

QUICK CARD: *THE SECRET GARDEN*



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| Reference | <i>The Secret Garden</i> , Frances Hodgson Burnett. (1909) ISBN: 978-0718126643 |
| Plot | Peevish Mary Lennox has grown up in a big house in British Colonial Africa, cared for by an Ayah and kept neatly out of her parents' sight. When a plague leaves her orphaned, she journeys to England to live with her sad, reclusive uncle at Misselthwaite Manor. The house is full of secrets: mysterious cries in the night, deep sorrows that brood over the house, and a hidden garden no one uses anymore. The key Mary discovers in the flower bed may unlock more than the secret door. |
| Setting | <p>Misselthwaite Manor, situated in the moors of Yorkshire, England, represents quite a change from the hot conditions of Africa that Mary remembers. The brisk English air and severe weather conditions Mary, nurturing her health. Soon her cheeks are ruddy and she gains strength. The place is full of natural beauty and wildlife, which Mary learns to notice and enjoy.</p> <p>The Manor itself is large, filled with passages and doors that lead to undiscovered rooms and treasures. Mary has the run of the place. Her uncle travels a great deal in order to avoid the place and its painful memories. Mary is left in the care of a housekeeper, a maid, and a gardener.</p> <p>The people in the surrounding countryside are hearty and happy. They befriend Mary and encourage her growth.</p> <p>Mary discovers the secret garden hidden behind a wall from the other garden paths. Ivy shrouds the door, but Mary finds the key hidden beneath it in the dirt of a flower bed. Inside, overgrown roses tumble in tangles while other plants lie dormant, but a robin has made the place his own. Mary determines to make it hers too and to bring it back to life.</p> |
| Characters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary Lennox, 10-year-old orphaned niece of Archibald Craven • Uncle Archibald Craven, Mary's new, if absent, guardian • Colin Craven, Mary's sickly cousin, whom she discovers behind a door that is hidden by a tapestry in the Manor • Martha Sowerby, the maid • Ben Weatherstaff, the gardener • Dickon, Martha's younger brother who, Pan-like, charms the animals and befriends Mary • Mrs. Sowerby, Martha and Dickon's mother, full of country wisdom and kindness • Mrs. Medlock, Misselthwaite's housekeeper • Dr. Craven, Colin's uncle, who stands to inherit Misselthwaite if Colin dies • Lilies Craven, deceased wife of Archibald Craven and mother of Colin, |

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| | <p>whose passing is the source of all the sadness within the house and whose favorite place was the secret garden</p> |
| <p>Conflict</p> | <p>Man vs. Self – Mary must learn to entertain herself and delight in the people and things around her. She must learn to treat others with decency and abandon her peevish ways. Colin, too, must learn to abandon his own selfishness and self-pity to regain his health.</p> <p>Man vs. Man – Mary and Colin must fight against the ill decisions of Dr. Craven, whose petting medical treatments are only hurting the boy.</p> <p>Man vs. Nature – Although nature is indirectly responsible for Mrs. Craven’s untimely death, it also becomes the vehicle for everyone’s healing. The children consider it magical.</p> <p>Man vs. God – The story self-consciously attributes the natural world with the Christian Creator God when Dickon and Mary sing the doxology together. God’s presence behind the natural world and its events evokes the problem of pain. Mrs. Craven’s death provokes her husband to reject the natural world and any hope it might offer.</p> |
| <p>Theme</p> | <p>The healing power of nature Resurrection/Redemption The blessings of providence</p> |
| <p>Literary Devices</p> | <p>Allusions –</p> <p>The children at the pastor’s house Mary visits after her parents’ death don her “Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary” after the nursery rhyme.</p> <p>The Doxology Mary and Colin sing is associated with Christian theology of a Creator God.</p> <p>The association of health and healing with positive thinking and magic with a life-giving spirit in nature recall Christian Science and New Thought, contemporary, but unorthodox religious philosophies that interested Burnett.</p> <p>Symbolism –</p> <p>Consider the Garden’s resemblance to Eden and the roses’ connection with the deceased Mrs. Craven. Think too about the association of Magic with a spirit behind nature and the robin’s representation of nature’s posture toward man.</p> |