

The Secret Garden

Frances Hodgson Burnett

Reviewed by: Bianca Sayuri, 17

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Set in 1911, Mary Lennox is a ten-year-old girl born in India to a wealthy British couple. Neglected and unloved by her parents because of her sickly appearance, she is mostly taken care of by servants. As a result, Mary becomes arrogant, hostile, and self-centered. After her parents die due to an outbreak of cholera, she is sent to live with her uncle in Yorkshire. Mary starts to spend her days out in nature and almost instantly it has an incredible positive effect on her. Connecting with the people and the world around her she becomes healthier and her attitude drastically improves over time. She discovers the secret garden of her late aunt, and befriends a boy named Dickon, who has a special connection to animals and great gardening abilities. One-night Mary also discovers a boy of her age named Colin living in a hidden bedroom in the manor. She finds out that not only is he sick and unable to leave his bed, but also her cousin. As she gets to know him better, she becomes aware of how spoiled and self-centered he is. After Mary is upfront with him about his negative traits, he then also starts to go outside to the garden, which he had not done in years. Being around nature and friends, Colin's health and perspective on life starts to change for the better.

I particularly love the character arch in this book, and how the story comes to an end. I also love the idea of connecting with nature and how good it can be for you since it is not something common to see in books. The overall message I got from this story was how your attitude and mind can be so powerful that it can completely change you and the people around you. I believe this to be a special story that many different people can take away different things from.

Even though the main characters in this book are children, I would recommend this book to any person over the age of 10. The moral behind it is so meaningful that anyone who reads it, can admire it. This story starts out in a negative and sad tone, but as the story progresses and the character's change their attitudes towards life, the book also becomes brighter. When I finished reading it, I was overwhelmed with a sense of hope and positivity.

Recommended Titles:

Heidi by Johanna Spyri

Pollyanna Eleanor H. Porter

Charlotte's Web by E. B. White

The Forgotten Garden by Kate Morton

A Little Princess by Frances Hodgson Burnett