

Introduction

This visual guide is designed for any audience members who would benefit from familiarizing themselves with what to expect from The Secret Garden before they arrive at the theatre.

It contains images and information about the characters, story and production in general.

We hope this resource makes your visit more enjoyable.

Themes within the show:

Enclosure and Liberation

Neglect and care

Grief and healing

Nature

Magic

Advisory Content

This play contains ableist and colonial language, depictions of child neglect and references to the death of family members. They are included to ensure the authentic telling of the story but are done in a manner that ensures all actors feel safe.

Activating ableist terminology is used to explicitly address topics. Language that may cause discomfort includes “invalid” and “cripple.” All actors feel safe and supported in this use of harmful language within the context of the play.

To accurately represent the original story’s historical context, there is a scene in which party goes in India die from cholera, this is not explicit or gruesome but may cause discomfort.

At moments in the play smoke will be used to represent a ship and train, don’t worry there is no fire causing this smoke and no safety risk

Please be aware:

A chorus is a group of actors who describe the story to you, the audience.

Throughout our show the actors will be on stage most of the time as they tell the story as a chorus and play different characters.

Sometimes the performers will speak as a group narrating what happens in the show. Characters in the scene will pretend not to see or hear the chorus.

The main back wall of the set moves. Don’t be alarmed, it is safe and designed to do so to aid our storytelling.

The sickness in India, cholera, sadly causes Mary’s mother and father to die. This means that Mary is sent to live with her uncle, Lord Archibald, in Yorkshire.

Throughout the show , some actors will also play animals including a squirrel, a fox, a crow, a lamb and a robin. These animals are puppets created from the actor’s movements and clothing so they appear magically in the scene.

Our story is one of learning to care and grow, however at times there are challenges that the characters must confront in order to learn and grow.

When the characters shout at each other or call each other names or get upset, they don't mean it. For example, sometimes Mary and Colin cry and have tantrums and use aggressive language. There are also times when Archibald also becomes angry. Do not worry the actors are ok and just acting their characters.

Our show is a place for complete acceptance so please feel free to move around and respond in a way that feels true to you.

Short Show Summary

'Mary would always say that what happened at that moment was almost magic.'

Spoilt and abandoned, 10-year-old Mary Lennox is sent from India to Yorkshire, and put into the care of an Uncle she has never met.

At Misselthwaite Manor, a broken-hearted house full of secrets and strange noises, Mary discovers a garden as lost and neglected as she is. If she can learn to make friends with robins, grumpy gardeners, and a boy who speaks to animals, Mary might be able to bring more than just the garden back to life.

Frances Hodgson Burnett's beloved and radical story about the magic of nature and the nature of magic is adapted in a new version by Holly Robinson (*soft animals*, Soho Theatre) and Anna Himali Howard (*Graceland*, Royal Court; *Orpheus*, Opera North).

The Characters

Mary Lennox, A Little Girl

Champa Lennox, Mary's Mother

Captain Lennox, Mary's Father

Lord Archibald Craven, Mary's Uncle

Colin Craven, Mary's Cousin, Archibald's Son

Dr Harold Craven, Mary's Uncle

Mrs Medlock, Housekeeper

Martha Sowerby, Medlock's Maid

Ben Weatherstaff, Gardener

Dickon Sowerby, Martha's Brother

Lata Craven, Mary's Aunt, Archibald's Wife

Padma Mukerjee, Mary and Colin's Aunt

The Story

ONE: THE END

Archibald, Mrs Medlock, Dr Craven, Ben, Martha, Dickon, Padma, Lata and Champa are gathered to begin to tell the story.



TWO: BRITISH INDIA

1903 during the English Raj - A British Bungalow in Kolkata.

A party fills the stage; there is dancing, wine and “sophistication”.



We meet Mary and her Ayah and the scene shows how Mary's parents Champa and the Captain treat her.

There is a cholera outbreak that kills everyone at the party.



Two British Officers find Mary. They decide to send Mary to England.

THREE: ACROSS THE SEA, ACROSS THE MOOR



Mary travels alone by ship. She doesn't know how to play with other children on board the ship.

Mary is collected by Mrs. Medlock from the English docks.

Mary and Medlock travel by train to Thwaite's Station, in Yorkshire.

Mary and Medlock travel by horse and carriage to Misselthwaite Manor.

FOUR: MISSELTWHAITE MANOR



The Doctor and Archibald argue whether Mary should be at The Manor.
Archibald tells Medlock he doesn't want to see Mary.



Archibald leaves for Switzerland to find a cure, Potassium Bromide, for his son Colin.

The Doctor meets Mary.

Mary is sent to bed, she has nightmares and hears crying.

FIVE: THE SECRET

Mary is woken by Martha. Mary expects Martha to dress and take care of her. Mary is upset when Martha does not do what she expects.



