

# BOOK KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER – THE SECRET GARDEN BY FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT

## Important Information

### Plot

Mary Lennox is a sour and disagreeable 9-year-old girl who lives with her father (a British statesman) and mother (always partying and socialising) and is left to be raised by Ayah. When all three die from a cholera outbreak, she is forced to move in with her uncle. She soon realises the servants will not do everything for her and she is left to develop her own independence and imagination. After meeting Colin and Dickon, they explore a secret garden locked by Archibald Craven after his wife's death.

### Themes

Nature, Magic, Self-Awareness, Secrets, Childhood, Belief and Class Differences.

### Setting

Mary starts the story in India, travels by boat to England and ends up in the Yorkshire Moors at her uncle's manor house. There are many scenes of large, empty houses or rooms which accentuate the loneliness felt by many of the characters.

## Characters

Mary Lennox	Protagonist - Young rich girl living in India catered for by servants until her parents die and she moves to her uncle's in Yorkshire.
Colin Craven	Ten-year-old boy and son of Archibald Craven. He is made to believe he is sick until he meets Mary and Dickon.
Dickon Sowerby	Younger brother of Martha and a down-to-earth farm boy.
Archibald Craven	Mary's uncle and master of Misselthwaite Manor whose wife died 10 years earlier, thus avoiding the secret garden and even his own son.
Lilias Craven	Was the wife of Archibald Craven. Died in the secret garden.
Ben Weatherstaff	Groundskeeper at Misselthwaite Manor who befriends Mary.
Susan Sowerby	Mother of Martha and Dickon who is generous and warm.
Martha Sowerby	Mary's main servant at her uncle's estate who is kind yet blunt.
Mrs. Medlock	Housekeeper and servant at Misselthwaite Manor.
Dr. Craven	Cousin of Archibald and serves as Colin's doctor.
Mr & Mrs Lennox	Mary's wealthy parents who leave their daughter to be raised by a nanny.
Ayah	Mary's main servant in India who does everything for her.

Context - The British Raj was the rule by the British Crown on the Indian subcontinent from 1858 to 1947 where rule was passed to Queen Victoria. Mary Lennox is an Anglo-Indian child, which means that her parents are both English but she was born in colonial India. She becomes used to beating and kicking her Indian nannies (called "Ayahs") without any kind of punishment at all. The book *clearly* does not approve of Mary's behaviour yet it tends to overlook the strong history of Indian resistance to British rule from the 1857 Rebellion of the Indian army towards the British. By 1910, when the book was published, Mahatma Gandhi was already working for Indian liberation. There are some stereotypes and clichés to be wary of, along with plenty of descriptions of these two contrasting regions to unpick and analyse.



### What Can the Book Teach Us?

Think less about yourself and more about other people.

Things which appear lifeless can come back to life with proper care.

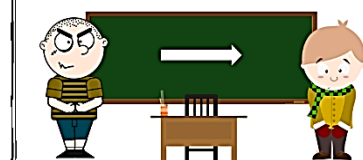
### Quotes

*"Mary had worn her contrary scowl for an hour after that, but it made her think several entirely new things."*

*"When new beautiful thoughts began to push out the old hideous ones, life began to come back to him,"*

## THE 7 STORY TYPES

### NO. 7 - REBIRTH



## SECRET GARDEN FACTS

- 1.) In 1898 Burnett rented Great Maytham Hall in Kent. The gardens inspired the book.
- 2.) The original title was *Mistress Mary*, the name coming from the nursery rhyme 'Mary, Mary, quite contrary'.

Name of Book: The Secret Garden

Date Published: 1910

Author: Frances Hodgson Burnett

Reading 'Reconsidered' Spine: Archaic Text

Genre: Historical Fiction

## Key Vocabulary

abasement	a state of depression, degradation or humiliation
contrary	opposed / the opposite
doleful	filled with or expressing grief / mournful
draught	current of air coming into a room or vehicle
embowered	shelter with foliage
enshroud	to cover as if with a shroud / to hide from view
harangue	strong feeling or expression / non-stop tirade
hasten	to move or act swiftly
hobnail	short nail used for nailing soles of heavy boots / shoes
imperious	arrogant and overbearing in manner
impudent	shameless or brazen
moor	an uncultivated expanse of open rolling land
obsequious	full of or showing compliance / obedience / following
Rajah	prince or ruler in India
renumeration	payment for work that has been done
sallow	having a yellowish and unhealthy-looking colour
trifle	something of little importance or value; a small amount
veranda	porch/balcony extending along the outside of a building