. ‘I fell asleep here. Everybody is sick. Why does nobody come?’

‘It is Captain Lennox’s child,’ the man shouted. ‘They forgot her!’

‘Why does nobody come?’ asked Mary again.

The young man looked at her sadly. ‘Poor little child,’ he said. ‘There is nobody left to come.’

---

<sup>1</sup> nursery: a room in a house where young children can play

That is how Mary learned that her mother and father had died.

\* \* \*

Mary did not miss her mother very much. She had not spoken to her much when she was alive. She was a **selfish** child, and she only cared about herself.

‘I hope I’ll stay with nice people,’ she thought. ‘I hope they will let me do what I want.’

At first, she was taken to live with an English family, the Crawfords. Mary did not want to live with them because they were poor. There were five children. They wore old clothes and argued all the time. Mary hated their untidy house.

She spent her time playing by herself outside. One day, she was playing in the garden, trying to make a garden. One of the children came and tried to help her. Mary did not like this.

‘Go away!’ she cried. ‘I don’t want boys!’

The boy looked angry at first. Then he began to make fun of Mary. He danced around and sang a song about Mary. This made her very angry.

‘You’re going home,’ he said. ‘Next week. And we’re all glad.’

‘I’m glad, too,’ said Mary. ‘Where’s home?’ she asked.

‘You don’t know where your home is!’ said the boy. ‘It’s England, of course. You are going to your uncle. His name is Mr. Archibald Craven.’

‘I don’t know anything about him,’ said Mary.

‘I heard my parents talking about him. He lives in a big, lonely old house in the countryside, and no one goes near him because he’s a **bad-tempered** man. He’s got a crooked<sup>2</sup> back, and he’s awful.’

‘I don’t believe you,’ said Mary. She turned her back because she did not want to listen anymore.

That night Mrs. Crawford told Mary that she was going to sail away to England in a few days. She was going to live with her uncle, Mr. Archibald Craven, who lived at Misselthwaite Manor. Mary looked like she did not care. Mrs. Crawford wanted to be kind and tried to kiss her, but she turned her face away.

\* \* \*

The sea journey to England was long. When Mary arrived in London, a woman called Mrs. Medlock met her. She was Mr. Archibald Craven’s housekeeper. She was a large woman, with very red cheeks and sharp black eyes. Mary did not like her at all, but that was natural because she did not usually like people.

Mrs. Medlock did not like Mary very much either. She did not like children. Besides, she had not wanted to go to London. Her sister’s daughter was getting married. But Mr. Archibald Craven had asked her to go.

‘Captain Lennox and his wife died of cholera,’ he had said in his cold way. ‘Captain Lennox was my wife’s brother. The child will be brought here. You must go to London and bring her.’

When Mrs. Medlock saw Mary for the first time, she thought, ‘What a plain-looking, **cross** little girl!’

---

<sup>2</sup> Crooked: not in a straight line; bent or curved

The next day they set out on their journey to Yorkshire. In the train, Mary sat in a corner. She was bored and unhappy. Her black dress made her look yellower than ever, and her black hat covered her light hair.

‘I have never seen such an unpleasant child in my life,’ Mrs. Medlock thought. At last she got tired of watching her and began to chat. ‘I can tell you something about where you are going to,’ she said. ‘Do you know anything about your uncle?’

‘No,’ said Mary.

‘Well, you are going to a strange place. It’s big and grand, of course, but it is **depressing**. The house is six hundred years old and it’s on the edge of the moor. There are a nearly a hundred rooms in it, but most of them are locked. And there are pictures and old furniture and things. There’s a big park around the house and gardens and big trees. But there’s nothing else,’ she ended suddenly.

Mary had begun to get interested. It all sounded very different from India. But she did not want to look like she was interested, so she sat still.

‘I don’t know why you will be living there,’ said Mrs. Medlock. Mr. Craven is not going to take care of you. I’m sure about that. He never cares about anyone. He only cares about himself. He’s got a crooked back. He was an unpleasant man when he was young. But he changed when he got married.’

Mary looked up. She was surprised that Mr. Craven was married. Mrs. Medlock saw that she was interested, so she continued to **explain**.

