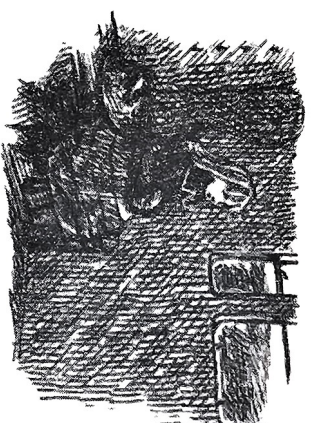
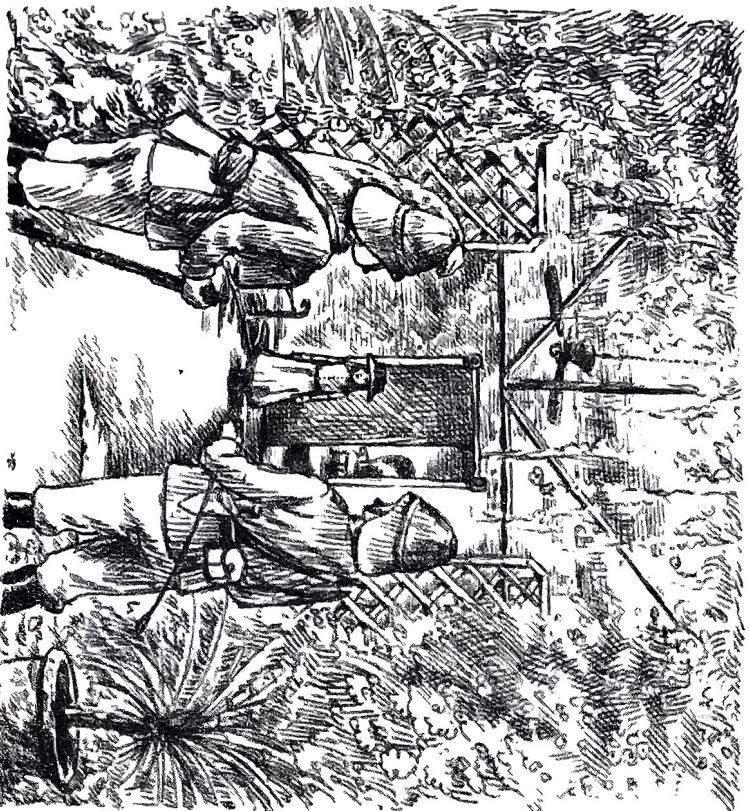


When cholera swept through the house in India where ten-year-old Mary Lennox lived it killed her mother, her father and her servants. Mary only survived by hiding herself away.

Days later she was found by two soldiers. They stared at each other, wondering what to do with this little orphan girl.

'Poor little kid,' said one. 'There is nobody left.'



CHAPTER I

No one left

Mary sighed as the train pulled out of the station. 'More travelling!' she thought to herself. 'I've been going from person to person for weeks, like the booby prize in pass the parcel.' She was going to stay with the only relation she had left, her Uncle Archibald in Yorkshire. Her black dress was stiff and itchy. She felt cold. Was England always so wet? So grey? It was very different from India. Even the people were different. They looked and sounded strange.

Just then Mrs Medlock spoke. She was her

uncle's housekeeper and had come to take Mary back to Yorkshire. 'So,' said Mrs Medlock, 'what do you know about your uncle?'

Mary said nothing.

'What a rude child!' thought Mrs Medlock.

'And very plain looking. Why, her face is so pale! Almost yellow.' But she asked again:

'What did your mother and father tell you about your uncle?'

Mary just stared out of the window and scowled. The truth was, Mary's mother and father had never said much to her about anything. Her father was always at work, and her mother was always at some party or other.

'Well, I'll tell you anyway,' Mrs Medlock sniffed. 'First of all, don't go expecting a big welcome when you get to Misselthwaite Manor.'

'I shan't!' Mary said, stung as if she had been accused of something.

Mrs Medlock raised an eyebrow. 'Oh! You shan't, shan't you? Well it's a good job because you shan't get one! Mr Craven's as sour as a



crab apple. His wife dying young didn't help but he was like it before then. He was born with a crooked back, see. That formed him, if you want my opinion.'

Mary felt her spirits sink even lower. So Yorkshire was going to be just like India, then. Where no one wanted her.



As if to prove it, when they finally arrived at Misselthwaite Manor, Mrs Medlock took her straight upstairs. 'Master doesn't want to see you,' she said. 'He's going to London in the morning.'

'Fine! I don't want to see him either!' Mary thought. Holding her head high, she followed Mrs Medlock up a broad staircase and along corridor after corridor. At last Mary was shown into a room. It had a fire in it and a supper set out.

'Well, here you are. This room and the next is where you'll stay. And I mean stay! No wandering about! Mr Craven won't have it and nor will I!' Mrs Medlock told her.

With that warm welcome, Mary Lennox was left alone.



CHAPTER 2

Martha

Mary awoke the next morning to the sound of loud scraping. She sat up in her bed and looked around. A girl was making a fire in the fireplace.

'Who are you?' Mary asked.

The girl turned. 'Oh! You're up! Morning, Miss! I'm Martha,' she said with a smile.

Mary climbed out of bed and held her arms in the air. 'I suppose you'd better dress me then,' she told Martha.

Martha blinked. 'You what?'

'You are my servant, aren't you?' she asked. 'Dress me!'

‘Well, I have been told to come and help you,’ Martha said, ‘but I didn’t think you’d need dressing. Our Susan Ann dresses herself and she’s only four!’

Mary felt her cheeks flush. ‘Of course I could dress myself, if I wanted to!’ she declared.

To prove it, Mary struggled into her new clothes. In truth, she had never dressed herself in her life. She found it hard, especially buttoning up her boots. Finally, with a proud look on her face, she said, ‘I’ve done it!’

‘Well done, Miss!’ Martha nodded.

‘Excepting for your boots being on the wrong feet, you’ve done a grand job!’

As Martha helped Mary with her buttons, she began to chat. ‘I hope you like it here, Miss. There’s not much inside but outside – well – there’s a whole world waiting for you.’

‘I’ve never played outside,’ Mary told her. ‘Never played outside? No wonder you’re so pale! My mother’s had twelve children and every one of us has played outside all our

lives, especially our Dickon.’

‘Dickon?’

‘Aye, Dickon, my brother. He’s out on the moors come rain or shine. And talk about animal mad. You never know what he’ll bring home next.’

‘I don’t like the moors,’ Mary said, remembering the bleak, black wilderness they had crossed the day before.

‘Well, there’s gardens galore at Misselthwaite. But there’s one garden you can’t go in.’

‘Why not?’

The maid hesitated and then lowered her voice. ‘It’s been locked up for ten years. Mr Craven locked it after his wife died.’