Martha tells Mary about the secret garden, Lata's garden.

Mary goes outside to explore and meets the Robin. Mary also meet Ben the gardener.

Mary asks Ben about the secret garden. He doesn't tell her about the garden but does tell her about the roses in the garden.

Medlock calls Mary inside to eat supper.

SIX: THE CRY IN THE CORRIDOR

Mary can't stop thinking about the secret garden.

Martha asks Mary if she has found the garden.

That night Mary has nightmares and hears crying.

Mary gets out of bed and finds the Doctor and Medlock talking. She tells them that she heard crying. They lie about who made the sound of crying. Medlock scolds Mary and sends her to bed.



SEVEN: SEARCHING



Mary asks Martha how to find the garden. Martha suggests asking Dickon because he knows a bird that knows where the garden is.

A few weeks go by.

Mary meets Ben, the gardener, who shows her how to call the robin. Ben tells Mary to look for the robin down the laurel path.



Mary looks for the Robin near the kitchen gardens and meets Dickon.

Mary helps Dickon to free a squirrel, trapped in some wire.

Dickon leaves. Mary finds the laurel path and calls the robin. Mary asks the robin to show her the way to the garden.

The robin shows Mary the door to the secret garden.

EIGHT: THE INDIAN ROOM

The next day Mary cannot go outside because it is raining.

Mary wanders around the house, trying to open all the locked doors.

Mary finds the India Room, and plays with a wooden elephant. Mary sees a picture of Lata and finds the key to the garden.

Archibald finds Mary in the India Room. He is upset and tells her not to wander around the house.

Mary tells Archibald that she likes to play outside. She asks for a 'bit of earth'.

Archibald calls for Medlock, he tells her to allow Mary to play outside.

The rain has stopped so Mary goes outside with the key.

Mary bumps into Ben but runs to the laurel path calling the robin.

Mary finds and opens the door to the garden.

NINE: THE GARDEN



Mary enters the garden and discovers the flower beds and the dolna (a swing).

The Robin passes Mary a stick, she digs around to find green shoots in the soil.

Martha calls for Mary to go inside and eat supper.

TEN: WICK

Medlock notices that Mary has grown healthier.

Mary asks Martha to ask Dickon to meet her in the kitchen gardens.

They hear a cry, Martha lies about who is crying, she tells them that it is Betty Buttersworth.



The next morning, Mary meets Dickon and Clementine (a fox).

Mary tells Dickon about the secret garden and asks if he'll look at it.

Mary and Dickon look at the garden, they find that it is wick - still alive.

Mary asks Dickon if the garden will live, Dickon admires her gardening skills, and tells her about Spring.

Mary asks Dickon to help her bring the garden back to life, he says he'll come every day. Mary trusts him.

ELEVEN: A BOY WHO LOOKS LIKE HER

That night Mary hears crying.

Mary searches for where the crying is coming from and who is crying.



Avoiding the Doctor and Medlock, Mary finds Colin.

Mary and Colin work out that they are cousins.



Mary comforts Colin and tells him about his mother Lata and about Spring. They hear Medlock coming. Mary promises to come back. Colin pretends to cry.

INTERVAL

TWELVE: ANOTHER SECRET

Martha gives Mary a gift. It is a skipping rope.

Mary tells Martha that she found Colin. Martha cries because she is afraid that she will be in trouble and lose her job.

Martha tells Mary how Lata, Colin's mother, died - that she fell off the swing when she was pregnant - and about Colin's illness.

Mary and Martha bond over the shared secret.

Mary tries to skip.

Mary skips outside, meets Ben, tells him about her friends.



Mary goes to the garden and meets Dickon and Sally (the squirrel).

Dickon shows Mary how to garden.

Mary tells Dickon she found Colin, they discuss when to bring him to the garden.

That night, Mary visits Colin and tells him about Dickon.

Mary suggests Colin could go outside. Colin becomes very upset.

Mary tells Colin about his mother's secret garden.

Martha appears. She warns them that Medlock is coming.

Mary promises she'll keep visiting Colin.

THIRTEEN: BACK AND FORTH



Mary spends her days in the garden and nights with Colin; she tells Dickon about Colin and Colin about Dickon.



Mary goes to visit Colin and hears crying. She discovers it is Archibald crying over a sleeping Colin.

The Doctor tells Archibald the potassium bromide isn't working.

Archibald says he is leaving for St Petersburg tomorrow, to look for a new cure..

The Doctor suggests Archibald sees Colin when he's awake, Archibald avoids the subject by asking whether their father told them stories.

Archibald asks about Mary and then leaves abruptly.

Mary sneaks in to find Colin asleep. She is glad he didn't hear his father.

The next morning Dickon and Mary agree to bring Colin to the garden on the first day of Spring.

Dickon offers to build Colin a chair with wheels.