‘His wife was a sweet, pretty girl. He loved her very much and would have done anything for her. People were surprised when she married

him. They said that she married him for his money. But it wasn't true. Then, she died. And Mr. Craven became strange again. He cares about nobody. He doesn't want to see people. Most of the time he is away. When he is at Misselthwaite, he shuts himself up in his room.'

Mary felt sorry. It was a sad story.

'You probably won't see him. And there won't be many people to talk to you. You'll have to play by yourself. There will be rooms that you can go into and rooms that you cannot go into. You can spend time in the gardens. But don't go walking around in the house. Mr. Craven won't like it.'

'I won't,' said Mary. She stopped feeling sorry for Mr. Craven now. He was an unpleasant man.

Mary looked out of the window and watched the grey sky going dark. It was raining heavily now, and she felt more and more depressed. She fell asleep.

\* \* \*

It was quite dark when they finally **arrived** at Thwaite Station. It was raining hard. They got out of the train and got on a horse carriage. As they drove, Mary looked out of the window to see the road and the house that they were going to. She was not shy or scared, but she wanted to see the house with a hundred rooms.

They drove through a tiny village with small white houses. Then, they came to a highroad with a lot of trees. After a while, they were on a rough road. Mary heard a strange, wild noise.

'It sounds like the sea,' said Mary.



‘That’s the sound of the wind,’ said Mrs. Medlock. ‘It’s blowing through the bushes. We’re in the moors.’

‘What is a moor?’

‘It’s just miles and miles of wild land. Nothing grows on it and nothing lives on it. Only wild ponies and sheep.’

They drove through the darkness. The rain had stopped, but the wind blew hard and made strange sounds. The road went up and down, and they passed over several little bridges. It seemed like an endless road.

Mary was unhappy. ‘I don’t like it,’ she said to herself. ‘I don’t like it.’

Finally, she saw a light on top of a hill. It was the house. They drove a few minutes more and reached the old house.

Mary got out of the carriage and looked at it. It was low-built and very long. The main door was huge. They entered into the great big hall. The walls were covered with portraits of people. It was not a welcoming room. Mary felt small and lost.

They went upstairs. Mrs. Medlock showed her into a room with a fire in it. There was some food on the table.

‘This is your room,’ she said. ‘You’ll live here. And you must stay here. Don’t forget that!’

\* \* \*

When Mary opened her eyes in the morning, she saw a young housemaid who was cleaning out the fireplace to light the fire. Mary lay in bed and watched her for a few moments and then looked around

the room. It was a strange and dark room. There were pictures of trees, horses, dogs, and people on the walls. Then, she looked out of the big window. She could see a wide area of land without trees and a purple sea.

‘What is that?’ she asked, as she pointed out of the window.

Martha, the young housemaid, looked out of the window. ‘That’s the moor,’ she said. ‘Do you like it?’

‘No,’ said Mary. ‘I hate it.’

‘That’s because you’re not used to it,’ said Martha. ‘But you will like it. I like it. It’s beautiful in spring and summer when there are flowers. The air is fresh and it smells like honey. The birds sing beautifully. I couldn’t leave the moor.’

Martha was a red-cheeked, friendly person. She spoke in a strong Yorkshire accent. Mary listened to her in surprise. She was not like the servants that Mary knew in India.

‘Are you going to be my servant?’ Mary asked.



*When Mary opened her eyes in the morning, she saw a young housemaid who was cleaning out the fireplace to light the fire.*

‘I’m Mrs. Medlock’s servant,’ she said. ‘And she’s Mr. Craven’s servant. But I will clean your room and bring you your food.’

‘Who’s going to dress me?’

Martha stood up. She looked surprised. ‘Can’t you dress yourself?’ she asked.

‘No, I never did,’ said Mary. ‘My servants always did.’

‘Well,’ said Martha, ‘You have to learn. It will be good to take care of yourself. Mother always says that you should learn to look after yourself.’

‘It is different in India,’ said Mary unhappily. ‘You know nothing about India. You know nothing!’

She was angry and helpless. Suddenly she felt very lonely. Nobody understood her. She threw herself down on the bed and began to cry.

Martha was sorry for her. ‘Oh, don’t cry,’ she said gently. ‘I’m sorry. You’re right. I don’t know anything. Please stop crying.’

Martha’s voice was comforting and friendly. Mary stopped crying.

‘It’s time to get up now,’ she said. ‘Your breakfast is ready in the room next door. If you get out of bed, I’ll help you put your clothes on.’