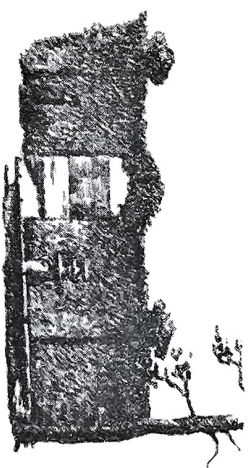
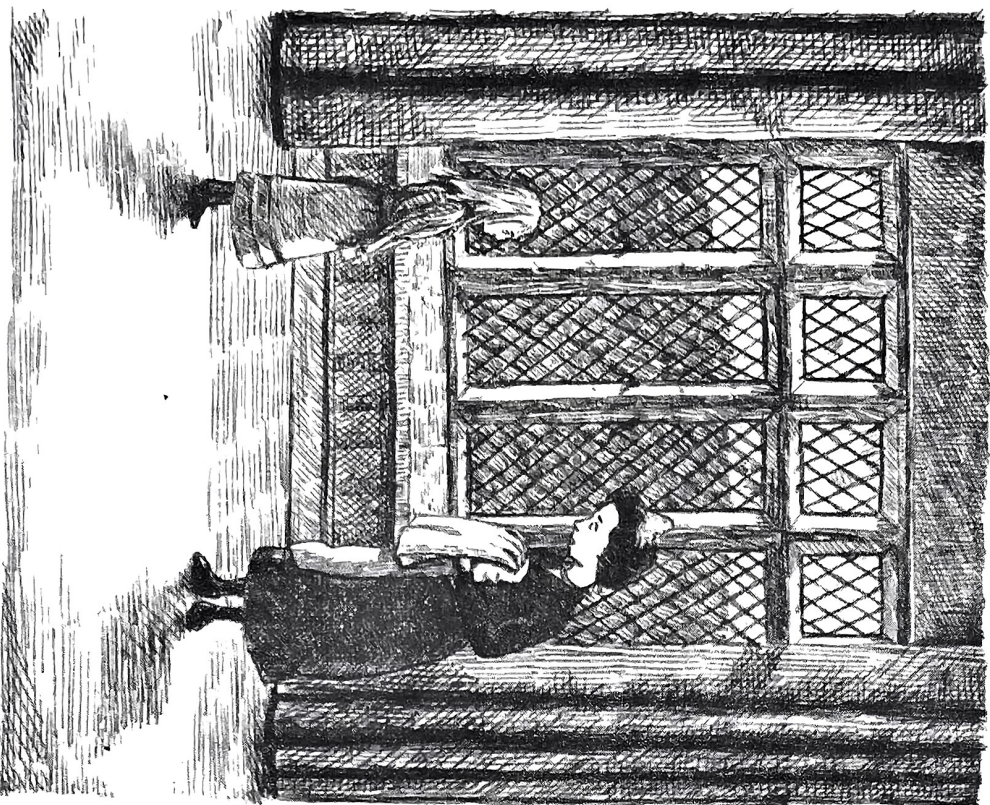
‘Why?’ said Mary. ‘Did she die in the garden?’

‘Sort of. She fell off a swing and never opened her eyes again. Poor Mr Craven was heartbroken. He buried the key, so nobody could find the garden ever again.’

Martha chewed her lip. ‘Don’t tell nobody I

told you that, will you? I'll be in such trouble if you do.'

'I won't tell,' Mary promised.



CHAPTER 3

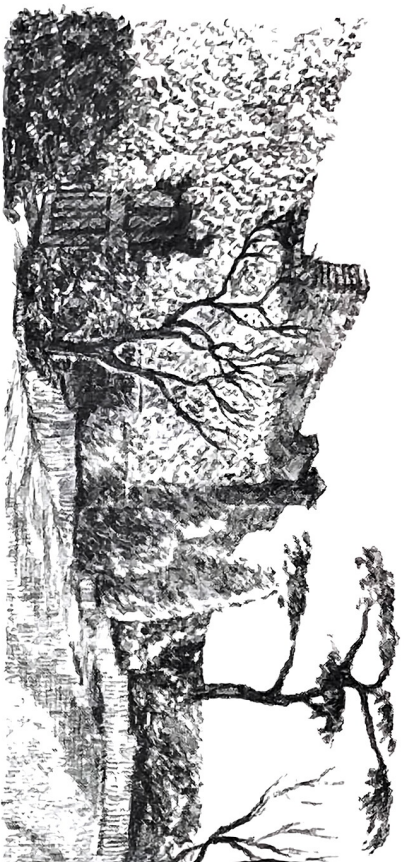
The friendly robin

Mary couldn't stop thinking about the secret garden. 'What would it look like?' she wondered. 'Would it still have flowers? Or would everything have died?'

'I think I shall go out,' she told Martha.

'Very good, Miss,' Martha said and led Mary out of the house. Martha pointed towards a pathway opposite the door. 'Head that way, keep going and you'll be fine.'

Mary walked along the pathway until she came to huge gardens with wide lawns and winding walks. There was a large pool with a fountain in the middle. But the flowerbeds



were bare and wintery and the fountain was not working.

Mary looked around. Where could the locked-up garden be?

At the far end of the path she noticed a wall covered in ivy. Perhaps it was there? She hurried across and saw a green door in the ivy but it was already open. She sighed with disappointment and went in anyway.

She found herself in another garden with walls all round it. One walled garden seemed to open into another and another. It was all a bit dull really, Mary thought. She kept walking. Through the next green door and the one after that until there were no more doors. How annoying!

Strangely though, she could see the tops



of trees above the wall at the far end of the orchard where she stood. She frowned. How could there be trees but no door to them? Instead the ivy grew wild here, trailing like a waterfall down to the ground.

The sound of chirruping broke into her thoughts. She looked up. A robin was perched on the top branches of one of the trees. It sang so beautifully and she was sure it was looking straight at her when it did so! For the first time in months, Mary felt happy.

She stood very still, listening to its song until it finished and flew away. She gazed at the empty branch for a second and that's when she knew, just knew, that the robin had sung to her from the locked secret garden.

'It has to be,' she whispered to herself.

