

The Secret Garden
by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Chapter 4: Inside the Secret Garden

Author: Adrian Tennant
Level: Pre-intermediate
Age: Teenagers / Young adults
Time needed: 45-60 minutes
Preparation: One copy of the picture needed for Activities 1a and 1b; one copy of the worksheet per pair of students (Activity 2)
Note: Choose Activity 1a or 1b, but don't do both.



Activity 1a

- 1 Show the students the picture from the chapter.
- 2 Ask the students the following questions: *What can you see in the picture? Where do you think Mary is? How do you think she got there? What do you think she will find?*
- 3 Elicit ideas from students and write these up on the board.
- 4 Play the recording from 'She was standing inside the secret garden' to 'Martha was delighted to see she had bright red cheeks and bright eyes.' and ask students to compare their ideas to what actually happens in the story.
- 5 Once you've played this part of the recording, ask students which of their ideas were correct.

Activity 1b

- 1 Divide the class into two groups, A and B.
- 2 Take group B out of the classroom and show them the picture from the chapter. Ask them to discuss and make notes about what they think is going to happen in the story.
- 3 Go back to group A and play the whole recording.
- 4 Divide the students from group A into small groups of three or four and ask them to check with each other what they understood / heard.
- 5 Bring group B back into the classroom and put students in pairs (one A with one B).
- 6 Ask student As to tell student Bs what they heard. While they are doing this, student Bs can check their ideas / predictions.
- 7 Finally, play the recording again to the whole class.

Activity 2

- 1 Explain to students that you will give them a worksheet with eight sentences. Each sentence has one mistake.
- 2 Hand out the worksheet and ask students to work in pairs and discuss the sentences, correcting the mistake in each sentence.
- 3 When they have finished, ask students to turn over the worksheet. Play the recording again and get students to check and discuss their answers.
- 4 Play the recording again, if necessary, and check the answers as a class.

Key:

1. Martha was tidying away Mary's washing breakfast things.
2. The robin flew to the top of the roof wall and twittered loudly.
3. It was easy difficult to turn the key in the door.
4. Mary left the door open shut / closed the door after she went into the secret garden.
5. There were lots of no leaves on the roses.
6. Mary used a spade sharp piece of wood to dig away at the thick grass.
7. Mary worked in the garden for about thirty minutes two or three hours.
8. When Mary got back her cheeks were pale red.

Extension Activity

- 1 Write up the following on the board: *Imagine Ben Weatherstaff finds Mary in the secret garden. Write a short dialogue between the two of them. With a partner, act out your dialogue.*
- 2 Put students in pairs and get them to do the activity.
- 3 Ask two or three pairs to act out their dialogue.

1 Martha was tidying away Mary's washing.

2 The robin flew to the top of the roof and twittered loudly.

3 It was easy to turn the key in the door.

4 Mary left the door open after she went into the secret garden.

5 There were lots of leaves on the roses.

6 Mary used a spade to dig away at the thick grass.

7 Mary worked in the garden for about thirty minutes.

8 When Mary got back her cheeks were pale.

Chapter 4: Inside the Secret Garden

Transcript

The next day, Martha was back at work. She was full of excitement about her visit home.

'When I'd helped Mother with all the baking and the washing I made the children a little cake,' she told Mary. 'And when they came in from playing on the moor, they just shouted for joy. And in the evening we all sat around the fire, and I told them all about you. They wanted to know all about the ship you sailed on from India! But Mother does worry about you all alone in a big place like this.'

Martha went on chattering about her day at home until she had finished tidying away Mary's breakfast things. Then she went back to the kitchen, and Mary put on her coat and hat and went outside into the gardens. She went to her special walk, and immediately noticed the robin hopping around at the bottom of the wall. When she saw him, she laughed.

'You showed me where the key was yesterday,' she said. 'You should really show me where the door is today. But I don't believe you know!'

The robin flew up onto the top of the wall and twittered loudly. What happened next really was very strange.

