



Cary Arts Center
TOWN of CARY
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PRODUCTION GUIDE

Information and activities for ages 6 & up.

APPLAUSE! CARY YOUTH THEATRE PRESENTS

The SECRET GARDEN

Adapted by Tim Kelly

From the novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett



This play features actors ages 6-12 and is appropriate for all audiences.

Tickets on sale now at the CAC Box Office and eTix.com.

PLAY SUMMARY

Mary Lennox has grown up in India with her parents and her **Ayah**, Kanchi. When both of her parents die in a **cholera** epidemic, Mary is escorted by Mrs. Crawford and Kanchi to live with her uncle, Archibald Craven, at his estate called Misselthwaite Manor. Mrs. Medlock, the head housekeeper, makes it clear that Mary should not snoop around the house, and that she is to behave and stay out of the way.

Lonely, moody and **contrary**, Mary adapts slowly to her new surroundings. Housemaids Martha, Betty, and Jane suggest Mary explore the garden with their brother Dickon, the gardener's assistant. Dickon and his mother, Mrs. Sowerby, explain to Mary that after Archibald's wife died in an accident in one of the gardens, he locked up the garden, buried the key, and has kept to himself ever since.

Over the weeks, Mary thinks she hears crying in the house at night, but no one will speak about it. One night, Mary can't resist following the sound and discovers a boy her age in one of the rooms. Colin Craven is Archibald's son, an **invalid** who never leaves his room. Mary tries to talk with him, but is forced out by Colin's nurse and by Dr. Craven, Archibald's cousin.

Mary grows closer with Colin and the Sowerbys, and begins to discover what it means to be part of a family. Soon after, Mary makes another discovery: the long-buried key to the locked garden. She is determined to make the secret garden beautiful again but tells only Dickon and Colin so it can be their secret. Helping in the garden, Colin grows stronger day by day, slowly standing and kneeling without his wheelchair for support.

One afternoon, Archibald, who is traveling away from home, receives a letter from Mrs. Sowerby, urging him to come home. That day, Archibald dreams of his **deceased** wife standing in a beautiful garden, asking him to join her. He rushes home, determined to open the locked garden once again.

When he gets home, he finds the secret garden already open and in bloom, and demands to know who has unlocked it. Mary reminds her uncle that he gave her permission to work a piece of earth, and tells him how she found the key. Suddenly Colin appears, *walking*, and Archibald cannot believe his eyes. Colin tells him it was the garden's magic and the friendship of Mary and Dickon that healed him. Archibald promises to be a better father to Colin, and Mary realizes her own loneliness has been healed as well.

 Find vocabulary words in **bold** on the back of this guide.

