



# THE SECRET GARDEN

**Adapted by Gary Peterson**

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For my Aunt Dolores,  
the only person capable of teaching me  
the mystery of shoe tying.

# THE SECRET GARDEN

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

|                       | <u># of lines</u>   |
|-----------------------|---|
| MARY LENNOX .....     | ten-year-old English girl raised in India; scrawny and dour 180 |
| MRS. MEDLOCK.....     | housekeeper of Misslethwaite Manor; middle-aged 26              |
| MARTHA SOWERBY .....  | housemaid 75  |
| BEN WEATHERSTAFF..... | gardener 41   |
| DICKON SOWERBY .....  | Martha's brother; early teens 61                                |
| COLIN CRAVEN.....     | Mary's cousin 95  |
| ARCHIBALD CRAVEN..... | Colin's father; in his thirties 16                              |
| THE ROBIN .....       | small bird puppet n/a   |
| EXTRAS .....          | as OFFSTAGE VOICES and additional SERVANTS n/a                  |

## SETTING

Time: Around 1910.

Place: Within and around Misslethwaite Manor, situated on a moor in Yorkshire, England.

## SET DESCRIPTION

There are several indoor and outdoor scenes in this play, including Mary's room, an ivy wall, out on the moor, the secret garden and Colin's bedroom. Sets need not be elaborate, save for the secret garden in ACT TWO. See Production Notes for more details.

The two side walls of the set represent "inside" and "outside." The STAGE RIGHT wall should be covered with a tapestry, and the STAGE LEFT wall should be covered with ivy. Use different areas of your stage to represent the different settings—nearby the tapestry wall for interior scenes, and close to the ivy wall for outdoor ones. A dresser table and chair may represent Mary's bedroom, while a simple tree or two near the ivy wall can represent the outside moor. Colin's bedroom is represented by a bed. All this changes with ACT TWO, where the entire action takes place in the secret garden. This set may be as elaborate as you like.

The first act has several scenes that represent different areas, but they should generally flow into one another without break, if possible. Some scenes use fadeouts, others do not. Even so, these fadeouts

should not be very long. Try to time it so the lights go down in one area and then up in another area for the next scene.

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

### PROLOGUE

Mary's room at Misslethwaite Manor.

### ACT ONE

Scene One: Mary's room at Misslethwaite Manor.

Scene Two: Next to an ivy wall, later that day.

Scene Three: The secret garden, immediately after.

Scene Four: Mary's room, a little while later.

Scene Five: Out on the moor (near the ivy wall), a few days later.

Scene Six: In the secret garden, immediately after.

Scene Seven: Mary's bedroom, late at night, a few days later.

Scene Eight: Colin's bedroom, immediately after.

Scene Nine: Near the ivy wall, a few days later.

Scene Ten: Colin's bedroom, one morning in late spring.

### ACT TWO

The secret garden, immediately after.

## THE SECRET GARDEN

### Prologue

1 AT RISE: Mary's room at Misslethwaite Manor. MARY LENNOX ENTERS and stands in her room CENTER, frowning. CHILDREN are heard OFF RIGHT and LEFT. Though she hears the VOICES, she only reacts minimally to their talk. Her frown gets larger. You cannot tell what, or  
5 even if, she is thinking.

**CHILD ONE:** That Mary Lennox is the most disagreeable child I've ever seen.

**CHILD TWO:** What a sour expression.

**CHILD THREE:** It comes of the parents not caring for her.

10 **CHILD FOUR:** Her mother didn't even want her. She wanted a boy.

**CHILDREN:** (*Sing, taunting.*) Mistress Mary, quite contrary!

**CHILD ONE:** (*Whispers.*) I understand it was a cholera epidemic. Ran through the whole village in India.

**CHILD TWO:** No.

15 **CHILD THREE:** Everyone died from it—the parents, the servants, everyone!

**CHILDREN:** (*Continue the song.*) How does your garden grow?

**CHILD ONE:** But she survived.

**CHILD TWO:** What happened to her?

**CHILD FOUR:** She was sent back to England.

20 **CHILDREN:** With silver bells, and cockle shells—

**CHILD ONE:** She'll be staying with her rich uncle, you know the one.

**CHILD TWO:** The—the deformed one?

**CHILD ONE:** Yes, in that big mansion of his that he hardly ever visits!

**CHILD TWO:** What do you think will become of her?

25 **CHILDREN:** (*Sing.*) And marigolds all in a row!

**CHILD ONE:** I've no idea.

**CHILD TWO:** Won't she be lonely?

**CHILD ONE:** Who can tell? I don't think she has any emotions.

30 **CHILDREN:** (*Sing, taunting.*) Mistress Mary, quite contrary! (*Louder, changing key.*) Mistress Mary, quite contrary! (*Louder, changing key.*) Mistress Mary, quite contrary!

### ACT ONE

#### Scene One

Continuous from last scene. Mary's room at Misslethwaite Manor. A dressing table and chair are ONSTAGE.

- 1 **MRS. MEDLOCK:** (*ENTERS RIGHT with MARTHA in tow. OFFSTAGE CHILDREN abruptly stop their singing. MARY watches the two as they ENTER, but does not move from her spot.*) Martha, this is Mary, she's Mr. Craven's niece. This will be her room while she's here.
- 5 **MARTHA:** Yes, mum.
- MRS. MEDLOCK:** (*Takes in MARY and talks as if she were not present.*) Humph! She is such a plain child. (*To MARTHA.*) And her mother was a great beauty. Almost as pretty as Mr. Craven's wife, when she was alive.
- 10 **MARTHA:** Perhaps she will improve as she grows older, mum.
- MRS. MEDLOCK:** Well, she'll have to! Not that she'll have much chance here at Misslethwaite Manor. I really have no idea what we'll do with this girl. That will have to be one of your duties, Martha.
- 15 **MARTHA:** Yes, mum.
- MRS. MEDLOCK:** (*Looks closely at MARY. When she speaks directly to MARY, she speaks louder and enunciates, as if she were talking to someone who doesn't know the language.*) Mary, this will be your room. Mr. Craven has given it to you. (*No answer from MARY.*) He is your uncle. He will be your guardian now—now that your parents are... (*No response from MARY.*)
- MARTHA:** Is she deaf? Or do they speak a different language in India?
- MRS. MEDLOCK:** No, they speak English. I suppose she's just in shock.
- 25 **MARTHA:** Perhaps with the new surroundings and all.
- MRS. MEDLOCK:** Yes, I expect that's it. She's not sure what is to become of her. (*To MARY.*) Mary, I'm Mrs. Medlock, the housekeeper. I am the head of the household staff here. (*Indicates MARTHA.*) And this is Martha. She cleans the rooms and helps with the cooking. She'll be looking after you day to day. (*Still no response.*) Well, I have other business to attend to! I have to manage this whole house. I have no time for nonsensical girls. (*Turns to leave.*)
- MARY:** Who will dress me?
- MRS. MEDLOCK:** (*Surprised, turns back.*) Dress you?
- 35 **MARTHA:** Goodness, don't you dress yourself?
- MARY:** When I lived in India, my servant Ayah would dress me every morning. I never did it myself.
- MRS. MEDLOCK:** Well, here in England, we all dress ourselves. Martha here will put out clothes for you, but you will dress yourself.
- 40 **MARY:** When will I get to see my uncle?

1 **MRS. MEDLOCK:** Your uncle is away on business at the moment. He  
often leaves the manor in my care for months at a time when he  
is traveling. I'm not sure when he will return. *(There is a SUDDEN,  
LOUD CRY heard OFF RIGHT. MARTHA and MRS. MEDLOCK*  
5 *exchange glances. MRS. MEDLOCK then turns and prepares to*  
*leave.)* Right now there is something urgent that I must take care  
of. *(To MARTHA.)* Look after her—comb her hair, make her look  
presentable. But be ready to come if I need you with... If I need  
you. *(There is ANOTHER CRY, and MRS. MEDLOCK hustles OUT*  
10 *RIGHT. Once MRS. MEDLOCK is gone, MARTHA gets a comb from*  
*the dresser and prepares to do Mary's hair.)*

**MARY:** Are there ghosts in this castle?

**MARTHA:** This isn't a castle, it's a manor house. Misslethwaite Manor  
is very old and large. I bet there's over a hundred rooms. *(Weary.)*  
15 It certainly feels that way when I clean them.

**MARY:** But are there ghosts?

**MARTHA:** No! What makes you think of ghosts?

**MARY:** Because I heard that cry. It sounded ghostly. Didn't you hear it?

**MARTHA:** No, Mary, I hain't heard no ghosts. *(The CRY comes again,  
20 but it is cut short.)*

**MARY:** There, there it is again. You must have heard it.

**MARTHA:** No, miss, that's no cry... that's just... um... that's just the  
wind in the long corridors. They makes that sound sometimes.  
*(Starts doing Mary's hair.)*

25 **MARY:** It didn't sound like wind to me.

**MARTHA:** *(Changes the subject.)* Have you never ever dressed yourself?

**MARY:** No, never. My Ayah always did that for me.

**MARTHA:** Heavens! Even my four-year-old sister can dress herself.  
I'll tell you what, I'll help you tomorrow when I come with your  
30 breakfast tray, but after that, I think Mrs. Medlock is right—you'll  
have to manage on your own.

**MARY:** What is my uncle like? I've never met him.

**MARTHA:** Mr. Craven? Oh, he's a good master, though most of us  
servants are afraid of him.

35 **MARY:** Afraid? Why?

