

SIMPLIFIED READERS

A2⁺

LEVEL 3

The Secret Garden

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT



WORKSHEETS

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ABOUT THE NOVEL

The Secret Garden was written in 1909 by British-American author and playwright Frances Hodgson Burnett. It is one of the most popular children's novels. *The Secret Garden* tells the story of a 10-year old girl named Mary Lennox. Her parents die in a cholera epidemic in India, and she is sent to England to her uncle's house. The events which she lives through in the story are similar to those that the author herself experienced as a child. Both Mary and the author lost their parents in childhood and were raised in a country that was not familiar to them. Burnett wrote this book

while she was living in a country house, where she took up gardening as a hobby. She had a walled-in rose garden which inspired many parts of the story. Burnett was greatly influenced by the then popular idea that through positive thinking, one's illness could be cured, and his/her fate could be changed. The book was published in 1911 in England and America, but the story first appeared in serial format in a magazine in 1910. It has been adapted many times for the cinema, television, theatre and also for a multimedia series partly presented on YouTube.

SUMMARIES

Mary Lennox is a 10-year old girl who is living in India with her rich British family. She has been neglected both by her self-centred, unloving mother and by her father. She is raised by her Indian nanny and becomes a spoiled girl who always expects the servants to do everything for her. When her parents die in the cholera epidemic, she first stays with a poor English family, the Crawfords. Then, she is sent to her uncle's house in England. Her uncle, Archibald Craven, who is a rich, ill-tempered man with a crooked back, has a huge estate in Yorkshire.

Archibald Craven's wife died ten years ago, and since her death, he has been a solitary man travelling to different places in order to forget his grief. At first, Mary hates living in this huge, depressing house with a hundred rooms, most of which are locked. Luckily, the young housemaid Martha is very friendly and helpful to her. Martha encourages Mary to go and play in the gardens and explore the moor. Mary is curious about the secret garden that Martha mentions and becomes determined to see it. This garden belonged to Mrs Craven. After her death, Mr Craven locked its door and buried the key in the ground. Mary spends weeks walking around, looking for this secret garden. She often talks to the kind, elderly gardener, named Ben Weatherstaff. She spends time playing with Ben's little robin that has its home in the secret garden. Her daily walks in the gardens, the fresh air of the moor and her friendship with the gardener and his robin make her a healthier and more pleasant girl.

One day, with the help of the robin, she finds the buried key and enters the secret garden. The garden looks very untidy with dead rose bushes and dead vines, but there are also some green shoots. Mary decides to bring life to the garden again. She becomes friends with Martha's brother, Dickon, and they secretly work in the garden every day. Working and playing with Dickon and the plants growing in the secret garden make Mary very happy. Several nights in the following days, she hears a strange crying noise in the house. Everyone denies hearing that noise. Finally, she decides to discover what the sound is and looks into all the bedrooms. In one of the bedrooms, she finds a little boy lying in bed. The boy is Colin Craven, the 10-year-old son of Mr Craven.

Colin is not allowed to leave his room. He has been told that he is very sick and will not live very long. He is very weak and tired, so he always lies in bed. He cannot even stand or walk. So, he has become a disagreeable and irritable child who often cries and screams. When Mary becomes friends with him, she tries to comfort and entertain him with her stories. She also tells him about the secret garden, which makes Colin very interested. Mary introduces Colin to Dickon, and the three of them secretly visit the garden each day to work and play in it. Colin loves being in the garden. Eventually, he stops thinking that he is very ill and becomes strong and healthy. He even begins to stand and walk.

Martha's mother, Mrs Sowerby, who visits the three kids in the garden, sends a letter to Mr Craven and asks him to return home. When he arrives, he is shocked to see the children having fun in the secret garden and his son walking like a normal child. The father and son are now happy together after so many years. The story ends as Mr Craven and the children cheerfully walk together to the house and the servants watch them with unbelieving eyes.

Discuss before you begin reading:

- 1 If you had a garden of your own, what would you like to grow in it? Why?
- 2 Do you know how to plant a tree and how to take care of the flowers in a pot or in a garden? Explain.

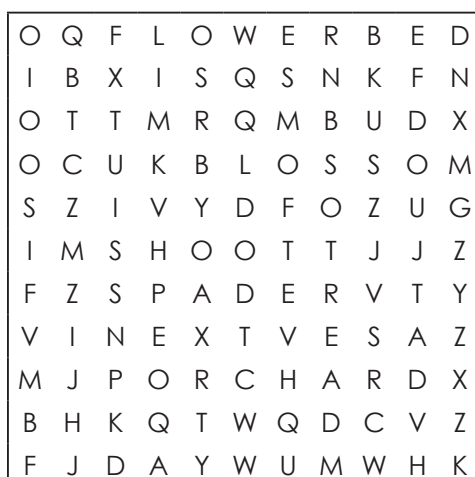
A Word Search

Can you find the ten hidden words in this puzzle? They are all about gardens and/or plants. When you find these words, write them down in the blanks below the puzzle.



