

**The Secret Garden**  
by Frances Hodgson Burnett

**Chapter 1: Mary comes to England**

<b>Author:</b> Adrian Tennant
<b>Level:</b> Pre-intermediate
<b>Age:</b> Teenagers / Young adults
<b>Time needed:</b> 30-45 minutes
<b>Preparation:</b> One copy of the picture needed for Activity 1



**Activity 1**

- 1 Show the students the picture from the chapter.
- 2 Ask students to work in pairs and try to describe the picture. If students need a hint, ask them some questions. For example: *What do the people look like? What is their relationship? Where are they? How do they feel?* etc.
- 3 Encourage students to speculate and use their imagination.
- 4 Elicit ideas from the students and write these up on the board.
- 5 Play the recording and ask students to identify the passage from the story that describes the picture.
- 6 Once you've played the chapter ask students which of their ideas were correct.
- 7 If necessary, play the specific section of the story again from *When Mary arrived in England ...* to *'I've never seen such a spoilt-looking child in my life,' Mrs Medlock thought to herself.*

**Activity 2**

- 1 Write up the following words on the board:  
Mary  
India  
nine  
Crawfords  
Yorkshire  
six hundred  
moor  
wife
- 2 Ask the students to listen to the story and write down why these words are important.

- 3 After they've listened to the story once, put the students into pairs or small groups and get them to discuss their answers together.
- 4 Play the chapter again and discuss students' answers as a class.

**Alternative procedure**

- 1 Divide the class into two groups, A and B.
- 2 Ask group A to listen for four of the words and Group B to listen for the other four words.
- 3 After they've listened to the story once, put students in pairs. Make sure you pair a student from group A with a student from group B so they can share information.

**Key:**

*Mary is the main character in the story. She was born in India. Her parents died (of cholera) when she was nine years old. She went to stay with a family called the Crawfords, in India. She was sent to live with her uncle who lived in Yorkshire, England. Her uncle's house was six hundred years old. They travelled across a moor on the train. A moor is 'miles and miles of wild land'. Her uncle, Mr Craven, has a wife.*

**Activity 3**

- 1 Tell the students they are going to do a team quiz, but they won't hear the questions until after they've heard the story again.
- 2 Put the students in teams of three to five and give them a minute to discuss their tactics.

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- 3 Make sure each team has a piece of paper and a team name.
- 4 Get them to write their team name on the piece of paper.
- 5 Tell students to listen very carefully and play the whole of the chapter.
- 6 Explain that you will ask questions about the story and they should just write down the answers and not shout out.
- 7 Read out the questions, pausing after each one to give the students enough time to discuss the answers in their teams.

**Questions:**

- a. What is Mary's surname?
  - b. Where did the Crawfords live?
  - c. Who is Mr Archibald Craven?
  - d. How did Mary travel from London to Yorkshire?
  - e. How many rooms are there in Misselthwaite Manor?
  - f. What animals live on the moor?
  - g. What were the paintings of?
- 8 When you've finished the questions, get the teams to swap their papers, read out the answers and get them to mark the other team's answers.
  - 9 Which team won?

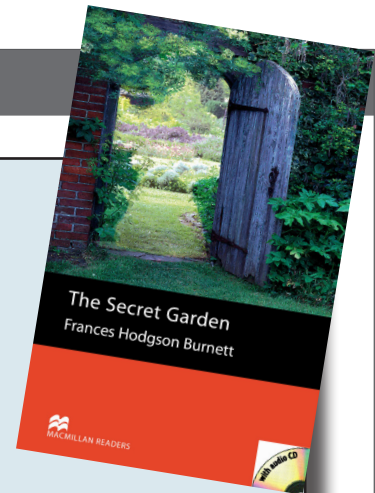
**Key:**

a. *Lennox*; b. *India*; c. *Mary's uncle*; d. *nearly a hundred*; e. *by train*; f. *wild ponies and sheep*; g. *people who had lived a long time ago*

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**Transcript**



LISTENING SKILLS TRANSCRIPT

Mary Lennox was born in India. When she was nine years old, her mother and father died of cholera. Mary did not miss her mother very much when she was gone. She had not seen or spoken to her very much when she was alive.

Mary's mother had not wanted a child at all. She had been very beautiful, and she had only been interested in going to parties and meeting people. Mary's father was always busy with his work, too. So when Mary was born, a servant looked after her. Her mother told the servant to make sure that Mary did not cry or make too much noise. So the servant always gave Mary whatever she asked for and Mary quickly became a very difficult and selfish little girl.

Mary was a plain-looking child, too. She had a thin little face and body, and she always looked cross.

Because Mary was such a selfish little girl, she only really thought about herself. She wanted to know who would look after her now that her parents had died. She hoped they would let her do what she wanted.

At first, Mary went to stay with a family called the Crawfords, in India. But Mary was so disagreeable that none of the Crawford children wanted to play with her. After she had been there for a week, one of the Crawfords' little boys told her that she was going to go back to England.

'You are going to live with your uncle,' the boy said. 'He lives in a great big old house in the country. He's so cross, he won't let people come and see him. And no one would want to see him anyway. He's a hunchback, and he's horrible.'