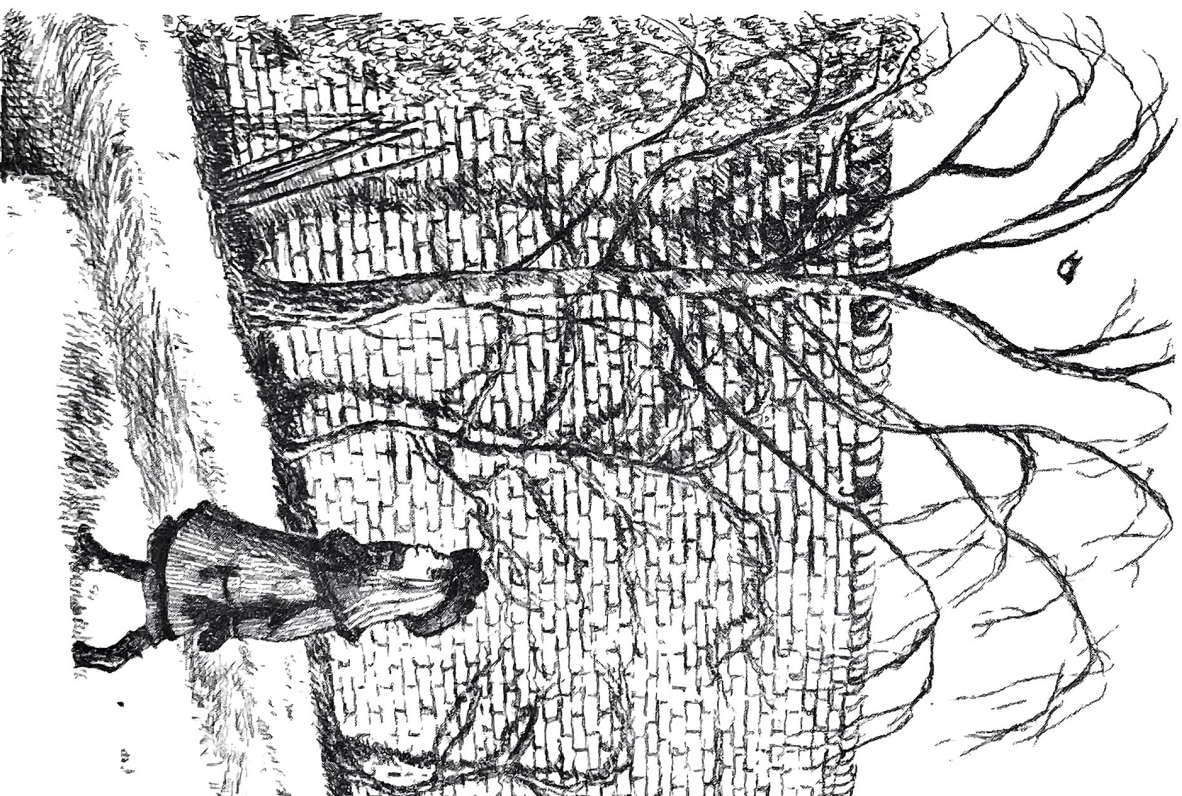


So Mary's days took shape. She would awake to the sound of Martha making the fire, dress herself and go outside. Every day she searched for the door to the secret garden but every day she came back disappointed.

The days when she saw or heard the robin were the best. Then she would run from one garden to the other, the wind in her face, her hair blowing everywhere. The fresh air put colour in her cheeks and she grew stronger. 'You look like a proper country girl now!' Martha would laugh as Mary asked for second helpings at lunchtimes.

Sometimes it would rain and she had to stay indoors. She hated those days. She was so bored. The only person she had to talk to was Martha but Martha could never stay long. Mrs Medlock was always calling her away. It was so unfair!

One morning Mary woke to find bright sunshine flooding her room. She dressed



quickly and ran outside. Everything felt different. As she skipped along the paths leading to the kitchen gardens, she noticed they didn't seem so bare. Tiny green shoots were jutting out of the soil.

'What are they?' she asked a gardener.

The gardener, who was called Ben Weatherstaff, stopped digging. 'Them's the spring flowers coming up.'

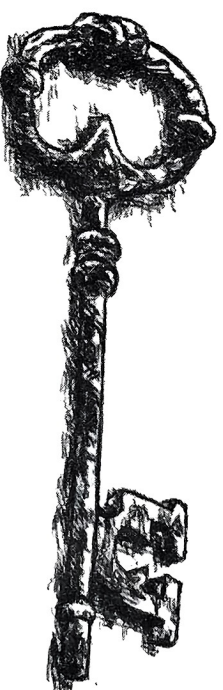
'When? Tomorrow?' Mary was used to the heat of India where flowers bloomed overnight.

'Tomorrow? Nay, lass! It'll be a few weeks at least. You'll have to watch and wait.'

A cheery sound distracted her. Mary looked and saw the robin flying overhead. 'Bye!' she called out to Ben and ran after the bird. It stopped by the garden at the far end of the orchard; the one with the trees over the wall. It hopped towards the wall and began pulling at a fat, juicy worm.

'What have you got there? Lunch?' she asked. Then something caught her eye. A rusty

object was poking out of the soil. Mary leaned forward and tugged at it, her heart thudding. It was a key. A long, rusty key.



CHAPTER 4



The secret garden

The next morning Mary was already buttoning up her coat when Martha arrived. 'You're an early bird!' Martha said.

'Well, I do like birds!' Mary grinned.

'It's nice to see you so cheerful, Miss,'

Martha told her. 'Have a nice time.'

Mary felt the key deep in her coat pocket. 'I will,' she said.

A few minutes later she was staring at the ivy-covered wall. If only she could find the door. She had spent all yesterday looking for it but had given up when it became too dark to see anything.

What she needed was the robin to bring her luck.

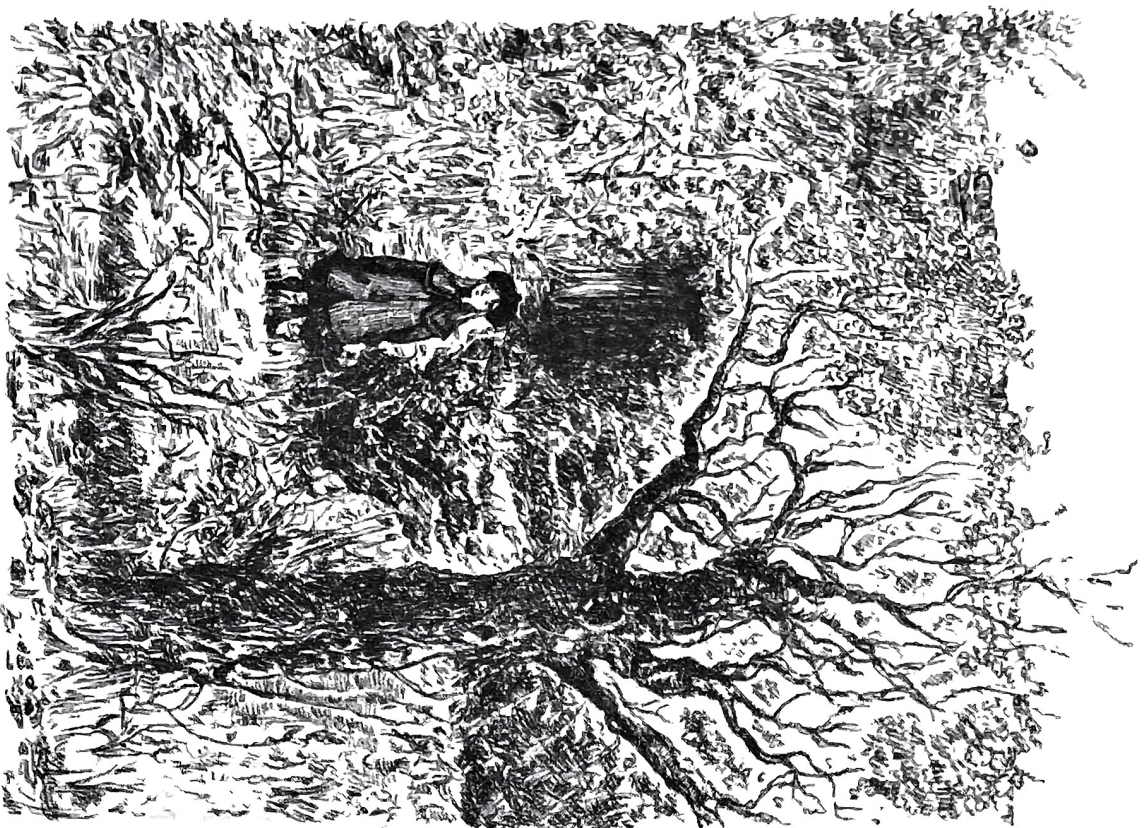
Sure enough she soon heard his cheery call and there he was, staring down at her with those black, beady eyes.

