The Secret Garden

Story by
Frances Hodgson Burnett

Adapted for the Stage by
Thomas W. Olson

The Secret Garden was first presented by The Children's Theatre Company for the 1988-89 season.

The license issued in connection with PYA perusal scripts is a limited license, and is issued for the sole purpose of reviewing the script for a potential future performance. All other rights regarding perusal scripts are expressly reserved by Plays for Young Audiences, including, but not limited to, the rights to distribute, perform, copy or alter scripts. This limited license does not convey any performance rights of any kind with this material. By accepting any perusal script(s), Licensee agrees to and is bound by these terms.
Characters:
- Mrs. Medlock
- Mary
- Mr. Pitcher
- Martha
- Dickon
- Colin
- Ben Weatherstaff
- Archibald Craven
- Dr. Craven
- John
- Betty

Ensemble includes: servants, gardeners, people in the nightmare visions
Act I, Scene 1-A

Preset: Barren, late winter’s night; exterior garden wall. Hollow wind. Distant rumbling of storm.

Preset fades to Blackout. Wind rises to a howl. Thunder. Lightning reveals walls have opened to dark corridor. Mrs. Medlock stands, impatiently shaking out a wet umbrella; Mary remains near the entrance to the corridor with a battered valise.

MRS. MEDLOCK I told you this was a queer old place, now didn't I? Still, it's grand enough for a homeless little orphan the likes of you, I shouldn't wonder. (Mary gasps at the appearance of an old man, carrying a candle: Mr. Pitcher.) Ah, Mr. Pitcher. Foul and nasty for an evening, eh?

PITCHER Indeed. And the girl?

MEDLOCK A plainer, more ill-tempered little parcel of goods I never did see.

PITCHER Her uncle does not want to meet her.

MEDLOCK (Not surprised.) Oh, doesn’t he?

PITCHER You may take the girl straight to her room. Mr. Craven and I shall be leaving for London first train tomorrow morning.

MEDLOCK As long as I know what's expected of me, I can manage.

PITCHER What's "expected of you," Mrs. Medlock, is to make certain Mr. Craven is not disturbed, and that he does not see what he does not wish to see.

MEDLOCK (After a slight, icy pause.) Not to Worry, Mr. Pitcher. Her uncle shan't be disturbed -- not by the girl, at any rate. (Starting off.) This way, Mary. (Mary hesitates. Mrs. Medlock impatiently taps the floor with her umbrella.) Mary Lennox! (Thunderclap.) And don't touch anything, either!

Mary follows Mrs. Medlock off. Pitcher watches them exit as wind rises. He blows out the candle. Blackout.
Act I, Scene 1-B

In the Blackout, wind rises to a howl, joined by a child’s distant cry.

MEDLOCK (Voiceover in Blackout.) Six hundred years old is Misselthwaite Manor, and there’s near a hundred rooms to it, although most of them are shut up and locked ....

Lightning reveals SR wall has opened to bedroom: a canopied bed, small table, dressing screen, coal stove, curtained window with windowseat. Another thunderclap and windows fly open -- wind blowing the curtains. A jangling of keys and Mrs. Medlock enters the room, carrying a candle. She quickly moves to the window to close it.

MEDLOCK This room is yours .... (She notices she is alone. A stern command as she lights the gas sconce beside the bed.) Mary?! In here, child -- and be quick about it! (Mary slowly enters and stands near the door as Mrs. Medlock goes to the stove to stir the coals.) Well? What do you think?

MARY Nothing. It’s nothing like my room was in India.

MEDLOCK (A snort of sarcasm.) No doubt. Is that all you’ve got to say?

MARY It hardly matters what I say, does it.

MEDLOCK (Rising from stove; cooly.) Right enough. It doesn’t. (She takes suitcase from Mary, sets it on the bed to unpack it, going through her few things with disdain.) Why you’re here in the first place, I’m sure I don’t know.I fully understand your Uncle’s obligations -- your parents dying so suddenly, of course it’s only right he should fetch you away. But there are my number of perfectly good boarding schools all over England for little orphans the likes of you. Lord knows Mister Craven’s rich enough – and all in all, it would mean a great deal less trouble for me! (Mary has stepped to the stove and stares at the coals.) Your Uncle’s not about to be troubled over you -- that’s sure and certain. Mister Craven won’t trouble himself with anyone, not even his own... (A clap of thunder. Mary looks passively out at the storm and the night. Again, distant child’s howls.) ... never mind; just don’t you expect to see him. And you needn’t think there will be any others to spend time with you either. We’re a small staff for such a big place, and far too busy. Now, come along and get out of those...
MARY wet rags. *(Mary doesn’t budge.*) Mary Lennox! I said, “Come here!” I haven’t got all night! *(Mary slowly steps to Mrs. Medlock, who efficiently undresses the girl, who offers little more assistance than a doll might. Wind wails.)*

MARY What’s that sound?

MEDLOCK *(Nervously cocking an ear.)* Sound? What? Where?

MARY Outside.

MEDLOCK *(Relieved.)* Oh. The wind. It’s naught but the wind a-nutherin’ over the moor.

MARY The moor?

MEDLOCK Mile upon mile of wild land where nothing much grows and nothing much lives.

MARY It sounds like somebody crying.

MEDLOCK *(Dressing Mary in a nightgown.)* Ah, the moor can seen as gloomy and dreary a place as ever there was on earth. Still, some like it. Your Uncle Craven, likes it, in his own way and that’s gloomy enough too.

MARY I won’t.

MEDLOCK Fine. But like it or not, you’re here. *(Heading for the door.)* Only don’t let me catch you wandering and poking about this house. Mr. Craven won’t have it.

MARY Why should I want to go poking about?

MEDLOCK Just see that you don’t! There’s space enough out-of-doors for you to roam, but while you’re inside, you’ll keep to this room. Is that understood? *(Mary makes no reply. Mrs. Medlock nods at the tray on the table.)* You may take some supper now, if you’ve a mind to.

MARY No.
MEDLOCK  (A shrug, taking away the tray.) A s you wish.

Medlock exits , closing and locking the door behind her. Mary runs to door and tries to open it. It is locked. She beats her fists against the door in rage. With a cry, she whirls, then collapses onto the bed and sobs bitterly into the pillow as lights fade.

Window blows open. Sound of wind rises, joined by the distant child's cry and a ringing of a handbell in alarm. Distant clock chimes three; Music; an eerie buzzing sound like locusts joins the crescendoing cries as a mist begins to fill the room.

MEDLOCK  (Voice-over.) It's only the moor- . . it's naught but the wind. . .

