



CLARKSVILLE'S CENTER FOR ARTS & EDUCATION

ROXY REGIONAL THEATRE

SEASON THIRTY-THREE *Better than Broadway*



The
Secret
Garden

Based on Frances Hodgson Burnett's
Children's Novel

Book & Lyrics by Marsha Norman
Music by Lucy Simon



A Roxy Regional Theatre Production
Teacher's Guide

About the Author

Frances Eliza Hodgson Burnett was born in Manchester, England on November 24th, 1849, the middle of five children. When she was just 3 years old her father passed away and when she was 15 years old her mother moved her family to Knoxville, Tennessee to be near her uncle's family. To help her family make money, Frances began to write stories. Her first story was published in *Godey's Lady's Book* in 1868. Within a short time she was also being published in *Scribner's Monthly*, *Peterson's Ladies' Magazine*, and *Harper's Bazaar* and she had earned enough money to move her family into a better home in Knoxville.

In 1873, after a year-long visit to England, Frances married her childhood neighbor, Swan Burnett. Their first son, Lionel, was born the following year in 1874. Their second son, Vivien, was born not long after. At this point, Frances was supporting her family completely through her writing. Her first book, *The Lass o' Lowries*, was published in 1877 to good reviews. In 1879, after meeting fellow writer Louisa May Alcott and children's magazine editor Mary Mapes Dodge, Frances began to write children's fiction. Over the next five years, several of her short stories were published in *Mary Mapes Dodge's* magazine. It was here that she first published a serialization of her novel *Little Lord Fauntleroy* in 1884. The book received good reviews and became a best-seller in both the United States and England. It was translated into twelve languages and distributed all around the world.

By 1887, Frances and her sons returned to England to live in London for a time. There, Frances continued to write, publishing novels as well as stage adaptations of her stories. One book, *Sara Crewe or What Happened at Miss Minchin's*, was the beginnings of the book we now know as *A Little Princess*.

Sadly, in 1890, Frances' oldest son, Lionel, died from tuberculosis. The loss of her son deeply affected Frances, causing her to turn away from her traditional Protestant faith and investigate Christian Science and Spiritualism. This shift in faith had effects not only on Frances' personal life but on her writing as well. *The Secret Garden* has strong Christian Science influences.

In 1898, Frances divorced Swan Burnett and moved permanently to a house in England called Great Maytham Hall. This house's large gardens became an inspiration for *The Secret Garden*. In 1900, she married Stephen Townsend, but the marriage was troubled and they divorced just two years later. After an illness and recovery in America, Frances returned to Maytham Hall in 1904. It was here that she had the idea for *The Secret Garden*. *A Little Princess*, which was published in 1905, features characters similar to those in *The Secret Garden*—young English girls who grew up in India and move to England after the untimely death of their parents.

Frances returned to the United States in 1907 and settled on Long Island, New York, where she would live for the remainder of her life. *The Secret Garden* was published in 1911. While it was well received by the public, *The Secret Garden* was not nearly as popular as other books Frances had published in her lifetime. It wasn't for another quarter of a century that *The Secret Garden* would become as popular as it is today.

Frances Hodgson Burnett died on October 29th, 1924 at the age of 74.

About the Creators

Marsha Norman (playwright) won the 1983 Pulitzer Prize, Blackburn Prize, Hull-Warriner, and Drama Desk Awards for her play *'Night, Mother*. In 1992 she won a Tony Award and a Drama Desk Award for her book for the Broadway musical, *The Secret Garden*. She also wrote the book for the Broadway musical, *The Color Purple*, for which she also received a Tony nomination. *The Color Purple* is currently in the third year of its national first-class tour. Her new play, the *Master Butcher's Singing Club*, premiered at the Guthrie Theatre in the fall of 2010. She won a Peabody Award for her writing on the HBO television series, *In Treatment*, starring Gabriel Byrne and Dianne Wiest. Her most recent work is the adaptation of *The Trumpet of the Swan: A Novel Symphony for Actors and Orchestra*, with music conducted and written by Jason Robert Brown. She is a native of Kentucky and currently lives in New York. Most recently, she received the William Inge Distinguished Lifetime Achievement in Theatre Award.

Lucy Simon (composer) made her Broadway debut in 1991 as the composer of *The Secret Garden*, for which she received Tony and Drama Desk nominations, the DramaLogue Award and a Grammy nomination for the recording of the score. She received two Grammy Awards for her *In Harmony* albums, which she co-wrote and produced. Ms. Simon wrote songs for the film *A Simple Wish* and contributed songs for the long-running review *A... My Name is Alice*. She began her professional career at the age of 16 with her sister Carly as part of The Simon Sisters.

