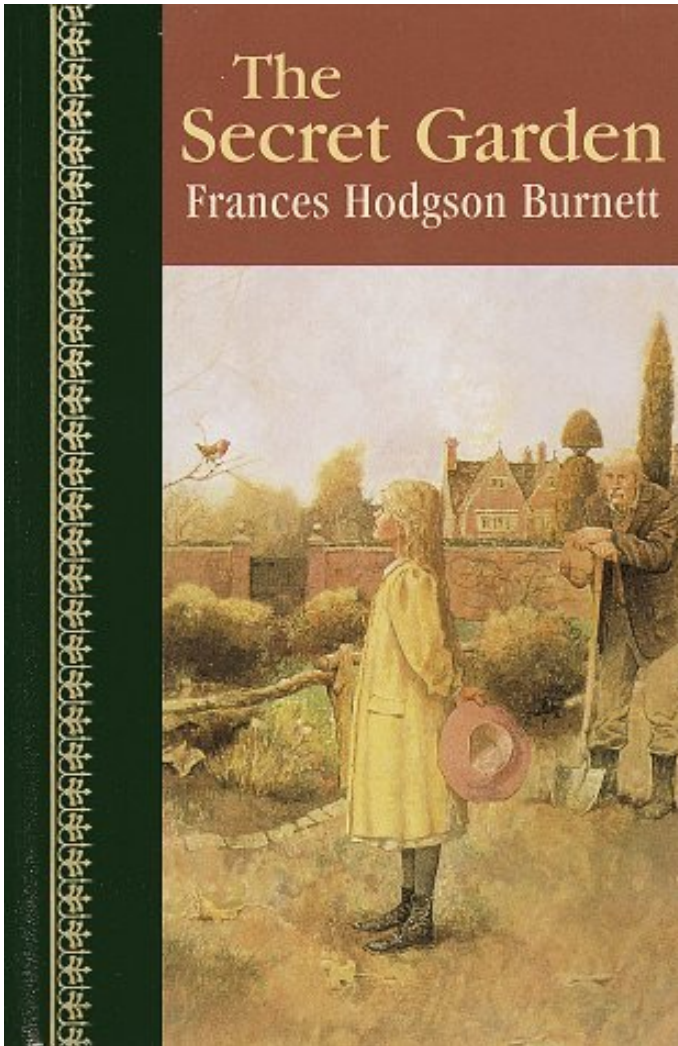

Frances Hodgson Burnett

The Secret Garden



Title: The Secret Garden

Author: Frances Hodgson Burnett

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Description

What secrets lie behind the doors at Misselthwaite Manor? Recently arrived at her uncle's estate, orphaned Mary Lennox is spoiled, sickly, and certain she won't enjoy living there. Then she discovers the arched doorway into an overgrown garden, shut up since the death of her aunt ten years earlier. Mary soon begins transforming it into a thing of beauty--unaware that she is changing too. But Misselthwaite hides another secret, as Mary discovers one night. High in a dark room, away from the rest of the house, lies her young cousin, Colin, who believes he is an incurable invalid, destined to die young. His tantrums are so frightful, no one can reason with him. If only, Mary hopes, she can get Colin to love the secret garden as much as she does, its magic will work wonders on him.

Insightful reviews

Lisa Vegan: I read this book for the first time when I was nine, and unlike many books I loved back then I believe I read it only once or twice. I just reread it, finishing on 2/25/11, for a March 2011 discussion for the [Children's Books group's](#) Fiction Books Club, one of the months chosen to read a classic vs. contemporary book. I'd remembered enough to give it 5 stars but not enough to review it, though I recalled the gist of the story well enough. I'm so glad I reread it now, nearly a half century after my first reading!

I have no idea which library edition(s) I read as a child. I own a nondescript paperback edition. I bought the Norton critical edition but didn't have time to read it for the group discussion. This [Tasha Tudor](#) illustrated edition was the book I was able to borrow from the library so this is the edition I read for my reread, the first in decades. And I did enjoy the illustrations.

I should probably have thought more carefully and waited at least a short time before I wrote a review, given that I've already waited nearly a half century, but I felt like writing a bit down when the reading experience was fresh in my mind.

I'm in danger of waxing rhapsodic. It's not my favorite book/children's book, but it's a comfort read for me and I enjoyed it enough for it to make my favorites shelf.