As they got ready, Martha went on talking. Mary listened to her coldly at first. But slowly she became more and more interested.

‘I’ve got eleven brothers and sisters. And Father earns very little money. There’s never enough food for all of the children. They run and play on the moor all day, and Mother says that the fresh air fattens them up. She thinks they eat grass just like the wild ponies do. My brother Dickon is twelve. He’s got a pony that he rides.’

‘Where did he get it?’ asked Mary.

‘He found it on the moor when it was little, and he became friends with it. Now it follows him around and lets him ride on its back. Animals like Dickon.’

Mary had never had her own pet animal but had always wanted one. She began to get interested in Dickon. She had never been interested in anyone besides herself.

She went into the room next door. It had been turned into a nursery for her, but it did not look like a child’s room. It was a grown-up person’s room, with old pictures on the walls and big old chairs. She looked at the breakfast on the table. Mary always ate very little. She was not interested in the food.

‘I don’t want it,’ she said.

‘What? If my brothers and sisters were here, they’d eat this food in five minutes.’

‘Why?’ asked Mary coldly.

‘Why!’ said Martha. ‘Because they never get enough to eat and they’re always hungry.’

‘I don’t know what it is to be hungry,’ said Mary. She drank some tea and ate a little toast and some marmalade.

‘Now put your coat on and go outside and play,’ said Martha. ‘It will be good for you.’

Mary looked out of the window. There were gardens and paths and big trees. It was cold and dull.

‘Who will go with me?’ she asked.

‘You’ll go by yourself,’ said Martha. ‘You’ll learn to play like other children do when they don’t have sisters and brothers. My brother Dickon plays on the moor by himself for hours. That’s how he made friends with the pony, the sheep, and the birds.’

Martha found Mary’s coat and hat and a pair of little boots. She showed her the way downstairs.

‘If you go around that way, you’ll come to the gardens,’ she said, pointing to a gate. ‘There are lots of flowers in summer, but not now.’ Then she paused and looked away. ‘One of the gardens is locked up. No one has been in it for ten years. It was Mrs. Craven’s garden, and when she died Mr. Craven locked it up and buried the key. No one can go inside.’

A bell rang. ‘Mrs. Medlock is calling me. I must go,’ said Martha and left.

After Martha was gone, Mary went into the gardens. There were wide lawns, trees, flowerbeds, and a large pool with an old fountain in the middle. But there were no flowers in the flowerbeds and no water in the fountain. Mary thought about the garden which had been locked up for ten years. This was not that garden.

At the end of the path, she saw a long wall that was covered in ivy<sup>3</sup>. She went toward the wall and found a green door. It was open. She went through the door and came into a garden with walls around it. There were fruit trees against the wall and some beds that contained vegetables. These were the kitchen gardens. There was another green door that opened to another walled garden. There were several more walled gardens beyond.

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<sup>3</sup> ivy: a climbing plant, especially one with dark green shiny leaves with five points

Then an old man walked through the door. He was carrying a spade<sup>4</sup>. He did not look very friendly, so Mary walked on.

She walked through the second green door and found more walls and winter vegetables. There was another green door. Mary opened it and this time she found herself in an orchard<sup>5</sup>. There were walls around it and many fruit trees. Mary could see the tops of the trees behind the wall, but she could not find a green door.

Then she **noticed** a robin sitting on top of a tree on the other side of the wall. It was singing its winter song. She stopped and listened to him. His cheerful, friendly little song made her happy. The big house, the empty moor, and the empty gardens had made her feel lonely. But the little bird almost made her smile. She listened to him until he flew away.

She kept thinking about the locked garden. She wanted to see it. Why had Mr. Craven buried the key? Why did he hate the garden? Then she thought about the robin and his song. She **remembered** the top of the tree that he was sitting on.

‘I think that tree was in the secret garden. I’m sure about it,’ she said.

She walked back into the first garden and found the old man. He was digging. She began talking to him, but he was not very friendly.

‘I went into the other gardens and the orchard,’ she said. ‘There was no door there into the other garden.’

He stopped digging. ‘What garden?’ he asked.

‘The one behind the orchard,’ Mary said. ‘There are trees there.’

---

<sup>4</sup> spade: a garden tool with a broad metal blade and a long handle, used for digging

<sup>5</sup> orchard: an area of land on which fruit trees are grown

A bird with a red breast was sitting on one of them and he sang.'