- 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____
6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____

B Can you find the words that match the definitions next to the puzzle? These are also words about gardening and plants. They will often appear in the story which you are going to read.



- 1 to produce flowers: _____ 5 an area where flowers are planted: _____
2 a small part that grows on a plant and develops into a flower, leaf, or new branch: _____ 6 the part of a new plant that is just beginning to grow above the ground: _____
3 a climbing plant that often grows on the outside of buildings: _____ 7 a tool with a heavy metal blade attached to a wooden handle; it is used for digging: _____
4 an area where we grow fruit trees: _____ 8 a plant with very long stems. It grows along the ground or up and around a wall or tree.

A Who is Who? When you finish reading **Chapter 1**, match the names in the first column with the descriptions or events in the next three columns. Put the numbers (1-21) under the correct names.

Captain Lennox:	1 Mary enjoys listening to her.	8 Martha mentions him to Mary.	15 gives Mary information about her uncle
Mrs Crawford:	2 not very friendly at first; doesn't seem interested in Mary	9 speaks in a strong Yorkshire accent	16 the mother of five children
Mrs Medlock:	3 All the animals love him.	10 a very friendly and kind housemaid	17 used to be unkind but changed when he got married
Archibald Craven	4 comes to Mary's room every morning	11 brought Mary from London to Yorkshire	18 a British army officer; not a loving father to his child
Martha	5 an unpleasant, depressed man	12 wants to be alone all the time	19 rides a pony; friends with all the animals
Dickon	6 took care of Martha in her house when her parents died	13 has no friends except for a robin	20 doesn't like children
Ben Weatherstaff	7 died of an epidemic disease	14 gave Mary the news that she was going to live in Yorkshire with her uncle	21 has a crooked back

B When you finish reading Chapter 2, fill in this chart with the correct names.

	Who said this?	To whom?
1	'If roses have no leaves and look grey and brown, are they dead or alive?'	
2	'You may do what you like. I cannot look after you. I am too ill and unhappy.'	
3	'I know you are Miss Mary. I brought you the seeds and the spade.'	
4	'Don't they have skipping ropes in India? Now, watch me.'	
5	'Did Dickon and your mother like to hear about me?'	

Number the events in the order that they happen in the story (1-21).

A While walking in the wood, Mary comes across Dickon sitting under a tree and playing his wooden pipe.	
B Mary sees a cute robin in the gardens and meets Ben Weatherstaff for the first time. She also discovers the secret garden's wall.	2
C While exploring the house on a rainy day, Mary gets lost in the corridors. She hears the crying sound again.	
D Mr Craven receives a letter from Mrs Sowerby, in which she asks him to come home.	
E Mr Craven falls asleep and has a dream while he is sitting by a lake and thinking about his home and his son.	
F Martha's mother comes to the secret garden and joins the three children. They have a good time chatting and laughing.	17
G One evening, while chatting with Martha in front of the fireplace, Mary hears the sound of a child crying.	
H Mr Craven walks toward the garden's door and suddenly Colin comes out running to his arms.	
I Martha brings Mary a gift that her mother has bought for her and surprises her.	
J The wind moves the ivy leaves on the garden's wall, and Mary sees the door. She opens it and enters the garden.	7
K One night, Mary looks for the room where the crying sound comes from and finds Colin lying in bed.	
L Mary discovers that Colin has no hump on his back and he is not a sick boy.	
M One day, as she is secretly chatting to Colin in his room, she is caught by Mrs Medlock and Doctor Craven.	13

N Mary takes Dickon to the secret garden, and they decide to bring the garden back to life.	
O Mary and Dickon take Colin to the secret garden in a wheelchair.	
P Colin is able to stand up for the first time, and he begins to walk.	
Q After having a small breakfast, Mary goes out to explore the gardens.	
R Mary finds the buried key to the secret garden with the help of the robin.	
S Mary becomes very happy to see that secret garden is not really dead.	
T Mr Craven walks in the garden with the children and is amazed that it has come alive. The four of them walk to the house happily.	21
U Mr Craven talks to Mary for the first time, and she asks for his permission to have a small garden of her own.	

Now skim through the story and see if your order is correct. Make changes if you haven't got the order right.