Synopsis

ACT ONE

Mary Lennox, a ten-year-old girl who loses her parents to a cholera epidemic in India ("Opening Dream"), is sent to live with her uncle Archibald Craven, at Misselthwaite Manor in England ("There's a Girl"). He is the widower of Mary's Aunt Lily who died many years earlier. He is a hunchback and is still grieving over his wife's death.

His brother, Dr. Neville Craven, is largely responsible for the management of the manor, along with the housekeeper, Mrs. Medlock. Mary receives a cold welcome upon arrival ("The House Upon the Hill"), and she has trouble sleeping her first night ("I Heard Someone Crying"). She, Archibald, Lily, and the Dreamers lament the loss of loved ones.

The next morning Mary meets Martha, a young chambermaid, who tells her about the grounds, a hidden garden in particular, and encourages her to play outside ("If I Had a Fine White Horse"). Meanwhile, Archibald reminisces about how he met Lily ("A Girl in the Valley").

As Mary explores the grounds, she meets Ben Weatherstaff, the head gardener, and Dickon, Martha's brother. Through a series of songs ("It's a Maze," "Winter's on the Wing," and "Show

Me the Key”), Mary learns the history of the hidden garden and its lost key. She befriends a robin who shows her the location of the missing key, but not the door.

Neville tries to persuade Archibald to send Mary away to school and for him to find happiness elsewhere, if not at Misselthwaite. Archibald resists, and meets with Mary, who asks him for “A Bit of Earth.” As a storm approaches (“Storm I”), both Archibald and Neville realize how much Mary reminds them of Lily (“Lily’s Eyes”), with whom both men were in love.

In her wanderings throughout the manor, Mary again hears someone crying (“Storm II”) and discovers Colin, her bed-ridden cousin. She learns that his mother Lily died when Colin was born and he is terrified that he, too, will become a hunchback like his father. He tells her of his dreams about “A Round-Shouldered Man” who takes him on adventures.

As the children are becoming friends, Mrs. Medlock and Neville enter and angrily threaten Mary to stay away from Colin. In her frustration, she rushes outside into the climax of the storm, and with the help of the Dreamers, finds the door to the garden (“Final Storm”).

ACT TWO

Mary envisions having a secret place to go to be herself (“The Girl I Mean To Be”), but Neville is again campaigning to have her sent away to school because she is disrupting his “treatment” for Colin. Archibald again refuses and relates a dream he had of Lily and Mary together in the garden. The brothers individually reflect on Lily, while a flashback shows

Rose, Mary’s mother, and Lily arguing over the forthcoming marriage of her and Archibald (“Quartet”). Archibald finally permits Neville to investigate a few schools for Mary and leaves for Paris, stopping to look in on the sleeping Colin (“Race You to the Top of the Morning”).

By this time, Mary has found the door to the garden but believes everything inside to be dead. Dickon tells her that the garden is just dormant and offers his help in waking it up (“Wick”). Mary tells Colin about the garden and tries to convince him to come outside to see it. He is reluctant until he has a vision of his mother inviting him to her garden (“Come to My Garden/Lift Me Up”).

Late one night, Mary, Dickon, and Martha covertly bring Colin to the garden in a wheelchair. As they spend time there the exercise and fresh air help Colin regain his health (“Come Spirit, Come Charm”). The Dreamers share in the joy of the moment (“A Bit of Earth (reprise)”).

Not long after, Mary is in danger of being sent away to boarding school by Neville (“Disappear”), but is buoyed up by Martha who tells her to “Hold On” to everything and everybody to which she has grown close. She writes to Archibald and asks him to come home (“Letter Song”).

In Paris, Archibald still struggles to find peace in his life (“Where in the World”), but Lily’s ghost persuades him to return home to Misselthwaite Manor (“How Could I Ever Know”). Entering the garden on his arrival, he discovers Colin in complete health, running and playing with the others. Archibald, now a changed man, invites Mary to be his own, and the Dreamers bid all to “stay here in the garden” (“Finale”).

Main Characters

Lily — Mary's aunt and Archibald Craven's wife. Died of a tragic accident within her garden and metaphorically haunts the walls of Misselthwaite Manor.

Mary Lennox — A ten-year-old girl sent to live with her uncle, Archibald, when her parents die from cholera in India. Quite the curious explorer and often finding herself in trouble. Stubborn and always fighting for what she believes in.