Suddenly, the old gardener's face changed, and he began to smile.

'People look much nicer when they smile,' thought Mary. She had never **realized** this before.

The old man began to whistle softly. And the next moment, something wonderful happened. The robin came flying over to them and landed near the gardener's foot.

'Here he is,' laughed the old man. 'Where have you been, little one?' he said.

The bird looked up at him with his soft bright eye. He didn't seem afraid. He hopped about, looking for seeds and insects. Mary had a strange feeling in her heart because the bird was so pretty and cheerful.

'Does he always come when you call him?' she asked the old man.

'Yes, he does. He's a robin redbreast. They're the friendliest of birds. I've known him since he was a baby. He came out of the nest and flew over the wall. But he was too weak to fly back. When he came back, all the other robins were gone. He was lonely.'





*The robin came flying over to them and landed near the gardener's foot.*

The robin hopped about pecking the soil and stopped and looked at them. Mary went nearer and looked at him.

‘I’m lonely,’ she said.

She had not realized this before. It was one of the things that made her feel so unhappy and angry all the time.

The old gardener stared at her a minute. ‘Are you the little girl from India?’ he asked.

Mary nodded. ‘What is your name?’ she asked.

‘Ben Weatherstaff,’ he answered. ‘I’m lonely too. But I’m not lonely when the little bird is with me. He’s my only friend.’

‘I have no friends,’ said Mary. ‘I never had any.’

‘You are a little bit like me, then,’ said the old man. ‘We’re not good looking and we’re both bad-tempered.’

Mary Lennox had never heard the truth about herself. ‘Do I look as ugly as Ben Weatherstaff?’ she thought. ‘Do I look as unpleasant as he does? Am I bad-tempered?’ She felt uncomfortable.

Suddenly the bird flew onto an apple tree and started singing. Ben Weatherstaff laughed.

‘He wants to be friends with you,’ he said. ‘He likes you.’

‘Me?’ asked Mary. She moved toward the little tree softly and looked up.

‘Would you be friends with me?’ she said to the robin. She spoke softly and gently.

Ben was surprised. 'You said that in a nice way. You sounded like Dickon. He talks to the wild animals on the moor.'

'Do you know Dickon?' Mary asked.

'Everybody knows him. The flowers know him, and the foxes and the birds know him.'

Mary wanted to ask some more questions. But suddenly the robin flew away.

'He has flown over the wall!' Mary cried out, watching him. 'He has flown into the garden where there is no door!'

'He lives there,' said old Ben. 'Among the old rose trees.'

'Are there rose trees? I'd like to see them,' said Mary. 'Where is the green door? There must be a door somewhere.'

Ben picked up his spade and started digging. He was cold and unfriendly again. 'There is no door,' he said. 'You can't go in there. Now go and play. I must go on with my work. I don't have time.'

He took his spade and walked off. He did not even look at her or say goodbye.

\* \* \*

The next few days were almost the same for Mary. Every morning she woke up and found Martha making the fire. She ate her breakfast in the nursery. Then she looked out of the window at the moor, and then she went out because there was nothing else to do.

She did not know this, but spending time outside was good for her. Walking and running made her stronger and healthier, and the fresh air

put some red colour on her cheeks and brightened her dull eyes.

One morning, she woke up and for the first time in her life she was hungry. She ate all of her breakfast.

‘The fresh air is making you hungry,’ said Martha. ‘If you go on playing outside every day, you’ll get bigger and stronger.’

‘I have nothing to play with,’ said Mary.

‘Nothing to play with!’ said Martha. ‘Our children play with sticks and stones. They just run about and shout and look at things.’

Mary did not shout, but she looked at things. She walked round and round the gardens. Sometimes she looked for Ben Weatherstaff, but he was too busy to look at her or too unfriendly to speak to her.

There was one place that Mary often went to. It was the long path outside the gardens. The walls around it were covered in ivy. One part of the ivy was thicker than others. No one had cut it for a long time. One morning, Mary was looking at the ivy and thinking about this when she heard a bird. She turned around and saw the robin sitting on the wall. He was looking at her with his small head on one side.

‘Oh! It’s you!’ she said.

He answered. He twittered and chirped and hopped along the wall. He was telling Mary many things, and she understood him.