MARY  (Voice-over.) It sounds like crying. . .

MEDLOCK  (Voice-over.) Oh, the moor is a gloomy and a dreary place. . .

MARY  (Voice-over.) It's nothing like my room was in India. . . in India. . .

The locusts overtake the sound of wind, as the single cry is joined by many wailing voices. An Indian Ayah appears at Mary's bedside as Mary, in her dream, awakens.

MARY  Crying. I hear crying. Tell me, Ayah -- who is crying?

AYAH  (Voice-over.) Never mind, Missy. Go to sleep.

MARY  (Voice-over.) Who's crying? Why? What's wrong?

AYAH  (Voice-over.) The village is filled with a terrible sickness. People are sick, Missy -- very sick. Never mind. Sleep now. Sleep, Missy Sahib.

MARY  (Voice-over.) How am I to sleep when they won't stop crying?

AYAH  (Voice-over.) I will sing to you, so that you will not hear.

MARY  (Voice-over.) Yes, Ayah -- sing and then I will sleep. Sleep... sleep...

An Hindustani lullaby which fades as cries crescendo. Mrs. Lennox appears in the room, runs to window, as Ayah rises from the sleeping Mary's bedside and goes to the woman.
MRS. LENNOX (Voice-over.) What's the matter? Why is everyone crying? Why do I feel so ill?

AYAH (Voice-over.) It is the cholera, Mrs. Lermox! Cholera!

MRS. LENNOX (Voice-over.) The cholera? Is it so very bad?

AYAH (Voice-over.) Already many people are dead.

MRS. LENNOX (Voice-over.) Dead? No. . .

AYAH (Voice-over.) Many dead, many sick, many leaving. The cholera, it is very bad, Mrs. Lennox, very bad...

Mrs. Lennox suddenly puts her hand to her forehead and collapses into the arms of the Ayah as wailing crescendos and lights fade to Blackout. A moment of silence, then a distant dog’s bark as hot light pours through the window. A British Officer is at the bed, nudging the sleeping Mary.

OFFICER (Voice-over.) Colonel McGrew! In here!

COLONEL (Voice-over; entering.) What is it?

OFFICER (Voice-over.) It's a child! She's alive!

COLOHEL (Voice-over.) A child?! Alive?! After an epidemic such as this? (Mary stirs and awakens.)

MARY (Voice-over.) Who are you? I want my breakfast! Where is my Ayah?

OFFICER (Voice over.) Her nanny was found dead.

MARY (Voice-over.) Where is my mother?

COLONEL (Voice-over.) You're the only one left, little girl. Now come away.

MARY (Voice-over.) Come away where?

COLONEL (Voice-over.) To the missionary’s. There will be other children at the missionary’s...
Lights fade; sound of Children taunting, lights rise to reveal Boy and Girl at bed, which Mary stands upon.

CHILDREN  Mistress Mary, most contrary! Mistress Mary, most contrary!
MARY        Go away! Leave me alone! I hate you!
BOY         You're to be sent away to England, and we're glad of it!
MARY        I'm glad of it, too! Where's England?
BOY         Stupid girl -- it's where your uncle lives.
GIRL        He lives in a big, nasty old house, and no one goes near him!
BOY         Our Mama said that your uncle's a hunchback. He's a hunchback and he's wicked!
MARY        I don't believe you!
CHILDREN   Hunchback! Hunchback! Hunchback!
MARY        Stop it! Go away! I hate you! I want my Ayah! I want my Mama!
CHILDREN   (Voice-over.) They're all dead! Your Ayah's dead! Your Papa's dead! Your Mama's dead! All dead! Dead! Dead! Dead!

Lights fade as Harry buries her head in the pillow, screaming "No! No! No!" A thunderclap and Mary awakens from her dream.

MARY        No! (The window is open and the child's cries can be heard over the wind and rain. She rises from the bed to close the window.) Crying? (She listens, the crying ceases. She closes the window.) No. Naught but the wind.

She returns to the bed and pulls the covers up around her as lights fade to Blackout.
Act I, Scene 2

The storm segues to dull rain. The light of the coal stove illumines the face of a young chambermaid, Martha, preceding the grey morning light through the window which falls on the still-sleeping Mary. Martha stokes the stove from the coal bucket and begins to sweep the cinders, Mary stirs, moans, and slowly sits up in bed.

MARTHA  (Without turning.) Mornin', Miss.

Mary looks over at Martha, but makes no reply to her. She rises to her knees to look out her window.

MARY  I hate it.

MARTHA  (Turning to look.) "Hate?!" Hate what? The mornin'? (Mary sneers at her view out the window, then flops down into bed again.) Oh -- the moor.

MARY  It’s ugly.

MARTHA  (Rising to open the window.) But tha' doesn’t even know it yet. Might be tha' thinks the moor too big an’ bare now, but give it time an’ tha’ will like it.

MARY  I won’t.

MARTHA  Come spring an’ summer, it’s none bare, Hiss. Aye -- wi’ the gorse an’ broom an’ heather all in flower, th’ moor smells sweet as honey, an’ there’s then such a lot of fresh air! Not a sky more high, an’ the bees, kites an’ skylarks makin’ rare, lovely noise: all hummin’ an’ singin’! Eh, I wouldn’t stray from this my Yorkshire moor for anythin’!

MARY  You’re strange.

MARTHA  (Coming out of her reverie.) Miss?

MARY  You’re a strange servant.
MARTHA  (A shrug and warm, jolly chuckle.) P’raps I am, but then Misselthwaite Manor’s a strange house. (At stove, pouring warm water into a washbasin.)

MARY  How so?

MARTHA  (A grunt and roll of her eyes.) Ha -- tha might ask instead "how not so?" Well, to begin with, Misselthwaite ain’t got a Missus. A fine man like your Uncle, with no wife -- there’s many what thinks that’s strange enough.

MARY  But he had a wife once. She died.

MARTHA  Tha’s right. I was but a bit of a girl then -- ’bout your age.

MARY  You wouldn’t know how my aunt Lily died; would you?

MARTHA  Best you never mind how; Mister Craven, he don’t like it to be talked of. Anyway with your Aunt Lily all dead and buried, ain’t been neither Master nor Mistress here, ’nless you count old Mr. Pitcher an’ Mrs. Medlock. Your Uncle - he’s nearly always gone away on business, an’ when he is here, he don’t let no one but Pitcher see him, an’ that’s only because Pitcher's took care o’ Mr. Craven ever since he was a boy.

MARY  And who is to take care of me? You?