Mrs. Medlock — Archibald's housekeeper. As cold as the Misselthwaite Manor.

Dr. Neville Craven — Archibald's brother. Trapped by the idea that he is responsible for the caretaking of Colin. Even though he was never loved back by Lily, he is still in love with her. This adds to his unwillingness to move on and leave Misselthwaite.

Martha — A faithful housemaid. Grew up near Yorkshire and has the accent to prove it. Although she is from a lower class family, her wisdom is often far beyond her age.

Archibald Craven — Mary's uncle and lord of Misselthwaite Manor. He has a hunch-back. Haunted by the past and afraid of the future, he locks himself away both physically and mentally. Mary painfully reminds him too much of his wife, Lily, who died ten years ago.

Ben Weatherstaff — Head gardener. Secretly entrusted to take care of the garden after Lily's death. Knows a great deal about the history of the garden and the grounds it sits on. He has worked for the family for many years. He calls himself "an old man."

Dickon — Martha's younger brother. Looks after the sick plants and animals within the Misselthwaite grounds—including Mary. He is a young man who is between the world of child imagination and adult reasoning. Befriends Mary and convinces her to take care of the Garden.

Colin Craven — Archibald's ten year-old son. Spent his life in bed due to a heart condition. He is very stubborn and throws temper tantrums to get what he wants. He believes his father hates him for causing Lily's death.

Mrs. Winthrop — Headmistress of a private school. Prides herself on nurturing girls with tempers. Mary seems to be more than she can handle.

The Following characters, referred to collectively as the Dreamers, are people from Mary's life in India, who haunt her until she finds her new life in the course of the story. They are free to sing directly to us, appearing and disappearing at will.

Rose Lennox — Mary's mother. A "dreamer" from the past who doesn't understand how her sister Lily could truly love Archibald. Very loyal to her husband and refuses to leave India during the cholera outbreak that takes her life.

Captain Albert Lennox — Mary's father. Tries to send Rose out of India during the cholera outbreak.

Musical Numbers

ACT I

Opening	Lily, Fakir, Company, Mary
There's a Girl	Company
The House Upon the Hill	Company
I Heard Someone Crying	Lily, Mary, Archibald
If I Had A Fine White Horse	Martha, Mary
A Girl in the Valley	Archibald, Lily
It's a Maze	Mary, Ben, Dickon
Winter's on the Wing	Dickon
Show Me the Key	Mary, Dickon
A Bit of Earth	Archibald, Mary
Storm I	Company
Lily's Eyes	Archibald, Neville
Storm II	Mary, Company
Round-Shouldered Man	Colin, Mary
Final Storm	Mary, Company

ACT II

The Girl I Mean to Be	Mary
Quartet	Archibald, Lily, Neville, Rose
Race You to the Top of the Morning	Archibald
Wick	Dickon with Mary
Come to My Garden	Lily
Lift Me Up	Colin
Come Spirit, Come Charm	Mary, Dickon, Martha, Lily, Fakir, Company
A Bit of Earth (Reprise)	Lily, Rose, Albert
Disappear	Neville
Hold On	Martha
Letter Song	Archibald, Mary, Martha
Where in the World	Archibald
How Could I Ever Know	Archibald, Lily
Finale	Company

Setting

The Secret Garden is set in 1906, a year that saw Mt. Vesuvius erupt, San Francisco's earthquake, French Captain Alfred Dreyfus' exoneration, and Mohandas Gandhi's first non-violence campaign. Pablo Picasso was working on his painting *Les Femmes d'Alger*, Booker T. Washington was head of the Tuskegee Institute, Upton Sinclair published *The Jungle*, and President Theodore Roosevelt won the Nobel Peace Prize.

ENGLAND

In Great Britain, Edward VII was King, the subway system ("tube") was six years old, and children entered mines at age twelve. Railways were being built in India and England, but even in the home country travel between the rail station and one's destination was still over unpaved roads by carriage or wagon.

Larger houses in England, such as *The Secret Garden's* Misselthwaite Manor, relied on servants. For example, housemaids were responsible for maintaining and cleaning up the coal fires that provided heat and carrying water to upstairs floors several times a day. That was in addition to emptying chamber pots, turning down beds, scrubbing floors, and other activities.

Misselthwaite Manor is a fictional home in Yorkshire, England's largest and one of its most northern counties. Yorkshire's urban areas saw rapid industrialization in the 19th century along with the concomitant issues of population growth, poverty, disease, and pollution. The rural areas of Yorkshire were dotted with tiny villages, and outlying homes were often far apart, isolating their inhabitants. Because of the distances, servants lived in their employers' homes, only leaving on their "day out" once or twice a month.