**MARTHA:** Well, for one thing, he could dismiss a servant if he didn't  
like how they worked for him. Jobs is hard to get out here on the  
moor. My mother has twelve children, and most of us older ones  
needs our jobs to bring in money to help support us all.

40 **MARY:** Twelve children! My, what a large family!

1 **MARTHA:** Oh, you should see us all around dinnertime, miss. You have to grab what you can and eat fast, or you don't get nothin'. But we all help our mother as much as we can, even the little ones.

5 **MARY:** Does my uncle have a large family, too?

**MARTHA:** Oh, no. You see, his wife died.

**MARY:** She did?

**MARTHA:** Yes, a while ago. I remember her though. She was very pretty, and Mr. Craven loved her very much. He would've done anything for her. Anything. But since she's been gone, he stays more to himself, and he's become more sullen and moody. She must've loved him too, despite—

**MARY:** Despite what?

**MARTHA:** Well, your uncle is a good-looking man, miss, but, well, his back is crooked. There's many a woman who won't see through that to look at the person within. While she was alive, though, they both seemed very happy, and you would see the pair laughing and smiling together all the time. They spent a lot of their time in a garden he had made just for her. (*Thinks.*) That's all closed up now. Now, ye hardly sees him, he's away on business so much—and even when he is at home, he just shuts himself up alone in his rooms mostly. (*Finishes Mary's hair.*) So what will you be doing with yourself today?

**MARY:** Well, I suppose I can begin by looking around this manor house.

**MARTHA:** Oh, that's a tall order, miss. There's all these big quiet rooms, though many of 'em is locked up for ages. Ye can go where ye like, o'course, but I'd keep to your room here. (*Gives her an idea.*) Why not go outside? There's plenty of space out on the moor for a child to play. You might even run into my brother, Dickon.

**MARY:** Play? I never just play.

**MARTHA:** You never play? You don't play, you never dressed yourself—whatever did you do in that India place?

**MARY:** I mostly sat alone by myself and read my books. I did look out my window, and I saw other children playing.

**MARTHA:** But you never joined them?

**MARY:** I was never invited, so I assumed they weren't my type. Plus playing out in the dirt would have soiled my pretty clothes.

**MARTHA:** Oh, miss, if you don't remind me of one of them porcelain dolls what gets all dressed up fancy and then sits on a shelf! You need to get out of doors and smell the wild world. It's a fair lovely spring coming, and the earth's all awaking. What I wouldn't give to

1 have the free time to go out and enjoy it. (*Struck.*) Wait a minute.  
I has summat for ye. Oh, I know I saw it in this room. (*Begins to  
open drawers in the dresser.*) I noticed it when I was cleaning onest  
5 and it struck me as so odd. Why, here it is. (*Pulls a jump rope out  
of a drawer and displays it.*) Here it is. You could take this outside.

**MARY:** (*Askance.*) What is it?

**MARTHA:** Why, it's a jump rope! What it's doing in here, I have no idea.  
But you can play with it. (*Stretches it out to MARY, but she doesn't  
take it.*)

10 **MARY:** How?

**MARTHA:** Now don' tell me you've never played with a jump rope.

**MARY:** I've never seen one before. I've seen ropes. The servants  
used them to tie up our bundles. But surely—

**MARTHA:** Oh, dear goodness! (*With that, she takes the jump rope in  
15 hand and begins skipping. MARY is amazed at her. After a moment,  
MARTHA begins to chant.*) Silver bells,

Cockle shells,  
Eevie, ivy, over.  
I like coffee.

20 I like tea.

I like the boys,  
And the boys like me.  
Mother went to market  
And got bread cheap.

25 Baby's in the cradle  
Fast asleep.

A tiger chased me  
Up a sycamore tree,  
And this is what it said to me—

30 I like coffee.

I like tea.

I'd like Mary

To jump with me. (*Still skipping.*) That's when you jump in, too.  
You say who you'd like to jump with you, and they jump in along  
35 with you.

**MARY:** At the same time? There's no place for me to get in there.

**MARTHA:** There's plenty o' room.

**MARY:** I'd get hurt. The rope would strike me, and I'd get hurt.

**MARTHA:** Oh, nonsense. You just time it so's you come in the jump  
40 rope, too, and we jump together.

**MARY:** It looks complicated.

1 **MARTHA:** It's not. It's the simplest game in the world. *(Stops.)* Oh, well, you take the rope, Mary—try it out yourself. Go outside and try it. You'll have fun. *(At that moment, MRS. MEDLOCK RE-ENTERS RIGHT, bustling.)*

5 **MRS. MEDLOCK:** Martha, Martha! We need your help. Coll—the—the thing, you know, upstairs—has become uncontrollable. This is a bad one. We need more help with him. Right now.

**MARTHA:** Oh, dear. *(They rush OUT RIGHT.)*

**MARY:** *(Left alone, she looks at the jump rope. She holds the ends in both hands and drops the middle to the floor with a thud. It seems lifeless, and she looks perplexed. To herself.)* How did she do that? *(Flips the rope around, but since she doesn't actually jump, it just thuds on the floor behind her, pathetically. She flips it forward and it thuds in front of her.)* Seems pointless, but she made it work. What did she say? Maybe it was some kind of magic spell. *(Chants dully, still flipping the rope, but never actually jumps.)*

15 Silver bells,  
Cockle shells,  
Eevie, ivy, over.  
20 I like coffee.  
I like tea. *(Sad, drops the rope.)*  
I like nobody,  
And nobody likes me. *(LIGHTS FADE OUT.)*

End of Scene One

ACT ONE  
Scene Two

LIGHTS UP: Later that day, next to the ivy wall. MARY ENTERS, holding  
25 one end of the jump rope and letting the other end drag out behind her.

**MARY:** *(Dull.)* This is not any fun. *(Looks about.)* So this is the moor. Doesn't seem like much of anything to look at. *(Smells.)* But, I do smell something, though. It must be flowers, or an orchard or something. *(Examines the ivy wall.)* But this wall, hmmm. There  
30 should be more to the moor on the other side, but there doesn't seem to be any way to get to it. Oh, well. *(Disinterested, she walks along the wall. Every once in a while she touches the ivy and stops to think, but she just continues with the rope trailing behind her, distractedly.)* BEN ENTERS DOWN LEFT with his shovel over his  
35 shoulder, and they startle each other.) Hello!

**BEN:** *(Amiable.)* Hello, yerself.

**MARY:** I didn't know anyone would be out here.

**BEN:** I'm always out here. I'm old Ben, the gardener.

1 **MARY:** Oh! My name is Mary. I live here now. I just came from the house over there. I'm taking a stroll out here on the moor.

**BEN:** Well, there was nothing to prevent ye. Ye can go where ye like, I suppose.

5 **MARY:** But I can't get into the garden in there. (*Points to the ivy wall.*)

**BEN:** (*Cautious.*) How do ye know there's a garden there?

**MARY:** Can't you smell it? Besides, do you see the tall tree hanging over the wall? It must be growing in a garden on the other side. But there's no way in. This wall goes all the way around.

10 **BEN:** Which tree be that?

**MARY:** That one. Oh, you must see it. The one with the little bird high up in it. (*Points above the wall. [NOTE: The tree need not actually be seen.]*)

**BEN:** Bird, is it? Is he up there? Oh aye, there he is. (*Cups his hands over his mouth and whistles. The ROBIN responds to the birdcall and flits ON and stands on the ground near BEN, who addresses the bird in a very quiet voice. [See PRODUCTION NOTES.]*) And where have you been, ye cheeky little beggar?

15 **MARY:** Isn't he afraid of us?

20 **BEN:** Him? Not likely. He comes here every spring—this is where he was born. Inside the— (*Stops himself.*) Well, on the other side of this here wall.

**MARY:** And he comes when you call him?

**BEN:** Oh, aye, that he will. I've knowed him many a year. An' he knows me. Don'tcha, fella?

25 **MARY:** What kind of a bird is he?

**BEN:** Wha'? Ye dunna know?

**MARY:** We never saw birds like that in India.

**BEN:** Why, he's a robin, to be sure. A robin redbreast. Boastful, chattering little beggar, he is. Look at him, now—he's listenin' to us, cuz he knows we're a-speakin' of him. He likes that. He's a friendly fellow, but I think he's a might lonely.

30 **MARY:** Do you think so? (*Moves closer to the ROBIN.*) I'm lonely, too.

**BEN:** Then ye might be friends. Go on, speak to him. Soft like. Ye won't scare him, lest ye move quick or shout.

35 **MARY:** (*Moves closer, with BEN beside.*) Hello, Mr. Robin.