Activity: Something to Believe In

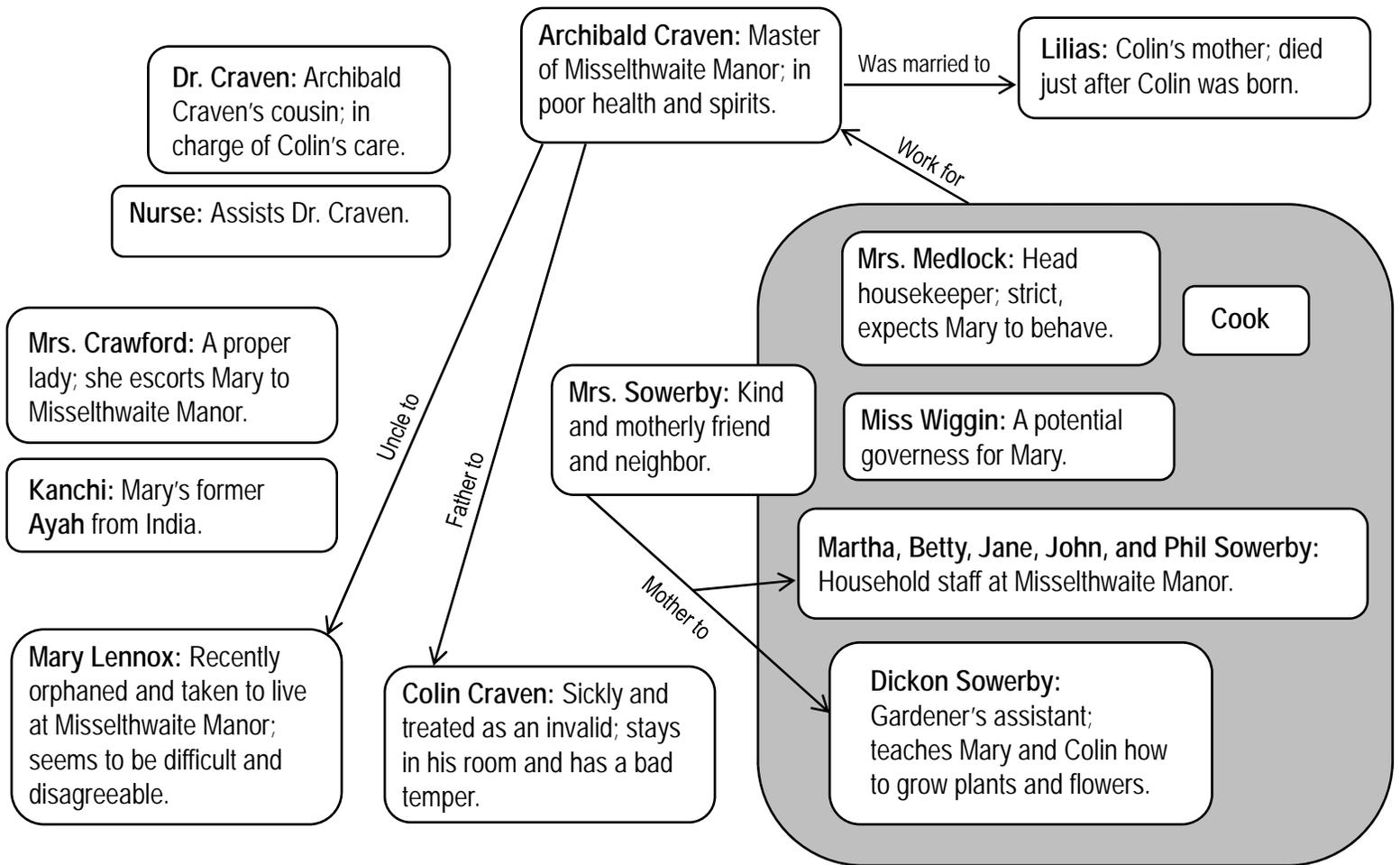
Mary, Dickon, and Colin believed they could restore the secret garden, and they worked hard to accomplish the task.

Has your belief in something ever helped you achieve a goal? How did your hard work change you?

I believed I could _____.

After I accomplished my goal, I felt _____.

MEET THE CHARACTERS



Activity: Family Matters

As Mary grows to love and be loved by the Sowerbys, Colin, and her uncle, she becomes part of a new family in her new home. No matter what your family looks like or where your family lives, every family is unique and special. Who is part of your family? Does it include friends? Pets? People far away? Draw your own family portrait!



WHAT'S THE STORY?

If you've read The Secret Garden, you know that Frances Hodgson Burnett set her novel in England, during the Victorian Era. We've decided to set Applause!'s production in late 20th century southern America. We made a few minor changes (for example, Mary arrives at Misselthwaite Manor by car instead of by carriage), but we think this is a story that can take place at any time, in any place, and still be meaningful.

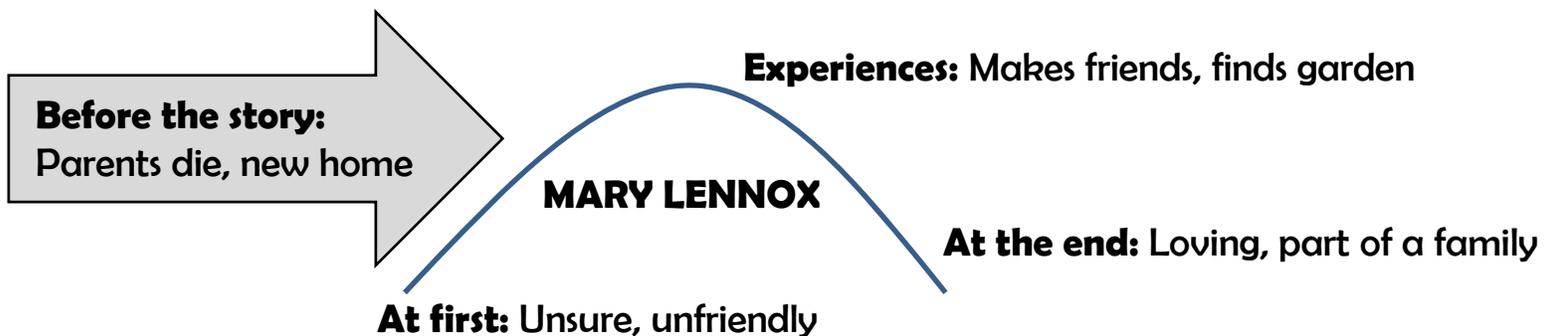
The Secret Garden is a story about family, personal growth, determination, and love, and our ensemble of actors, volunteers, and production staff are focusing on those themes. We hope you will, too!