'Robin,' she said, her voice soft, 'yesterday you showed me the key. Can you show me the door today?'

What happened next was pure magic. A strong gust of wind lifted the ivy, parting it like a curtain. The gust blew only for a second but long enough for Mary to see a doorknob. Beneath the doorknob was a metal square with a hole in it.

She fumbled for the key, her heart beating faster than a galloping horse. Nearby, the robin continued to sing as she put the key in the keyhole and turned. Taking a deep breath, Mary pushed open the door and stepped inside.

She found herself surrounded by four high walls. They made her feel she was in her own private kingdom. Slowly she began to walk, treading softly on the overgrown pathways.



Rose trees had taken over the garden. They had climbed over urns and arbours and other trees, spreading thorny tendrils across to each other, as if holding hands. The branches were all either grey or brown. Mary wasn't sure if they were dead or alive.

Onwards she explored. Everything was so still. The grass and moss beneath her feet muffled her footsteps. She kept her eyes to the ground. It must have been a beautiful place once but now everything was overgrown.

Picking up a sharp stick, Mary began prodding in the earth. She was amazed to find tiny green shoots beneath the dead vegetation. Could they be spring flowers like those Ben Weatherstaff had shown her? She began to dig away until the shoots were showing.

'There! You can breathe now!' she whispered.

For the rest of that week Mary tended the garden. It was such a peaceful place. There was nothing within its walls to make her feel angry or cross or unwanted. There was



only a calm feeling that made her feel she was wrapped in a warm blanket. If only she could do more! The sticks she used to clear the ground kept breaking. She wished she had tools like a proper gardener. She also wished she knew more about gardening.

'Martha?' she asked the girl one lunchtime. 'Do you know where I can get a small spade to dig with?'

'Well, there's a shop in Thwaite that sells things like that. Why?'

'I...' Mary hesitated. She couldn't tell Martha about the secret garden. 'I...I've found a patch of ground in one of the gardens. I thought it would be nice to dig in it.'

'Oh, that's a lovely idea. You could plant some seeds too.'

'Seeds?'

'Aye, seeds. You sprinkle them in the ground and flowers grow.'

Mary's eyes lit up. Flowers growing again in the secret garden! Imagine!

'Our Dickon could get them for you.'

'Could he? That would be wonderful!'



CHAPTER 5

Dickon

A few days later, Dickon was waiting for her as she crossed the grounds between the house and the walled gardens. He had glorious rust-coloured hair and blue eyes the colour of the sky. He was sitting beneath a tree, perfectly still. Around him, rabbits and pheasants and squirrels had gathered. As she approached, he put his fingers to his lips to warn her to be quiet. Once, if someone ordered her to do something she would have flown into a rage. But she wasn't the old Mary from before and she obeyed.

Mary liked him at once. 'I've brought these

for you,' he said. He held a large package, wrapped in brown paper. 'Here's a spade and a fork and a hoe,' he told her.

'And seeds?'

'Aye, and seeds.'

'Thank you,' she said. She hesitated and looked at Dickon.

'Dickon,' she began.

'Aye?'

'Do you know much about gardening?'

'I guess.'

'And can you keep a secret?'

'Huh! Half the birds and foxes round here'd be dead if I couldn't!'

Mary made up her mind to trust him.

'Follow me,' she said.



Dickon stared at the secret garden in wonder, just as Mary had on her first visit. 'We often talked about it at home,' Dickon whispered, 'but we never knew where it was.'

'A robin showed me where the key was buried.'

Dickon nodded as if robins did that kind of thing every day.

'It's the roses I want to know most about,' Mary said as she took him round. 'Are they all dead?'

Dickon took a knife from his belt and cut deep into some of the branches. 'A few are,' he said, 'but not all. See these green bits? They'll shoot up if we cut 'em reet back and give 'em some space.'



'Will they? Really?' Mary asked, staring at the faint green sap inside one of the branches.

'Really.'

Mary felt her heart race. 'Dickon, will you come back and help me? Help me make the garden beautiful again?'

'If you want,' Dickon agreed and gave her a lopsided grin.



Mary ran back to the manor, full of excitement. 'I've met Dickon! He brought me things for the garden,' she gasped, hurling herself into her chair at her dining table.

Martha smiled. 'Aye, I knew he wouldn't take long.'

'I like him so much.'

'There's nowt not to like with our Dickon.'

'I can't wait to get started on the garden now,' Mary said as she bolted her soup. 'Right, I'm off!'

But Martha shook her head. 'Sorry, Miss,

you're needed in the house this afternoon. Mr Craven's asked to see you.'

'Mr Craven?' Mary asked in astonishment.

'He's just back for the day. He's setting off for his travels again tomorrow but he's sent for you before he goes. You'd best get changed.'

Mary changed into her best dress. She felt nervous. Then Mrs Medlock stormed in, the usual scowl nailed to her face. 'Look at that hair! What a mess! Never mind! Come on, we can't keep Mr Craven waiting.'

Mary was hurried along all the corridors and passageways she had been told to keep away from. She didn't have time to catch her breath before Mrs Medlock was knocking on a door and being told to enter.

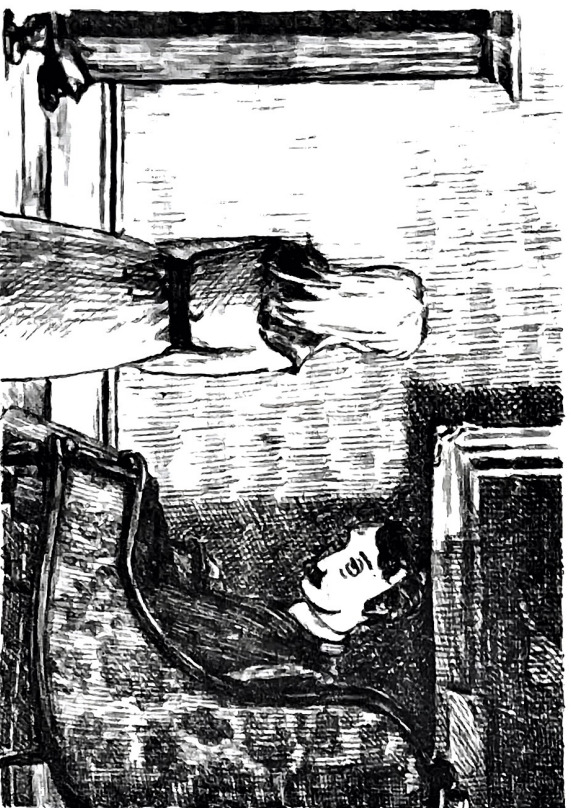
'This is Miss Mary, sir,' she said.

'You may leave now, Mrs Medlock,' a voice from behind a high-backed chair replied.

Mary waited. A head dipped round the side of the chair. 'Come, child,' Mr Craven said, his voice more gentle than she had thought it would be.