MARTHA  I’m Mrs. Medlock’s servant. An’ she answers to Mr. Pitcher. I suppose, when I’m here, I can wait on thee a bit. Tha’ shouldn’t need too much o’ that, though.

MARY  (Appalled.) What? Do you mean to say that I’m not going to have an Ayah?!

MARTHA  A what?

MARY  An ayah! Don’t you know'anything? An ayah is a servant. In India!

MARTHA  Oh. No, Miss -- I don't think tha’s goin' to be havin' no Ayahs.
MARY Then who's going to dress me if I haven't got an Ayah?

MARTHA (Amazed.) Canna tha dress thysen?

MARY (Losing her temper.) What? Speak English!

MARTHA (A giggle.) Sorry -- it's me Yorkshire. (Slowly, over-enunciating.) I meant to say: "Can't you put on your own clothes?"

MARY Of course not! My Ayah always dressed me!

MARTHA Well, then -- I'd say t'were high time tha' learned to wait on thysen' abit. T'will do thee good. (Martha goes to breakfast tray at base of bed and pours Mary a cup of tea. She shakes her head as she speaks, not really addressing Mary.) Me mother always wondered how grand people's children kept from turnin' out to be fair fools, what with servants always washin' an' dressin' and feedin 'em as if they was puppies. (She offers Mary the teacup.)

MARY "A fool?! A puppy?!!" How dare you call me names?! I am Mary Lennox! I am the daughter of an Army Captain! And you’re just a servant. You’re not even people! You’re nothing but a slave – and the daughter of a pig!

Mary slaps the cup from Martha’s hand. Martha gasps. Mary slaps Martha’s face. She pauses, waiting for Martha to react, then winds up to slap her again. Martha grabs Mary’s wrist and holds it tight in midair.

MARTHA Servants are too people - just as much as thee! (She releases Mary, who falls back down onto the bed and howls with fury and frustration. Martha stares at her in wonder.) Heavens, girl! I’m the one what were hit! (She goes to the door to exit, then stops. She closes the door, steps back to the stove, takes a cloth, dips it inot the basin, and goes to the bed again to wash Mary’s tears.) Now, now... I ‘m sorry, Miss . How was I to know tha’d be so vexed? Oh, please & stop thy weepin’! (Mary slaps Martha’s hand aside and throws herself to the floor, kicking her feet in a young child’s tantrum.)

MARY I won’t stop! I won’t! I won’t!
MARTHA  
**(Taking a dress out from behind screen.)* I’ll help thee put on thy dress.

MARY  
No! You’re a pig! A pig! A pig! (Martha sighs in disgust, and hangs dress on screen.) Besides. . . that isn’t my dress.

MARTHA  
Yes, it is. Your Uncle bought it for thee.

MARY  
He did? *(Mary turns and looks at it again.)* The soldiers burned up all my pretty clothes. The missionaries gave me only charity rags.

MARTHA  
*(Sincerely.)* Poor thing. *(Holding forth the dress again.)* Come, Miss Mary. . . just give it a try-on, eh?

MARY  
No! I hate it!

MARTHA  
*(Thoroughly disgusted now.)* An’ there nothin’ tha’ likes?! *(No reply. Martha heads for the door.)* Tha’s got a breakfast here: toast, jam, sausage, porridge...

MARY  
I don’t want it.

MARTHA  
Then get thysen’ outside an’ play, you! ’T’might give thee a stomach for good, bread an’ meat!

MARY  
Why should I go out on such a wretched day as this?

MARTHA  
*(Mimicking her nasty tone.)* Well, if tha’ doesn’t go out, tha’lt have to stay in -- an’ what has tha’ got to do in here?

MARY  
Will you go with me?

MARTHA  
No! Tha’lt go alone! *(A breath, trying to regain her civility.)* Go round through th’ gate and thal’t come to th’ gardens. There’s lots o’ flowers growin’ wild there in spring an’ summer, but none now. None yet. *(With a teasing tone, noticing Mary at least hasn’t expressed her hatred for gardens.)* There’s one garden what’s all locked up. Your Uncle Craven -- he buried the key so as no one should get in.

MARY  
He buried the key? Why? *(A bell sounds from a distant wing of the house.)*
MARTHA (Rushing towards the door.) The bell! I'm gone.

MARY Wait, you!

MARTHA I canna'! (She exits, then pokes her head back in the door.) Oh -- an' up here in England, us servants got names. Mine's "Martha!"

Martha exits again, closing the door behind her. Mary growls, grabs a piece of toast from the tray, crams it into her mouth. She sits at the window and cranes her head outside as lights fade.

Act I, Scene 3

A garden area outside the stone wall. An elderly man, Ben Weatherstaff, digs with a spade. It is later that morning, cold and wet. Mary appears, both comic and pathetic in the shoddy way she has dressed herself.

MARY (After observing Ben at work a while.) What is this place?

BEN Eh? (He takes a long look at her, then resumes digging.) A garden.

MARY (An arrogant sigh.) I knew that!

BEN If tha' knew it, then tha' needn't ha' asked.

MARY What I meant was: what kind of a garden is this?

BEN If that's what tha' meant, then tha' should ha' said so in the first place.

MARY Well? (No response from Ben.) This is a flower garden; isn't it?

BEN No. This here's a kitchen garden -- herbs and vegetables. Only now I'm supposin' tha' doesn't know what vegetables is.

MARY I most certainly do too know what vegetables is! (Quickly correcting her grammar.) . . . are!
BEN  But has tha' ever eaten 'em, though? I'll wager no, for all tha'rt the skinniest, yellerest, sick-lookin'est child as ever I seen.

MARY  *(A pause, somewhat taken aback. Haughtily.)* I've already been into the other gardens -- and the orchard too!

BEN  *(Utterly unimpressed.)* There weren't nothin' to stop thee.

MARY  *(Looking at the wall.)* I couldn't find a door into this garden, though.

BEN  *(Suddenly stopping his work; roughly.)* Which garden?

MARY  The garden behind this wall. Where is the door?

BEN  *(A pause; then resuming digging.)* Ain't one.

MARY  Oh, that's nonsense! There must be a door! *(Slight pause. A nicer tone.)* Mustn't there be?

BEN  There were ten year ago; there ain't one now.

MARY  There are trees in there; that much I could see. And I saw a bird, too. He was sitting high up in one of the trees and he had a red breast and he sang.

BEN  *(To himself.)* Sing, did he? Cheeky little beggar!

MARY  What sort of bird is he?

BEN  Doesn' tha' know nothin'?! T'were a robin redbreast you saw, an' they're the friendliest birds alive, they are. All the time he's comin' by to see what I'm about plantin'. Why, sure 'tis robin's who's the head gard'ner here, 'stead or me.