**BEN:** I think he likes ye, miss. Why don't you tell him yer name?

**MARY:** (*Sweet, to the ROBIN.*) My name is Mary. I'm from India. (*To BEN.*) Do you think I could touch him?

- 1 **BEN:** Well, if ye got that close, ye'd probly scare him away, miss. Give him time to really know ye and trust ye. Then he'll be yer friend for life.
- MARY:** *(Still looking at the ROBIN.)* I would love to have a friend. I never had one in India, and I don't have one here, either. *(To the ROBIN.)*
- 5 **MARY:** Would you like to be my friend, Mr. Robin? *(The ROBIN suddenly bursts forth with a little song.)*
- BEN:** Will ye listen to that, now? Oh, he's taken to ye, miss, I can tell. He'd not chirp like that for just anyone. Why, not even for old Ben. He must see you are a very good person, miss.
- 10 **MARY:** Me? He can tell that about me?
- BEN:** Sure he can. Animals and birds is much closer to nature than you and me. And that lets them tell human nature, to be sure. They can see a good heart and a tender soul jes' as clear as you can see his red breast. Why, you take young Master Dickon—
- 15 **MARY:** Do you know Dickon? Martha's brother?
- BEN:** Everyone knows him. The very brooks and the flowers know him. Everything hereabouts what's got life knows Dickon Sowerby for their friend. He's as close to nature as ever I saw in a human being. *(The ROBIN unexpectedly flies OFF behind the wall.)*
- 20 **MARY:** Oh, look!
- BEN:** Well, I guess Mr. Robin has other things to do with his day than to spend it all chattering with us.
- MARY:** But he went behind the wall. Into the garden with no entrance.
- BEN:** Eh, yeah. The garden with no entrance. *(Wistful, not to MARY.)*
- 25 **MARY:** Maybe he'll nest among them old rose bushes. *(To MARY.)* He'll live in there all spring, and come out when he's of a mind.
- MARY:** Was there ever a door to this garden, Ben?
- BEN:** A long time ago...
- MARY:** Then there is a way in! Martha mentioned my uncle and aunt
- 30 **MARY:** had a garden. She was talking about here, behind this wall. She said they—
- BEN:** *(Rougher.)* That were ten years ago, miss. It's best all forgotten.
- MARY:** I would love to go inside! Won't you tell me how to get in?
- BEN:** No, miss, no. Old Ben better get back to his chores. Yes, yes.
- 35 **MARY:** Spent enough time jabberin', jes' like that robin. *(Thoughtful.)* He took to you right away, didn't he, that old robin? And he knows a thing or two.
- MARY:** But, I'd really like to see—
- BEN:** *(Looks down.)* Woo, this earth needs a little tillin', I see. *(Strikes the ground with his spade. Unsatisfied with the first place he digs,*
- 40

1     *he moves his spade over slightly and digs again.)* Here, or here,  
mebee. Yes, yes, yes, right here! *(To himself.)* I thought it was. Ben,  
your memory hain't so bad after all. *(To MARY.)* Well, I'll get to tilling  
more here later, I guess. Right now, I gots to get back to the shed.  
5     Yes, back to my chores. *(Walks OFFSTAGE.)* Good day to ye, miss.

**MARY:** Good day, Ben. *(Looks down at the place where BEN "dug." Sure  
enough, she can see something shiny there. She bends down, reaches  
her hand in, and comes out with a large golden key. She looks at it,  
then looks OFFSTAGE after BEN, then smiles.)* A key! Someone buried  
10    this key. I wonder why? And Ben knew where it was. He wanted me  
to find it. Then there must be a door here somewhere. *(Searches  
along the ivy wall.)* There must be—and the key opens it. *(Suddenly,  
the ROBIN REAPPEARS on the ground near MARY. She turns to it.)*  
Well, hello, little friend. *(The ROBIN chirps.)* You know how to get into  
15    that garden, don't you? But then you just fly in. *(Pause.)* I wish I could  
fly. But I can't. People don't have wings like you do. *(The ROBIN looks  
at her sidelong, and then begins to hop near the wall. MARY follows  
him. He hops to one place in the wall in particular, and chirps again.)*  
What are you trying to tell me? *(Chirp.)* What, here? But there's  
20    nothing. Just ivy. Wait! Oh! *(Reaches her hand into the ivy and feels.)*  
Behind the ivy, just here, oh! There's a handle, I feel it. And there's  
the keyhole. Oh, thank you, Robin, thank you. Let me just try this  
key! *(Tries, and a gate in the ivy wall swings open. She peers inside.)*  
Oh! *(Steps through and closes the ivy door behind her as she EXITS  
LEFT. LIGHTS FADE OUT.)*  
25

End of Scene Two

ACT ONE

Scene Three

SPOTLIGHT UP on MARY, discovered inside the secret garden. The  
lighting does not show us much of it. She looks about her, but what  
she is seeing is mostly dead and rotting. No one has been in this  
garden for ten years. The ROBIN hops on the ground nearby.

30 **MARY:** So this is it. This is inside the garden. How still it is. How still.  
No wonder it is so quiet—I'm the first person who has spoken  
here for ten years. *(The ROBIN chirps. To the ROBIN.)* Oh, I forgot  
about you. You've probably chirped and sung songs in here many  
times. But it doesn't look like a spot for singing. It's so gloomy  
35    and overgrown. No one has cared for this garden in a very long  
time. It's probably been all locked up and just allowed to run wild.  
*(Stoops down, examining the ground.)* So much looks dead in here.  
I wish it didn't. I feel the garden needs to be tended to and to  
come alive. *(To the ROBIN.)* You want that to happen, too, don't

1 you? (*Chirp.*) That's why you showed me how to get in. You are a  
clever little bird, Mr. Robin. (*Chirp.*) Well, I could clear away this  
little patch here, and let the flowers breathe. That would be easy.  
(*Scrabbles in the dirt with her hands.*) Oh, I could clear a lot of this,  
5 but I wish I had a shovel, like old Ben did. That would help a lot. I  
wonder if I could find something up at the house to dig with? (*To  
the ROBIN.*) I tell you what. I'll go back up to the house and have  
dinner, and I'll come back more prepared tomorrow. How does that  
sound? (*Chirp.*) Martha was right—being out of doors is fun! (*Puts  
10 the key in her pocket, takes out the jump rope, and begins to skip  
with it on her EXIT, completely unaware that she is now skipping  
rope properly. She sings as she skips.*) Mistress Mary,  
Not contrary,  
Soon my garden will grow!  
15 With silver bells,  
And cockle shells,  
And marigolds all in a row! (*LIGHTS FADE OUT.*)

End of Scene Three

## ACT ONE

### Scene Four

LIGHTS UP: Mary's room, a little while later. MARY is seen eating her  
dinner hungrily. MARTHA stands nearby, watching in amazement.

20 **MARTHA:** Two pieces o' meat an' two helpings o' rice pudding!  
Skipping rope has given you quite an appetite!

**MARY:** (*Drinks some milk.*) It wasn't just skipping rope. I've been working!

**MARTHA:** Working! Wherever would you find work?

**MARY:** (*Stops a second.*) Oh, just out in the—out in the grounds...

25 **MARTHA:** Let me see your hands. (*MARY shows them to her.*) You  
ought really to wash your hands before eating, miss. But I suppose  
a little dirt won't hurt. (*Sees her knees.*) Ah! And your knees as  
well. Aye, you've been digging in the earth, that's sure.

**MARY:** I wish I had a spade. You know, a little shovel to dig with.

30 **MARTHA:** You plan to go digging again?

**MARY:** I'll go out again tomorrow morning. It was fun!

**MARTHA:** Digging in the yard! That's the most childlike thing I've  
heard of you doing. You mostly does things only older folks do.

**MARY:** How much would a spade cost—a little one?

35 **MARTHA:** Well, down at Thwaite village there's a gardening shop, and  
they sells a little spade and a rake together for two shillings. I've  
seen it.



1 **MARY:** I've got more than that in my purse. (*Gets her purse.*)  
**MARTHA:** You do?  
**MARY:** I have five shillings in here. That's more than enough.  
**MARTHA:** My word! That's riches for a little girl! Miss, you have no  
5 idea how much money that is. You can certainly buy your spade  
and anything else you might want.  
**MARY:** Martha, while I was digging, I saw small white roots lying on  
the ground. They looked like onions!  
**MARTHA:** Onions! (*Pause.*) Oh! Them's bulbs! Some flowers grows  
10 from seeds, and others grows from bulbs. You plant them in the  
ground, and they grow. Very beautiful, them flowers is. My brother  
Dickon knows all about that.  
**MARY:** (*Thinks.*) Seeds. Yes, I'd like flower seeds, too. Does the  
garden shop sell seeds too?  
15 **MARTHA:** Aye. They sell small packages of flower seeds for a  
penny each.  
**MARY:** (*Thinks.*) With some seeds, and a spade, I bet I can. I bet I can  
make that place come alive again!  
**MARTHA:** What place is that, miss?  
20 **MARY:** Oh, just a little place, a little spot I've found, but it all looks  
so lifeless and sad. I think I could make it alive and happy again,  
with a little work.  
**MARTHA:** Why don't you write down all that you need, miss. My  
brother Dickon goes into town quite often. I'll give him your note,  
25 and he'll pick up the things for you. He's got an eye for good seeds  
that'll grow into healthy flowers.  
**MARY:** Your brother Dickon sounds like such a nice boy. I would like  
to meet him. I would like to have someone my own age to talk to.  
**MARTHA:** I'm sure he'd like to meet you, too.  
30 **MARY:** (*Starts writing out a letter on her dressing table.*) Let's see. I  
need the spade and the seeds—  
**MARTHA:** Best to print it, Mary—my brother hain't so good with  
reading handwriting yet.  
**MARY:** All right. (*Prints.*) Dear Master Dickon...  
35 **MARTHA:** "Master Dickon," is it! Oh, he'll chuckle at that.  
**MARY:** But that's how you address a letter to a boy.  
**MARTHA:** Yes, I suppose it is. Dickon don't get much in the way of  
formal letters. But you just print out that letter to him as you see  
fit, Mary. I'll take it to him for you when I go home tonight. You can  
40 put your money in the same envelope with it. He'll go into town

1 tomorrow maybe, or the next day, and pick up the things for you.  
Three shillings should be enough for the spade and all the flower  
seeds you could want.

