



Mary goes to Misselthwaite Manor

Mary Lennox was born in India. Her father worked for the British government there. As a child, Mary did not see her parents very much. Her father was busy with his work and her mother liked to spend time with her friends. Mary's mother had not wanted a child at all. She left her small daughter with Indian servants all the time.

Mary was not a happy child. She cried a lot. The servants tried to stop Mary crying and always did what she wanted. Mary was a *selfish* child. She was not nice at all. She was also an ugly girl. No one loved Mary.

Every morning a servant came to Mary's room. But one morning the servant did not come. Mary was angry. Why had she been left alone? Where was the woman?

Mary dressed herself and went downstairs. She heard her mother talking. Many people in the house were sick and some had died. This was why Mary had been left alone. No one had remembered her. Mary went back to her room and went to sleep. She was angry. She was sad too.

When Mary woke up, the house was very quiet. Mary waited, but no one came to her room. Suddenly she heard a noise outside her door. Two men came in.

selfish thinking only about yourself and not about other people

'The house isn't empty. There is someone here,' the first man said. 'Who are you?' he asked Mary.

'My name is Mary Lennox, and I live here. Where is my servant? Why has no one come to my room? Why has everyone forgotten me?'

'Poor child,' the man said. 'There is no one here.'

Mary's mother and father had died. Most of the servants had died too and the others had run away from the house. No one had remembered Mary. No one *cared* about her.

Mary had no other family in India, so she could not stay there. She went back to England by boat. A woman called Mrs Medlock met Mary in London. Mrs Medlock was a servant. She worked for Mary's uncle, Mr Archibald Craven. Mary knew very little about her uncle. She only knew that he lived in a big house called Misselthwaite Manor in the north of England.

Mrs Medlock took Mary to her uncle's house. During the journey the two of them sat in silence. Mary did not like Mrs Medlock. She was fat and had a very red face. Mrs Medlock looked at the small girl. The child looked *pale* and angry. Mrs Medlock did not like Mary either.

care be worried about or interested in
pale not having much colour, white

Mrs Medlock and Mary sat quietly for a long time. Mary thought about her family. She had an uncle, but she did not know him. Other children were part of a family, but Mary had never felt part of a family. Why was she always so alone? Servants had looked after her, but they had not cared about her. They had not liked her. This was because Mary was not a nice little girl. But she did not know this.

Mrs Medlock did not like silence, so she started to talk. 'Have you met your uncle?' she asked.

'No,' replied Mary.

'Did your mother and father talk about him?' Mrs Medlock continued.

'No,' was the answer.

'Do you know anything about your new home?'

'No,' said Mary.

Mary showed no interest in her new home, but Mrs Medlock continued. 'Misselthwaite Manor is on the moor,' she said. 'It's a very old house. There are big gardens and more than one hundred rooms. Most of them are not used.'

'Why are the rooms not used?' Mary asked herself. But she didn't want to ask Mrs Medlock. She wanted to know about her new home, but she didn't want to show that she was interested.

'Your uncle won't speak to you,' Mrs Medlock went on. 'He never speaks to anyone. Mr Craven's a strange man. He's a *hunchback*. He was not happy until he got married. His wife was a beautiful young woman. No one knew why she agreed to marry him. And then when she died ...'

Mary looked up. She was interested in Mrs Medlock's story. 'Did his wife die?' she asked. 'How sad!' she thought.

'Yes, she did. And then your uncle became stranger than ever. So don't think that he will have time for you. You'll have to look after yourself. You can play in the gardens, but you mustn't go running around the house.'

Mary fell asleep. It was dark and raining when she woke up. The train was at a station. 'This is our station,' Mrs Medlock said as she picked up her *packages*. Mary did not offer to help. In India she had never helped the servants.

Outside a *carriage* was waiting. Mrs Medlock spoke to the driver. They spoke in English, but Mary could not understand them. On the drive to Misselthwaite Manor, Mary looked out of the window. 'What is a moor?' she suddenly asked.

hunchback a person with a round lump on their back
packages something, or a number of things, wrapped up in paper
carriage a vehicle with wheels that is pulled by horses

'We have to cross the moor to reach the manor,' said Mrs Medlock. 'But you won't see it tonight. It's too dark.'

Mary continued to look out of the window. There were no plants or trees. But there was a strange noise. It sounded like the sea.

'Is that the sea?' she asked.

'No, it's the wind and the rain,' said Mrs Medlock. 'The moor is a wild place. It's always very windy. Nothing grows on the moor. Only wild horses and sheep live on it.'

The journey to Misselthwaite Manor took a long time. The road went up and down. Mary was tired. 'I don't like it,' she said to herself as they drove on.

At last they reached the manor. Only one light was on. The rest of the house was in darkness. A manservant opened the door for them. 'The girl should go to her room,' he told Mrs Medlock. 'Her uncle doesn't want to see her.' Mrs Medlock took Mary upstairs. After they had walked a long way, Mrs Medlock finally opened a door. Mary found herself in a room with a fire and supper on the table.

'Here you are!' Mrs Medlock told her. 'This room is yours. You must stay in it. Don't forget that!'

When Mary woke up next morning, she was not alone in the room. A young servant girl was making the fire. Mary



looked around her. She did not like the room. The walls were covered with dark paintings. They were paintings of horses and dogs. Through the window everything looked dull and purple in colour.

'What's that?' she asked the young girl.