‘Good morning! Isn’t the wind nice? Isn’t the sun nice? Isn’t everything nice?’ he said.

Mary began to laugh and ran after him. ‘I like you! I like you!’ she cried out. She chirped and whistled. The robin was quite happy and

chirped and whistled with her. Then he flew to the top of a tree and started singing. It was the same tree that Mary had seen him on. She looked at the wall that was covered in ivy.

‘The tree is in the locked garden,’ she said to herself. ‘The robin lives there. I wish I could see it!’

She walked round and looked closely at the wall. There was no door in it. ‘It’s very strange,’ she said. ‘Ben Weatherstaff said there was no door. But there must have been a door ten years ago because Mr. Craven buried the key.’

\* \* \*

That evening, after supper, Mary and Martha were sitting in front of the fire. It was a windy night. They could hear the wind blowing around the house.

‘Why did Mr. Craven hate the garden?’ asked Mary.

‘Well, Mrs. Medlock doesn’t want us to talk about it,’ said Martha. ‘Mr. Craven is the way he is because of the garden. It was Mrs. Craven’s garden and she loved it. They used to look after it together. And they didn’t let the gardeners go in there. They used to stay in there for hours, reading and talking. There was an old tree with a big branch, and Mrs. Craven used to sit on it. But one day when she was sitting there, the branch broke and she fell. She was hurt very badly, and the next day she died. That’s why he hates the garden. No one can go in there, and no one can talk about it.’

Mary did not ask any more questions. She looked at the red fire and listened to the wind. She felt sorry for Mr. Craven. It was the first time in her life that she felt sorry for someone.

As she was listening to the wind, she heard another noise. It was a strange sound. It was like the sound of a child crying somewhere. The noise came from inside the house.

‘Do you hear a child crying?’ she asked Martha.

Martha paused. ‘No,’ she said quickly. ‘It’s the wind.’

‘But listen,’ said Mary. ‘It’s in the house.’

At that moment, the wind opened the door of the room. They heard the crying very clearly.

‘I told you!’ said Mary. ‘Someone’s crying. It’s a child.’

Martha ran and shut the door. ‘It was the wind,’ she said quickly.

Martha looked worried about something. Mary did not believe that she was telling the truth.

\* \* \*

The next day was a rainy day. Mary could not go out. ‘I’m going to **explore** the house,’ she said to herself. She wanted to see the hundred rooms that Mrs. Medlock had told her about. She had many questions. Were there really a hundred rooms? Were they all locked? What was inside them?

She left her room quietly and began walking. She was on a long corridor that led to other corridors. She went up some stairs and walked on other corridors. There were lots of doors, and many pictures on the walls. Some of them were pictures of strange and dark places. Most of them were portraits of people who wore strange, grand costumes. Then she began opening the doors and going in and out of the rooms. The

rooms were filled with old furniture and pictures. But no one lived in them.

Mary walked around the house for a long time. Finally, she got tired. As she was going back to her room, she got lost. She stood still and tried to remember the way.

She was standing there quietly when suddenly she heard a cry. 'It's like the cry that I heard last night,' she thought.

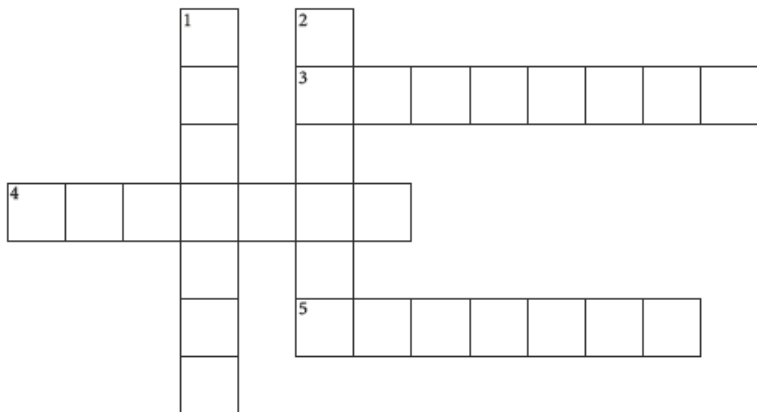
At that moment, Mrs. Medlock appeared with some keys in her hand. She looked angry. 'What are you doing here?' she asked. 'What did I tell you?'

