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The Secret Garden

Frances Hodgson Burnett

Adapted by Sylvia Ashby

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION

**SAMUEL
FRENCH**
FOUNDED 1830

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Ben Griessmeyer as Colin Craven and Faith Laska as Mary Lennox in the Sheboygan Theatre Company production.

For Allson and Jonathan

First produced by Lubbock Community Theatre (TX), *The Secret Garden* was directed by Clifford Ashby. Soundscore by Mark McCoy. Set design by Elaine Atkinson. The cast was as follows:

MARY LENNOX Leslie Floyd
MRS. MEDLOCK Karen Copple
ANDREW CRAVEN Clayton Naff
MARTHA Rachel Greene
BEN WEATHERSTAFF Harlan Reddell
NURSE GREY Debbie McCarter
DR. SPENCER Bill Lanier
MRS. APPLEBY Johanna McCrary
DICKON Dustin Benham
COLIN CRAVEN Trent Price

Co-winner of the 1996 Unpublished Play Project of the American Alliance for Theatre and Education, this play was later produced by the Sheboygan Theatre Company (WI), under the direction of Ralph Maffongelli. Set and Lighting Design was by Marty Kooi. Soundscore by Mark McCoy. Costume Design by Benjamin J. Gartmann. The cast was as follows:

MARY LENNOX Faith Laska
MRS. MEDLOCK Char Koehler
ANDREW CRAVEN Joel Griessmeyer
MARTHA Diane Sciarra
BEN WEATHERSTAFF Glenn Schultz
NURSE GREY Kerrylynn Kraemer-Curtiss
DOCTOR SPENCER Chuck Ebert
MRS. APPLEBY Dee Gillig
DICKON Christopher Scholke
COLIN CRAVEN Ben Griessmeyer

ABOUT THIS PLAY

The style is presentational, one scene blending into another in cinematic fashion. Changes in time are conveyed through dialogue and movement. Except for a few instances, blackouts are unnecessary and disrupt the flow. Scenery can be fragmentary and suggested, with the area downstage becoming various locales. The ages of the youngsters are purposely vague, permitting flexibility in casting. Production notes and Mary's Hindu lullaby follow the script.

An original soundscore, created by composer Mark McCoy, includes music, sound effects, and voice-over lines. Available on compact disc from the publisher, this music accents the shifting moods of the play.

CHARACTERS

ANDREW CRAVEN — Master of Misselthwaite. Slightly hunched in one shoulder, he is still grieving the loss of his beloved wife, and too self-absorbed to focus on his son or Mary. Craven is constantly traveling to escape his memories.

MARY — Craven's niece, perhaps twelve. She is sullen, spoiled, imperious, the result of a neglected rearing in India. By restoring the garden, she herself is redeemed.

COLIN — Craven's sickly young son. Spoiled and imperious like Mary, he is fearful, given to hysterics, a lonely child in need of love and friendship. Role can be played Mary's age or younger.

MRS. MEDLOCK — Middle-aged, Head Housekeeper of Misselthwaite Manor. Cold and calculating, she has assumed considerable authority due to the indifference of her employer. Medlock wants everything under her control, and resents Mary and Mary's success with Colin.

MARTHA APPLEBY — Likable, youthful servant from a nearby cottage. She is fearful of losing her position and the income her family needs. Role can be played as a teen or older.

DICKON — Martha's brother. Somewhat older than Mary and Colin, Dickon is intuitive and warm, close to nature in all forms. He has an almost mysterious skill with plants and animals.

MRS. APPLEBY — Mother to Dickon and Martha. She is generous, warm-hearted and maternal, in contrast to Mrs. Medlock. Combining Earth-Mother and Fairy Godmother qualities, she aids in the 'rehabilitation' of the two orphans.

BEN WEATHERSTAFF — Sour, cantankerous old gardener. His gruff demeanor hides a caring nature.

Helping the youngsters nurture the garden of his treasured mistress mellows him.

DR. SPENCER — Colin's pompous, stuffy physician. Though ineffectual, he is not of ill-will, despite appearances.

NURSE GREY — Colin's harried nurse. Blunt, matter-of-fact, perceptive, she has a better grasp of Colin's problems than Dr. Spencer.

THE SECRET GARDEN

ACT I

(SETTING: In and around Misselthwaite Manor in Yorkshire, England, 1910. The downstage area is flexible, becoming various locales. Upstage on platforms, rooms of the Manor are suggested.)

MUSIC: Sound Cue #1 – Overture.

AT RISE: The music ends with train whistle. Somber lights up reveal a plain bench serving as train seat. Mary, an unhappy girl in black, enters; she sits on bag case, glaring. Mrs. Medlock follows, turning to shout orders.)

MRS. MEDLOCK. Careful with that box! Mind you don't scratch the suitcases! No! No! In the baggage car! *(To Mary.)* Stay right there and don't move. Did you lose the umbrella? *(Scowling, Mary thrusts umbrella up toward Mrs. Medlock. Calls.)* Careful with the steamer trunk, mind you! Come all the way from India – don't want it torn up now!

OFFSTAGE VOICE. *(Announces.)* Notting'am, Sheffield, Leeds – platform three.

MRS. MEDLOCK. *(Addresses audience.)* If not for that bothersome girl, I'd be at me cousin's wedding. But Master says, "You will escort my niece up from London." Says I, "Yes, sir. As you wish, sir. Anything else, sir?" *(Porter's whistle.)* Look at the sullen creature! Well, I'll stand no nonsense from young'uns! *(Crosses.)* Mary! Get a move on, Missy! Here's our compartment. *(Mimes opening outside door of compartment. Sound Cue #2 – Sound of steam train starting.)*

MARY. *(Sulky.)* Where are we going now?