**MARY:** *(Still writing.)* Will you bring the things to me?

5 **MARTHA:** I'm sure Dickon would like to deliver them to you himself. I  
think he'd be pleased to meet you.

**MARY:** Where will I meet him? Will he come up to the house?

**MARTHA:** You just keep going out to the moor each day. You're sure  
to run into him. He's always about somewhere out there, talking to  
10 the birds and animals he meets.

**MARY:** Your brother talks to animals?

**MARTHA:** If ever there was a boy who did talk with animals, that's  
my brother. He knows their ways, and they truly trust him. It's a  
wonder to see.

15 **MARY:** *(Finishing the letter, she folds it and puts it in an envelope  
with some coins.)* There! Here, Martha, please give this letter to  
your brother. And thank you. *(Hands the envelope to MARTHA, who  
pockets it. An old style HANDBELL is heard OFFSTAGE.)*

**MARTHA:** Oh, goodness, that's Mrs. Medlock's bell! I'll have to  
20 hurry. *(Dashes OUT RIGHT.)* I'll see you tomorrow, Mary. *(A CRY is  
heard OFFSTAGE.)*

**MARY:** *(After MARTHA leaves.)* That's not the wind. But it's not a ghost  
either. *(LIGHTS FADE OUT.)*

End of Scene Four

ACT ONE  
Scene Five

LIGHTS UP: Out on the moor, next to the ivy wall, a few days later.  
25 MARY ENTERS, skipping rope. DICKON is DOWNSTAGE, playing on a  
recorder or small flute. The ROBIN is nearby, listening to the music.  
She stops her skipping and looks at the boy with interest. She steps  
cautiously nearer.

**DICKON:** *(Does not look at her, but senses she is there. Stops playing  
30 momentarily.)* Better stay back, miss. You'll scare him away.

**MARY:** Who? The robin? I won't scare him. He knows me. *(Nonetheless,  
she approaches slowly.)*

**DICKON:** Does he, now? Well, he likes my music. *(Turns.)* You be Mary,  
aren't ye?

35 **MARY:** And you must be Dickon, Martha's brother. Did you get  
my letter?

**DICKON:** That's why I'm here. I've got your garden tools.

**MARY:** And the seeds?

1 **DICKON:** Aye, the seeds too. Come look. (*MARY comes closer. DICKON opens a small paper bag and pulls out some seed packets and a small shovel.*) There's poppies, and mignonettes... (*Suddenly, the ROBIN lets out a trill. Both look at him.*) Well, it seems your friend  
5 wants to have a chat. (*DICKON gives a birdcall, and the ROBIN gives one back.*) Oh, he's telling me all about you, miss.

**MARY:** Do you think he likes me?

**DICKON:** Aye, he likes you. He'd run away if he didn't. (*The ROBIN continues to chirp.*) Listen to him now. Birds is rare choosers,  
10 miss. And this one likes you well.

**MARY:** (*Quiet.*) Then I really do have a friend. I never had one in India. Can you really understand birds?

**DICKON:** I think I do. What's more, they think I do. They chatter and sing to me just as if I was a bird, too. And they're never afraid of  
15 me. Do you want me to help you plant your seeds?

**MARY:** Would you? I don't know much about gardening, and I want to plant them right.

**DICKON:** Where is your garden?

**MARY:** (*Had not thought she would have to reveal this.*) Oh!

20 **DICKON:** You do have a garden to plant the seeds in, don't you?

**MARY:** Yes.

**DICKON:** Well, where is it?

**MARY:** Can boys keep secrets? I mean, can you keep a secret, if I told you one? It's a big secret, and I don't know what I would do if Mrs.  
25 Medlock or even Ben found out that I—

**DICKON:** I keep secrets all the time. That's one of the reasons animals like me. I don't tell on them.

**MARY:** I've stolen a garden.

**DICKON:** Stolen? Well, that's quite a trick. Where do ye keep it?

30 **MARY:** Well, maybe stolen isn't the right word. It's just—I found it. I know it isn't mine, really, but I care for it. No one else does. It was... it was... abandoned. That's it. It was abandoned and neglected, and I found it, and I care for it. They were letting it die, and I don't want it to. Nobody ever goes there but me and the robin  
35 and a few squirrels.

**DICKON:** Show it to me, Mary. I'll keep your secret. (*Slowly, MARY pulls the big key out of her pocket and walks over to the ivy wall. DICKON picks up the seed bag and shovel and follows her.*)

40 **MARY:** The robin showed this to me. He really did. I found the key, but he showed me where to put it, right here behind the ivy. It's like he

1 wanted me to come and care for the garden. (*Moves the ivy, inserts the key, and opens the garden door. The two CHILDREN EXIT LEFT through the door. LIGHTS FADE OUT.*)

End of Scene Five

ACT ONE  
Scene Six

SPOTLIGHT UP on MARY and DICKON in the secret garden. We do not  
5 see anything of the garden itself, only the area immediately around MARY and DICKON. The rest of the set is dark.

**MARY:** Here it is. My secret garden.

**DICKON:** (*Looks about him, removes his hat.*) I never thought I'd see this place. Never.

10 **MARY:** Did you know about it?

**DICKON:** Martha told me there was a garden that was shut up, and no one ever saw the inside of it. I always wondered what it would be like.

15 **MARY:** Do you see what I meant? It's so sad and gloomy in here, but it's not supposed to be this way. It's like the garden needs me... needs someone to tend for it. I know I can save it. I don't want the garden to die.

20 **DICKON:** This place is far from dead, Mary. Oh there's dead wood that needs to be cut out and bracken that needs clearing, but I can smell the wick.

**MARY:** Wick?

**DICKON:** Wick is life. Wick is in all things what grow. When a tree or a flower loses wick, ye cannot save it. But there's wick here yet. Someone just has to stir it up.

25 **MARY:** Could we do that, do you think?

**DICKON:** With some work, surely. (*Picks up a small branch.*) Do you see this? (*Cracks it, or uses a knife.*) Look at the green inside. That's alive. That has wick.

**MARY:** Oh, I'm so glad it has wick! Will there be roses here?

30 **DICKON:** Roses? Look about you. You and me work on this garden, we nurture it and care for it and work for it—Mary, there'll be a fountain of roses here this summer. You watch. Why, somebody has started already. Look at that patch. It's cleared, and the bulbs are planted fairly.

35 **MARY:** I did that.

**DICKON:** With your bare hands?

**MARY:** Yes. That's why I asked for the shovel.

- 1 **DICKON:** Why, I thought you didn't know nothing about gardening.
- MARY:** I don't. But they were so little, and the grass around was so thick and strong. It looked as if they couldn't breathe. So I made a place for them. I don't even know what they are.
- 5 **DICKON:** (*Impressed.*) You done right. No gardener would do better. They'll grow like beanstalks, I tell ye. (*Points in different directions to unseen flowers.*) Those are crocuses, and those are snowdrops, and this one here is a daffydowndilly. You can't see the flowers yet, but that's what they will be. You've done a fair bit of work here
- 10 with just your hands.
- MARY:** But that's just a small place in this whole big garden.
- DICKON:** It's a start. A good start. But, aye, there's a lot of work ahead of us.
- MARY:** Then you'll help me with it?
- 15 **DICKON:** I'll come here with you every day if you like. This will be the most fun work I've ever done. Think! We'll wake up a sleeping garden. We won't make it too tidy, now will we? No, not like the gardens that city folk think of, all clipped and trim and spick and span. No. Just the right amount of wildness to it.
- 20 **MARY:** Are there any flowers that look like bells?
- DICKON:** Lily of the Valley does, and there's flowers called Canterbury Bells. But why bells?
- MARY:** When I was in India, other children used to tease me.
- DICKON:** They did? That was unkind.
- 25 **MARY:** They used to sing at me—  
"Mistress Mary, quite contrary,  
How does your garden grow?  
With silver bells and cockle shells—"
- DICKON:** Well, it will. Your garden will have lots of silver bells.
- 30 **MARY:** And marigolds all in a row?
- DICKON:** Right over there if you like.
- MARY:** Oh, I like it. Do you know what else I like? My new friends. Now I have four friends, and I like them all.
- DICKON:** Only four friends? Well, I assume I'm one. Who are the
- 35 other three?
- MARY:** Well, there's your sister, Martha. There's old Ben Weatherstaff, and then there's that robin. Why, there he is again, right there. (*Sees the ROBIN off to one side.*) Would you teach me to talk to him, like you do?
- 40 **DICKON:** Certainly.

1 **MARY:** (*Hesitant.*) You just said... (*Eyes down.*) You assumed you  
were one of my friends. I never had friends back in India, and I  
didn't know what I was missing. Having friends makes me feel so  
different. Do you mean you like me? I don't think anyone really  
5 has before.

**DICKON:** Eh? I like you fine! I think them kids in India were bad to  
tease ye like that. I'm pleased as can be that I am one of your  
friends. But you should work on getting more than just four.

10 **MARY:** I will. I think I'll add your mother to the list. Martha told me  
about her, and she seems very nice.

**DICKON:** Well, I'm partial to her.

**MARY:** So you'll come tomorrow early? We can get started right away?

**DICKON:** We can start right now. (*Picks up the shovel.*)

15 **MARY:** It's getting late. I should go back to the house for dinner. Don't  
you need to go home for dinner?

