Frances Hodgson Burnett's

The Secret Garden

Adapted by
C. Warren Robertson

Performance Rights

It is an infringement of the federal copyright law to copy or reproduce this script in any manner or to perform this play without royalty payment. All rights are controlled by Encore Performance Publishing, LLC. Call the publisher for additional scripts and further licensing information. The author's name must appear on all programs and advertising with the notice: "Produced by special arrangement with Encore Performance Publishing."

PUBLISHED BY

ENCORE PERFORMANCE PUBLISHING
encoreplay.com
© 1995 by C. Warren Robertson

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
https://histage.com/secret-garden

STORY OF THE PLAY

The classic story of two emotionally-stunted children who discover, through their love for a garden, and the teachings of a boy of the English moors, that the key to happiness lies in caring for others.

The story opens as two British officers in India discover 10-year-old Mary Lennox alone, her parents having just died in the cholera epidemic. She is sent back to England to live with an uncle, Archibald Craven, whom she doesn't know, in the foreboding Misselthwaite Manor. His son Colin is sickly and bedridden and his cries can be heard echoing down the dark hallways.

Initially Mary is a spoiled, unloved and unloving creature who demands everyone obey her. A housemaid, Martha, encourages her to play outside in the fresh air. Mary soon meets Dickon, a boy of the moors; Ben, the gardener; and even a wild but friendly robin.

She and Dickon unlock the secret garden, vowing to bring it back to life. Soon they are able to encourage Colin to join them. It is a process of healing and self-discovery that even includes Archibald Craven.

About 1 hour and 45 minutes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7 m, 6 w, extras. Doubling possible.)

COLONEL MCGREW: British army officer.

BARNEY: His orderly.

MARY LENNOX: 10-year-old orphan.

OFFICER'S WIFE: Nicely dressed.

A WOMAN: Poorly dressed.

ORPHANS: Boys and girls. (Including Basil and a Boy.)

MRS. MEDLOCK: Grouchy, middle-aged housekeeper.

MR. PITCHER: Reserved manservant.

MARTHA SOWERBY: Young housemaid, kind and caring.

BEN WEATHERSTAFF: An old, grumpy gardener.

ARCHIBALD CRAVEN: Mary's hunchbacked uncle.

COLIN CRAVEN: Mary's bedridden cousin, 10.

DICKON SOWERBY: Martha's brother, a boy of the moor, 13-15.

NURSE: A woman of good, common sense.

A robin puppet that is heard more than seen.

* POSSIBLE DOUBLING:
Colonel McGrew and Mr. Pitcher
Barney and Ben Weatherstaff
Officer's Wife and Nurse
A Woman and Martha
Basil and Dickon
Another Boy and Colin
If Mary is double cast, the "other" Mary should play the role of the little girl who is led away by the poorly-dressed woman.

ACT I: Early 1900s. Late summer through the following fall and winter.
ACT II: Early spring to summer.

SETTINGS

Multiple simple settings which can be suggested: Outside and inside a cottage in India; a London boat dock; the lower level of the manor house and Craven's study at Misselthwaite Manor in Yorkshire, England.

Settings which should be more fully realized:
Mary's room with a large window, four-poster bed, fireplace, armoire, and breakfast table and chair.

Colin's room with four-poster bed, stool, and curtain with pull cord which covers his mother's portrait.

The garden, behind a green door, with a table and two chairs. Initially we see a broken limb and lots of dead leaves scattered around, but there is a small patch of spring flowers starting to grow.

PROPS AND COSTUMES

Please see end of script for complete list.

SOUND EFFECTS

Haunting East Indian flute music
Deep blasts of an ocean liner's horn
Steam locomotive on railroad tracks
Clop-clop sounds of a horse and carriage
Heavy door knocker
Sound of a child crying
Rain and thunder
Mrs. Medlock's duty bell
Music suggestive of a warbling robin
Bird chirpping

ACT I

(The play begins with mysterious East Indian flute MUSIC. As the stage LIGHTS rise, the music fades out. British officer COLONEL MCGREW and his orderly BARNEY appear in front of a bungalow. They are dressed in khakis, pith helmets, and boots or puttees. McGrew has a side arm, Barney a clipboard. It is hot.)

MCGREW: *(Joining Barney.)* Empty. What were the names there?
BARNEY: *(Checking clipboard.)* Arjun and Madhavi Sejnani. *(He pronounces it "Mahthavee Sejnahnee" and checks it off.)*
MCGREW: Good people. Fled to the hills, I suspect.

(THEY continue walking a short distance then stop abruptly.)

BARNEY: Ach. What a smell. *(Pulls out a handkerchief and covers his nose and mouth.)*
MCGREW: The stench of death. More bodies to report up ahead. It's no good, cholera. It strikes everyone - rich and poor alike - old and young - men, women, and children drop like flies. This is India for you, Barney. *(Shaking his head.)* You shan't get used to it. All this death.

(The SOUND of a little girl humming a tune drifts out to them. It is a Hindu lullaby.)

MCGREW: *(Cont.)* You hear that? There is a child in there. Imagine. In a place like this. Check the name.
BARNEY: *(Checking clipboard.)* Captain and Mrs. John Lennox.
MCGREW: Then it's bad news, I'm afraid. They were on the hospital list last night. *(HE taps lightly on the door. The humming stops.)*
MARY: Is that my Ayah? I want my Ayah!
MCGREW: No, Miss. May we come in?

(MCGREW and BARNEY go into Mary's room. Her bed is unmade and she is still in her nightgown. MARY is seated on the floor playing with her dolls.)

MARY: *(Sharply.)* Who are you? What do you want?
MCGREW: I'm Colonel McGrew and this is my orderly, Barney. We're checking for survivors, Miss. Are you all right?

(BARNEY is off looking around the room.)

MARY: I fell asleep for a very long time and I've only just waked up.
MCGREW: *(Turning to BARNEY.)* It's the child no one ever saw.
MARY: I'm not a child! I'm Missie Sahib.
MCGREW: She's been forgotten. Actually been forgotten.
MARY: Why was I forgotten? *(Standing up.)* Why does nobody come?
BARNEY: *(Blinking a tear.)* Poor little kid.
MARY: *(Stamping foot.)* And where is my Ayah? I want my Ayah!!
MCGREW: She's fled to the hills, Miss, with the others, I suspect.
MARY: Then you must find me another servant! Immediately. Do you understand? *(Under her breath.)* Daughters of pigs.
BARNEY: *(Holding a portrait.)* Beautiful lady, Miss. Was this your mother?
MARY: What is he doing? If he's your orderly he must stop nosing around and stand at attention.
MCGREW: You heard her, Barney.
BARNEY: *(Puts down the portrait, stands at attention, and salutes.)* Yes, sir.
MCGREW: So. What's your name, Miss? You are a Lennox, aren't you?
MARY: Yes. I'm Mary. Mary Lennox. Where are my parents? Why have I been left alone?

End of Freeview

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
https://histage.com/secret-garden

Eldridge Publishing, a leading drama play publisher since 1906, offers more than a thousand full-length plays, one-act plays, melodramas, holiday plays, religious plays, children's theatre plays and musicals of all kinds.

For more than a hundred years, our family-owned business has had the privilege of publishing some of the finest playwrights, allowing their work to come alive on stages worldwide.

We look forward to being a part of your next theatrical production.

Eldridge Publishing... for the start of your theatre experience!