FOURTEEN: THE PORTRAIT



One evening,, Mary decides Colin is ready to meet Dickon. Mary and Martha carry Colin out of his room. The Doctor and Medlock find the children.

Colin declares he is the master of the house, that Mary will be in charge of his care and that they should be allowed to go outside with no one watching.

The Doctor speaks to Mary about Colin's illness and tell her that she must be careful.

Mary leaves.

Medlock and the Doctor discuss the risks of Colin going outside.

FIFTEEN: SPRING ARRIVES



Colin is very excited to meet Dickon in his room.

Dickon enters Colin's room, Colin calls him a cripple.

Mary and Colin argue, Mary runs out leaving Martha, Dickon and Colin.

Dickon shows Colin how he walks with his stick.

Martha goes to find Mary to reason with her..

Mary tells Martha about the secret garden but Martha says she can't come.

Mary and Martha rejoin Colin and Dickon.

Mary, Martha and Dickon carry Colin to the garden door.

Dickon shows Colin the wheelchair.

Colin uses the wheelchair to enter the garden.

Colin meets the robin.

The children spend the afternoon in the garden.

SIXTEEN: LEARNING THE MAGIC

Dickon teaches Colin to prune. Colin begins to have a crush on Dickon.

Days pass.



Medlock and the Doctor are pleased with the improvement of Colin's health.

Colin plants a flower.

The children watch the garden bud and blossom.

The weather becomes colder and the children worry the magic has stopped.

Mary shows Colin and Dickon how to bring the magic.

Colin speaks about his wish to walk but is interrupted. Ben finds the children in the garden.



Ben confesses that he has kept the roses alive and promises to keep the garden a secret.

The children begin to do the magic again.

Padma finds them in the garden.

SEVENTEEN: THE THIRD SISTER



Padma tells Mary how she has been searching for her.



Padma discovers Colin is still alive.

The children ask Padma to keep the garden a secret.

The children lead Padma to the house.

Padma speaks to the Doctor and Medlock.

Padma puts the children to bed.

EIGHTEEN: THE ORANGE

The next morning Padma makes a picnic for the children.

Padma and Medlock bond over chapati.

Mary and Colin take Padma to the garden.



Padma meets Ben and hears about Lata's roses.

Padma meets the robin.

Padma tells Mary and Colin about India, the resistance movement to British rule and about her sisters.

Mary and Colin tell Padma about their lives.

Dickon arrives with Clem (the fox) and Sally (the squirrel).

They find that an orange has grown in the garden.

In Russia, Archibald is visited by the robin and decides to go home.



NINETEEN: THE LIMITS OF MAGIC

Time passes and everyone is happy: Padma cooks and tells the children about India, Mary dresses in a sari, Ben talks about Lata, Colin and Dickon hold hands and share a kiss and Mary is jealous.



Colin and Mary tell Padma of the magic and how it will heal Colin.

The children show Padma the magic.

Padma teaches the children the correct words to their magic chant. The flowers bloom.



One day, Colin decides it is the day he will walk.

Colin tries to walk but he can't. Padma speaks to him of the limits of magic.

Colin becomes very upset. He keeps trying to make the magic work.

Mary screams to stop Colin. She tells Colin how much she cares for him and threatens him.

Colin tells Mary he hates her.

TWENTY: THE ROSES

Colin re-enters the house in a temper.

Days pass and Colin refuses to leave the house.

Mary, Padma, Dickon and Ben work in the garden. Mary refuses to speak to Colin.



Martha speaks to Colin about how much she wants to see the garden and the roses.

Colin comforts Martha by describing the garden. He remembers that the garden is wonderful and decides to take Martha to the garden.



Colin tells everyone in the garden that he understands that he will not walk and wants to keep living.

Mary, Padma and Dickon tell Colin that they love him.

TWENTY ONE: THE GARDEN THAT BELONGED TO EVERYONE

Ben and Padma leave Colin, Mary and Dickon in the garden.

Colin, Mary and Dickon summon the magic.

Ben reappears, he tells Mary that Archibald has returned and is angry.

Archibald shouts at the Doctor and Medlock as he tries to find Colin.

Padma confronts Archibald about how badly he has treated the children. Archibald defends himself, telling Padma that he has been looking for a cure for Colin.

Mary enters. She tells Archibald that Colin is not dying.

Mary confronts Archibald about his lack of kindness. She tells him Colin feels hated and unloved.

Mary asks the Doctor and Archibald if their father was kind to them and about how their father treated their stammer and back.

Mary tells Archibald to stop interrupting the Doctor.

Mary takes Archibald to the garden.



Archibald enters the garden to find Colin and Dickon.



Colin tells his father that he will to live.



Archibald is surprised. He tells Mary that he will not send her away.
The garden blooms and belongs to everyone.