**DICKON:** (*Takes a sandwich out of his pocket.*) I always carry my dinner  
with me. You go on back, Mary. I'll stay here a bit and start with the  
shovel. I know how to lock the gate after myself.

20 **MARY:** And you promise you won't tell anyone about my secret  
garden? I mean our secret garden?

**DICKON:** A mistle thrush once showed me where her nest was. Did I  
show that nest to anyone else? No, not me. Mary, you are as safe  
as a mistle thrush.

**MARY:** Goodbye then, I'll see you again tomorrow.

25 **DICKON:** Goodbye, Mary. (*Readies his shovel and whistles to himself  
as LIGHTS FADE OUT.*)

End of Scene Six

## ACT ONE

### Scene Seven

LIGHTS UP DIM: Mary's bedroom, late at night, a few days later.  
MARY sits at her dressing table, looking at the key by candlelight. It  
is raining outside.

30 **MARY:** This key was the start of quite an adventure. Just a few days  
ago, I knew nothing about plants or flowers or the earth they grow  
in. Now, with Dickon's help, my little secret garden is coming back  
alive. All thanks to this key! (*Suddenly, there is a MOAN or CRY OFF  
RIGHT. It seems to come from behind the tapestry wall.*) That's not  
35 the wind. That's somebody crying. (*With decision.*) Well, I'm going  
to find out about it. If I didn't have curiosity about this key, I never  
would've unlocked the secret garden. I'm going to unlock this  
mystery as well. (*Picks up the candle and begins to walk around*

1     the STAGE with it. If possible, the LIGHTS DIM so that only MARY is  
illuminated, presumably by her candle. The MOANING CONTINUES,  
guiding her way.) It's coming from this way, down this corridor. I'm  
5     sure of it. I think everyone else is asleep now, and I'm going to find  
out who does this crying. It's this way. I'm sure of it. (*Walks about  
the darkened STAGE, eventually coming up next to the tapestry  
wall. The crying is louder, just OFFSTAGE near where she is.*) My  
goodness, I think it's coming from behind this tapestry. Can that  
be? (*There is a MOAN. She is now very near.*) Wait a minute. Maybe  
10    this tapestry is like the ivy wall to the garden. Maybe there's a  
secret door hidden behind it! (*Feels along the wall.*) Why, it's like  
a carpet on the wall! (*Finds part that moves.*) Wait, wait! Here it  
is! There is a door behind here! (*Moves part of the tapestry, and  
it opens enough to let her go EXIT RIGHT behind it. With surprise,  
15    behind the tapestry.*) Oh!

End of Scene Seven

ACT ONE  
Scene Eight

Immediately after, Colin's bedroom. While MARY was walking about in  
the dark "corridors," stagehands use the time to set up the bed quietly  
on the opposite side of the stage. COLIN is lying in his huge bed,  
moaning, but for the moment is covered by blankets. MARY ENTERS  
20    RIGHT, candle shaking in her hand, presumably through the hidden  
door in the tapestry, and approaches the bed with wide eyes. Suddenly,  
the covers move and lift up, a shadowy COLIN, not yet revealing  
himself underneath.

**COLIN:** (*Sharp.*) Who are you? Are you a ghost?

25    **MARY:** No, I am not. Are you one?

**COLIN:** (*Finally dropping his blanket, we see he is a boy about Mary's  
age.*) No. I am Colin. Colin Craven. Who are you?

**MARY:** I'm Mary Lennox. Mr. Craven is my uncle.

**COLIN:** That's my father.

30    **MARY:** Your father! No one told me he had any children. Why didn't  
they tell me about you?

**COLIN:** Come here. Closer. (*She does, and he touches her face.*)  
Hmmm. Real, all right. I thought you might be one of my dreams. I  
often dream about odd things and strange people. Where did you  
35    come from?

**MARY:** From my own room. I could hear you crying, so I thought I  
would follow the sound. Why were you crying like that?

**COLIN:** (*Moody.*) Because I couldn't sleep and my head aches. What  
was your name again?

- 1 **MARY:** Mary Lennox. Didn't they tell you anything about me? About me coming to live here?
- COLIN:** No, but that doesn't surprise me. Mrs. Medlock and the others would try to keep us apart, for fear of exciting me too much.
- 5 **MARY:** Exciting you?
- COLIN:** *(With conviction, and surprisingly strong.)* You see, I'm very ill. I'm sick all the time. I never leave this room. In fact, I rarely get out of this bed.
- MARY:** Really?
- 10 **COLIN:** Yes, sometimes they lift me into my wheelchair, and they wheel me around, but I don't like it much because it tires me out so. So I'm here in this room by myself, all the time.
- MARY:** Doesn't your father visit you?
- COLIN:** He's gone away on business most of the time. And when he is
- 15 here, he only comes to see me when he thinks I'm asleep. I don't think he likes me.
- MARY:** Why not?
- COLIN:** My mother died when I was born, and it makes him very sad to look at me and be reminded of her. He thinks I don't know, but
- 20 I've heard the servants talking.
- MARY:** *(Thinks aloud.)* That's why he closed up the garden.
- COLIN:** What garden? What are you talking about?
- MARY:** Your father had a garden made especially for your mother. He closed it up after you were born. He must have closed it up
- 25 because it reminded him of her, and he didn't like that. Now I understand.
- COLIN:** What garden are you talking about? I don't know of any garden.
- MARY:** You wouldn't. It's been locked up since you were a baby. And if you never go out, you'd never see the wall that hides it. *(COLIN looks at her askance, and MARY notices it.)* What's the matter? Why
- 30 are you looking at me like that?
- COLIN:** I'm still trying to decide if you are a dream or if you're real.
- MARY:** I'm real all right. *(Pinches his cheek.)*
- COLIN:** Ow!
- 35 **MARY:** Now, would a dream do that?
- COLIN:** A nightmare might. *(There is a pause, and then both laugh. After a moment, COLIN stops suddenly.)* I'd better not laugh. It excites me too much, and I have to be careful of my weak condition.
- MARY:** You don't look that sickly to me.
- 40 **COLIN:** Oh, I'm sickly all right. Everyone says so. I'm very frail, and my legs are too weak to support me. You see, I'm all but certain to

- 1        come down with the same thing my father has, that crooked back. (*Wistful, not at all sad.*) I'll probably die soon, I'm so weak. So I just lie here, and call for help when I need it. Mrs. Medlock and the others have to come when I cry out.
- 5        **MARY:** They didn't come now. They must be asleep.
- COLIN:** Well, I didn't cry loud enough this time. If I want, I scream very loud, and they all must come here and attend me. And they go away when I tell them to.
- MARY:** Do you want me to go away?
- 10       **COLIN:** (*Pause, considering.*) No. I'd like you to stay and talk to me for a little while. Tell me about this garden.
- MARY:** Well, can you keep a secret?
- COLIN:** Who would I tell? You're the first person to ever come here.
- MARY:** I mean you can't tell Mrs. Medlock or Martha.
- 15       **COLIN:** The servants? I never tell them anything except how sick I am.
- MARY:** Well, your father locked up this beautiful garden when your mother died. It must have been because something about it reminded him of how much he loved her, and how much he missed her. He buried the key. So the garden went untended and wild for
- 20       ten years, and now it's dying, but not quite dead. But here's the real secret part. I found the key. I'm working in the garden when everyone thinks I'm just outside playing on the moor. (*Quiet.*) I'm bringing it back to life.
- COLIN:** All by yourself?
- 25       **MARY:** No, not all by myself. There's a robin, and another friend helping me. As the days have gone by, things have started to grow.
- COLIN:** Is it spring outside? I never know what season it is.
- MARY:** Don't you have a window?
- COLIN:** They boarded all my windows up. The light hurts my eyes, and
- 30       besides, the moor air would come in, and I might get a chill.
- MARY:** That doesn't sound right. The moor air is fresh and fragrant.
- COLIN:** It makes me cough. (*Grows a bit cross.*) Everything makes me cough.
- MARY:** Well, I don't make you cough! Do I?
- 35       **COLIN:** No, I think you're nice. Maybe you can come here from time to time and talk with me. I kind of like it.
- MARY:** I like it, too. You seem nice to me. You know, when I first came here, I thought nobody at all liked me. I'm finding out there are friends everywhere.

1 **COLIN:** Well, I'll be your secret friend. You have a secret garden, and I'll have a secret friend. I shan't tell the servants I met you, and you can come visit me when they're not around. I'm getting a bit tired now, though.

5 **MARY:** I've been here quite a while. Do you want me to leave?

**COLIN:** No. But I want to close my eyes. If I close my eyes, maybe you could tell me a story or sing to me, and I'll fall asleep.

**MARY:** Sing? I only know two songs. One I don't like because cruel children used to taunt me with it, and another one Martha taught to me.

10 **COLIN:** (*Lies back and closes his eyes.*) Martha? Oh, she's nice, too. The nicest of the servants. Sing me that one.

**MARY:** It's kind of silly. You sing it when you're jumping rope.

**COLIN:** (*Sleepy.*) It must be fun to jump rope.

15 **MARY:** Oh, it is! It's a lot of fun. Well, here goes. I'll sing it softly. (*Sings.*) Silver bells,  
Cockle shells,  
Evie, ivy, over.  
I like coffee.