TEST YOURSELF

THE SECRET GARDEN by Frances Hodgson Burnett

TOTAL

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A2+ - Level 3

A Who are they? Match the names (a-h) with the information (1-8). (8x2=16 pts)

- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| a Ben Weatherstaff | d Mrs Medlock | g Doctor Craven |
| b Martha | e Mr Craven | h Mrs Sowerby |
| c Dickon | f The robin | |

- ___ 1 ... is a poor but very kind woman with 12 children.
- ___ 2 ... is the only person in the house whom Mary hates.
- ___ 3 ... the first person that Mary has ever been interested in knowing.
- ___ 4 ... is the first person that Mary has ever felt sorry for.
- ___ 5 ... is Mary's very first friend in Yorkshire and is always cheerful.
- ___ 6 ... thinks Mary is a bad girl at first because she asks too many questions.
- ___ 7 ... is the only person who is not happy to see Colin healthy and strong.
- ___ 8 ... is the person who Mary often chats with in front of the fire.

B Mark the sentences as True (T) or False (F). (10x2=20 pts)

- ___ 1 Mary arrives in Yorkshire on a warm spring day.
- ___ 2 One of Mrs Medlock's duties in the house is to clean Mary's room and bring her food.
- ___ 3 Martha's mother buys a skipping rope for Mary.
- ___ 4 Some roses in the secret garden were still alive when Mary first went in there.
- ___ 5 Dickon gives Colin one of his animals.
- ___ 6 Ben took care of the garden for eight years.
- ___ 7 Colin does not know about the secret garden until Mary tells him.
- ___ 8 Colin doesn't want to see the garden at first.
- ___ 9 Colin tells everyone in the house that he can stand up and walk.
- ___ 10 Mrs Sowerby does not keep her promise that she won't tell Colin's father about his improvement.

C Mark the correct answers. (10x3=30 pts)

- 1 Why does Mr Craven hate the garden?
 - a He is a cruel man who doesn't like nature, trees or plants.
 - b His wife died there, and it reminds him of her death.
 - c It is the place where he first met his wife.
- 2 How did Mrs Craven die?
 - a The branch that she was sitting on broke, and she fell.
 - b She died when she was giving birth to her son.
 - c She fell while she was trying to climb a tree.
- 3 Why is Mr Craven rarely at home?
 - a He wants to forget his sorrow, so he travels a lot.
 - b He has another house in Europe.
 - c He travels on business all the time.
- 4 How did Mary find the key to the secret garden?
 - a when she stepped into a hole in the ground
 - b when the robin pointed to a hole in the ground with its beak
 - c while the robin was looking for a worm in a hole that a dog had made

5 Why does Mr Craven want to see Mary before he leaves for another country to spend the summer?

- a to say 'goodbye' to her
- b to ask her if she needs anything
- c to hire a teacher for her

6 Why doesn't Mary want to have a teacher?

- a She hates studying.
- b She wants to be outside and free all the time.
- c She has no interest in learning anything.

7 Why doesn't Mr Craven want to see Colin?

- a He looks like his mother and has the same eyes
- b He is afraid that he might die when he is with him.
- c He wants to punish him for causing his mother's death.

8 Why does everyone have to please Colin?

- a His father can fire them if they don't.
- b He will be their master when his father dies.
- c They feel sorry for him.

9 Why was Colin angry at Mary one day?

- a She made fun of him for being so weak.
- b She lied to him.
- c She did not come to see him that morning.

10 Which is wrong about Doctor Craven?

- a He made Colin wear a metal thing on his back.
- b He gave Colin too much medicine.
- c He has tried very hard to help Colin recover.

D Match the sentences (1-5) with the reasons (a-e). (5x4=20 pts)

- ___ 1 Colin has not been outside for ten years.
- ___ 2 Dickon doesn't want the garden to be tidy.
- ___ 3 Colin becomes strong and healthy.
- ___ 3 Colin thinks there is magic in the garden.
- ___ 5 When Colin is hungry, he can't ask the servants for more food.

- a They won't believe that he is still ill.
- b He spends time in the fresh air every day.
- c Everything in it is growing, and he is recovering.
- d If it is, it won't look like a secret garden.
- e He was always too weak and ill to do so.

E Are these sentences true? Write YES or NO. (7x2=14 pts)

- 1 Mrs Medlock often punishes Mary. _____
- 2 Colin dislikes Mary at first and doesn't want her in his room. _____
- 3 Mary sometimes visits the Sowerbys. _____
- 4 Mary thinks Colin is proud to talk about dying. _____
- 5 The doctor from London thinks Colin will die. _____
- 6 Mary believes that Mr Craven loves his son. _____
- 7 Mrs Sowerby has a big role in bringing Colin and his father together. _____

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