'It's the moor,' the girl replied. It was not easy for Mary to understand what she said. She spoke in such strange English. 'Do you like it?' she asked.

'I hate it,' Mary said.

The girl laughed. 'I love it,' she said. 'In spring and summer the air is fresh, the sky is blue and the birds are singing. You will love it too.'

Mary looked hard at the girl. She was a servant, but she talked a lot. Servants in India were not like this. 'You are a strange servant,' she told the girl. 'What is your name?'

Again the girl laughed. 'My name is Martha Sowerby. I will help you, but I won't do everything for you.'

'Who is going to dress me?' Mary asked.

'You can do that yourself,' the girl replied.

'I didn't dress myself in India.'

'Well, you must learn.'

Mary felt very angry. She had not usually dressed herself. That's why her family had had servants. Poor Mary! She

felt all alone. No one understood her. And with that she started to cry.

Martha was *alarmed*. 'I'll help you to get dressed today,' she told Mary. 'Here are your clothes.'

The clothes were not Mary's clothes. They were not the ones she had worn on her journey from India. But Mary put them on. As she helped Mary to dress, Martha talked about her family. 'There are twelve of us,' she explained, 'and we are very poor. I am lucky to have my job here. The younger children play on the moor all day. My brother Dickon found a young horse on the moor. He says it is his horse. He loves animals and they love him.'

Mary didn't know much about animals. She began to be interested in Dickon. She was not often interested in other people.

Mary was not hungry. She looked at her breakfast. She did not want to eat it. 'I don't want it,' she said.

'My brothers and sisters would eat it at once,' Martha said.

'Why?' asked Mary.

'Because they are always hungry.'

'Then take it for them,' Mary said coldly.

alarmed frightened or worried

'I can't do that,' Martha replied. 'It is not my food, and I have to work.'

Finally Mary drank some tea and ate a little toast and some marmalade.

'Now go outside and play,' Martha told her. 'It will be good for you.'

'It's cold outside. I don't want to go out,' said Mary.

'But there is nothing for you to do here,' said Martha. 'Go out and look at the gardens.'

'Who will go with me?' Mary asked.

'No one,' Mary replied. 'You will have to learn to play on your own.'

Martha showed Mary how to get to the gardens. 'If you go that way, you will find the gardens,' she explained. She stopped for a second, then she went on. 'You can't go into one of the gardens. No one has been in it for ten years. It was Mrs Craven's garden. When she died, her husband locked the gate.'

Martha went inside to do her work and Mary set off on her walk. 'Misselthwaite Manor is a strange place,' Mary thought. 'Many of the rooms are locked up, and one of the gardens is locked up too. No one has been there for ten years. It's a secret garden.'

Comprehension questions

- Put these events in the order in which they happened to Mary.
 - She met Mrs Medlock.
 - She met Martha Sowerby.
 - She went to Misselthwaite Manor.
 - Her mother and father died.
 - She left India.
- What kind of girl was Mary? Which of these adjectives describe her?

happy selfish nice ugly angry fat
 pale beautiful
- Did Mary like these people or things?
 - Mrs Medlock
 - the moor
 - her room at Misselthwaite Manor
 - her breakfast
- Complete these sentences about Mary's uncle.
 - His name was ...
 - He lived at ... in the ... of England.
 - His ... had been beautiful.
 - She ... ten years ago.

Mary goes into the garden

Mary walked from one garden to the next. There were trees and flowerbeds in the gardens, but there were no leaves on the trees and no flowers. It was winter. Everything was bare. At the end of the second garden there was a wall. Mary could see trees above the wall. And in one of the trees there was a small red bird. Suddenly the bird started to sing. Mary smiled. The bird made her feel happy. She listened to him until he flew away.

Just then an old man appeared. He had a spade with him. He was a gardener. The man looked angry. He was not pleased to see Mary. 'How can I enter that garden?' Mary asked him coldly.

'Which garden?' the man asked.

'The one on the other side of this wall. I saw a little red bird in a tree. It sang to me,' Mary explained.

The man smiled. His face changed when he smiled. He looked so much nicer. The man began to *whistle*. And a wonderful thing happened. The little red bird flew down to them. 'Where have you been?' the man asked the bird.

'Does he always come when you call him?' Mary asked.

'Yes, he does. He's my only friend,' said the man.

whistle make sounds by pushing air out through the lips



'I have no friends,' Mary told him. 'My name's Mary Lennox. What's your name?'

'Ben Weatherstaff's my name. You and I don't look friendly. That's our problem,' the man went on. Mary did not like hearing this. But she knew that it was true. Perhaps this was why no one loved her.

The bird began to sing again. 'The little bird wants to be friends with you,' Ben Weatherstaff explained.

Mary spoke to the bird in a soft, gentle voice. 'You want to be friends with me?' she asked.

The man was surprised. 'You sounded just like Dickon then. Nice and friendly,' he said.

Mary wanted to ask about Dickon. But Ben walked off, and the bird flew away. 'That little bird lives in the secret garden,' Mary said to herself. 'I'd like to see that garden.'

Every day was the same for Mary at Misselthwaite Manor. After breakfast she went outside and walked around the gardens. She had no one to play with.

One day she saw the little red bird on top of the high wall. He started to sing when he saw Mary. Mary began to laugh. She felt happy when she saw the bird. 'Hello,' she said. 'Is it you?' And the bird went on singing. Then suddenly he flew to a tree on the other side of the wall.