 "Where you tend a rose, a thistle cannot grow."
(From The Secret Garden)

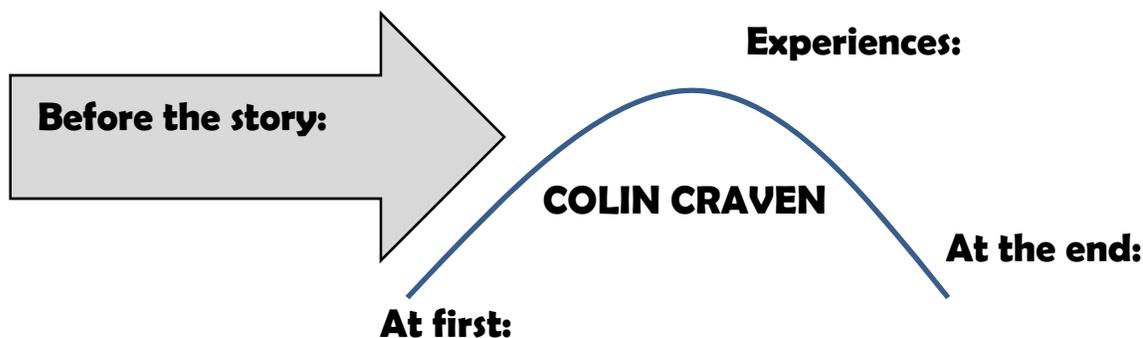
Activity: Journey of Spirit

The secret garden discovered by Mary is like a character itself! At first abandoned, neglected, and ignored, by the end of the play, the garden has been nurtured and tended into a place of beauty. Other characters go through a similar transformation, too.

This **Character Arc** shows Mary's growth throughout the play:



Try making a Character Arc for Colin:



LITERARY LINK



Frances Hodgson Burnett was born November 24, 1849, near Manchester, England. Frances enjoyed a comfortable life with her family until her father died when she was just sixteen; her mother died soon after. Frances suddenly found herself responsible for herself and her siblings, and began writing and publishing stories in magazines to earn money to support her family.

After marriage, Frances began writing novels. Her novel Little Lord Fauntleroy became a bestseller in 1886, and Frances traveled all over the United States and Europe publicizing her novels and doing readings. Another children's book, A Little Princess, was also a great success, and Frances became very famous. She even helped write some stage adaptations of her novels.

By the 1880s, Frances was traveling often to England; inspired by the gardens at her home in Kent, she began writing The Secret Garden. The Secret Garden began as a serial in The American Magazine, and was published as a novel in 1911. Over her lifetime, Frances wrote over fifty novels. She died on October 29, 1924 in New York.

In 1936, a memorial sculpture depicting Mary and Dickon from The Secret Garden was erected in Frances' honor in Central Park's Conservatory Garden. The Secret Garden remains a favorite of readers and has been adapted into film, theater, opera, ballet, anime, and more. Even today, it is regarded as one of the best books for young people.

Activity: How Does Your Garden Grow?

Gardens have been symbols of self-discovery and transformation for centuries. Studies have shown gardening has many health benefits:

Reduce stress ♦ Improve mood ♦ Provide exercise for body & brain ♦ Provide healthy food

Give it a try! **Pick up a packet of marigold seeds from the Cary Arts Center front desk**, and see if you can feel your own spirit grow along with your flowers!

You will need: Seeds ♦ Small pot ♦ Potting soil ♦ A sunny indoor space ♦ Water

You may need: An adult to help

Fill the pot with potting soil, and spread the seeds on top. Don't bury them; just press down into the surface of the dirt. Place in a sunny window and keep soil moist until seedlings are 4-6" high.

 Did you know? Marigolds are natural mosquito repellent!

GLOSSARY

20 th Century:	The period between January 1, 1901 and December 31, 2000.
Anime:	Japanese animated productions featuring hand-drawn or computer animation.
Ayah:	Indian expression for “nanny”
Carriage:	A wheeled vehicle for people, usually horse-drawn.
Character arc:	The status of a character throughout a story; how a character’s viewpoints change in response to changes to the plot. Often results in a new awareness or new skills.
Cholera:	A highly contagious disease in the intestines caused by bacteria in food or water; usually fatal.
Contrary:	Unwilling to obey or behave well.
Deceased:	No longer living; dead.
Invalid:	A person who is too sick or weak to care for him or herself.
Victorian Era:	The period of British history during Queen Victoria’s reign from June 20, 1837- January 22, 1901; known for peace, prosperity, refined sensibilities and national self-confidence for Britain.

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WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Search “Secret Garden” at www.townofcary.org or call (919) 465-4792.

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