

**The Secret Garden**  
by Frances Hodgson Burnett

**Chapter 11: 'I am getting stronger!'**

<b>Author:</b> Adrian Tennant
<b>Level:</b> Pre-intermediate
<b>Age:</b> Teenagers / Young adults
<b>Time needed:</b> 45-60 minutes
<b>Preparation:</b> One copy of the worksheet needed per student for Activity 1; one copy of the worksheet needed per pair for Activity 2



**Activity 1**

- Hand out the worksheet to the students and ask them to read the questions.
- Ask the students to choose two or three questions and to cross out all the others.
- Tell them that you will play the recording of chapter eleven to them, but you only want them to answer the questions they picked.
- Play the recording once.
- Tell the students to answer their questions as they listen. Monitor and see how well they are doing.
- Play the recording again, if necessary.
- Put students in small groups of three to five and tell them to share their answers (they will probably be able to answer between five and eight questions between them).
- Play the recording again and ask them to check each other's answers.
- Finally, check the answers as a class.

**Key:**  
 a. things were growing – green shoots, buds appearing, lots of colour  
 b. the smell of roses  
 c. he walked around the garden  
 d. 'I am quite well and I shall live to be a man.'  
 e. because the servants were starting to wonder why Colin was eating so much  
 f. Dickon's mother  
 g. she thought it was funny how the children were trying to keep everything secret from the servants  
 h. bread (that she had baked) and (fresh) milk

**Activity 2**

- Ask the students to work in pairs.
- Tell the students to match the words in the left-hand column with words in the right-hand column to make collocations from the chapter text.
- Elicit a few ideas from the students and write these on the board.
- Play the recording, and ask the students check their answers.
- Give the students a few minutes to check / discuss their answers with their partner.
- Check answers as a class.

**Key:**  
 1. i; 2. a; 3. j; 4. h; 5. c; 6. d; 7. e; 8. g; 9. b; 10. f

**Activity 3**

- Ask the students what they think / predict will happen in the next chapter.
- Ask them to write down their ideas and tell them that in the next lesson they will listen to the next chapter and find out who (if anyone) is correct.

**Extension activity**

Ask the students to look back at all the notes they've made about the story and, for homework, write a brief summary (about 50 words) of the story so far.



### Activity 1

Read the questions below. Choose two or three that you want to answer, then cross out the others.

- a What was magic about the garden?
- b What filled the garden air?
- c What did Colin do every morning?
- d What did Colin want to say to his father?
- e Why did the children want to try and eat less?
- f Who did the children tell their secret to?
- g Why did Dickon's mother laugh?
- h What did Dickon's mother send for Mary and Colin?

### Activity 2

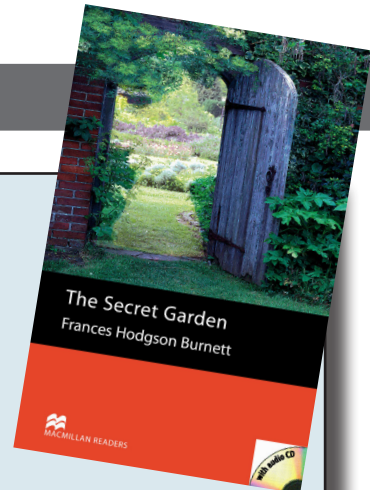
Match the words on the left with those on the right to make collocations from the chapter text.

- |              |           |
|--------------|-----------|
| 1. green     | a. air    |
| 2. garden    | b. bread  |
| 3. a few     | c. child  |
| 4. biggest   | d. colour |
| 5. vegetable | e. garden |
| 6. warm      | f. milk   |
| 7. vegetable | g. boy    |
| 8. crooked   | h. secret |
| 9. nice      | i. shoots |
| 10. fresh    | j. steps  |

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**Chapter 11: 'I am getting stronger!'**

**Transcript**



The next few months in the garden were like magic. At first there were green shoots coming up everywhere – in the grass, in the flowerbeds and even on the walls. Then the buds appeared. And then the buds opened out and the garden was full of colour. The poppies Dickon and Mary had planted grew, and the roses covered the garden. They climbed the walls, hung from the trees and grew out of the grass. They seemed to come alive every minute, and their smell filled the garden air.

Colin saw it all. He spent every hour of each day in the garden. He watched things growing. He watched the insects and birds in the garden. And he learned from Dickon about other animals, too. Suddenly he had a whole new world to discover.

Because he had stood on his feet, Colin had something else new to think about, too. He wanted to walk and run, and he wanted to be as strong as Dickon. So every morning, with Mary standing on one side, and Dickon on the other, he walked around the garden. The first time, they had to stop after every few steps, and Colin held on to Dickon's arm. But sometimes Colin took his arm away, put his head up high and walked a few steps alone.

'I am getting stronger! I can feel it!' he cried, after they had walked all around the garden for the first time.

'What will Dr Craven say?' cried Mary, excitedly.

'He won't know,' Colin answered. 'This is going to be the biggest secret of all. No one will know about it. I don't want my father to hear about it. We'll wait until I can walk and run like other boys. Then when my father comes back to Misselthwaite, I shall walk into his room and I shall say, 'Here I am. I am quite well and I shall live to be a man.'

'He won't believe his eyes!' cried Mary.

Colin's cheeks were red. He finally believed that he was going to get well. And he couldn't wait to show his father that he was as straight and as strong as any other boy.

But it was difficult for the children to keep their secret. Each day Colin grew a little stronger. He no longer looked like a sick child. His skin now had a warm colour, his beautiful eyes were clear and he was starting to get fatter. He and Mary were always hungry now. After every meal, their plates were empty. The children knew that the servants were starting to wonder why Master Colin was suddenly eating so much. So the children decided they must try to eat less. But every morning, they woke up feeling hungry. And when they saw their breakfast laid out, they could never send it away.

The children had decided that Dickon's mother could know their secret. They all agreed that she would never tell anyone. So one beautiful evening, while Dickon was working in his vegetable garden at home, he told her the whole story. He told her about the buried key, and the garden, and about Master Colin getting stronger.

## Transcript

'My word!' she said, when he had finished talking. 'It's a good thing that little girl came to the Manor. It's been good for her, and it's saved Master Colin. You say he stood on his feet! And we all thought he was a poor, crooked boy. What do they think of it all at the Manor?'

'They can't understand it,' laughed Dickon. 'Master Colin's keeping it all a secret. He doesn't want them to write and tell his father. So he pretends he's still ill. When the servants carry him down to the wheelchair, he lies back like a sick child, moaning and complaining. The problem is that Master Colin and Miss Mary are always hungry now. They want to ask for more food. But they know the servants won't believe that Master Colin is still ill!'

Dickon's mother laughed.

'Oh, they're enjoying themselves, aren't they!' she said. 'I'll tell you what, son. In the morning, I'll bake them some nice bread, and you can take them some fresh milk. That will stop them feeling hungry!'

'Oh, Mother! You are wonderful!' cried Dickon. 'What a good idea!'

And so the next morning, after the children had been in the garden for a while, Dickon brought out a bucket of milk and some fresh bread, still warm. Mary and Colin were delighted.

'Your mother is such a kind, clever woman, Dickon!' they cried. 'The milk is so good! And the bread is wonderful!'