Mary stayed outside all day. She thought a lot about the secret garden. That evening she asked Martha about it. 'Why does my uncle hate that garden?' she asked.

At first Martha did not answer. Then she said, 'No one must talk about it. That's what Mrs Medlock says. So don't say that I told you.' Mary nodded. Martha went on. 'It was Mrs Craven's garden. It was a beautiful garden with roses in it. Mrs Craven had a seat in one of the trees. She sat there for hours and read. Then one day she fell to the ground. She was badly hurt. She died the next day. Mr Craven was very sad. And since that day no one has gone into the garden.'

Mary was sad. She *felt sorry* for Mr Craven. She did not ask Martha any more questions. Instead she listened to the wind on the moor. Mary was pleased that she was inside. But then she heard another noise.

She turned to Martha. 'Someone is crying,' she said. 'Can you hear it?'

'No, no, it's only the wind,' Martha told her. But the crying continued.

Mary looked hard at Martha. It was not the wind. Someone was crying. It was a child!

The next day it was raining. Mary could not go outside.

feel sorry feel sympathy or pity

After breakfast, Mary opened the door and went into the corridor. She walked a long way that morning. When she was on the second floor, she opened the door of a big bedroom. After that she opened more doors and looked into the rooms. Soon she became tired. She wanted to go back to her room.

On her way back, Mary heard the noise again. It was someone crying. She was sure of it. Just then Mary heard another noise, and Mrs Medlock came round the corner.

'What are you doing here?' the woman asked her crossly. 'I turned around the wrong corner,' Mary explained. 'I didn't know which way to go and I heard someone crying.'

Mrs Medlock was very angry. Mary was frightened of her. 'You didn't hear anyone crying,' she said. 'Now get back to your room.'

Next day the weather was better. 'It has stopped raining,' Mary told Martha. 'The sun is shining.'

Martha smiled. 'That's because spring is coming,' she said. 'I don't have to work today. I'm going home to my family for the day.'

'I would like to go with you,' Mary said. 'I would like to see your house. I would like to meet Dickon. I have never met your brother, but I like him.'

Martha smiled again. 'Would Dickon like you?' she asked.

Mary looked sad. 'No, he wouldn't like me,' she said. 'No one likes me.'

'Do you like yourself?' Martha asked.

Mary hesitated. She had not thought about this question before. 'No, not really. I'm not a very nice person.'

After breakfast Martha left Misselthwaite Manor for the day and Mary went outside. She felt very lonely. She had no one to talk to. She walked through the gardens, and saw Ben Weatherstaff, the gardener. He did not look cross today. Perhaps the sunshine had done him good.

This time Ben Weatherstaff spoke to her first. 'Things are starting to grow in the garden,' he said. 'Spring's coming. Can you smell it?'

'I can smell something nice and fresh,' Mary answered.

Just then a bird began to sing. It was the little red bird from the secret garden. It came closer to them. 'Do you think he remembers me?' Mary asked.

'Yes, of course,' Ben Weatherstaff said. 'You're his friend.'

Mary walked on. She thought about Martha and Dickon. She thought about the little red bird. She liked them all. It was nice to like people and to have friends, she decided.

The little bird was still at her feet. He was looking at the ground. He was hoping to find something to eat. Mary looked at the ground too. She could see something in front of her. What was it? Mary looked closely. It was a key, an old key. Was it the key to the secret garden? Now she must find the door.

Next morning Martha was back at work. She told Mary all about her day with her family. She had told her family about Mary, she explained. They had all wanted to know about her life in India. It was so different from their life in the north of England. Mary said nothing about the key.

Mary went out into the gardens again. She stood outside the wall of the secret garden and waited for her friend. Soon the little red bird came to her. 'You showed me the key to the secret garden,' Mary told him. 'Perhaps you will show me the door.'

Just then the wind began to blow. It blew some plants away from the wall. Mary stepped forward. The bird started to sing. Mary looked closely at the ground. Then she looked closely at the wall. She could not believe it! There was a door! Mary took the key out of her pocket and opened the door. She was standing inside the secret garden!

Comprehension questions

- 1 Put these events in the order in which they happened to Mary.
 - a) She heard someone crying.
 - b) She found the key to the secret garden.
 - c) She met Ben Weatherstaff.
 - d) She asked Martha about the secret garden.
 - e) She talked to Ben and saw the bird again.
 - f) She saw a little red bird.

- 2 Answer these questions about the little red bird.
 - a) Where did Mary first see the bird? What did it do?
 - b) Who talked to Mary about the bird? Did he like the bird? Did the bird like him?
 - c) How did the bird help Mary? What did it show her?

- 3 Which of these things has Mary done?
 - a) She has spoken to Mr Craven.
 - b) She has visited Martha's family.
 - c) She has met Dickon.
 - d) She has found someone crying.
 - e) She has gone into the secret garden.

Mary meets two boys

Mary stayed in the secret garden for three hours that morning. She walked around with her friend, the little bird. He wanted to show her everything. Mary looked closely at the ground. Not everything was dead. And now that it was spring, perhaps some flowers would grow again.

Mary did not know anything about gardening. But she spoke to Martha about gardening at lunchtime. They talked about plants and flowers, and Mary asked lots of questions. 'Does Dickon like flowers?' she asked.

'Yes, he does,' Martha told her. 'And they like him. He can make a flower grow out of a wall.'

'I like flowers,' Mary continued. 'And I'd like to have a garden. I wish I had a little spade. I've got some money.'

