



The Secret Garden



About the Book

“ ‘People never like me and I never like people,’ Mary thought.”

When Mary Lennox is sent to Misselthwaite Manor to live with her uncle everybody says she is the most disagreeable-looking child ever seen. It is true, too. Mary is pale, spoilt and quite contrary. But she is also horribly lonely. Then one day she hears about a garden in the grounds of the Manor that has been kept locked and hidden for years. And when a friendly robin helps Mary find the key, she discovers the most magical place anyone could imagine...

About the Author

Frances Hodgson Burnett was born in 1849 in Manchester but when her father died Frances's mother emigrated with her sons and daughters to Tennessee in the United States. Life there was harsh and they were quite poor but the young Frances would entertain herself and her siblings with stories. And then in 1868, at the age of eighteen, she went out with her sister to pick grapes and made enough money from that job to buy paper and stamps. She wrote out a romantic tale and sent it off to a magazine. Marvellously, her story was accepted and from that day forward she became the breadwinner in her family, writing up to six stories a month.

When she married a man called Swan Burnett in 1872, she kept up her writing. Frances's two sons, Lionel and Vivian, would sleep beneath her desk as toddlers.

It was unusual for a woman to earn her own money and support her family in the way that Frances did so people in nineteenth-century England and America were very surprised. Many newspapers and magazines were interested in her private life and wrote about her, much like they do about celebrities today.

In 1890, something very sad happened and Frances's son, Lionel, died at the age of sixteen. When she wrote about Colin in *The Secret Garden* Frances might have been thinking about her own son and wishing that his sickness could have been cured. Her other son, Vivian, lived and Frances once made him a real velvet suit. The sight of him in his smart suit inspired her to write her book *Little Lord Fauntleroy*.

VINTAGE CHILDREN'S CLASSICS

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Quiz

Which character from *The Secret Garden* are you most like?
Take this quiz to find out.

What do you most dislike?

- A Other people
- B Being indoors
- C Fresh air

What are your worst and best qualities?

- A You are bad tempered sometimes, but you can be thoughtful, you love gardens and you try to help your friends.
- B You don't have any bad qualities, you are kind, you love animals and you can keep secrets
- C You are selfish, throw tantrums and order people about. You can also be grateful, plucky and loyal to your friends

Answers:

Mostly A's

You're Mary Lennox

You can be bad-tempered and dislike people, but underneath your cross exterior you can be loyal and a fierce supporter of your friends. You don't like being fussed or told what to do; you do like skipping, gardening and robins.

Mostly B's

You're Dickon Sowerby

You are kind to all living creatures and love spending all of your time outside. Calm and forgiving, you are wiser than your age and a good secret keeper. You don't like being indoors; you do like roaming the moors watching the animals.

Mostly C's

You're Colin Craven

You are spoilt and bossy and love to moan about how ill you feel, however, you can be strong and loyal to your friends. You don't like being looked at or being outside; you do like people waiting on you and secrets.

You see a robin, do you:

- A Get a queer feeling in your heart, like him enormously and feel quite sure he is looking at you and finding out all about you.
- B Make a twitter almost like the robin's own and have a good old chat
- C Robins? You don't see robins because you rarely go outside

Your favourite way to spend your time is:

- A Skipping and gardening
- B Rambling over the moors, watching wildlife
- C Moaning



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Secret Places

Mary Lennox discovers a secret garden at Misselthwaite Manor that has been locked away for many years.

If you discovered a secret place what would it be like? Can you imagine what you might see? What would you do there? And who would you tell your secret to?





The Secret Garden

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Mary
Dickon
Misselthwaite
Garden
Skipping

Robin
Yorkshire
Colin
Mr Craven
Martha

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Design your own bookmark

'Things are crowding up out of the earth,' she ran on in a hurry. 'And there are flowers uncurling and buds on everything and the green veil has covered nearly all the grey and the birds are in such a hurry about their nests for fear they may be too late that some of them are even fighting for places in the secret garden. And the rose-bushes look as wick as wick can be, and there are primroses in the lanes and woods, and the seeds we planted are up, and Dickon has brought the fox and the crow and the squirrels and a new-born lamb.'

Can you imagine what the secret garden looks like when spring arrives? Try and capture your picture of the garden here in pencils and crayons and make your very own secret garden bookmark.