In fact everything about her uncle was gentler than she thought it would be. Even his back was not as bad as people had said. His shoulders just seemed a little higher and a little more rounded than most; that was all. As she stepped before him, she saw her uncle had a kind, almost handsome face, but it was full of sadness. He looked at her. 'You are very thin,' he said.

'But I'm not so pale!' she told him. 'Martha says so.'



There was a pause and then her uncle said, 'Do you have everything you need, Mary? Toys? Books?'

'Yes, thank you.'

'Are you sure? You only have to ask. Perhaps a doll?'

'I'm not keen on dolls,' she said, 'but I would like one thing.'

'Yes?'

Mary took a deep breath. 'A little bit of earth.' Mr Craven looked puzzled. 'What do you mean?'

'A little bit of earth...to grow things in.'

He smiled a sad smile. 'You remind me of...' he began, then stopped. 'Well, there is plenty of earth at Misselthwaite. Take as much as you like!'

'From...from anywhere? As long as no one's using it?'

'From anywhere,' her uncle agreed.

'Oh, thank you!' she beamed.

Mr Craven sighed then and rang for Mrs Medlock. 'I must ask you to leave now, Mary.'

I am going away for a long time and have much to do.'

Mary almost galloped out of the room. She had her uncle's permission! She could go in the secret garden! As she brushed past Mrs Medlock, she shot her a meaningful look. Mr Craven was a kind man. If anyone in this house was as sour as a crab apple it was her!



CHAPTER 6

The cry in the corridor

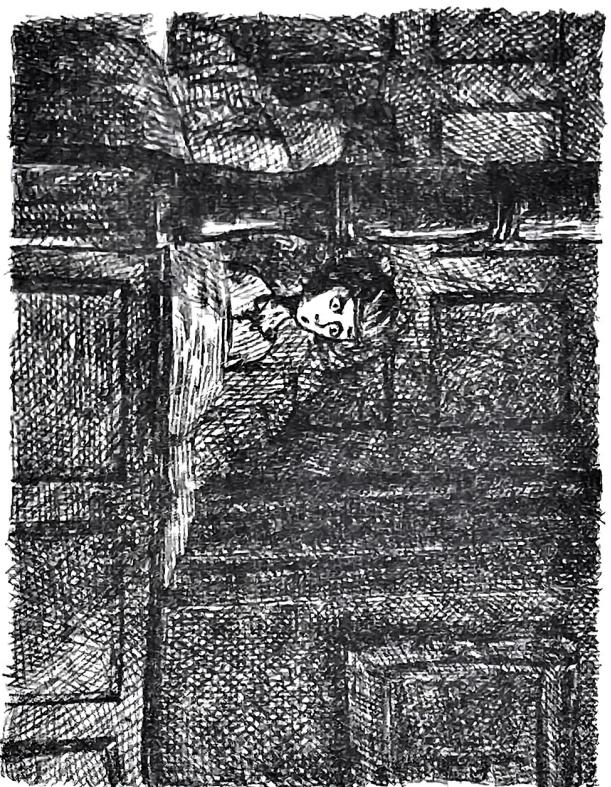
The rain began again that night. It beat against the window, waking Mary up. She listened as the wind howled round the house and down her chimney. She tried but could not get back to sleep. 'Stupid wind!' she thought.

Then she heard another noise. It sounded like crying. She sat up. It was someone crying! She tiptoed out of bed and opened her door. The crying was coming from the other side of the house; from the part she wasn't allowed to explore.

Taking her candle, she made her way along the corridor. The crying was much louder

here and soon Mary came to a door where a glimmer of light spilled into the corridor. She swallowed hard and stepped into a huge room. There was a fire glowing, throwing shadows onto large, handsome furniture, and in a four-poster bed a boy about her own age was crying his heart out.

The boy had huge, dark eyes that seemed too big for his thin, pale face. When he saw the light from Mary's candle his eyes widened even further, but the crying stopped.



'Wh...who are you?' the boy asked, his voice trembling. 'Are you a ghost?'

'No, no, I'm Mary Lennox. I live here. Who are you?'

'I'm Colin.'

'Colin?'

'Colin Craven. My father is master of this house.'

'Oh!' Mary gasped. 'I didn't know Mr

Craven had a son!'

'Well, he does, not that he cares,' Colin sniffed.

'That makes us cousins!' Mary said and told him who she was. 'Didn't anyone tell you about me?'

'No. They probably daren't.'

'Why?' Mary asked.

'I don't like new people. I don't like being looked at.'

'Why not?'

Colin wiped the tears from his eyes.

'Because I shall have a hunchback like my father any day now. If I live long enough to

get a hunchback, that is.'

'Why won't you live long enough?'

Colin stared at Mary crossly. 'Because I am so weak and ill. Isn't it obvious?'

'It's not obvious to me. You just look thin and pale. A bit like I did when I came from India. What does your father do to help?'

'My father? My father hates me!' Colin growled. 'He hates me because when I was born my mother died. The only time he comes in this room is when he thinks I am asleep!'

'How...how old are you?' Mary asked.

'Ten.'

'The same as me,' Mary replied.

The same length of time the secret garden has been locked up, she thought. Mary remembered Martha telling her about the broken swing. Poor Mrs Craven. Dying without ever seeing her baby.

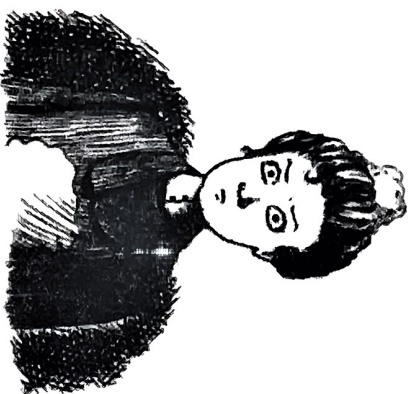
'Tell me about India,' Colin said, breaking into Mary's thoughts.

So Mary told him about India. About the heat and the monsoons and the elephants and

tigers and rajahs. Colin listened until he began to fall asleep. Mary felt tired too. 'I am going back to my room now,' she said softly.

'You must come again,' he told her, his voice far away, 'come again soon.'





CHAPTER 7



Can you keep a secret?

'Oh, Miss! Oh, Miss!' Martha cried when Mary told her about Colin.

'What's wrong?' Mary asked.

'Mrs Medlock will think I've told you about him! I'm in such trouble now!'

'Why?'

'I just will be!' Martha said, pacing up and down. 'Master Colin's probably in one of his paddies right now! Did he scream at you?'

'No. We just talked.'

Martha stopped pacing. 'Talked? What, like you an' me do?'

'Yes.'

'That's a first!'

'What do you mean?'

'He can be a bit...erm...difficult sometimes.'

'Maybe he just needs fresh air like I did.'

'Oh no! We tried that! The worst fit he

had was when we took him out and one of the gardening lads stared at him by mistake.

Master Colin threw such a paddy he was up all night with a terrible fever.'

'Well, if he threw a paddy with me I'd just walk out.'

Martha began her pacing again. 'Oh, I bet he's in a state this morning! I'd best go help see to him.'

Mary ate her breakfast, deep in thought.