Martha was surprised at Mary's interest in gardening. But the child had few other things to do, so Martha encouraged her. 'Let's write a letter to Dickon,' Martha suggested. 'Let's ask him to buy you a spade and some seeds. Dickon knows the prettiest flowers. He can choose the seeds for you.'

So that afternoon Mary wrote a letter to Dickon. In the letter she asked Dickon to buy her a spade and some seeds. She put some money in the envelope too.

The sun shone for nearly a week. Mary went to her secret garden every day. She had read about secret gardens when she had lived in India. There was something nice about having a secret garden of her own.

These days Mary liked being outside. She did not have a spade yet, but she worked every day in the secret garden. Her friend, the little bird, watched her all the time. She spoke to Ben Weatherstaff several times too. He was much friendlier now. She did not tell him about the secret garden. But he told her a lot about plants and flowers.

Towards the end of the week Mary heard some music in the gardens. A boy was sitting under a tree and playing a pipe. Some rabbits and a squirrel were there too. They were not frightened of the boy. Mary knew at once that this was Dickon.

'I'm Dickon,' the boy said. 'And you are Miss Mary.'

'Did you get my letter?' Mary asked.

'Yes, I did,' Dickon answered. 'That is why I am here. Here is your spade. And let's look at your seeds.'

Dickon opened several packages and showed her the seeds. He told her about the flowers that would grow from them. Then Dickon heard a noise. It was the sound of a bird singing. 'That bird's calling a friend of his,' he told Mary.

'Is he really calling a friend?' she asked.

'Oh, yes. He knows you, Miss Mary,' Dickon said. 'And he likes you.' The little red bird moved nearer. 'He's a friend of yours,' Dickon went on. 'That's why he comes so near.'

'Do you understand everything birds say?' Mary asked.

'I think so. I've lived on the moor with birds and animals all my life,' Dickon explained. 'I understand them. And they understand me.'

Dickon stood up. 'Where's your garden?' he asked Mary. 'I'll plant your seeds for you while I'm here.'

Mary did not know what to say. Finally she spoke. 'Can you keep a secret?' she asked.

'Yes, I can keep a secret,' Dickon answered.

'I have stolen a garden,' Mary explained. 'No one wants it. Everything in this garden is dying. And I want things to grow there again. I love this garden!'

'Where is it?' Dickon asked again.

'Come with me. I will show you,' she said. Mary led him to the secret door. She opened it slowly and the two of them entered. 'This is my secret garden. And I want it to be alive.'

Dickon looked around. 'I have always wanted to see this place,' he said. 'Martha told me about it. She said no one ever went inside it.'



'Are all the plants dead?' Mary asked.

'They aren't all dead,' Dickon replied. He took his knife and cut a small piece of wood from a tree. 'There's a lot of dead wood here,' he continued. 'But there are some new bits too. The tree is alive.'

Mary and Dickon walked around the garden. They looked at all the other trees. 'They are sleeping at the moment,' Dickon explained. 'But they aren't dead. There's a lot of work to do in this garden.'

'Will you come and help me do it?' Mary asked.

'I'll come every day,' Dickon replied, 'if you want me to.'

'Thank you, Dickon,' said Mary.

The two of them began work. They used Mary's new spade, and they used their hands. Mary held the packages of seeds and Dickon put the seeds into the ground. Mary was very happy. 'You are very nice,' she told Dickon. 'You are as nice as Martha said you were. I like you. You are the fourth person I like.'

'Only four people?' Dickon asked. 'Who are the other three?'

'Martha, the little red bird and Ben Weatherstaff, the gardener,' Mary told him. 'And now I have a question for you. Do you like me?'

'Yes I do,' Dickon said. 'I think you're wonderful. The little red bird likes you too.'

'Oh, good,' said Mary. 'That's two friends for me.'

Soon it was lunchtime. Dickon had brought his lunch with him. But Mary had to go back to the house. She didn't want to leave her friend. Perhaps he wouldn't come back. 'Please don't tell anyone about the garden,' she said.

'Of course I won't tell anyone,' said Dickon. 'Your secret is safe with me.'

'I've seen Dickon,' Mary told Martha when she reached the house. 'He's wonderful!'

Martha asked Mary many questions about the seeds she and Dickon had planted. Mary didn't want to answer all the questions. She didn't want Martha to find out about the secret garden. Mary ate her lunch quickly. She wanted to go back outside and be with Dickon again. But when she stood up after lunch, Martha stopped her. 'I've got something to tell you. Mr Craven wants to see you.'

Mary turned white. She was frightened. Her uncle would not like her. And she wouldn't like him.

'He's going away tomorrow,' Martha explained, 'so he wants to see you this afternoon. He'll be away until the winter. Don't be frightened of him.'

Mrs Medlock took Mary to meet her uncle. 'You can go and leave her here,' Mr Craven said to Mrs Medlock.

Mary looked hard at her uncle. He had high shoulders and not much neck, but he wasn't really a hunchback. He wasn't ugly either. He just looked sad.

'Are you well?' he asked. 'Do they look after you?'

'Yes,' Mary answered.

'You are very thin,' Mr Craven went on.

'I am getting fatter,' said Mary. 'I am eating more now.'

'Are you happy?' he asked. 'Please don't be frightened of me. I don't give you any time, I know that. I don't know anything about children. But I want you to be happy. Is there anything you want? A teacher, perhaps?'