20 I like tea.  
I like the boys,  
And the boys like me.  
Mother went to market  
And got bread cheap.

25 Baby's in the cradle  
Fast asleep. (*By this time, COLIN is quite asleep, so MARY takes her candle and EXITS RIGHT. LIGHTS FADE OUT.*)

End of Scene Eight

ACT ONE  
Scene Nine

LIGHTS UP: Near the ivy wall, a few days later. BEN is seen standing near the ivy wall, looking into the distance. MARTHA ENTERS, a small basket in her hands.

30 **BEN:** Martha!

**MARTHA:** (*Draws near.*) Oh, hello, Ben.

**BEN:** Have you a moment to spare, Martha?

**MARTHA:** Of course. What's the matter?

35 **BEN:** I've been hearing something strange out of Master Colin's rooms of late.

**MARTHA:** What? One of his tantrums?

- 1 **BEN:** No, not a tantrum.
- MARTHA:** Because I was about to say, I haven't heard him crying out lately. Usually he doesn't go two days without screaming or crying or whimpering, but here lately—
- 5 **BEN:** Nay, it weren't a screamin' that I heard. (*Looks about, as if someone might think he was going crazy.*) It were—It were laughter! I'm sure of it. Laughter comin' out of Master Colin's room, late at night when the household's asleep.
- MARTHA:** Laughter?!
- 10 **BEN:** I'm a-certain of it! His window be that one over there. I was passing by after nightfall, as I'm tellin' ye, and I heard laughing jest as plain as day.
- MARTHA:** Really! That's the oddest thing I've heard yet. Dare I tell Mrs. Medlock about it?
- 15 **BEN:** If'n ye do, don't say I told ye. She'll think I'm gone mad, sure enough.
- MARTHA:** I think we'll keep it to ourselves, then.
- BEN:** Tell ye what—I'll keep an ear open. If it should happen again, I'll let you know about it.
- 20 **MARTHA:** Very good. I'll do that, too. But right now, I'd better get these things back up to the manor! (*LIGHTS FADE OUT.*)

End of Scene Nine

ACT ONE  
Scene Ten

- LIGHTS UP: Colin's bedroom, one morning in late spring. COLIN sits up in bed with a breakfast tray laying across his lap, his wheelchair nearby. The food has hardly been touched, and the glass of milk is still full. MARTHA is standing nearby, waiting for him to finish his breakfast.
- 25 COLIN is quite a different person in front of the servants. He is seen as imperious and commanding. He scowls a lot.
- COLIN:** Take it away. I'm finished.
- MARTHA:** But you've hardly touched anything.
- COLIN:** (*Commands.*) Take it away, I said.
- 30 **MARTHA:** (*Takes the tray.*) Yes, sir. Will there be anything else, sir?
- COLIN:** (*As she removes the tray, he gingerly reaches around and touches the CENTER of his back. Pause. After a moment's thought, with a touch of concern.*) Send Mary to me.
- MARTHA:** Mary! However do you know about her?
- 35 **COLIN:** She's been coming here to visit me when no one else will for weeks now. I need to talk to her. I wish you to bring her to me.

1 **MARTHA:** Oh, but sir, that will get me into trouble with Mrs. Medlock!  
You're not supposed to know that Mary is here, let alone see her.

**COLIN:** Do as I say! Mrs. Medlock will have to do as I say, too. Who  
is in charge here?

5 **MARTHA:** You are, sir, of course.

**COLIN:** Don't you forget it, either. I could release you or Mrs. Medlock,  
or any other of the staff who won't do what I tell them.

**MARTHA:** *(Eyes down.)* Yes, sir.

**COLIN:** So go get Mary, as I told you. I wish to see her. Now. *(MARTHA  
10 stands still for a moment, unsure of what to do.)* Now, I said! Now!  
Now! Now! *(Begins to throw a tantrum. He starts to scream and flail  
about in his bed, making a tremendous noise.)*

**MARTHA:** Oh, dear goodness! *(Does not know what to do. Finally,  
as the noise increases, she dashes OFF RIGHT to get help. She  
15 runs directly into MRS. MEDLOCK, who is running IN RIGHT to quiet  
COLIN down.)*

**MRS. MEDLOCK:** *(Sharp, to MARTHA.)* What's going on? What did  
you do to excite him? *(COLIN continues wailing all through  
their conversation.)*

20 **MARTHA:** Nothing, mum, he just started up like that!

**MRS. MEDLOCK:** You must have done something!

**MARTHA:** I just didn't move fast enough when he called for—

**COLIN:** I want her now! Now!

**MRS. MEDLOCK:** For what? Well, go and get it, instantly! Whatever he  
25 wants! And better call in Ben and the other staff members as well.  
We'll need their help. Oh, this is a bad one!

**MARTHA:** *(As she EXITS RIGHT.)* Yes, mum, straightaway!

**MRS. MEDLOCK:** *(As COLIN cries and flails about.)* Now there, Colin,  
Martha has gone to get whatever you want! Colin, Colin! *(Yells over  
30 the screams.)* Martha! Oh, where is that girl?

**BEN:** *(ENTERS RIGHT, hobbling. [Additional other STAFF may also  
join this scene, if desired.]*) Did you need help with something,  
Mrs. Medlock?

**MRS. MEDLOCK:** *(Exasperated.)* It's the boy! Can't you see? He's  
35 working himself up into hysterics!

**BEN:** What do you want me to do?

**MRS. MEDLOCK:** I don't know! I don't know! Hold his arms down  
or something!

**BEN:** I'm not gettin' near that windmill.



1 **MRS. MEDLOCK:** But we must do something! (*Just then, MARY and MARTHA ENTER RIGHT. MARY takes in the situation.*) Oh, Mary! What are you doing here? Get out! Get out! This is no place for a little girl! You shouldn't see his hysterics! He's going to scream  
5 himself to death!

**MARY:** Why stop him? (*To COLIN.*) Go ahead, Colin, if that's what you want. Scream yourself to death, why don't you? We'll just all shut up and watch you.

**MRS. MEDLOCK:** What?!

10 **MARY:** Let him, Mrs. Medlock. Let him scream. No one who can scream that loudly can be really sick. (*COLIN begins to whimper a little and cease his flailing, but still cries. MRS. MEDLOCK watches on in awe.*) Or if you want a screaming contest, I can scream, too! I bet I can scream louder than you! Yahhhh! (*Lets out a fearsome scream, much louder and shriller than his, which shuts COLIN up tight.*)  
15 There. (*Moves closer.*) Now what on Earth is the matter with you?

**COLIN:** (*Sheepish.*) I felt a lump on my back. I thought I might be getting a crooked back like my father, and then I got scared. I wanted to talk to you about it. The more I thought about it, the  
20 more I screamed. The more I—

**MARY:** (*Sharp.*) Turn around. Let me see. (*COLIN twists in his bed, and MARY looks closely at his back, touching it briefly.*) Why, there's no lump!

**COLIN:** (*Quieted.*) There isn't?

25 **MARY:** No, your back is as straight as anyone's.

**COLIN:** Really?

**MARY:** (*Decisive.*) Really. No lump.

**COLIN:** You mean maybe I won't die?

**MARY:** Not from lumps. Not today. What you need is to get out a bit,  
30 and get some fresh air. This room is all musty.

**MRS. MEDLOCK:** Oh, he can't go outside, Mary! He's far too frail for the out of doors.

**COLIN:** (*To MRS. MEDLOCK.*) If Mary says going outside would be good for me, then I'm going outside. Help me into my wheelchair. (*MARY goes over to the wheelchair and pushes it next to the bed. COLIN determinedly swings his useless legs out and sits on the edge of the bed.*)  
35

**MARY:** There's something I want to show you, Colin. In the place we talked about.

40 **MRS. MEDLOCK:** But you mustn't, Master Colin! Think of your health!

**COLIN:** I am. I think the change of scenery would do me good.

- 1 **MRS. MEDLOCK:** But your father is expected home any day now! If he finds I've not taken good care of you, I'll lose my position!
- COLIN:** On the contrary, you'll lose your job if you don't help me into this wheelchair.
- 5 **MARY:** You can do it yourself, Colin. The chair is close, and I'll hold it tight. Grab onto the armrest and pull yourself over.
- COLIN:** You're right, I can do it myself. (*Shifts himself over into the wheelchair.*) You servants all stay back. That's my order. Stay back. Mary, will you push me?
- 10 **MARY:** Glad to! (*Pushes the chair forward.*)
- COLIN:** I am going outside!
- MRS. MEDLOCK:** (*Very quiet.*) No!
- COLIN:** None of you stop me. I am going to the secret garden! (*MARY begins to push COLIN OFF RIGHT. LIGHTS FADE OUT.*)

End of ACT ONE

## ACT TWO

- 15 **LIGHTS UP:** Inside the secret garden. Spring, full daylight. In every sense that Misslethwaite Manor in Act One was drab, dreary, and lifeless, this setting in the secret garden is the opposite—colorful, florid, and brimming with life. There are flowers everywhere. Small animals and birds (puppets) may be seen here and there. Slightly OFF-
- 20 **CENTER** is a simple garden swing with its two ropes leading up into the rigging above the curtain line. This swing must be practical and usable. Let the audience drink in the scene for a moment, then the sounds of the approaching children are heard OFFSTAGE.
- MARY:** (*From OFF.*) Make sure that blindfold is on tight.
- 25 **DICKON:** (*From OFF.*) It is, Mary, get the key.
- MARY:** (*From OFF.*) Here's the lock. (*Comes ON first, followed IN by DICKON pushing COLIN in the wheelchair. COLIN has a blindfold over his eyes.*)
- COLIN:** (*Fidgets with the blindfold.*) When can I take it off?
- 30 **MARY:** Not just yet. Push him to the middle, Dickon. He should get the full effect.
- COLIN:** But I can smell such things!
- DICKON:** Have you really never been outside the manor?
- COLIN:** They took me to the seashore once, but I didn't like it. So I
- 35 screamed until they took me back to my room.
- MARY:** Why didn't you like the seashore?