What a strange place this was! Secret gardens and secret passageways. Boys crying in the night and boys who talked to animals. Remembering Dickon, she pushed her dish away and went to find her tools. The trouble

was it was pouring down with rain. There would be no gardening today.

A few minutes later, Martha came in. She had a strange look on her face. 'Master Colin wants to see you,' she said.

'All right,' Mary said, glad she had something to do.

'I just hope Mrs Medlock doesn't get to hear of this!' Martha told Mary. 'I'll be in the next room...with his nurse...if you need help.'

'I shan't need any help!' Mary said. She didn't understand why Martha was making such a fuss.

Colin was sitting upright against a mountain of pillows. 'So you weren't a ghost!'

'No.'

He grinned and pointed to some books spread out on his bed. 'Look, I've been finding pictures of some of the things you told me.'

They sat and chatted. 'India sounds such a magical place,' Colin said.

'Yes, it is.'

'Not like here. There's nothing magical

about living here. It's like a prison.'

'I suppose if you stay in one room every day it does.'

'Exactly.'

He looked so glum. It made Mary want to cheer him up. 'But there's magic here too.'

'What do you mean?'

Mary hitched closer. Could she trust him? she wondered. He wasn't the same as Dickon but... 'There's a secret garden,' she whispered, 'full of the most wonderful things.'

'What, here? At Misselthwaite? I've never heard of it! Why have I never heard of it?'

Mary put her fingers to her lips. 'Shh! Nobody knows. Only I know where it is, and Dickon.'



‘Dickon?’

‘Martha’s brother. He’s amazing.’ And she told Colin about Dickon and his way with animals. Then she described the garden. Every bit of it. Colin’s face lit up. ‘It does sound wonderful.’

‘It is,’ Mary said. But then she grew worried. She plucked at the bedcover. ‘Colin, you won’t tell anyone, will you? They’ll spoil it otherwise. They’ll stop me from going. Can you keep the secret about the garden?’

Colin shuffled upwards in bed. ‘Of course,’ he said. He raised his eyebrows. ‘I’ve never had a secret before!’

Mary sighed with relief.



The rain didn’t stop for several days but this time, instead of feeling bored and unhappy, Mary had Colin for company.

Martha couldn’t believe the difference Mary had made to Master Colin’s moods. ‘He’s like a

different boy!’ she said, following Mary down the corridor towards Colin’s room. ‘I think you’ve put a spell on him.’

‘He’s just lonely, like I used to be,’ Mary said, sounding very wise, ‘and when you are lonely it turns you a bit mean.’

Martha shook her head and went to chat to Colin’s nurse, who couldn’t believe the change in Master Colin either. ‘Listen to that,’ the nurse said, as sounds of laughter were heard coming from Colin’s bedroom.

‘Incredible!’ Martha agreed.

‘What’s incredible?’ Mrs Medlock asked, coming up behind the pair and startling them.

Martha was so shocked at seeing Mrs Medlock she couldn’t speak. Mrs Medlock pushed Colin’s bedroom door open. ‘What’s all this?’ she cried. ‘What’s that girl doing here?’

Master Colin scowled. ‘I asked her to come, Medlock!’ he told the housekeeper.

Her tone changed immediately. Her voice was soft and smarmy. ‘But Master Colin! Your cheeks are flushed! You must not get excited!

The girl must leave at once!

'If anyone must leave at once it's you, Medlock! Get out! Go on! Shoo, you daft woman! Shoo!'

'Master Colin!'

'Did you hear what I just said?' Colin growled, puffing himself up. Mrs Medlock fled. Mary began to giggle. 'You sounded just like a proper little rajah then,' she told him. Colin sniffed. 'Good,' he said.



CHAPTER 8



A tantrum

By the Monday, the rain had cleared and Mary couldn't wait to get outside. Nice as it was to talk to Colin she had missed the secret garden. She had missed Dickon too.

'Right, I'm going digging in my garden,' she decided after breakfast.

'Aren't you going to see Master Colin first?' Martha asked.

'No. I've got to grab the sunshine while it's out. I'll call in later.'

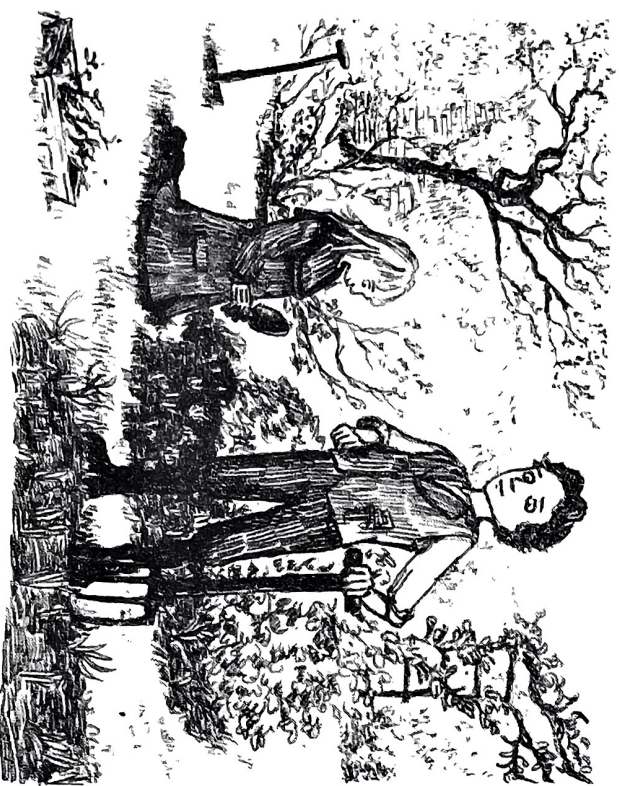
'But what if he needs you?'

'Later,' Mary repeated.

She ran as fast as the moor wind across the grounds, down the side of the Long Walk, past the kitchen gardens and through to the secret garden. Dickon was already there. 'You beat me!' she said.

'There's work to be done,' Dickon replied. He began to whistle a tune.

Together they dug and pruned and cleared. Green shoots were sprouting everywhere now. Mary was especially pleased to see that the



seeds she had planted were growing. The garden was coming alive. 'It's grand, isn't it?' Mary said.

'It's nature. All nature's grand.' Mary went back to the manor house in such a good mood. She couldn't wait to see Colin and tell him about her morning. 'Martha! I'm starving!' she announced.

'Sorry, Miss Mary, lunch is a bit late today,' Martha apologised. She looked hot and bothered.

'What's wrong?' Mary asked. 'It's Master Colin. He's working his way up to a right tantrum.'

Mary frowned and listened.

Sure enough, the sound of shouting and wailing could be heard along the corridor.

'Why? What's upset him?'

Martha looked embarrassed. 'It's because you didn't come when he asked for you, Miss Mary.'

'What? How silly!' Mary felt a wave of anger sweep over her.



Mary strode into Colin's room. His face was crimson from screeching. 'What's the matter with you?' she demanded.

Colin glared at her. 'You didn't come to see me!'

'How could I? I've been in the garden.'

'You come when I say! I am the master of this house. I am more important than some stupid garden and some stupid boy!'