'Please don't get me a teacher yet,' replied Mary. 'There is only one thing I want. A piece of ground, for a garden. I want to grow flowers.'

'You can have a piece of ground,' he said. 'You can have as much as you want. And now I am tired. You must go. Goodbye. I shall be away all summer.'

That night the wind blew and it rained. Mary was cross. Would she be able to go outside the next day? She hated the wind. She hated the rain.

Mary lay awake. Suddenly she heard a noise. It was not the wind. Mary listened carefully. 'It isn't the wind now,' she told herself. 'It's that crying again.'

Mary got out of bed and picked up the candle from her bedside table. She went into the corridor. The sound of crying got louder. Mary came to a door. 'The noise is coming from this room,' she thought. So she opened the door. Inside a boy was lying on a bed, crying.

The boy had a thin, white face and big grey eyes. He looked tired and cross. 'Who are you?' he asked Mary.

'I am Mary Lennox,' she replied. 'Mr Craven is my uncle.'

'And I am Colin Craven,' said the boy. 'He is my father.'

Mary was surprised. 'Your father!' she said. 'I didn't know my uncle had a son. Did anyone tell you about me?'

'No,' said Colin. 'No one said anything about you to me. And no one said anything about me to you. This is because I am always ill. I don't want to see people, and I don't want them to see me. I stay in this room all the time. My father doesn't visit me. He doesn't want to see me.'

'Why is that?' Mary asked.

'My mother died when I was born,' Colin explained. 'He hates me for that.'

'He hates the secret garden because she died,' Mary said

in a low voice, almost to herself. 'That's why no one has been in there for ten years.'

Colin heard what she said. 'Which garden?' he asked.

'Oh, just one of the gardens,' Mary replied. She didn't want to say anything about her secret garden. But Colin wanted to know about it. 'No one talks about the garden,' she said. She didn't say that she had already found it.

'I could make them talk about it,' Colin said. 'One day, if I live long enough, Misselthwaite Manor will be mine. Everyone knows that. They must do what I ask.'

Colin was not a nice boy. That is what Mary thought. He went on. 'I want to see that garden,' he said. 'One of the servants must take me there.'

Mary was frightened when she heard this. 'Don't do that,' she said. 'If someone takes you into the garden, it won't be a secret. If you and I could go into the garden together, then it would be our secret.'

Colin looked pleased. He liked the idea of a secret. 'I've never had a secret before,' he said. 'And you are a secret too, Mary Lennox. I will tell only Martha about you. And she will tell you when I want to see you.'

The two of them talked for a long time. Then Mary sang to Colin and he fell asleep. Mary went back to her room.

Comprehension questions

- Why did Mary do these things?
 - want a spade
 - write to Dickon
 - tell Dickon about the secret garden
 - get out of bed one night
 - go into another bedroom
- Who ...
 - offered to help Mary in the garden?
 - talked to Mary about birds and animals?
 - is leaving Misselthwaite Manor?
 - was crying in the night?
- Which of these sentences about Colin are true?
 - He is Mr Craven's son.
 - He goes outside a lot.
 - His mother died when he was born.
 - He wants to see the secret garden.
- How did Mary feel about these people? How did they feel about her?

Ben Weatherstaff Dickon Mr Craven Colin

Mary has an idea

Next morning it was still raining. Mary had to stay inside. 'I know what the crying was,' she told Martha. 'It was Colin. I heard him during the night. I went and found him.'

Martha was frightened. Everyone would think she had told the girl about Colin. She might lose her job.

'We talked a lot,' Mary said. 'He was pleased to see me.'

'Are you sure?' Martha asked. 'Did he stop crying?'

'Oh, yes,' replied Mary. 'He wants me to visit him every day. He'll tell you when to call me, and you can tell me. It's a secret from Mrs Medlock.' Mary thought for a moment, then she asked, 'What's the matter with Colin?'

'No one knows really,' Martha answered. 'Mr Craven wouldn't look at him when he was a baby. He said that Colin would be a hunchback, like him.'

'But he's not a hunchback, is he?' Mary asked.

'No, but he has a weak back,' Martha explained. 'That's why he's in bed all the time.'

Mary thought about her first days at Misselthwaite Manor. Going outside and getting fresh air had done her good. 'Perhaps he needs to go outside,' she said.

'He's been outside,' said Martha. 'He didn't like it. He got very angry and started crying.'

'If he gets angry with me, I won't see him again,' Mary said.

That afternoon Colin asked for Mary. She went to his room. 'I've been thinking about you all morning,' he said.

Mary told Colin about Martha. 'She thinks she will lose her job,' Mary explained.

Colin was angry. He called for Martha. 'You have to do what I want, don't you?' he asked her.

'Yes, sir,' replied Martha.

Mary didn't like Colin at all when he spoke like this. 'You are very different from Dickon,' she told him.

'Who is Dickon?' Colin asked.

'He is Martha's brother. He loves birds and animals, and they love him. He spends all his time on the moor,' she said.

Colin had never seen the moor. 'You never see anything if you are ill,' he told Mary. 'I can't go there. I'm going to die. People are always saying that. They want me to die.'

'Who wants you to die?' Mary asked.

'The servants. Dr Craven, my uncle wants me to die too,' said Colin. 'Misselthwaite Manor will be his if I die.'

Mary was sad when she heard these things. She was angry with Colin too. He wanted to die. 'Let's talk about Dickon,' she said. She wanted to talk about something nice.