MARY  You know him, then.

BEN  Don't I just! Why, he come out o' th' egg in that very garden! But when he first flew out over the wall, he were too weak a little chap to fly back again, for a while. So him an'me, well -- we got friendly.
Then come the time he were strong enough to get back to home, why, his family was all flown away.

MARY

(To herself.) I haven't a family either.

BEN

Guess robin were lonely, poor thing, so he come back to me.

MARY

(To herself, after a pause.) I'm lonely. (Ben stares at her a moment.)

BEN

(The first tone of compassion.) Thou art th' little wench from India. Thy folks all gone dead from the cholera.

MARY

It doesn't matter. I hardly ever saw my parents anyway.

BEN

No wonder tha'art lonely. (He resumes digging.) Tha'll be lonelier still, before tha's done.

MARY

Why?

BEN

Lonely's the way of Misselthwaite, that's all.

MARY

What is your name?

BEN

Ben Weatherstaff.

MARY

(Holding forth her hand.) I am Mary Lennox. (Ben grunts, not accepting the gesture. Mary'lets her hand drop with a sigh as she turns away. A gust of cold wind; she pulls her coat up snug against her neck.) There must be a door!

BEN

What?

MARY

Nothing.

BEN

Let me tell thee somethin', Miss Mary Lennox. I'm lonely too -- most times -- 'ceptin' when robin's with me. Robin's th' only friend I got.

MARY

I haven't any friends at all. I never had.
BEN

P'haps someday robin'll take a fancy to thee.

MARY

(A growl of pessimism.) Oh, why should he want to?

BEN

No reason I know. Still -- robin is my friend. And tha’ an’ me are a good bit alike, I think. (A pause.) Now get thee gone an’ play. I’ve no more time. (Mary doesn’t respond.) Didn’ tha’ hear me? Get on! I’ve work to do!

MARY

(Exiting swiftly.) Alright! Goodbye!

BEN

(Slowly rising; looking after her.) Meddlesome little wench! First day at Misselthwaite, an’ already after findin’ a door into th’ garden! Well, take care, wee "Mistress Mary, Most Contrary" -- take good care! Old Ben’s gut his eye on thee!

Lights fade to Blackout.

Act I, Scene 4

Morning. Mary, dressed, is seated at the window, gazing out at a deep blue, spring morning sky as she begins to lose her patience tying her shoes. She growls in frustration as Martha enters, carrying a breakfast tray.

MARTHA

Well, now! Tha’rt up an’ about a bit early this mornin’, aren’t tha’, Mary?

MARY

I’ve already spent half an hour trying to lace these horrid shoes!

MARTHA

P’raps if tha’ spoke o’ them a mite kinder, they’d lace themselves.

MARY

What does it matter if I’m kind or not? Shoes are only shoes.

MARTHA

Ah, but they got soles, don’t they?

MARY

(As Martha chuckles.) Martha! You’re always teasing!
MARTHA: Here – I’ll help thee. (She ties Mary’s shoes, but Mary looks out the window.) If that doesn’t watch me, Mary, tha’lt never learn!

MARY: But Martha -- have you seen the moor?!

MARTHA: Aye, the stormin’s over -- for a little while. Mind you, the rains’ll be back -- an’ plenty, too -- but Yorkshire’s the sunniest place on earth... when it’s sunny.

MARY: I never saw such a sky in India! Never a sky so blue!

MARTHA: (Releasing Mary’s laced feet; a chuckle.) Eh! Didn’t I tell thee tha’d like it?! (She goes to the tray and pours Mary a cup of tea.) Not two weeks ago, that very first mornia’, didn’t I say tha’d like the moor come springtime?! (Mary takes tea and a plate of toast as Martha busies herself with the stov.) Soon I expect tha’ll be wantin’ to run out afore sunrise an' stay on the moor the day long, like Dickon.

MARY: Like who?

MARTHA: Dickon. But Mary – I’ve told thee about me little brother by now, haven’t I? (Mary, her mouth full, shakes her head and grunts.) Why, each an’ every day -- be it rain or shine – brother Dickon’s out on the moor. There’s wild sheep what know him, an’ ponies too -- even the birds come an’ eat right out o’ his hands! Eh -- no matter how little food there may be at home, Dickon’ll always save a bit o’ his bread for to coax his pets. (Mary suddenly ceases chewing and looks at the toast in her hand.)

MARY: Martha -- you don’t suppose a robin might like some bread?

MARTHA: Bread, fruit, berries -- aye, a robin’ll eat most anythin’. (Mary quickly dumps bread and jam into her napkin. But when she lifts the cover off from one of the plates, she screams at the sight of a strange, coiled shape beneath it. She drops the cover back down with a clatter and hops onto the bed.) Mary?! What’s the matter?!

MARY: A snake!

MARTHA: A snake?! Where?
MARY    Under the cover! *(Martha begins pounding on the bed with coal scoop.)*

No, no -- under the plate cover! There! *(Martha suddenly stops and
laughs uncontrollably. Mary becomes angry and indignant.)* What are
you laughing for? Stop it, Hartha! In India there are all sorts of
poisonous snakes; snakes that can kill a person! it isn’t the least bit
funny!

MARTHA    *(Wiping away tears as she laughs.)* Oh, yes it is! Oh, Miss, I do beg
your pardon -- truly -- but this little snake an’t about to harm no
one. *(Martha, teasing, slowly lifts the platecover as Mary backs away to
the very edge of the bed.)* There! See? *(She lifts an end of the coil,
unraveling a jumprope.)* ’Tis nowt but a rope, Mary!

MARY    A rope?!

MARTHA    I meant it for a surprise.

MARY    And a very mean one too, I think!

MARTHA    Oh, no, Mary -- not that sort or surprise. ’Tain’t a prank; ’tis a gift.

MARY    You’re giving me a rope? Whatever for?

MARTHA    For skippin’, girl! *(Mary doesn’t understand.)* Does tha’ mean to say,
they’s got no skippin’ ropes in India - for all their snakes an’
elephants an’ tigers?! *(Mary shrugs.)* Well, you just watch and see
what a rope is good for... *(Martha hikes up her skirt and begins
skipping, counting and reciting rhymes as she goes.)* I could skip high as
five hundred, back when I was your age. If tha’ll practice, I warrant
tha’ll mount up to a hundred in a week! *(Martha resumes counting as
Mary gleefully joins in. Suddenly the door bursts open to reveal a shocked
Mrs. Medlock.)*

MRS. MEDLOCK    Martha Sowerby! *(The rope skipping immediately ceases.)* What is the
meaning of this?!