Mary had stepped forwards close to the robin, and at that moment a strong wind suddenly blew, lifting some of the ivy from the wall. Underneath, Mary saw a round knob which had been covered by leaves. It was the knob of a door.

Mary put her hands under the leaves and began to pull and push them away. Her heart started beating hard, and her hands trembled a little with excitement. The robin kept singing and twittering, as if he was excited too. Mary could feel a metal hole.

It was the lock of the door which had been closed for ten years. Mary still had the key in her pocket, and she took it out and tried to put it in the hole. It fitted. Then she turned the key. It was difficult, and she had to use both hands. But the key turned.

Mary looked behind her, but there was no one coming. She took a deep breath and slowly pushed back the door. Then she went through the door and shut it behind her. She was breathing fast with excitement and delight.

She was standing inside the secret garden! It was a lovely, mysterious-looking place. The high walls around it were covered with thick climbing roses. There were trees in the garden, and the climbing roses had run all over them. In places, the roses had grown from one tree to another and made lovely bridges. There were no leaves or roses on them now, just thin brown branches. But the way they hung from tree to tree looked so mysterious. It was different from any other place Mary had ever seen.

'How still it is!' Mary whispered to herself. Even the robin, who had flown to his treetop, was still. He sat watching her.

Mary looked up at one of the mysterious curtains of roses.

'Are they all completely dead?' she wondered. 'I hope not.'

She did not want it to be a dead garden. If it were alive, how wonderful it would be.



Chapter 4: Inside the Secret Garden

Transcript

As Mary walked around the garden, she felt as if she had found a world that was all her own. The robin flew down from his treetop and went from one bush to another. He twittered loudly, as if he were showing her things. In one of the corners of the garden, Mary could see that there had once been a flowerbed. And sticking out of the earth there, she could see some green shoots. She remembered what Ben Weatherstaff had said, and she bent down to look at them.

'Yes,' she whispered to herself. 'They are tiny growing things, and they might be crocuses or snowdrops or daffodils.'

All around the garden, Mary found lots more green shoots coming up out of the earth. She was feeling excited again.

'It isn't a dead garden,' she cried out softly to herself. 'Even if the roses are dead, there are other things that are alive.'

Mary did not know anything about gardening. But in some places the grass was very thick and the green shoots did not seem to have enough room to grow. Mary found a sharp piece of wood and dug away the weeds and the grass.

'Now they look as if they can breathe,' said Mary, after she had finished the first ones. She enjoyed herself so much that she went on digging, all around the garden, making space around the green shoots. When it was time for lunch, she realized that she had been working for two or three hours. And she had felt happy all the time.

When Mary came in for lunch, Martha was delighted to see that she had bright red cheeks and bright eyes.

'Mother will be so pleased,' she said. 'She said you must stay outside as much as possible. And now look at the colour in your face!'

'I wish I had a little spade,' Mary said to Martha.

'What do you want a spade for?' asked Martha, laughing.

Mary thought for a moment. She had to be careful. If Mr Craven found out about the open door, he would probably get a new key and lock it up for ever. And that would be terrible.

'If I had a little spade,' Mary told her, 'I could do some digging like Ben Weatherstaff. Perhaps I could make a little garden and plant some seeds in it.'

'Well,' said Martha, thinking for a moment. 'I saw a nice little spade and fork in the shop in Thwaite last week. They sell flower seeds there too. Our Dickon often walks over to Thwaite. He knows all about planting seeds. Why don't we write him a letter? We can ask him to go and buy the spade and fork and some seeds at the same time.'

'Oh, yes, let's do that!' cried Mary, excited.

So that afternoon, Martha and Mary wrote a letter to Dickon. Mary had some money which Mrs Medlock had given her from Mr Craven. She put some of the money in the envelope with the letter, and gave it to Martha to send.

The Secret Garden
by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Chapter 4: Inside the Secret Garden

Image



LISTENING SKILLS IMAGE