- 1 **COLIN:** There were lots of children playing about in the water. I didn't like how they stared at my wheelchair. (*Touches the blindfold.*) Please, may I take this off now?
- MARY:** (*As they arrive CENTER.*) Yes, now. (*DICKON undoes the knot in the blindfold and removes it. COLIN first blinks, and then stares about himself in amazement. He takes a moment.*) Well?
- 5 **COLIN:** (*Breathless.*) It's wonderful! I never knew there was such color! Look here, and here! Do you know the names of all these flowers?
- MARY:** Dickon does.
- 10 **DICKON:** (*Gestures around the stage.*) Them's carnations, them's foxglove, and these here are marigolds...
- MARY:** And here is my fountain of roses! Look how everything has grown!
- COLIN:** I don't believe my eyes.
- 15 **MARY:** This isn't a dream, Colin. (*During this conversation, DICKON spots something OFFSTAGE, and walks briefly OFF to get it.*)
- COLIN:** I know that. Even in my dreams I never saw colors like these. And the smell! (*Breathes deeply.*) You were right about the bedroom being musty. This is—fresh! You can tell it's alive. I see
- 20 color everywhere.
- MARY:** I see color in your cheeks. I never saw that before! (*Draws his attention to the tree.*) If you look up in that tree, you'll see my friend the robin.
- COLIN:** Where?
- 25 **MARY:** Way up in that one branch. Do you see that nest?
- COLIN:** (*Amazed.*) Yes!
- MARY:** That's his nest. He's up there, just peeping over the top.
- COLIN:** Oh, I see him. He must like it in here.
- MARY:** It was magic that sent the robin to me. I know it was magic—the magic of the garden. The robin was the one who showed
- 30 me the entrance here, but I think the magic wanted me to help the garden.
- COLIN:** Well, you certainly did that! You and Dickon must have spent a lot of time working here.
- 35 **MARY:** A lot of time, yes. But it hardly felt like work at all.
- DICKON:** (*Brings in a rabbit. [See PRODUCTION NOTES.]*) Look what I found! It's a rabbit.
- COLIN:** Oh!
- MARY:** He's beautiful!
- 40 **COLIN:** Put him in my lap, Dickon. I want to pet him. (*DICKON places the rabbit gently in COLIN'S lap. MARY comes close and begins to pet it.*)

1 **DICKON:** This one's a young one. There's probably a whole warren of 'em around somewhere.

**MARY:** Can we give him a name?

**DICKON:** Certainly, any name you like.

5 **COLIN:** Can I name him, please?

**MARY:** All right. Why, is there a name you like?

**COLIN:** I'd call him Peter, like in the story.

**DICKON:** More likely Penelope. It's a girl rabbit.

**COLIN:** Oh! *(They laugh.)* Penelope, then. Penelope Rabbit, my  
10 name's Colin.

**MARY:** And I'm Mary.

**DICKON:** M' name's Dickon, miss. Pleased to make your acquaintance!  
*(The CHILDREN all laugh as they pet the rabbit.)*

**MARY:** She's so soft!

15 **COLIN:** I've never felt anything like this. Not even my pillows or blanket feel as smooth as this fur.

**MARY:** Maybe you better put Penelope back, Dickon. She might miss her parents.

**COLIN:** *(A touch of sadness.)* Yes, put her back with her family. *(DICKON carries the rabbit back OFFSTAGE.)*

20 **MARY:** Goodbye, Penelope, say hello to Peter for us!

**COLIN:** Goodbye. *(As DICKON RE-ENTERS, he passes the swing. He stops by it.)*

**DICKON:** Hey, Mary, fancy a swing? I'll push!

25 **MARY:** Oh, yes! *(Runs to the swing and sits on it.)* Thank you. *(DICKON begins to push her back and forth in the swing.)*

**COLIN:** *(Looks on first wonderingly, then enviously.)* Do you think I could try that?

**DICKON:** I dunna see why not. Do you mind him taking a turn, Mary?

30 **MARY:** *(Slows down.)* Of course not. *(DICKON stops the swing, and she gets off. She goes over to COLIN and wheels him near the swing.)* Come on, Colin, let's get you in the swing.

**COLIN:** *(With certainty.)* I can get into it myself. Just push me near to it. *(She does, and COLIN hoists himself into the swing as DICKON holds it steady. Once he is positioned.)* All right, Dickon, you can  
35 push me.

**MARY:** Gently, though, Dickon, not too much at first.

**DICKON:** Right-o, here you go! *(Pushes COLIN in the swing.)*

- 1 **COLIN:** (*Holds on tightly to the ropes and is exhilarated by the gentle swinging.*) Oh, this is wonderful!
- DICKON:** Can I go a bit faster?
- COLIN:** Oh, yes, please! Just a bit.
- 5 **MARY:** (*After watching a moment, takes the jump rope out of her pocket and begins to skip by herself. Chants.*) Silver bells,  
Cockle shells,  
Evie, ivy, over.  
I like coffee.
- 10 I like tea.  
I like the boys,  
And the boys like me. (*Lowers her voice, but continues her chanting, while the conversation picks up with COLIN and DICKON. Sotto voce.*) Mother went to market  
And got bread cheap.
- 15 Baby's in the cradle  
Fast asleep.  
A tiger chased me  
Up a sycamore tree,  
20 And this is what it said to me—  
I like coffee.  
I like tea.  
I'd like Colin to jump with me. (*MARY may repeat her chant as needed so that she fills the time during COLIN and DICKON'S conversation.*)
- 25 **COLIN:** (*As MARY is skipping rope and he is swinging.*) I wish I could do what Mary's doing.
- DICKON:** What, skipping rope? Not likely if ye canna walk.
- COLIN:** (*Disappointed.*) Oh.
- 30 **DICKON:** (*Interested.*) What is it? Ye got no feeling in your legs?
- COLIN:** No, I have feeling in my legs.
- DICKON:** Then why canna ye walk if ye have feelings?
- COLIN:** I don't know. My doctors always said I just can't walk.
- DICKON:** Well, doctors know a lot, but they don't know everything.
- 35 They can't always tell how a body feels to itself. I've seen lambs only three days old walk on wobbly legs.
- COLIN:** Do you think maybe I could walk?
- DICKON:** You can never do what you never try.
- COLIN:** Would you help me try?
- 40 **DICKON:** (*Stops the swing.*) Let's do it.

1 **COLIN:** What, now?  
**DICKON:** Why not?  
**COLIN:** *(Eyes down.)* I'm afraid.  
**DICKON:** Of what? Falling to the ground? The grass is soft.

5 **MARY:** *(Stops her skipping, interested in what's happening. She approaches.)* We'll both help you, Colin.  
**DICKON:** We'll hold your arms.  
**COLIN:** You won't let me fall?  
**DICKON:** I canna promise that. I can promise if you do fall, you'll fall

10 on top of me.  
**MARY:** Let's try it, Colin.  
**COLIN:** All right. Take my arms. *(MARY gets under one arm and DICKON under the other, so that between them they lift COLIN off the swing. He is indeed very wobbly, but manages a stumbling walk between*

15 *them.)* I'm doing it! I'm doing it! I'm walking! *(After just a few steps, MARY lets go and DICKON supports COLIN alone. They manage the last few steps to the wheelchair, and COLIN collapses in it.)* I can do it! I can walk.

**MARY:** It will take a bit of practice, but I know you can, Colin. You

20 hardly put any weight on me.  
**DICKON:** I have an idea, if you feel up to trying again.  
**COLIN:** Sure. I'm not at all tired.  
**DICKON:** *(Goes to a nearby tree and picks up a stout branch with a fork in it. He returns to COLIN in the wheelchair.)* Here. I'll hold up

25 one side, and you can use this as a crutch for the other. We'll walk back to the swing together.  
**COLIN:** I need a hand up. *(MARY rushes to his side, and they help him to stand. DICKON positions the branch under COLIN'S right armpit and holds COLIN up on his other side. Together they walk first toward the swing, then back toward the wheelchair, DICKON and MARY giving encouragement along the way. COLIN is facing the garden entrance. They are not quite back to the wheelchair when BEN and MARTHA ENTER. They gaze in wonder at the scene.)*

30 **MARTHA:** *(Takes it in.)* Oh, my dear goodness!  
**BEN:** I hannot been in this garden for ten year. It's just as I remember. Lord Craven and his wife used to come here all the time, and I would tend it for them. Why, it's just as if I've been tending it all these many years.