MARTHA    I was only showin’ Miss Mary. . .

MEDLOCK    Never mind the excuses. I daresay, Martha, that there are a number
of young women in Yorkshire who envy your situation here at
Hisselthwaite, and would keep themselves dutifully occupied with those activities for which they were employed. Do you take my meaning?

MARTHA (Head bowed.) Yes, Ma’am.

MEDLOCK I should hope so! Now hand over that vulgar toy.

MARY Don’t, Martha!

MEDLOCK I beg your pardon?

MARY (Taking the jumprope from Martha.) It’s mine. Martha gave it to me. You’ve no right to take it. I haven’t any other toys.

MEDLOCK I see. Martha -- go to the West Wing and see if you can be of any use to Mister Pitcher.

MARTHA Mister Pitcher? But an’t he an’ Mister Craven still in London?

MEDLOCK No. Had you not been so carried away with your childish games, you might have heard their carriage arrive. Now hurry -- they’ll be off again this very afternoon and there’s much to be done.

MARTHA Yes, ma’am. (A curtsey and she turns toward the door.)

MARY Martha, wait! (Martha pauses as Mary holds up the jumprope.) Thank you, Martha.

MARTHA (A wink and a smile.) Tha’rt welcome, Miss. (She exits. Mrs. Medlock regards Mary sourly for a moment.)

MEDLOCK (A sigh; nodding to the bed.) Sit down, Mary Lennox. (Mary obeys.) How many times must I tell you that my staff have better things to do than waste their time entertaining little girls? Beyond that, I can hardly imagine what the niece of such a highly respectable gentleman as Mr. Craven would have to gain in consorting with such a common girl as Martha Sowerby.
MARY You oughtn’t to say that! Martha Sowerby is my fr. . . (She stops herself, unable to say the word “friend” completely.)

MEDLOCK She’s your what? (Mary doesn’t reply.) Martha Sowerby is your servant -- and should be treated as such. Now, Mary -- based upon my observations this morning, as well as over these past two weeks, it is my intention to request of your uncle that he engage for you a governess.

MARY A governess?!

MEDLOCK Yes. Some respectable, elderly woman who -- I could only hope -- might provide not only a measure of education which you appear to lack in a regretably profound degree, but also an amount of supervision and discipline required by me to maintain order in this household. I shall make my request this afternoon, prior to your uncle’s departure. As for the remainder of the morning, Mary, I’m certain that Mister Craven, not to mention myself, would be much obliged if you could make an effort to refrain from any shouting, laughter, singing: or other disruptive behaviour while in your room today.

MARY You needn’t worry. I’ll stay outside in the gardens.

MEDLOCK There’s a good girl. (She turns to exit, but halts at Mary’s voice.)

MARY Mrs. Medlock?

MEDLOCK Yes.

MARY How long will he be gone this time?

MEDLOCK Your uncle? Quite a long while, Mary. He doesn’t intend to return until October. So you see, I’ll be in complete charge of Misselthwaite for the entire spring and summer.

MARY You don’t suppose he might want to see me, do you? Before he goes?
MEDLOCK    See you? Oh, no, dear. I rather doubt it. (She exits, closing: the door behind her.)

MARY      Well, I don’t care! Uncle Craven’s nothing but an old hunchback anyway! I don’t care if he hates me -- not him nor you nor anyone! I’m glad Uncle Craven's going away, do you hear? I hate him and I'm glad!

_Lights swiftly fade to Blackout._

**Act I, Scene 5**

_Same day; late morning. Ben and two Gardeners are at work as Mary enters, stumbling and getting tangled with her skipping rope._

**BEN**    (A chuckle; shaking his head.) Well, well! I see tha's got a toy -- or maybe tha'rt punishin' tha'self?

**MARY**  It's a skipping-rope, Ben. Martha Sowerby gave it to me only just this morning, so I'm not very good at it yet.

**BEN**    Aye, an' that's a fact. Mind now -- don't tha' go atrippin' an' a-fallin' into any o' my garden beds!

**MARY**  (Offended Ben would presume such a thing.) I won't! Oh, bother. (Ben snorts, returns to his work: supervising the pouring of manure into the beds. Mary looks about.) Spring has come, hasn't it, Ben?

**BEN**    Aye. Canna' tha' smell it?

**MARY**  I smell something.

**BEN**    Tis the good earth, Mary Lennox -- earth and a bit o' fertilizer. Now, wi' the sun comin' out, the soil's makin' ready to grow things. Already there's flowers pokin' up here an' there; you jus' keep on the look-out for 'em.
MARY  I will! *(Another pause.*) Ben? If you wanted to make a flower garden, what would you plant?

BEN  Danged if tha' r'nt the worst little wench for askin' questions! I'll tell thee what I'd plant: Bulbs. And does tha' know why? Because bulbs ain't a bother!

MARY  *(Somewhat hurt.*) Sorry... *(She moves to exit. Ben quickly continues, with a tone of apology, to halt her.)*

BEN  An' some sweet-smellin' things too. Roses, I should think.

MARY  *(Brightening.*) Roses? Oh, do you like roses, Ben?

BEN  Aye. 'Twas taught to like 'em by a very beautiful young lady I were once gard'ner for. She had an awful lot of roses in this one special place. Oh, how she loved those roses -- almos' like as if they was her own children. Times, there was, I'd even seen her kissin' em, she loved her roses that much.

MARY  Where is she now, Ben - the beautiful young lady?

BEN  *(Gruffly turning back to his work.*) Heaven -- 'ccordin' to what the parson says.

MARY  Heaven? And the roses -- what's happened to them?

BEN  They been left to themselves.

MARY  Then are they dead too?

BEN  *(An outburst.*) Ask the robin! No one's been in there but him! *(He is surprised with himself; Mary gasps.)*

MARY  What? Do you mean... *(Pointing toward the wall behind Ben.)* . . . in there? Is that the young lady's garden?