They talked and talked. Colin smiled a lot and laughed. While they were talking, the door opened. Mrs Medlock walked in with a strange man. They were shocked to see Mary there. Who had told her about Colin?

'Dr Craven, this is my cousin, Mary Lennox,' Colin said. 'She heard me crying last night, and she came to see me.'

'Colin, you are ill,' the man said. 'Remember that.'

'I forget that I am ill when Mary is here,' Colin replied. 'I am better. She makes me feel better.'

Dr Craven turned and left the room. He was not a happy man. But it was true. Colin was better!

Mary went to Colin's room every day for a week. And then one day the weather was fine again. Mary ran outside. Perhaps Dickon would come! She ran to the secret garden. And there he was! He was already in the garden! Mary was very pleased to see him.

They looked at the seeds they had planted. Flowers were beginning to grow. Mary was very happy. She and Dickon watched the little red bird. Another bird was with him. He had found a wife.

Mary talked to Dickon about Colin. Dickon knew about the boy. 'Everyone knows about him,' he said, 'but no one sees him.'



Mary told him how she had met Colin. She then told him about her idea. 'We could bring Colin here,' she said.

'Yes,' agreed Dickon. 'We could bring him here in his wheelchair.'

That afternoon Mary didn't visit Colin. She worked in the garden all day.

'Colin is very angry with you,' Martha told her.

'I've been working in the garden all day with Dickon,' Mary told Colin when she got to his room.

'He mustn't come to the manor again,' Colin said crossly. 'I don't want him here.'

Mary was angry too when she heard this. 'If you send Dickon away,' she said, 'I'll never come to this room again.'

'Get out of this room now,' Colin ordered.

'I'm going,' said Mary, 'and I won't be back.'

When she got back to her room, Mary felt angry with Colin. She felt sorry for him too. She would never tell him about the secret garden now. He would never go there.

Mary woke up during the night. There was a terrible noise. It was Colin. He was crying. Mary heard someone outside her door. Then Martha came in. 'Please go to Colin. No one can do anything with him. But he likes you. Please make him stop. Make him stop crying.'

'Stop it! Stop it!' Mary shouted when she got to Colin's room. 'If you cry any more, then I will cry too.'

Colin was *shocked*. People didn't usually shout at him. He stopped crying at once.

'You are not ill, Colin. You are not going to die,' Mary went on. She spoke more quietly now. 'You will live. I am sure of it. I have an idea. Go to sleep now, and I will tell you my idea tomorrow.'

Next morning Mary slept late because she was tired. Martha brought her breakfast as usual. 'Colin wants to see you,' she said. 'You shouted at him during the night, but he likes you. He likes you a lot. He said to me, "Please ask Mary to come". Colin never says "please". This is the first time I have heard it.'

'Thank you for coming,' Colin said when Mary went into his room. 'Please tell me about your idea.'

'I have to speak to Dickon first,' Mary explained. 'But then I will come back here and speak to you. I will tell you my idea. It's about the secret garden.'

Colin smiled. 'Please come back quickly,' he said.

Mary smiled too. It was true. Colin was saying 'please' and 'thank you'. He was becoming a nice person!

shocked having an unpleasant feeling of surprise

Later Mary was with Dickon in the secret garden. Things were growing now, and the garden was looking beautiful. Mary loved being in the garden with Dickon.

Mary told Dickon about Colin. She told him what had happened during the night. They talked about bringing Colin to the garden in his wheelchair.

That afternoon Mary returned to Colin's room. At first she talked about Dickon and his animals. Then she talked about Ben Weatherstaff. 'When I first met Ben,' she began, 'I had no friends. He had no friends either. We didn't look friendly, that was what Ben said. And that was why no one loved us. But I have friends now. There's Dickon and the little red bird. When I got to know them, I became a nicer person.'

Colin was listening carefully to what Mary was saying. 'I'm sorry I said those things about Dickon,' he said. 'You like him a lot. I know that. And I hated him because he's your friend. And I want to be your friend.'

Mary smiled. 'I'm pleased you said that about Dickon,' she said. 'Because he's coming here tomorrow. We're going to take you to the secret garden.' She decided to tell Colin the truth. 'I have been there, Colin. I found the key and got in weeks ago.'

Comprehension questions

- 1 In which order did Mary do these things?
 - a) She told Dickon about Colin.
 - b) She told Colin about Dickon.
 - c) She shouted at Colin and made him stop crying.
 - d) She told Martha that she had found Colin.
 - e) She met Colin's uncle
 - f) She argued with Colin about Dickon.

- 2 Colin was not nice to people.
 - a) Why was he rude to Martha when he called for her on page 30? Was he rude to her on page 34?
 - b) Why was he angry about Dickon on page 33? How did he speak to Mary about him? How did he speak to Mary about Dickon on page 35?
 - c) How does he feel about Mary?

- 3 Mary has an idea to help Colin. What is her idea? Does she tell anyone her idea? Who?

Mary takes Colin to the garden

Later that day Dr Craven came to see Colin. The doctor always came when the boy was ill. 'How is he?' he asked Mrs Medlock.

'It's a very strange thing,' Mrs Medlock told him. 'But he's much better today. His cousin Mary Lennox spoke to him. I don't know what she said, but he's much better.'

When Dr Craven entered Colin's bedroom, Colin wasn't in bed. Instead he was sitting in a chair. He was talking to Mary. When they saw Dr Craven, they stopped.

