



NEW MEXICO YOUNG ACTORS

Present

The Secret Garden

Adapted and dramatized by **Tim Kelly**
Based on the novel by **Frances Hodgson Burnett**

TEACHER STUDY GUIDE

Dear Teachers,

Welcome to New Mexico Young Actors production of ***The Secret Garden***. We are offering this study guide to help you prepare your classes for our upcoming production at your school. Included in this guide are a **synopsis** of our story, a **list of characters** you'll meet in the play, a **vocabulary list** and **lesson ideas**, as well as some **audience protocol** reminders. We always enjoy hearing from you and your students and look forward to receiving any pictures, stories, or comments about the production after our visit. Thank you for your support of New Mexico Young Actors!

THE SECRET GARDEN SYNOPSIS

Mary Lennox, known as a difficult child, is sent to live at her uncle's estate in England after her parents pass away. Misselthwaite Manor turns out to be a gloomy fortress. Her uncle is rarely home, and his young son, Colin, never leaves his room, convinced he's an incurable invalid. To her surprise, Mary discovers a strange walled garden that has been locked up for years. With the assistance of Dickon, the gardener's apprentice, Mary brings the garden back to life and discovers Dickon's amazing ability to communicate with animals. The garden seems to have a wonderful, magical effect on all who come into it, allowing Mary to help restore Colin to health and to reunite him with his father.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Mary Lennox – orphaned, 11 years old, has just moved to England from India

Martha – a young maid of Misselthwaite Manor; befriends Mary

Mrs. Medlock – the housekeeper of Misselthwaite Manor; haughty and stern

Cook – one of the household staff

John – a young footman; brother to Martha

Betty – another housemaid; sister of Martha and John

Mrs. Crawford – the lady who escorts Mary from India to England

Kanchi – Mrs. Crawford's Indian servant

Miss Wiggin – Mary's governess

Dickon – a young gardener on the estate, a few years older than Mary

Mrs. Sowerby – kind and wise friend and neighbor; mother of Martha, John, and Betty

Colin Craven – a lonely boy in ill health who never leaves his room in the manor

Nurse – takes care of sickly Colin

Archibald Craven – the master of Misselthwaite Manor; Colin’s father

Dr. Craven – Archibald’s cousin and friend

Lilias – a memory from the past; Archibald’s wife

LESSON IDEAS

Preparing Your Class for a Live Theater Experience

1. *How many of you have experienced a live theater performance? What did you see?*
2. *What are some of the differences between seeing a play and watching television or going to a movie?*

- Theater features live onstage actors. They have spent many weeks rehearsing for the performance.
- The audience is a very important part of the performance. Appreciation for the performers is shown by close attention, participation, and applause at the proper times. The success of the production often depends on the audience.
- It is easy to identify with live actors. You can see how they use their bodies and voices to convey different emotions.
- Actors wear costumes and make-up to help create the impression of the characters they portray.
- There is much more to most live performances than actors. Special sets, effects, lighting, music, costumes, and of course, the audience add to the total experience.

Theater Etiquette

Discuss the role of the audience and proper theater etiquette.

- Arrive on time so that you do not miss anything and so that you will not disturb the rest of the audience while trying to get comfortable in your seat.
- It is easier for you (and the rest of the audience) to see and hear the performance if you stay seated and listen very carefully.
- There is no intermission during the performance, which is 60 minutes in length. Be sure to use the restroom before the performance begins.
- Although you may wish to say something to the actors, you need to hold your thoughts, as you will disturb their concentration.

- Sing or participate *if and only if* you are invited to do so. Your participation is often very important.
- Listen to how the music sets the mood and affects your own feelings.
- Show the cast and crew your appreciation for their hard work with applause after a song, dance, or joke.

Theatrical Terms to Know:

Actor	Overture
Acts/Scenes	Play
Balcony	Playwright
Box Office	Producer
Curtain Call	Program
Costumes	Props
Director	Scenery/Set
Lobby	Stage
Musical Theater	Stagehand
Orchestra	Usher
Pit	

Classroom Discussion and Extension Activities (Pre- or Post-Performance)

Reading/Writing

- Read aloud the original novel of *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett to your class.
- Write a description of one of the characters and share it with a partner. After sharing, students can question each other about the ideas presented. This can be done with a drawing for lower levels.

Content Vocabulary

The following are some words you will hear spoken in *The Secret Garden*:

cameo brooch	indispensable
cholera	nuisance
contrary	obstinate
crumpets	perceptive
gloomy	rubbish
governess	sari
hunchback	tantrum
hysteria	

Other Curricular Connections

- Draw a picture of a favorite scene or character.
- Draw an advertisement or program cover for the play.
- Design and draw your own garden. Would you plant flowers, vegetables, or trees?
- Ask the students to identify musical instruments that they heard in the play. Discuss other instruments that could have been added for greater effect.
- How did the music express the action or emotion of the story (tempo, volume, range of notes, etc.)?
- Research the setting of the play: England. Locate England on a map. Have students plan a vacation to England, identifying sites to visit, and creating a budget for their visit.
- Recreate a scene from the play in your classroom. Assign students to play various characters and have them work together to create short scenes from the play.
- Plant seeds in your classroom! Set them in a sunny window. Give students responsibility for watering and caring for their seedlings.
- Adopt a neglected patch of earth on your school grounds. As a class, spend time cleaning, weeding, and replanting the area.
- Go on a walking field trip to a city park near your school. Have students sit in one spot and quietly observe the patch of earth in front of them. They can write or draw their observations in a journal. Return regularly; students will observe firsthand the changing of the seasons.

INTERNET & OTHER RESOURCES

WEBSITES

An excellent companion study guide, compiled by Young People’s Theatre of Toronto, can be found at:

<https://www.youngpeoplestheatre.org/schools/study-guides/secret-garden-study-guide/>

RE-TELLINGS AND VERSIONS OF *THE SECRET GARDEN*

Return to the Secret Garden by Holly Webb

The Secret Garden (Golden Books edition) by Frances Gilbert

Secret in the Garden: A Peek-Through Book by James Mayhew

Inside the Secret Garden: A Treasury of Crafts, Recipes, and Activities by Carolyn Strom Collins

The Secret Garden on 81st Street: A Modern Graphic Retelling of The Secret Garden by Ivy Noelle Weir

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