BEN  *(Rising and pulling off his gloves.*) Now look here, Mary Lennox -- don't ask so many questions! I'm done talkin' for today! *(Starting off, barking for Gardeners to follow.)* Sam! Toby! *(Mary watches them exit, then stands -- frustrated and indecisive.)*
MARY

It must be. It must be the young lady's garden. And she was... she was Aunt Lily! Yes! She was beautiful, but she was forced to marry Uncle Craven: a hunchback! And Uncle Craven, he kept Aunt Lily locked away in her room, like me, but... but sometimes she would escape... yes, she'd escape and come to the garden... here... because the garden was pretty like her and the house was ugly and mean like her hunchback husband. But then Uncle Craven, he found out, and he was furious! He hated the garden because she loved it and didn't love him. So he had it shut up and locked... and he buried the key... and then -- poor Aunt Lily -- she died because she could not bear to live without her pretty roses! (A Brief pause. Suddenly her eyes bulge at a new thought.) Or maybe... maybe he had her murdered! (Mary gasps and starts to run off, but remembers her skipping-ropes she had set down beside the wall. When she bends down to retrieve it, she notices Robin in the garden bed beside it.) The robin! (She freezes, hoping not to startle it away.) Hello. Hello, robin. I've been hoping to meet you. I'm Mary. (Robin whistles.) Are you hungry? I brought some food. (She slowly pulls her breakfast napkin from her pocket.) See? Toasted bread with raspberry jam. I'll bet you'd like some bread and jam, wouldn't you? (Robin whistles and hops about, scratching at the mound of newly-turned earth Ben had been working at.) What are you saying? How funny you are: hopping and scratching in the dirt like that. Are you trying to tell me something? What is it, robin? (Mary takes a step nearer, and Robin immediately disappears through a chink in the wall. Mary drops to her hands and knees in the garden bed, attempting to peer after it.) Wait! Don't you want some bread? Robin, please! Don't go! (She groans with frustration and rises up. She looks at her hand and notices that, in her excitement, she has smeared it with bright red jam. As she licks her fingers, she notices something gleam metallic in the mound of dirt.) Now what's this? (Unearthing the object.) A ring of some sort... a rusty old brass... key! (Overjoyed, she brushes away the dirt.) A key! Perhaps... perhaps it is the key to... to the garden!

BEN

(Angrily approaching from offstage.) Hey! Hey you, Mary! What art tha' doin' in my garden bed?! (Mary quickly stuffs the key in her pocket.)

MARY

I... I fell...
BEN Fell, did thee?

MARY Skipping rope...

BEN An’ didn’t I warn thee... ?

MARY I didn’t mean to...

BEN (He suddenly sees Mary’s red-covered hand.) Oh, my Lord -- tha’s bleedin’! Tha’s bleedin' bad!

MARY I am?

BEN (Calling offstage.) Toby! Quick! Fetch Mrs. Medlock!

MARY Oh, no! Don’t! It’s only...

BEN (Another call, as Sam enters.) Sam! Lend a hand! (He stuffs his handkerchief into Hary’s hand.) Take my handkerchief! Take it!

MARY But Ben...

BEN No "Buts!" (As Sam helps him rush Mary offstage.) Quick, let's get her to the fountain!

MARY (As lights quickly fade to Blackout.) Ben, please. . . !

Act I, Scene 6

Moments later; a bench with lattice behind, near a fountain. Ben and two Gardeners stand by, as does Mrs. Medlock and Martha. Mary is seated.

BEN (As lights rise.) What?! Jam?!

MEDLOCK That’s what I said, Mr. Weatherstaff -- raspberry jam!

BEN Mary Lennox, I’ll thank thee to give back my kerchief!
MARY I tried to tell you, Ben; you wouldn't listen.

BEN (Exiting; over his shoulder to Gardeners.) Sam! Toby! Day's a-wastin'! (Gardeners follow off. Medlock whirs to Martha.)

MEDLOCK Martha Sowerby it's all your fault! Whether she's hurt or no, a frail, awkward girl oughtn't to be playing with such a dangerous thing as a skipping-rope! (Pitcher appears, followed by Archibald.) Oh, no! Now see what trouble you've caused? (Quickly stepping forth to greet the men; nervously.) Oh, Mr. Craven, sir – I'm sorry...

ARCHIBALD Is the girl badly injured?

MEDLOCK Not at all, sir -- just a misunderstanding...

PITCHER Then Mr. Craven's departure has been delayed for nothing?

MEDLOCK It was all Martha's doing -- she gave the child a skipping-rope and...

PITCHER You may make your excuses while seeing us to the carriage, Mrs. Medlock.

MEDLOCK But...

PITCHER (With a nod of his head.) Now, please, Mrs. Medlock!

MEDLOCK Yes, Mr. Pitcher. (As she starts off.) Martha - come! (Martha hesitates, sharing a look with Mary.) Now, Martha! (Martha swiftly follows Mrs. Medlock.)

PITCHER Mr. Craven, sir...

ARCHIBALD (Gazing at Mary.) I can hardly believe my eyes ... how she resembles...

PITCHER Sir?

ARCHIBALD Don't you see?
PITCHER  What?

ARCHIBALD  Never mind.

PITCHER  Mr. Craven, I'm afraid we've barely enough time to meet our train.

ARCHIBALD  I'll be along presently, Mr. Pitcher.

PITCHER  But, sir...

ARCHIBALD  Presently, Pitcher - at the carriage'.

PITCHER  Very good, sir. (He casts a sour glance toward Mary upon exiting. Archibald takes an awkward step toward Mary, who does not dare to fully look at her uncle; nor does he quite dare to look at her. A long moment of silence.)

ARCHIBALD  I'm ... your uncle ...

MARY  (Simultaneously.) I'm ... sorry ... (A sigh.)

ARCHIBALD  (Another step; a bow...) ...Archibald Craven.

MARY  (A nod.) How do you do?

ARCHIBALD  You're not hurt?

MARY  No.

ARCHIBALD  You're well, then? Mrs. Medlock takes good care of you, does she?

MARY  Yes. I suppose she does. Yes.

ARCHIBALD  That's fine. Good. (Another pause. He is about to turn and exit, but something within stops himself.) Forgive me, Mary. I know that I make a poor guardian to a child. I cannot tolerate this place so I am away on business most of the time, yet -- although I may be unable to provide you with the attention I ought, still I do wish you to feel comfortable and...happy...here. If such a thing as happiness might be possible ... here. I know almost nothing of children; Mrs.
Medlock is to see that you have whatever you may need or desire. She suggested today a governess or nanny...

MARY Oh, Uncle, I...

ARCHIBALD What is it, Mary. Don't be afraid. What do you wish to tell me?

MARY I...I am too big for a nanny, I think. And please, please don’t make me to have a governess. Not yet.

ARCHIBALD Very well. Not yet. But is there anything you do want? Toys, books, dolls ...?

MARY Might I...please...be allowed to keep playing out-of-doors? For I do like it out here and I’ll improve at my skipping-rope - Martha says it only takes time -- and I won’t cause any more harm; truly I won’t.

ARCHIBALD (To himself.) What more harm could come to Misselthwaite that hasn’t come already? (A breath; he looks at his pocketwatch.) Mary Lennox -- you play as much as you like, I must go now. Goodbye. (He starts off. Mary suddenly leaps to her feet.)