Despite some anachronisms, a last chapter that doesn't impress me as much as I would have hoped, this remains an almost perfect book for me, and therefore I'm ill equipped to write a decent review.

It's a very well written story.

I feel great fondness for Mary, for Colin, for Dickon, for Susan Sowerby (Dickon's mother), Martha, Ben Weatherstaff, and even Dr. Craven. I don't think I appreciated any of them as a child as much as I do now.

I particularly loved the robin, and I did also when young. I was used to seeing them from my bedroom window and around the neighborhood and liked them at least as much as I did the

hummingbirds.

I'd forgotten how there is not just flora therapy but fauna therapy too, and I was smitten with all the animals. Vivid memories from childhood came to mind as I was reading; I think most children who have access to it (I did) are often attuned to the natural world.

While it's not unique to tell a story of healing (emotional and physical) through nature or through tending to and caring for others/plants/animals, this story does so in such a lovely way, with such immediacy I sometimes felt as though I was right there, within its pages.

What's not to love, at least for me?! Secrets, gardens, nature, animals, friendship, hope, self-determination, nurturing, and some intangible qualities, so much that seems to leap off the pages of this book.

It's funny but during this reading I noticed some of what could be considered current new age thinking and beliefs, and those usually drive me up the wall, but here, it's believable and soothing and exhilarating and magical. I love how Colin uses the word "Magic" and how it's understood and accepted by those around him. I appreciate how this book shows that the most simple things and joys are extraordinarily ordinary, and necessary for humans to flourish.

I think I appreciated the whole book even more now that I am an adult. It touched me enough that I put it on my favorites shelf. It doesn't surprise me a bit that this classic has survived and thrived.

Yona: This whole book was pure magic and I loved it.

Eman: **What it is about**

[The Secret Garden](#) is about a little British orphan who survived cholera that killed her parents and all the household servants in India. Then she was sent to live in her uncle's mansion in England. Obviously the beginning is all Gothic and gloomy but I bet you already know how it ends, ~~or let me spoil it for you..~~ ([view spoiler](#))!

Mistress Mary

The first thing that caught my attention was *Mary's* character which is relatively dimensional if we compared her to *Sara* (or may I say "little miss perfect"?) in [Frances Hodgson Burnett's](#) other novel, [A Little Princess](#). *Mary's* successful development from a disagreeable little brat to a kinder version of herself is quite reasonable and was processed with a beautiful pace. She is imperfect, real, and relatable. She doesn't sugarcoat her opinion no matter what even if it was insensible sometimes. She gradually learned to lose the blunt rudeness but stayed true to herself which I admired about her.

How I liked it

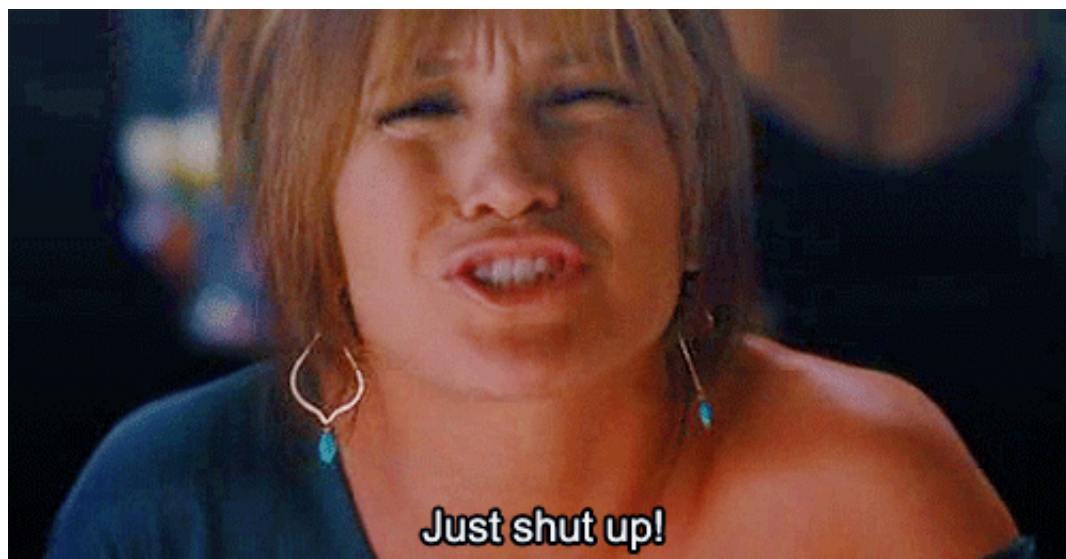
This book is for you if you're a nature-lover/tree-hugger/green-thumb. The author places great emphasis on fresh air and gardening for restoring psychological and physical health. There are parts that I really loved which jogged my childish imagination. The title is pretty much magnetic.. Who would resist reading about a mysterious secret garden? A huge mansion with many