Mary's face turned to thunder. 'I'll come to see you when I please,' she declared, 'and if

you ever speak to me like this again I shan't come at all!'

She spent the rest of the day in the garden, working twice as hard as she had in the morning. She was still furious.

Dickon tried to calm her down and make her see things from Colin's point of view. 'It's not much of a life for him in there. 'Specially as he has no marn and his dad's always away.'

Mary did not care one bit. 'So? I have no one either, but I don't cry like a baby all day!' She decided she wouldn't see Colin until she felt like it. Which might be never.



Never came sooner than Mary thought. In the middle of the night, she was awoken by Martha shaking her arm. 'Miss Mary, Miss Mary, come quick!' she begged.

'What is it?' Mary asked. She sat up and rubbed her eyes.

'It's Master Colin. He's having hysterics!'

'What are hysterics?'

'They're like a paddy only twenty times worse! Like that time when the gardener's lad stared at him. Oh, come quick, Miss Mary. Nurse thinks you're the only one who can get through to him. Even Mrs Medlock thinks so! He'll set off one of his fevers otherwise and it might kill him!'

Now she was fully awake Mary could hear Colin's screaming. It was different from before – higher and louder and more urgent. The sound set her teeth on edge. She put her hands over her ears, but it didn't stop the noise from getting through. 'Oh, for goodness' sake!' she snapped, tugging on her shawl and following Martha down the cold corridor.

The nurse looked at Mary with pure relief when she arrived. 'Oh, Miss Mary! Can you please talk to him? He'll do himself harm if he keeps on like this.'

Mary felt herself growing angrier and angrier. How dare this boy make everyone do what he wanted? Who did he think he was?



She strode up to the screaming boy and stamped her foot. 'Colin Craven! Shut up this minute!' she shouted.

Colin flung himself over so his face was buried in the pillow. He continued to wail and began banging his stick-like arms and legs.

'Fine! Scream yourself to death for all I care!' Mary fumed.

Behind her, someone gasped, but no one dared to try and stop her.

'You're just a spoilt brat! There's nothing wrong with you! Nothing!'

'There is! I felt the lumps! I felt them!'

'What lumps?'

'On my back. I'm going to be a hunchback!'

'Where?' Mary asked. She climbed onto the bed and started prodding Colin's back.

'There!' he said, and pointed to the back of his neck. 'There are lumps all down there.'

Mary tutted out loud. 'They're not lumps, you silly thing! That's just your backbone: Everybody's got that. Yours just feels lumpy because you're so thin!'

She got off the bed and Colin turned round.

'Is that...is that true?' he asked the nurse.

'Yes, Master Colin,' the nurse nodded, 'it is. I'm sorry. I...I didn't know that's what was bothering you. I would have said...'

'Oh,' he sniffed. He ran his fingers along the top of his back. 'So I'm just like everyone else?'

'Yes,' the nurse agreed.

'And will I live?'

'I don't see why you shouldn't live to be as old as the hills,' she told him.

The look of relief on the boy's face was heartbreaking. 'Oh,' he said.

'So can we all get some sleep now?' Mary asked. Colin looked at her. He blinked the rest of his tears away. 'Will you...will you stay a bit longer, Mary?' He swallowed hard. 'Please,' he added.

Mary agreed. Her temper had gone now she saw that Colin had been really scared. 'It's all right,' she said to Martha and the nurse and Mrs Medlock, 'you go. I'll stay until he goes to sleep.'

The three of them shot her grateful looks and disappeared.

‘Tell me about the garden,’ Colin said. So Mary told him about the garden. About how it was turning from grey to green. About all the birds that felt it was a place so safe, they could build their nests there. About the buds beginning to show on the rose trees.

‘I can see it,’ Colin smiled, his voice sounding far away. ‘I can see it.’

CHAPTER 9



The newborn lamb

The next morning Mary told Dickon all about Colin’s tantrum.

‘Poor lad,’ Dickon said, with more sympathy than Mary had shown, ‘stuck indoors all day.’ Dickon looked thoughtful. ‘You know, if he can’t see nature, maybe we should take nature to him?’

Mary looked up. ‘What do you mean?’

‘I’ve got a newborn lamb at home. I found her next to her dead mam on the moor last night. Maybe Master Colin’d like to have a hold and feed ‘er. There’s nowt nicer than feeding a lamb.’

Mary thought it was a fine idea. 'Tomorrow! Let's do it tomorrow!' she cried.

So the next day, Dickon visited Colin in his bedroom. 'I've brought this for you,' he said, setting the lamb in Colin's arms. 'You can feed her if you want.'

'May I?' Colin said in awe. The feel of the warm, soft newborn lamb through his nightgown filled him with tenderness. The poor thing shivered with nerves, just like he did sometimes.



As Mary watched Colin feeding the lamb, Dickon looked round the room. 'What's that?' he asked, pointing to a wheelchair in the corner. Colin glanced across. 'Oh, that's for me if I ever want to go out of bed. I can't walk, you see. My legs are too weak. But I never use it. I hate going out.'

'Wouldn't you like to come out with us? Me and Mary? And see the garden?' Dickon asked. 'I..I would,' Colin agreed, 'but...'

'He's worried people will stare at him,' Mary said.

'Well, what if we fix it so there's nobody to stare?' Dickon asked.



So that's what they did. Colin made Mrs Medlock send for the head gardener, Mr Roach. A puzzled Mr Roach waited for his orders. 'At two o'clock this afternoon I shall be going out in my chair...' Colin began.

Mrs Medlock gasped. 'But Master Colin!'

Colin ignored her. 'And if the fresh air agrees with me, I'll be doing the same every day.'

'Yessir,' Mr Roach mumbled.

'So it is your job to make sure no one sees me. I want no gardeners on the lawns or anywhere near the walled gardens.'

'Yessir. Two o'clock, sir. No one around.'

'Good. Off you go.'

Roach left but Mrs Medlock began to panic.

'But Master Colin, what if you catch a chill?'

'Stop fussing, Medlock!'

'But...'

Colin glared at her.

'Yes, Master Colin,' Mrs Medlock sighed.

She left with a shake of her head. Whatever was the world coming to?



Colin never forgot that day. How Dickon pushed him in his wheelchair along the grounds towards the secret garden. How the



smell of fresh air and the feel of the gentle spring breeze on his face wasn't scary at all. It was wonderful! The way his heart beat fast when Mary showed him the very spot where the robin had shown her the key. The cascading ivy hiding the entrance. And when he had leaned forward in his chair to push open the door leading inside the secret garden. Oh! Oh!

Inside was just as Mary had described.

Better. Better than any fairy tale. 'Take me over there! Now over there!' he ordered in delight as Dickon wheeled him up to every corner, every nook and cranny of the garden.

After a while, when he had seen almost everything, they drew the chair under a plum tree while they got some more work done.

The plum tree was about to burst with white blossom and it formed a canopy under which Colin sat in wonder. 'Everything is beautiful,' he said, then stopped. 'That's strange.'

'What is?' Mary asked, glancing up from her digging.

Colin pointed. 'That tree there. It's not got one leaf on it. Everything else has got at least a bit of greenery but that...that's quite dead. I wonder why?'