MARY Uncle Craven! (He halts without turning.) Please, might I also have... might I have a bit of earth?

ARCHIBALD (Slowly turning.) Pardon?

MARY A garden. To plant seeds in. To make things grow. To see them come alive.

ARCHIBALD (Voice trembles; eyes fill with tears.) I am reminded of someone else... one who loved a garden, who loved... (He clears his throat and starts off again.) Take what you will, Mary. When you find your bit of earth then take it, child, and make it come alive!

MARY (A call after him.) May I take it from anywhere - if it's not wanted?

ARCHIBALD (Offstage.) Yes, Mary! Anywhere!

*Mary smiles in joy as lights fade to Blackout.*
Act I, Scene 7

Moments later; in front of the garden walls. Lights rise on Mary, calling.

MARY Robin?! Robin, did you hear? I’m allowed a bit of earth! I can have the garden! So, please, Robin -- you’ve shown me the key, now show me the door. Robin? Are you there? Come, Robin -- I want to be your friend. Wouldn’t you like that, Robin? But ... if we are to be friends ... you really ought to invite me into your home. It’s only proper. (A growl.) Oh, I don’t believe you even know! You don’t even know where the door is; do you, silly old...! (Robin pokes through a chink in the wall, through the ivy, and trills. Mary gasps.) Robin! You... (It disappears. Mary rushes up to the wall and feels the door.) ... you da know! Yes! The door to the secret garden is... is right here! It was right here all along!

Mary looks to see if anyone is nearby, then pulls the key from her pocket. She finds the lock of the door, inserts the key, and slowly pulls it open, slipping inside as lights swiftly fade to Blackout. Music and birdsong.

Act I, Scene 8

Continuous with the preceding. Mary is revealed in a solitary pool of dappled, late afternoon light. Dark void surrounds her. She gazes about in reverence and wonder.

MARY How still it is. How still! No wonder it’s still. I am the first person who has spoken in this place for ten years. (She looks upward.) Robin? Robin, are you there? Thank you, Robin. Thank you for showing me the way. (A pause.) Roses. Yes, Ben -- I can see that there once were roses. So many branches... and leaves! Green leaves! No, they’re not all dead!

A second pool of dappled light rises near beside her, illuminating a small plot of tiny green blades and pale flower petals pushing up through a blanket of matted autumn leaves and dead grass. Mary kneels beside it.

MARY Other things too -- growing! Oh, but smothered so, how can you breathe? (She tenderly removes the leaves and grass and sighs at the
simple beauty of crocuses in bloom. Music.) Flowers! I wonder what you are? What to call you? It doesn't matter. You’re lovely. And you’re alive. Yes. Quite alive!

She sits back and looks about, smiling, as a golden beam of sunlight warms her face. Lights fade to Blackout.

Act I, Scene 9

Continuous with the preceding. Mary exits the garden door stealthily; general lights slowly rise to reveal a boy, sitting some distance away, with a rabbit in his arms. Mary halts and gasps upon noticing him. Dickon, in turn, sees her and raises a finger to his lips.

DICKON Easy there, Mistress Mary ... easy. A body needs move gentle an’ speak low when the wild things is about.

MARY Who ... who are you? How do you know my name?

DICKON Sister Martha -- she told me.

MARY Martha? Your sister? Then you must be -- you’re Dickon!

DICKON Dickon Sowerby, aye -- tha’s me. An’ this here’s "Captain." Come, Mary -- does tha’ care to pet him? Don’t fear; he’ll not bite thee. (Mary hesitantly holds forth her hand to pet it.) ‘Tis but a poor wee orphan I found on the moor. There was a great storm, ’bout two week ago, an' his home was all flooded out. His mother an' the rest o’ the family was all drowned. All dead, save him -- so I took him home ’til he grewed up enough to fend for hiself.

MARY All dead... like in India.

DICKON India?

MARY Never mind- It doesn’t matter anymore. Poor little Captain.

DICKON Aye, Anyway him an’ me -- well, we come by to give you a bit of a welcomin’ gift, we have
MARY A gift?

DICKON Mind you, it ain’t much -- only some gardnin' toola an' seeds...

MARY Gardening tools? Really? But Dickon, that’s just today what I’ve been wishing I had. (She stops herself.) Well, it’s like magic.

DICKON (A chuckle.) Magic. (Holding forth the bunny.) Come now, Mary -- hold on to Captain for me whilst I show thee thy things. (Mary awkwardly accepts the rabbit as he digs into his leather shoulderbag.) Tha’s got a little spade, an’ a rake, an’ a trowel. An’ as for seeds, I brought thee columbine an’ snapdragon an’ carnation an’--aye: here’s a lot or mignonette. Now, mignonette's about the sweetest-smellin' thing as grows, an’ it'll spring up wherever tha' cares to cast it, same as poppies will. Aye -- them flowers as'll come up an' bloom if you just whistle to 'em -- them's the nicest of all. (The song of Robin suddenly pierces the air. Dickon cocks an ear.)

MARY I don’t know how to... Oh, they’re wonderful! Thank you, Dickon! (Noticing his curious expression.) Dickon? What is it?

DICKON Canna’ tha hear the robin as is callin' thee?

MARY Calling me?

DICKON Don’t he know thee? An' like thee, too?

MARY Well ... he knows me. A little. But you can’t really understanding what a bird is saying, can you? Not really and truly.

DICKON I thinks I can. An' they thinks I can. Why, I’ve lived out on the moor with 'em for so long, Mary, sometimes I think I’m a bird too. An' then other times I think p’raps I’m a fox, or a rabbit, or a squirrel -- even a little beetle bug, and I don't even knows it! (Mary laughs at the notion. Dickon chuckles with her, then suddenly leaps to his feet.) Now see here, Mistress Mary, why don’t I show thee how to plant thy seeds? Where’s thy garden? (Mary smile suddenly fades as she bows her head.) Tha’ has got a bit o’ garden, hasn’t tha? (No response.) Well, no matter -- us’ll just go ask old Ben ...
MARY: No, Dickon! Wait! *(Hesitant. Fearful.)* I don't ... I don't know about boys. Could a boy... keep a secret?

DICKON: A boy the likes o' me, Mary? Does tha mean me? *(Mary looks up into his face and nods.)* Well, now -- me, I ' m keepin' secrets all the time! If I couldn't keeps secrets about foxes cubs an' birds's nests an' wild things' special places, why, they'd not be safe on the moor, now would they? No. Me – I'm fair full o' secrets, I am!