gardens and 100 rooms which most of them is locked! (Alas, I wished if the author gave more space to discover the locked rooms instead of the whole "Colin" thing). It's predictable, yes, but I don't mind that in a 19th/20th century children's novel. And then there is the *Robin*; not only does the bird have a character, but also you get to know what's in its mind! So freaking adorable.

Things that made me give the side-eye

Aside from the stuffing or repetition that is customary in classics, I rate this book with 3.5 stars. The following points have considerably weakened my rating:

- *Mary's* nasty racist/classist remarks about the native servants in India. But let's not forget that (a) she's only 10 years old, (b) she's supposed to be extremely neglected by her parents, therefore she practically lacked proper manners, and (c) the era it was written in had a lot to do with it although that doesn't quite justify it.
- The Yorkshire accent used by *Martha*, *Dickon*, *Weatherstaff*, etc.. was just too much. It rubbed me the wrong way and spoiled my reading mood sometimes. I know that's common in English literature but I've always disliked the heavy usage of local accents even in [Oliver Twist](#) and especially in [Wuthering Heights](#). They're simply distracting.
- *Colin* stealing the show toward the end was a bad closure in my opinion. He's an unbearable spoiled kid to begin with, he whines and cries with and without a reason, gives the household staff hard times, and I bet he would be the epitome of a privileged bully if he was strong enough, not to mention his chanting about magic or yoga sessions or whatever rituals he was performing which were extremely irritating!



I could stomach *Mary* despite her flaws and at least her transformation made sense, but *Colin* was an unnecessary addition. And don't even let me start on *Colin's* father who is such a douche! I believe the doucheness runs in the family.

Simon: ****SPOILERS****OK, i need to have learn and enjoyed this publication forty or so years ago. (Yikes!) I cherished it much this time round, however it was once troubling to me in different ways. It begins because the tale of Mary, a woman being affected by epic neglect. (Her whole loved ones in Colonial India, parents, servants, everyone, die from cholera or flee the home with no-one bothering to consider her, leaving her alone, no longer figuring out what is happening, if an individual is there, scavenging for nutrition from unfinished food at the table. How's that for a brutal establishing of a (children's) novel?) the outline of her overlook is so transparent and robust that one can't support yet think that the writer needs to consider a few sympathy for her character, yet amazingly, she dwells on her unpleasantness to such an volume that one cannot be yes she isn't really censuring her strongly. Well, it starts as Mary's story, and one is ready for the 'coming alive' she will experience, when.... the rattling factor will get hijacked via Colin, a bit boy at her uncle's condominium in Yorkshire (where she is sent) who's her male counterpart, his mom lifeless at or close to his birth, avoided through his self-absorbed father, loathed via the military of nurses and medical professionals over whom he principles tyrannically by means of advantage in their wish to hinder his tantrums. Well, it is hijacked by way of Colin, yet it truly is hijacked again, correct on the very end, by means of Colin's father whose personal unpleasantness, notwithstanding much less seen than Colin's and Mary's, is unquestionably extra culpable in that his begun in maturity and led him just to overlook the lifestyles of his son. But, happily, via Mary's paintings on Colin, and Colin's personal operating of what he calls Magic, the paterfamilias and his male inheritor are ultimately restored to happiness, Mary solely forgotten. and there is Dickon, the younger peasant boy who's the emblem of the therapeutic powers of nature. He absolves the functionality of the Magic Negro here, an oppressed outsider (by advantage of sophistication here, no longer race) whose knowledge and gear is harnessed by, and makes his (and his family's) poverty by some means much less lousy to, the ruling class. His fate, after the novel, was once very likely to be killed within the trenches of Flanders, most likely as Colin's batman. (Colin's correct to reserve each person around, Dickon, Mary, the outdated gardener Ben Weatherstaff, the doctor, isn't questioned.) And the Magic! evidently there is a lot of excellent feel in Burnett's perspectives approximately overall healthiness and happiness - nature, deal with animals and plants, consuming well, clean air and exercise, yet there is a new-agey self-help facet to it that will get a section nauseous: repeating repeatedly to your self "yes, I can," having one solid proposal a day, etc. etc.