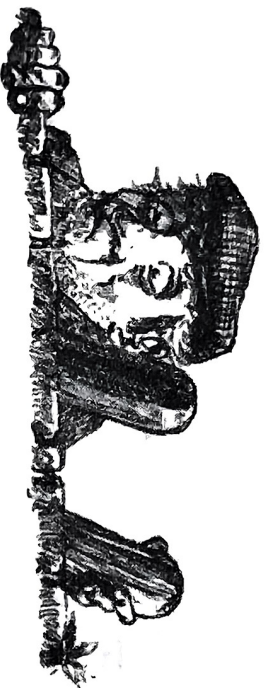
A silence fell across the garden then. Mary and Dickon knew why. It had been the tree with the swing. And that swing had broken with Colin's mother on it.

'How about some music?' Dickon asked.

He pulled his pipe from his pocket and began to play. Soft, reedy sounds floated across the garden.

Colin smiled. How perfect! How perfect everything was. 'It's magical in here,' he said several times, 'it's magical.'





CHAPTER 10

Ben Weatherstaff

Ben Weatherstaff was never one for orders and the latest one was plain daft. Not do any gardening mid afternoon? With all the work he had to do? Nonsense. He was seeing to his gardens and Mr Roach could like it or lump it!

So it was a surprise to him when he heard whispering and giggles coming from inside the locked garden. A surprise and a shock. Putting his ladder against the wall, he climbed and peered over. What he saw made him angrier than he'd ever been in his life. That lass! Laughing and messing about with a lad. 'What are you doing?' he yelled at her. 'You bad little

wench! How dare you go in there? How dare you?'

Mary almost dropped her trowel when she saw the old man glowering down at her.

'How'd you get in? How'd you get in?' the gardener ranted.

'I...I found the key. The robin showed me where it was,' Mary stammered.

That made Ben almost fall off his ladder with rage. 'Don't you make fun of me! Robin, indeed! A vandal, that's what you are. Going where you've no business.'

He began to shake his fist at her. Mary became quite scared. Colin, who had been hidden from view, called across to Dickon.

'Wheel me over there, Dickon. Hurry!'

Ben Weatherstaff's eyes nearly popped out of his head when Colin came into view.

'Do you know who I am?' Colin demanded, his face as furious as the gardener's.

'Well...I...I reckon tha must be Master Colin,' Ben replied, feeling a lump rise in his throat. He shook his head slowly. 'You look

just like her,' he whispered.

Colin glanced across at Mary and frowned.

'Do I? Well, I suppose we are cousins.'

'Not 'er,' Ben replied, 'your mother. Mrs Craven. You 'ave her eyes.'

'Do I?' said Colin, taken aback. 'You knew her? You knew my mother?'

Ben nodded. 'Aye. I helped her in there. She loved to grow things.'

'This was her garden?' Colin asked.

'Aye.'

For once, Colin was lost for words.

'I tried to keep it going,' Ben continued. 'I used to climb over and do it. Can't get to it now. I'm not as fit as I was. My legs are going gammy like yours.'

The old man hadn't meant to be rude but the comment made Colin angry all over again. He knew he had a weak, feeble body. He only had to look at Dickon to see that! But here in the garden, he felt different. Stronger.

'My legs aren't "gammy"! I' he yelled. 'I'll show you!' Placing his hands on either side of

the chair arms, he slowly began to rise. The blanket covering his lap fell onto the ground. 'I can use my legs,' Colin repeated, staring up at the gardener. 'I can.'

Ben blinked. Mary and Dickon daren't even breathe as they watched Colin put one foot on the ground, then the other, until he was standing upright. Upright! For the first time in his life! 'See!' said Colin, 'I can use my legs! I can!'

'Aye,' Ben nodded. He felt tears in his eyes. Colin flopped back down in his chair with a proud grin on his face.



That night, Colin slept long and deep. When he woke, refreshed and full of energy, he had a plan. 'I am going to learn to walk,' he told Mary and Dickon as soon as they reached the garden. 'It will be like a scientific experiment. I shall record my progress and write a paper on it for a scientific journal. I shall probably end up rather famous.'

'Big head!' Mary snorted but underneath she was really pleased. It was the first time Colin had talked of what he would do in the future. What she didn't know was that Colin wasn't doing it just for science. He was doing it so his father would be proud of him. 'He'll want to see me when I am awake as well as asleep,' he thought to himself.

The first few times he tried to walk, Colin could only shuffle forward a few steps with Dickon on one arm and Mary or Ben on the other. Slowly, over the days and weeks, the garden worked its magic. As the trees blossomed and the shoots turned into the most beautiful flowers, Colin, too, changed.

His arms grew stronger. His legs grew stronger. He took three, then four, then five, then six steps by himself. Then, on a day when even the robin flew down to watch, Colin Craven walked all the way round the garden.

By the time summer turned to autumn, he was not just walking, but running too. 'It's a miracle,' Ben Weatherstaff said. But the garden hadn't finished working its magic just yet.



In a land far, far from Yorkshire, Archibald Craven woke from his dream with a start. It had been so clear, so vivid! In it, he had heard his wife's voice calling to him, 'Archie! Archie!' He had smelled something in his dream too. The scent of roses. 'Oh, Lillias,' he whispered, 'Lillias, where are you?'

'In the garden,' came the voice, 'in the garden!'



All day, the dream stayed with him. It followed him on his long, lonely walk up the Italian mountainside. It followed him as he paused by the dazzling lake beneath. What didn't follow him, for once, was the dark shadow he had carried around for ten years. The shadow that clung to him like an ice-cold fog, no matter how far from Misselthwaite Manor he roamed.

It was such a strange dream, he thought to himself. So real. 'She is calling me back,' Archibald thought, 'she is calling me home.'

CHAPTER 11



Coming home

A few days later Archibald Craven returned to Misselthwaite Manor. He didn't even go in the house. He went straight to his wife's garden.

It was to here the voice had called him. When he reached the ivy-covered wall, he hesitated. What if this was just a dream after all? What if he found what he always found? Emptiness?

He began to turn back. Just then he heard sounds coming from inside the garden. Sounds of running and laughter. It couldn't be! The sounds – fast, heavy footsteps and panting – came closer. Next, the ivy curtain swung back and a boy burst at full speed straight into



his arms.

There was a moment's silence as they looked at each other. 'Father?' the boy asked.

Archibald Craven just stared. This couldn't be Colin? This tall, handsome boy? But it was. The eyes gave it away. He had Lillias' beautiful eyes.

A faint smell of roses floated past and Mr Craven swallowed hard.

'Come in,' Colin said, 'come into the garden.'

At last Mr Craven spoke. 'Of course,' he said, 'of course, Colin. I'll come into the garden.' It was where he should have been all along.



Mary and Dickon could only stand and stare as Colin and his father walked round the garden together, arm in arm. 'You did that,' Dickon said.

'Me?' Mary asked.

'You. You made the garden come alive and

you made *them* come alive too.'

Mary looked round at the garden. The place was a feast of autumn yellow and purple, and flaming scarlet. Late roses climbed and hung and clustered. The afternoon sun shone down on the leaves and made everything appear like a temple of gold. 'Not me,' said Mary. 'It was the magic of this place. The magic of the secret garden.'