MARY: *(After a pause; summoning her courage.)* I don't have a garden, Dickon. I took it. Nobody wants it; nobody cares for it -- no one but me. My Uncle Craven has been letting it die -- shut away by itself. I don't know why. I only know it has to be a secret. *(She looks at him earnestly, a tear in her eye.)* Don't you see, Dickon? It to be a secret garden, because if anyone were to find out, I'm sure they’d take it away from me and then. . . Well, then I believe that should die too.

DICKON: Shh, Mistress Mary. Tha should'na' speak so o' dyin'. Not when the whole world about thee is about cumin' back to life. *(He lightly touches Mary's shoulder.)* Where is it, Mary? Art tha goin' to take me in?

MARY: *(Rising to her feet.)* Yes, Dickon. Yes, I will.

Dickon picks up the parcel of gardening things. Mary, carrying bunny, nods at him to follow her as lights fade.

Act I, Scene 10

Continuous with the preceding. Mary and Dickon stand in a corner of the secret garden: a gnarled tree with a half-rotted, broken lattice bench around its trunk. Little clumps of tulips, daffodils and crocus in bloom. Mary waits nervously for Dickon to say something.

DICKON: Oh, Mary! Jus' look at what tha's done!

MARY: *(Afraid she did something wrong.)* What?!
DICKON Why, this here's the fairest spread o' bulbs as ever I did see! An' tha' makin' believe tha' doesn't know nothing about gard'nin'!

MARY But I don't! I only just cleared away the dead things.

DICKON An' that's all what was needed. I'm tellin' thee -- old Ben Weatherstaff couldn't ha' done no better. 'Tis a rare, lovely place tha's got here, Mary -- as like a body was in a dream! An' such a fine tangle o' roses!

MARY Aunt Lily's roses. Dickon - is there any hope they'll bloom again? It's ten years now they've not been cared for.

DICKON Well, let to run wild, the delicatest ones has died out. But see how the stronger has growed an' spread till they's a wonder! Why, I 'spect there'll be a fountain o' roses abloomin' come summer's end, so long as tha an' me looks after 'em.

MARY Do you mean you'll come back and help?

DICKON Each an' ev'ry day -- if tha'll have me.

MARY (After a pause.) Dickon?

DICKON Aye?

MARY Do you... "Does tha" like me?

DICKON (A smile.) That I does, Mary. I likes thee graidely. (He cocks his ear again at the trill of Robin.) An so does robin. Oh, don't he sound fair pleased, though! Just listen to him sing!

MARY Ben said the robin has no family. I suppose he's quite lonely.

DICKON Not anymore. Listen, Mary. Doesn' tha hear? (Mary listens. A second trill joins Robin.) Two voices, Mary. Thy little friend has found hi'self a mate.

Mary and Dickon sit side-by-side beneath the tree, listening to the birds' duet. Music rises as lights fade.
Act I, Scene 11

Mary’s bedroom; that night. Martha helps Mary change into her nightgown. A storm is brewing outside.

MARY                  (As lights rise.) And he let me hold it and feed it and... oh, Martha, I've never ever held a wild creature in my arms until today!
MARTHA                And did he bring his crow?
MARY                  Dickon has a crow?!
MARTHA                (A chuckle.) That an' more. But tell me, Mary -- I gather tha likes his pets, but what does tha think o' him?
MARY                  I think... I think he's beautiful!
MARTHA                Beautiful, eh? Ha! Well, Dickon's surely the best a' lads as ever was born, but no one's thought as much for his looks. Still an' all, his eyes are a most fine, rare colour...
MARY                  The colour of the sky over the moor.
MARTHA                Might be they got so 'cause or him ever-gazin' up at the clouds, eh?
MARY                  I wish my eyes were just like his.
MARTHA                Oh, no, Mary. Tha needs must learn that thine own eyes are ev'ry bit as beautiful.
MARY                  Are they?
MARTHA                But o' course they... (A strange, distant cry interrupts her. Martha pales.) That's enough flattery; let's us see what your eyes are like shut tight an' sleepin'.
MARY                  But it's not so very late, and I’m not so tired... (Noticing Martha.) Martha? Is something the matter?
MARTHA No! Tis nothin'! 'Tis just... I better go. (She starts out.) Mrs. Medlock'll ... (She opens the door. Another cry.)

MARY That sound!

MARTHA (Slamming the door.) What sound?!

MARY Like crying. I heard it before -- the night I arrived here Mrs Medlock said it was the wind.

MARTHA Tha's right. 'Tis the wind The storm.

MARY But listen, Martha -- it’s coming from inside this house. Down one of those long corridors. Who's crying, Martha? Who?

MARTHA 'Tis ...' tis Betty, that's all.

MARY "Betty ?"

MARTHA Betty Butterworth, the ... the scullery maid for ... for the West Wing. She’s had a toothache, the day lung. So you just go to bed and forget about the crying, or Mrs. Medlock'll surely give thee an' me somethin' to cry about! (A distant ringing of a handbell.) Now there's her bell! I've got to leave thee. Oh, please, Mary -- please be a good girl? Be a friend? (She quickly exits. Mary stands undecided for a moment.)

MARY A friend. (She goes to bed.) I have a friend: Martha. (A sudden realization.) And Dickon. And Robin! Three! I never, ever thought that I should have three friends. I wonder, will there ever be more?

She turns off the lamp and pulls the covers up to go to sleep. Wind rises. A great gust of wind and thunder. The window blows open. Mary leaps out of bed to close the window and again hears the crying – now more shrieking. She puts her ear to the door and listens. She tries the door. It is unlocked. The shrieking is louder still. Another rumble of thunder and rain begins to pelt against the window.

MARY It is a child! Somewhere in this house a child is crying!
She runs to the screen and puts on her peignoir, then goes to her nightstand and lights a candle. Carrying the candle, she goes to the door, listens, then cautiously exits. Thunder and music rise as lights quickly fade to Blackout.

Act I, Scene 12

Continuous with the preceding. Mary crosses along the apron carrying the candle. Dim light reveals a tapestry covered corridor wall. The ringing of bell is louder, as are the child’s cries and rumble of thunder. Indistinguishable voices of Mrs. Medlock and Martha draw nearer.

MARY (Whirling to look offstage.) Oh, no! Mrs. Medlock!

Mary quickly backs up against the wall to hide behind the tapestry but, to her amazement, the wall panel swings open and she begins to lose her balance.

MEDLOCK (Offstage; very near.) Quick! The child!

A huge thunderclap. Wall swallows and seals Mary within as she screams. Immediate Blackout.