One of the greenest areas in England, Yorkshire has huge regions of unspoiled land, predominantly moors or walled pastureland grazed by sheep or cattle. Moors are tracts of land with very acidic soil (frequently a peat bog) covered with vegetation, usually grasses and heather, a low-growing shrub that blooms a vivid purple in late summer. Moors are in high rainfall areas with virtually no tall vegetation where birds are common but reptiles are rare. Because many areas are very remote, the communities tend to be not only close-knit but relatively self-sustaining.

INDIA

India, where Mary Lennox begins her journey after surviving a cholera outbreak, was one of Britain's largest colonies and its rule there, called The Raj, began in 1858. The Crown's direct control extended into present day Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma, and much of India. By 1906 the path to Indian self-rule had begun, including the founding of the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1885 and the Muslim League (fighting for the political rights of the Muslim minority) in 1906. The same year, the INC stopped asking for greater participation and demanded self-rule—a demand not fulfilled until the independence of India and Pakistan in 1947.

From 1898 through 1923, there was a cholera epidemic throughout Russia and the Ottoman Empire, as well as in India. It is estimated that 800,000 people in India died during this time. This would have been the pandemic that killed Mary's parents as well as all of the servants in her childhood home.

by Vickie Rozell, TheatreWorks Dramaturg

“BioPoem” Activity

PART ONE

Have students answer the following questions before moving on to Part Two. (Alternatively, have your students complete this worksheet as a character from *The Secret Garden*.)

1. List at least six adjectives that you would use to describe yourself.
2. List 3 important relationships in your life (for example: friend, sister, brother, mother, daughter, nephew).
3. List 5 things you love.
4. List 3 memories you have and describe how you felt at those times.
5. List 5 of your fears.
6. List 3 accomplishments.
7. List 5 hopes or wishes.
8. Where do you live?

PART TWO

Using their answers to the previous questions, have students complete the following biopoem:

- (Line 1) First and last name
- (Line 2) Three or four adjectives that describe the person
- (Line 3) Important relationship
- (Line 4) Two or three things, people, or ideas that this person loves
- (Line 5) Three feelings this person has experienced
- (Line 6) Three fears this person has
- (Line 7) Accomplishments
- (Line 8) Two or three things this person wants to see happen or wants to experience
- (Line 9) The residence of the person
- (Line 10) First and last name

Example:

Mary Lennox
Kind, Curious, Lonely, Spirited
Cousin to Colin
Who loves the garden and adventure
Who feels happy, inspired, and lost
Who fears being cooped up, Lily's ghost, and darkness
Who finds the key to the garden and helps it blossom again
Who hopes for her family's health
Lives in Yorkshire, England
Mary Lennox

Discussion Questions

- Resiliency is the ability to recover quickly from illness, change, or misfortune. This musical is about young men and women finding resiliency within themselves to overcome obstacles in their lives. Brainstorm about a time in your life where you were faced with a particularly hard challenge. How did you solve the problem you were facing? What makes you a resilient person? What are some of the ways you are resilient in your everyday life?
- Discuss the characters in the play. Did they change or did they stay the same? Make a list of these characters as a class. You could even split it into two groups—those who changed and those who didn't.
- Which characters are most strongly associated with the world of the manor house? Which characters are most strongly associated with the secret garden? What does this opposition suggest?
- The secret garden provides a safe place for Mary, Colin and Dickon to explore and discover without feeling judged or at risk. Do you have your own “secret garden”—a place outside of your house that you feel safe and comfortable? Write a monologue that describes your “secret garden.” Use descriptive language to “show” the audience where this place is and what kinds of plants, animals and objects can be found there.
- The musical version of *The Secret Garden* is the same story as the book. However, it doesn't take as long to watch a musical as it does to read a book. Also, since musicals are seen, rather than read, there are more artistic choices made by the writers of a musical so that the story is interesting to watch. In the musical *The Secret Garden*, one artistic difference is that there are characters called “Dreamers” (which are all of the non-living people from Mary's life). These characters help to guide Mary in her new life as she travels to England, wanders the halls of the mansion, and finds Colin and eventually the Secret Garden. These characters are “all-knowing” and see things that the living characters in the musical don't. They also give important information to the audience, acting as narrators. What are some other differences you noticed between the book and the musical? What purpose do you think they serve, or why do you think the changes were made?