**COLIN:** Mary and Dickon did it.

- 1 **MARTHA:** *(Sees for the first time that COLIN is standing with DICKON. She rushes over toward him with BEN slowly walking behind.)* Master Colin! What are you doing? *(Pause.)* How are you doing that?
- BEN:** Why, I thought he had no strength in his legs!
- 5 **COLIN:** It turns out my legs aren't half so weak as I've been led to believe. I can stand, with the help of this staff Dickon made for me.
- BEN:** And walk, too, seemingly.
- COLIN:** The walking is hard.
- 10 **MARY:** He'll get better at it with practice.
- MARTHA:** Mrs. Medlock's all of a fright up at the manor. She's certain that Master Colin will die of exposure out here.
- DICKON:** What? Out here in the sunshine? But it's a warm day.
- MARY:** It's beautiful out here.
- 15 **COLIN:** I feel stronger than I ever did just lying in my bed.
- MARTHA:** Well, she is worryin' herself up something dreadful. She says if you get sick, your father will never forgive her, and we'll all lose our jobs.
- COLIN:** I feel fine. You should see! I've even been for a swing!
- 20 **MARTHA:** You know, your father's going to be here any day now.
- BEN:** That's right! He's written that he's finished his business in France, and he'll be home again soon. *(OFFSTAGE, ARCHIBALD CRAVEN and MRS. MEDLOCK are heard talking. [NOTE: They may approach the set through the AUDIENCE, speaking their offstage lines, if desired. Time their entrance so that they reach the stage when indicated.])*
- 25 **MR. CRAVEN:** *(From OFF, with command.)* Outside, Medlock? He went outside?
- MARTHA:** Oh, my dear, that's him now!
- 30 **MRS. MEDLOCK:** *(From OFF, with insistent worry.)* Yes, Mr. Craven, I tried my best to stop him. But he was so willful! And that girl incited him!
- BEN:** With Mrs. Medlock!
- MR. CRAVEN:** *(From OFF, but coming nearer.)* Girl? What girl?
- 35 **MRS. MEDLOCK:** *(From OFF.)* Your niece, Mary. You know, we wrote about her coming from India—
- MR. CRAVEN:** *(From OFF, impatient.)* Oh, yes, yes! But don't tell me you couldn't control a simple little girl. Where do you think they went? I don't see anyone.

- 1 **MRS. MEDLOCK:** *(From OFF.)* They must have gone into the garden.  
**BEN:** We're all in for it now, that's sure!
- MR. CRAVEN:** *(From OFF, but very near.)* The garden! Medlock, I  
ordered that place closed years ago! How could you allow them to  
5 go in there?  
**MARTHA:** Quickly! Get Colin back into his wheelchair! Hurry!  
**COLIN:** *(With decision.)* No! I will stand to greet my father. Dickon, you  
can let me go.  
**DICKON:** Are you sure?
- 10 **COLIN:** I want to stand by myself when my father comes.  
*(DICKON complies in small stages, and COLIN wobbles but  
stands determinedly.)*  
**MARTHA:** Oh, dear! Colin, please! We'll get into such trouble!  
**MR. CRAVEN:** *(Unexpectedly ENTERS.)* Get into trouble about what?  
15 What's going on here? *(MRS. MEDLOCK follows him IN sheepishly.)*  
**BEN:** Mr. Craven!  
**COLIN:** *(With love.)* It is my father! *(MR. CRAVEN changes his demeanor  
as he surveys the garden. He stops in wide-eyed wonder.)*  
**MRS. MEDLOCK:** There they are, sir. There they all are.
- 20 **BEN:** *(Sees MR. CRAVEN stare about.)* Are you all right, Mr. Craven?  
**MR. CRAVEN:** *(Snaps out of it.)* These children... Who are these  
children? *(ALL look to him as MR. CRAVEN crosses to CENTER  
STAGE nearer to COLIN standing with his crutch. MR. CRAVEN walks  
a bit stiffly and stooped, but his hunchback is barely noticeable. He  
25 stops walking a few steps away from COLIN.)*  
**COLIN:** It's me, Father. It's Colin.  
**MR. CRAVEN:** *(With wonder.)* Colin! *(COLIN begins to walk with his  
crutch towards MR. CRAVEN. He hobbles unsteadily a few steps as  
MR. CRAVEN stares in amazement at him.)* My boy! *(COLIN suddenly  
30 drops his crutch and walks the last step or two unsteadily toward  
MR. CRAVEN. He collapses finally into MR. CRAVEN'S arms and they  
hug each other mightily.)* Oh, my son! *(Kisses his forehead and  
holds him tightly.)* The doctors said you would never walk! *(Cries.)*  
What miracle is this?
- 35 **COLIN:** Mary did it, Father. Mary and the magic in this garden. I wanted  
to walk, and I can. I will come here every day and walk and walk  
until I can skip rope with her. I will do it, Father. *(They both look  
at MARY.)*  
**MR. CRAVEN:** Mary?  
40 **MARY:** *(Approaches.)* Yes, sir.

- 1 **MR. CRAVEN:** You're my niece, Mary? The one from India?  
**MARY:** Yes, sir. *(Then.)* Yes, Uncle.
- MR. CRAVEN:** *(Still holding COLIN.)* Come here, child. *(She runs to him, and the three join in one massive hug.)* Thank you, thank you, Mary!
- 5 *(They release from the hug. MARY looks quizzically at MR. CRAVEN.)*  
What's the matter, Mary?
- MARY:** I thought—I mean—
- MR. CRAVEN:** Yes?
- MARY:** Sir, they told me you had a crooked back.
- 10 **MR. CRAVEN:** Ah, yes, so I do. *(Stands fully and his hunch is apparent, but not great.)*
- MARY:** But that's hardly anything!
- MR. CRAVEN:** People always would say I could never stand upright.
- MARY:** Just like Colin being unable to walk. People said he couldn't
- 15 do it. They said he was sickly, and would die young.
- COLIN:** But now I say different. I say I will walk, and I'll live forever and ever.
- MR. CRAVEN:** *(To COLIN, straightens up.)* I can even stand straighter, if I've a mind to do so. It hurts a bit, but I can do it.
- 20 **MARY:** Now I can't see your crooked back at all.
- MR. CRAVEN:** My dear wife used to say that. She never saw my deformity. She said only the small-minded could see it. *(Teary eyed.)* I lost all hope when she died. Oh, how she loved this garden and its life! I let it wither. I couldn't stand to see it live when she
- 25 had died. But that was wrong. That was very wrong. *(To COLIN.)* Now, when I see you, I have hope again!
- COLIN:** Let me show you around the garden, Father. Give me your arm, and we'll walk together. *(Begins to point out the flowers to MR. CRAVEN, who holds COLIN tenderly under his arm for support. They hobble together from place to place.)* Dickon told me some of their names. These are carnations, these are foxglove, and these here are marigolds. There's even a swing you can push me in!
- MR. CRAVEN:** Of course I will. That sounds wonderful. We can do anything we like. *(As they walk about the garden, COLIN leaning upon his tall father, the OTHERS look on with pride and wonder.)*
- 35 **COLIN:** There's a robin nesting up in that tree—and oh! Father, there's a rabbit named Penelope! Oh, Father, this garden has been a secret too long. I love it! *(CURTAIN.)*

END OF PLAY

## **PRODUCTION NOTES**

### PROPERTIES ONSTAGE

#### ACT ONE

Scene One: Dressing table and chair, comb, jump rope.

Scene Four: Dressing table and chair with tray of food and glass of milk, small coin purse with coins, paper and pen, envelope.

Scene Six: Small branch, shovel.

Scene Seven: Lit [or battery-operated] candle.

Scene Eight: Bed with blankets and pillows.

Scene Ten: Bed with blankets and pillows, breakfast tray with food and glass of milk, wheelchair.

#### ACT TWO

Flowers, animals/puppets (optional), garden swing, branch to be used as crutch.

### PROPERTIES BROUGHT ON

Scene Two:

Jump rope, key (MARY)

Shovel (BEN)

Scene Three:

Jump rope, key (MARY)

Scene Five:

Recorder or flute, small paper bag containing small shovel and seed packets (DICKON)

Jump rope, key (MARY)

Scene Six:

Knife [optional], sandwich (DICKON)

Scene Seven:

Key, candle (MARY)

Scene Eight:

Candle (MARY)

Scene Nine:

Small basket (MARTHA)

#### ACT TWO

Jump rope (MARY)

Blindfold (COLIN)

Rabbit (DICKON)

## SOUND EFFECTS

Old style hand bell, various bird sounds (chirping, singing, trills, etc.), rain.

## ACCENTS

Many of the major characters speak English with a Yorkshire accent. The script attempts to show this by using occasional incorrect grammar as well as some odd words, such as ye (you), hain't (ain't/isn't), dunna (do not), summat (somewhat/ something), canna (cannot), and others. MARY, COLIN, and MR. CRAVEN speak without the accent.

## ANIMALS

The ROBIN can be shown either by a small, colorful puppet bird on the end of a long manipulating pole or may be portrayed by a hand puppet robin held by an actor dressed in black to suggest that he or she is invisible.

In ACT TWO, Dickon brings in a small rabbit for the three children to play with. While using a live animal onstage does present some logistical problems, the sight of the children playing with one can be quite effective. This animal is referred to as a rabbit in the script, but may be any small tame animal—say a puppy or kitten or guinea pig. Simply adjust the script accordingly. However, if using a live animal is out of the question, a stuffed animal or puppet may be substituted.

## ABOUT THE SECRET GARDEN

To help with logistics, as well as for dramatic effect, the audience does not see the actual secret garden until ACT TWO. In this way, you will have the entire intermission to set up the garden on stage. It should contrast sharply to the dismal and dreary Misslethwaite Manor of ACT ONE and have a certain “wow!” factor.

Scenes Three and Six in ACT ONE take place within the secret garden, but the garden is not actually seen. These scenes may best be staged in a small area, with a darkened stage under a spotlight. The important thing is that when you do see the full garden set in ACT TWO, it is quite a sight to behold.

There is a simple but useable garden swing called for in ACT TWO.

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