'I'm sorry you're not well,' the doctor began.

'I'm much better today,' said Colin. 'I'm going to go out in my wheelchair. I want some fresh air.'

'But you don't like fresh air,' Dr Craven continued.

'I don't when I'm alone,' Colin replied. 'My cousin is going out with me. I'm always better when she's with me. She made me better last night. And a friend of hers will push my wheelchair.'

Dr Craven wasn't happy about this plan. He turned to Mary. 'Who is this friend of yours?' he asked.

'Dickon Sowerby,' she answered.

The doctor knew the Sowerby family. 'You will be safe with Dickon,' he said. He felt happier about the plan.

That night Colin slept well. He was sitting in the chair when Mary came into his room. 'You've been out,' said Colin. 'There's a nice smell of leaves.'

Mary had been out. She had been to the secret garden. She told Colin about the flowers and plants there. Colin asked her to open the window. He wanted to smell the fresh air. Soon he would go outside too.

But Colin could not go out for a week. There were some windy days, and he had a cold. Mary brought Dickon with her when she visited Colin. Dickon told Colin about all his animal friends. It was spring now, and there were lots of baby birds and animals. Dickon had many new friends.

Colin's cold got better. Now he was ready to go outside. Dickon pushed his wheelchair and Mary walked beside him. She described everything to him. 'This is where the little red bird flew over the wall,' she said as they walked towards the secret garden. 'This is where I found the key. And this is the door.'

Colin closed his eyes. He couldn't see anything. Dickon pushed the wheelchair into the garden. Then Colin opened his eyes. He looked around. His eyes opened wide and he smiled at his friends. 'I shall get well!' he told them.

Dickon pushed Colin's wheelchair under a tree. It was

the tree where his mother had fallen. But Colin didn't know this. Colin sat under the tree while Dickon and Mary worked in the garden. They did not want to say anything about the tree or about Colin's mother. The little red bird flew into the garden and they talked about it instead.

'I don't want this afternoon to finish,' Colin told his friends. 'I shall come back tomorrow, and the day after, and the day after, and the day after.'

'Yes, you will grow with the flowers,' Dickon told him. 'Soon you will be able to walk. You will be able to help us with our work.'

Colin was very surprised to hear this. 'Walk?' he asked. He had never walked.

'Yes, there's nothing wrong with your legs,' Dickon went on. 'I'm sure of that. They aren't strong, it's true. But this is because you don't use them.'

'Who's that man?' Colin asked. He pointed to the high wall.

It was Ben Weatherstaff. He was looking very angry. 'What are you doing there?' Ben shouted. 'How did you get into that garden?'

The little red bird showed me,' Mary answered. 'Please don't shout at me.'

Colin was angry with Ben Weatherstaff. He should not shout at Mary. 'Push me to the door,' Colin told Dickon. And when he got to the door, he put his feet on the ground. And with a great *effort* he stood up on his weak legs.

'Who are you?' Ben asked as he entered the garden.

'I am Colin Craven,' was the answer.

'But Colin is a hunchback,' said Ben. 'He can't stand up. He can't walk.'

'No, Ben,' said Mary. 'It isn't true. Colin isn't a hunchback.'

'And I can walk,' said Colin as he began to walk slowly towards the tree. He turned round and faced Ben Weatherstaff. 'What work do you do in the gardens?' Colin asked.

'Everything,' Ben Weatherstaff replied. 'I'm an old man now, but she liked me. That's why they give me work.'

'Who is "she"?' Colin asked.

'Mrs Craven, your mother,' the gardener answered.

Colin looked around him slowly. 'This was my mother's garden, wasn't it?'

'Yes, it was,' said Ben. 'She loved this garden.'

effort the use of strength or energy

'And I love it too,' Colin told him. 'And I'm going to come here every day. But it is a secret. Please don't tell anyone about it. No one must know, only the four of us.'

Colin looked at the ground. Mary's spade was near his feet. He picked up the spade and began to work with it. 'You said I would help you, Dickon,' he said. 'You were right. I can help you.'

Dr Craven was waiting for Colin when he returned to his room. 'You mustn't get too tired, Colin,' he said. 'You have been out for a long time.'

'Don't tell me what to do,' Colin told the doctor crossly.

Mary did not like it when Colin was cross. 'You aren't nice to Dr Craven,' she told him. 'But he must be nice to you. You have always been ill. So he always has to be kind to you. But you are selfish. You are always rude to him.'

Colin was quiet. He was thinking. 'Well, I'm going to change,' he said. 'I'm going to get better, I'm going to walk and run, and I'm going to be nice to people.'

Mary smiled. She was pleased to hear this. She remembered her first days at Misselthwaite Manor. She had been like Colin. She had been rude to people. But then she had found the secret garden, and she too had changed.

Next day Colin went to the garden again. 'Can you keep

another secret?' he asked Dickon and Mary. 'I'm not going to tell Dr Craven that I'm getting better,' he said. 'And when my father returns, I will walk to him.'

Mary laughed. 'He will be so surprised,' she said.

Colin went on. 'And I will say, "The secret garden has helped me".'