'I don't believe you,' said Mary, and she turned her back and put her fingers in her ears.

But that night, Mrs Crawford told her that she would sail to England in a few days' time. She said that Mary would live with her uncle, Mr Archibald Craven, at Misselthwaite Manor in Yorkshire.

'Mary is such a plain child – and so disagreeable,' said Mrs Crawford afterwards. 'And yet her mother was so pretty, and so delightful. Perhaps if Mary's mother had spent a little more time with her, she might have learned to be delightful too. But most people didn't even know that she had a child.'

When Mary arrived in England, she was met in London by Mr Craven's housekeeper, Mrs Medlock. Mrs Medlock took Mary up to Yorkshire by train. Mrs Medlock was a large woman, with very red cheeks and sharp black eyes. She was not a very patient woman, and she was not interested in young children.

Mary did not like Mrs Medlock at all. In the train, she sat as far as possible from her, looking bored and unhappy. Her black dress made her look more yellow than ever, and her hair hung down messily underneath her hat.

'I've never seen such a spoilt-looking child in my life,' Mrs Medlock thought to herself.

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After a while, the housekeeper began to talk to Mary in a hard, sharp voice. 'I suppose I had better tell you something about where you are going to,' she said. She waited for Mary to reply, but Mary said nothing at all. 'It's a very strange place,' Mrs Medlock went on. 'It's big and grand, of course, but very gloomy. The house is six hundred years old, and it's on the edge of the moor. There are nearly a hundred rooms, with pictures and beautiful old furniture, but most of them are shut up and locked. There's a big park around the house, with gardens and big trees. But there's nothing else,' she ended suddenly.

Mary had begun to listen. It all sounded very different from India, and she liked new things. But she tried to look as if she wasn't interested.

'I certainly don't know why you're going there,' Mrs Medlock went on. 'Mr Craven's not going to look after you, I'm sure about that. He doesn't care about anyone. He has a crooked back. That gave him a bad start in life. He was a cross young man and he didn't do any good until he got married.'

Mary looked up. She had not known that Mr Craven was married, and she was surprised. Mrs Medlock saw that Mary was interested, and went on talking.

'His wife was a sweet, pretty thing. He'd have done anything for her. People said she only married him for his money, but that's not true. Then she died, and he became stranger than ever. He doesn't care about anyone now. Most of the time he goes away. But when he is at Misselthwaite, he shuts himself up and won't see anyone. You probably won't see him at all. And there won't be anyone to talk to you. You will have to play on your own. I'll tell you which rooms you can go into. But you mustn't go walking all around the house. Mr Craven wouldn't like it.'

Listening to Mrs Medlock did not make Mary feel very happy. A house with a hundred rooms, nearly all shut up and locked. A man with a crooked back who shut himself up too! She stared out of the window of the train and that made her feel even more gloomy, because it had started to rain. She watched the grey sky grow heavier and heavier, and then she fell asleep.

When Mary woke up, she and Mrs Medlock ate some lunch, but she soon fell asleep once more. When she woke again, the train had stopped at a station and Mrs Medlock was shaking her.

'Wake up!' she said. 'We've arrived.'

Mary watched as Mrs Medlock collected up their bags. She did not help, because she was not used to helping. In India, servants had always done everything for her. Then Mary followed Mrs Medlock through the station and outside, where a carriage was waiting. Mary climbed in, and they set off. She felt curious about where they were going.

'What is a moor?' she asked suddenly.

'Look out of the window and you'll see,' Mrs Medlock replied.

Mary looked out of the window. They were on a rough road, with bushes and low-growing things on both sides. Beyond that, all she could see was darkness stretching out all around them. The wind was making a strange low sound.

'Is it the sea?' Mary asked.

'No,' replied Mrs Medlock. 'And it's not fields or mountains, either. It's just miles and miles of wild land. The only things that grow there are heather and

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gorse. And the only things that live there are wild ponies and sheep.'

'It sounds just like the sea,' said Mary.

'That's the sound of the wind blowing through the bushes,' said Mrs Medlock. 'I think it's a dull, wild place. But plenty of people like it.'

They drove on through the darkness, until at last Mary saw a light in the distance. Mrs Medlock saw it at the same time.

'We're nearly there now,' she said.

At last the carriage pulled up in front of a long, low-built house. Most of it was in darkness, but there was a light in one of the upstairs rooms. Mary followed Mrs Medlock through the large wooden front door into the hall. It was a very large room, and the walls were covered with paintings of people who had lived a long time ago. But it was so dark in the hall that Mary found it quite frightening to look at the paintings. She suddenly felt very small and lost.

'I'll take you to your room now,' said Mrs Medlock. She led Mary up some stairs, down a long corridor, up some more stairs and along two more corridors. Then she opened a door into a room. There was a fire burning in the room, and there was some dinner on the table.

'Here you are,' said Mrs Medlock. 'You will live here, and in the room next door. And you must stay in these rooms. Don't forget that!'

And that is how Mary began her life at Misselthwaite Manor.

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LISTENING SKILLS IMAGE

Image