'I was trying to find my way,' said Mary. 'I heard someone crying.'

'You didn't hear anything,' said Mrs. Medlock. 'Go back to your room now! And stay there or I will lock you in.'

Mary hated Mrs. Medlock. 'There was someone crying, I know there was!' she said to herself. 'I will find out who it is.'



**ACTIVITIES****A. Do the puzzle.****ACROSS:**

3. (v) think back to a past event
4. (v) make smt understandable by telling about it in detail
5. (v) examine or investigate, look into

**DOWN:**

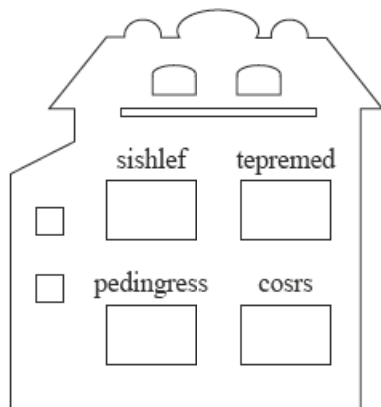
1. (v) understand, become aware of
2. (v) reach a place

**B. True or False?**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Mary had loving parents and was a happy child.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. After her parents' death, Mary stayed with an English family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Mr. Craven was sad and emotional when he told Mrs. Medlock about the death of Mary's parents.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Mrs. Medlock thought that Mr. Craven would take very good care of Mary.



**C. Unscramble the words and complete the sentences with them.**



- Mary was a s \_ \_ f \_ \_ h little girl. She never thought about others.
- She was also a **bad- t \_ m p \_ \_ ed** girl. She was usually unhappy and got angry quickly.
- Sometimes when Mary asked too many questions, Ben would get c \_ o \_ s and leave.
- Misselthwaite Manor was a very old and d \_ \_ r \_ s \_ \_ n g house on the moor. It was grey and full of old things. It was not a happy place.

**D. Discuss the following questions.**

- Why did Mary cry the first morning when she met Martha?
- What did Martha tell Mary about the garden that was locked up?
- How did Mary feel when she saw the robin for the first time?
- Why did Ben Weatherstaff think Mary was like him?
- Mary heard a strange noise in the house. What did it sound like? What did Martha say it was?

## GLOSSARY

### Chapter 1

**arrive** (v) to get to a place, especially at the end of a journey

**bad-tempered** (adj) Someone who is bad-tempered is not very cheerful and gets angry easily.

**cross** (adj) annoyed or slightly angry

**depressing** (adj) something that makes you sad and disappointed

**depressed** (adj)

**explain** (v) to tell somebody about something in a way that makes it easy to understand

**explore** (v) to travel to or around an area or a country in order to learn about it

**notice** (v) to see or hear somebody/something; to become aware of somebody/something

**realize** (v) to understand a situation

**remember** (v) If you remember people or events from the past, you still have an idea of them in your mind and you are able to think about them.

**selfish** (adj) caring only about yourself, and not about other people

### Chapter 2

**breathe** (v) to take air into your lungs and send it out again through your nose or mouth

breath (n)

**disappear** (v) to become impossible to see; to be lost or impossible to find

appear (*ant.*)

**earth** (n) <sup>1</sup> the world; the planet that we live on; <sup>2</sup> the substance that plants grow in

**exclaim** (v) to say something suddenly and loudly, especially because of strong emotion or pain

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Frances Hodgson Burnett (born 1849, Manchester, England; died 1924, New York, U.S.), was an American playwright and author.

Burnett had a difficult childhood. Her family experienced financial difficulties after the death of her father in 1854. In 1865, the family immigrated to the United States and settled in Tennessee. Burnett began writing and publishing stories in magazines at the age of 19 to help support her family. She later began writing novels. Her first novel, *That Lass o' Lowrie's*, was published in 1877. After moving with her husband to Washington, D.C., Burnett wrote the novels *Haworth's* (1879), *Louisiana* (1880), *A Fair Barbarian* (1881), and *Through One Administration* (1883).

Burnett published her most famous and successful book, *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, in 1886. It was written as a children's book, but mothers loved it, too. The book sold more than half a million copies. Burnett's later works include *The Little Princess* (1905) and *The Secret Garden* (1909). Both of these works were written for children. In 1893, she published a memoir, *The One I Knew Best of All*.

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