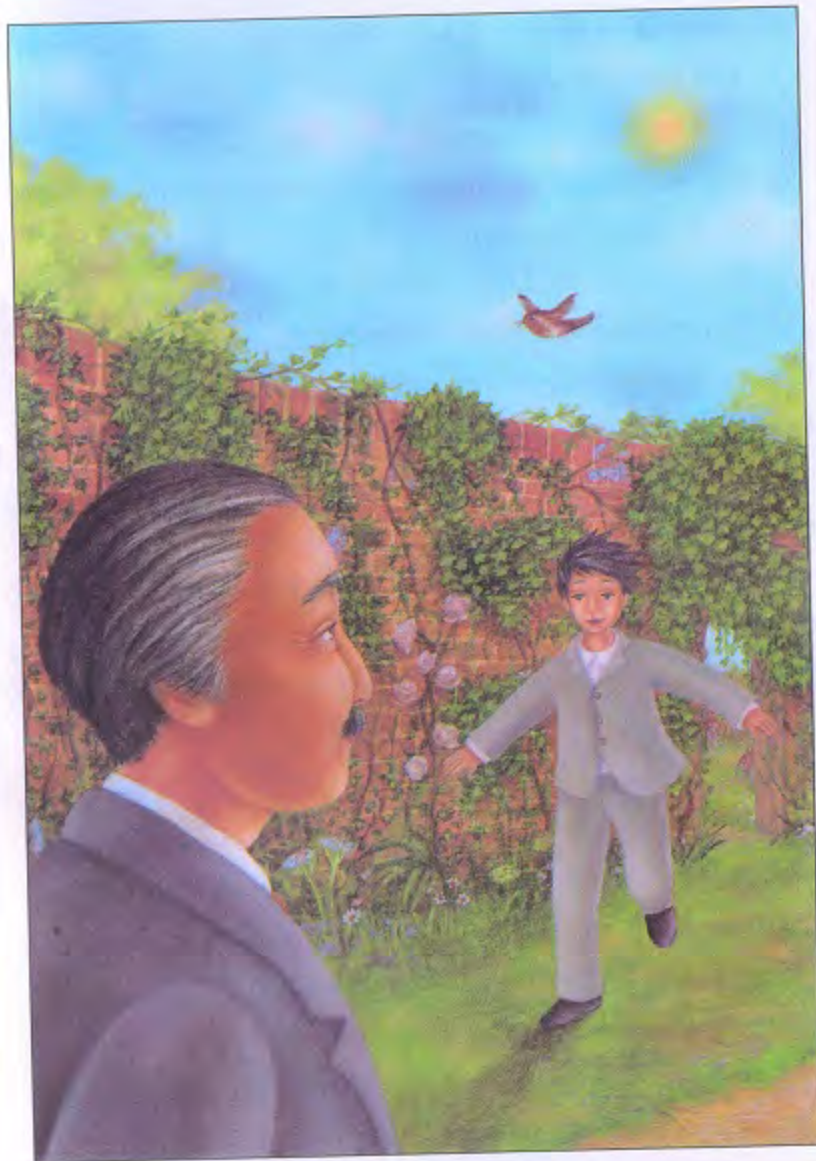
The three friends loved being in the garden. It was so beautiful there! They worked together. Colin got fitter and stronger. He got fatter too. It was difficult to hide this from Dr Craven. It was getting difficult to keep this secret. Colin thought about his father. 'Please come home soon,' he wanted to say to him.

At the time Colin's father was in Italy. He often thought about his son at home in England. He thought too about Colin's mother. One day he was sitting in a garden when he fell asleep. He dreamt about his wife. She was sitting in a garden too.

'Where are you, my dear?' Mr Craven asked his wife.

'I am in the garden,' she told him. 'I am in the garden at home. I am with Colin.'

When Colin's father woke up, he decided to return to Misselthwaite Manor at once. He was very worried about his son. His wife was dead. Colin wasn't dead too, was he?



As soon as he arrived at Misselthwaite Manor, Mr Craven spoke to Mrs Medlock. 'How's Colin?' he asked.

'He's changed, sir,' Mrs Medlock replied.

Colin was worse! Mr Craven was sure of it. 'Where is he?' he asked. 'Is he in his room?'

'No,' said Mrs Medlock. 'He's in the garden.'

Mr Craven remembered his dream. His wife had said, 'in the garden'. He hurried outside. He started walking towards the garden where she had fallen from the tree.

Then he heard children's voices. He looked up. A boy was running towards him. 'Colin!' he cried. 'Is it really you?'

'Yes, Father,' Colin answered. 'I am better. It has been a secret. Dr Craven and the servants do not know. I wanted to tell you first. I have been in the garden with my friends Dickon and Mary. They have helped me to get better. The garden has made me better. Come inside.'

Dickon and Mary were in the garden. Mary was pleased to see her uncle too. Mr Craven looked around. It was so beautiful. 'I have not been here for ten years,' he said. 'But it is not dead. Everything is alive and well.'

'Yes, Father,' said Colin. 'And I am alive and well too. And from now on, this will not be a secret garden. And there will be no more secrets.'

Comprehension questions

- In which order did Colin do these things?
 - He talked to Ben Weatherstaff about his mother.
 - He stood up and walked.
 - He ran to his father.
 - He helped Dickon and Mary in the garden.
 - He had a cold.
 - He went to the secret garden.
- Who ...
 - was not happy about Colin going outside?
 - pushed Colin's wheelchair into the garden?
 - shouted at Mary in the secret garden?
 - returned to the manor from Italy?
 - went into the secret garden for the first time in ten years?
- Which of these adjectives describe Colin when Mary first met him? Which describe him at the end of the story?

angry happy nice pale rude selfish
sick unkind well