Cheryl: Frances Hodgson Burnett seemed to gardening for therapeutic from grief and psychological collapse--she additionally believed in metaphysical healing. on a daily basis she wrote in a "walled rose garden." She enjoyed examining Dickens and Charlotte Bronte. It indicates during this book. Nature and clean air--all symbolisms. How can an individual write approximately those basic components and go away you interested? They throw in a few kids protagonists who're psychologically and bodily healed from a hidden, charitable garden. They sprinkle a few Yorkshire dialect. Then upload a narrative that strikes with masterful pacing. Little leave out Mary is all yet contrary. She is an inspirational heroine who it seems isn't really attempting to be disagreeable, yet is making an attempt to carve her area in a global that hasn't ever looked as if it would embody her considering birth. She is authentic--even although in the course of the Victorian age upper-class youngsters have been anticipated to act like miniature adults, so now and then she comes off announcing a few issues that sound past her age. either she and Colin, the younger boy who's additionally a hypochondriac, are convincing nineteenth-

century characters. Mary is a brat within the beginning, a baby deserted by means of her parents, who lacks human skills. But you continue to get to love her. How, I am not sure. I suppose it speaks to Burnett's abilities as a writer. Sure, I'll have refrained from the references to how gruesome the kid was. I additionally may have refrained from the adversarial inferences to Indians as "blacks" and inferior (honestly, had it beaten the tale and been greater than character-inner-thought highlighted via a number of brief discussion interchanges, I might have taken greater than a celeb away and stopped reading--classic or not). Then again, there's the context to maintain in mind: Burnett writes concerning the period after the conflict of Plassey in 1757, while India fell less than British rule, she locates Mary's father as a member of the British colonial management in India (started through the 1700s I believe). India won independence in 1948 and this e-book was once first released around 1911. So there you've got it. Mary again to London from India after her relations died of cholera (again Burnett is writing concerning the large cholera outbreak in India among 1898 and 1907 that killed over 300,000 people), and used to be greeted with a few standoffishness: she was once the "child from India," and so surely, whatever should have been diversified approximately her due to the fact not anyone around her knew something approximately that a part of the world--except for the detrimental issues they'd heard. Frankly, you even experience that Burnett additionally does not recognize a lot in regards to the nation or its people. And but the tale of the 2 children, Mary and Colin--even Dickon--is an endearing one concerning the ever-changing international of a child, and an extraordinary glimpse into the mental realism of the younger protagonist.

Merna : 1 megastar for a classic? What a scandal. Well, it's the first vintage I am giving 1 famous person for, so it's really a huge deal. Although I didn't end this, I already understand how the publication wraps up. (view spoiler)[Take a guess. Bratty kid. suggest uncle. ailing kid. (hide spoiler)] Here's the thing Classics care for common ideas. The key backyard offers with childrens who fight with weakened consciousness spans. Even supposing it really is overdone now days, I will be able to comprehend why it was once so popular, say a century ago. I already now the nature may have a few self-realization in regards to the proven fact that she's a bit bitchy ungrateful child (of direction she is going to nonetheless be racist), and he or she will stay fortunately ever after along with her uncle, by no means attending tuition simply because she's a silly female. "Oh, she doesn't want school, she must bounce extra rope!" Sexist? Na. I simply cannot connect to a narrative a few spoiled little wealthy kid, who unearths out that they could really be nice, however it warms my center to understand everyone seems to be able to such emotion. Still, the truth that Mary continues to be unappreciative to having the chance to reside and event areas (India and England) proves the full publication is a lie and that she is going to continually be a bratty kid. I believe the message of the publication was once loud and clear: for those who develop up in a shitty surroundings then anticipate your self to be shitty too. The message was once not: be a pleasant individual whether you are rich. And if I need to learn yet one more line of Martha talking, I will lose it. Can the ladies communicate properly? I do not care if it's a few accent, it's goddamn demanding examining it. I additionally think her brother used to be on meth simply because he could cross round the box saying, "ahahaha canna tha' are you able to hear the birds and scent the honey..." Classic? Please!

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