MRS. MEDLOCK. A long ways. North of England. Take off your coat.

MARY. (*Sits on bench.*) I don't want to.

MRS. MEDLOCK. (*Joins her, arranging parcels.*) Suit yourself.

MARY. Still raining. (*Shivers.*)

MRS. MEDLOCK. Won't see much sun in Yorkshire. Not like (*Frowns.*) *India!* (*Mary stares out window; Medlock fidgets, then bursts out.*) I'd best explain about your uncle. S'pose your folks told you some of it.

MARY. Hardly. Father was always away on business and Mem Sahib —

MRS. MEDLOCK. (*Another frown.*) Mem who?

MARY. That's what servants called my mother. Mem Sahib was always rushing off to parties.

MRS. MEDLOCK. Mary Lennox, you might's well find out now: You are going to a most peculiar place.

MARY. Basil said my uncle's a hunchback. And so horrid no one comes near. I think Basil's horrid.

MRS. MEDLOCK. (*Devouring candy.*) Master's back is a bit twisted — that's what set him wrong. And who, pray tell, is Basil?

MARY. One of the Crawford boys. You know ... the family I stayed with after ... after Mother and Father died. Least I'm rid of Basil and five nasty little Crawfords! Always teasing: 'Mary, Mary.'

MRS. MEDLOCK. (*Aside.*) 'Quite contrary!' (*Offers.*) Have a candy?

MARY. (*Quick glance.*) I don't like chocolate.

MRS. MEDLOCK. It's my duty to warn you: Misselthwaite's terrible gloomy. Near a hundred rooms, mostly locked up. What do you think of that?

MARY. Nothing. I know nothing of such places.

MRS. MEDLOCK. (*Laughs.*) My, what an old woman! Don't you care?

MARY. Doesn't matter if I care or not.

MRS. MEDLOCK. True enough. He's not going to trouble himself. Master sees no one, 'cept Pruitt, his old servant. Ever since the wife died.

MARY. (*Surprised.*) My uncle was married?

MRS. MEDLOCK. Miss Lily it was — up and married him. And not for money! Course, he'd walk the world over to please her.

MARY. (*Intrigued.*) She died? Like a princess in a fairy tale?

MRS. MEDLOCK. Master went off his head, crazy-like. Said he lost the only one who'd ever love him. Stays shut up in the west wing. When he's home. Hungry?

MARY. I don't get hungry.

MRS. MEDLOCK. I expect not, scrawny as you look.

MARY. Don't they heat this train? (*Yawns.*) So dark out ... (*Sleeps. Outside, the wind blows.*)

MRS. MEDLOCK. What a plain little piece of goods! Heard the mother was a beauty! Guess she never handed much of it down. Lord knows, there's nothing to improve children at Misselthwaite. Leastways, I'm not bringing her up! A governess can see to that, thank you. (*Shakes Mary.*) Coming to Thwaite Station. Time to open your eyes!

MARY. (*Wakes.*) Aren't we there yet?

MRS. MEDLOCK. Almost. We're passing a stretch of moor now. Hear the wind howl?

MARY. (*Stands, looking out.*) Sounds like the sea.

MRS. MEDLOCK. Just barren land. Miles and miles of wild bleak land.

MARY. Looks like an ocean of black ...

MRS. MEDLOCK. Moor's a dreary place to my mind. But there's them as likes it.

MARY. I don't. Not one bit!

MRS. MEDLOCK. At the Manor I'll show you to your quarters. Mark my words, Missy: Keep to your rooms and don't go poking about!

MARY. I shall not want to go poking about!

MRS. MEDLOCK. (*Gathers parcels.*) Here we are, Thwaite Station. There's a nice cold supper waiting in your room. Quickly, child! (*Exits. Sound Cue *3 — Music. Flashback: Mary stands under umbrella, remembering.*)

INDIAN SERVANTS. (*Voice-over.*) Master dead. Mem Sahib dead! Ayah gone!

MARY. (*Near tears.*) Why does no one come? Why am I forgotten?

MRS. MEDLOCK. (*Offstage.*) Mary! Don't dawdle! The coachman's here!

MARY. (*Stomps off.*) Doesn't it ever stop raining in England? (*Lights fade.*)

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(In the study, Andrew Craven sits hidden in armchair. Slightly stooped, he holds a music box which plays gentle waltz. Sound Cue #4 – Music Box. Hearing a knock, he closes box.)

MRS. MEDLOCK. (*Enters.*) Pardon, sir.

MASTER CRAVEN. What is it now, Mrs. Medlock?

MRS. MEDLOCK. I've just brought Mary Lennox up from London.

MASTER CRAVEN. (*Vague.*) Oh yes. I remember. I trust my niece is well?

MRS. MEDLOCK. A bit thin and frail is all.

MASTER CRAVEN. See that the girl's provided for, Mrs. Medlock. And no black dresses! The place is dismal enough –

MRS. MEDLOCK. Sir, being as how I don't know much about raising children ...

MASTER CRAVEN. Nor I ...

MRS. MEDLOCK. With all due respects, sir ...

MASTER CRAVEN. Come, come, Mrs. Medlock. Speak up!

MRS. MEDLOCK. (*Pointed.*) Won't the girl need looking after? A teacher of some sort. You know, a governess.

MASTER CRAVEN. Most definitely.

MRS. MEDLOCK. I've all I can manage, what with supervising the whole staff –

MASTER CRAVEN. (*Impatient.*) Of course. I understand.

MRS. MEDLOCK. Then you'll arrange for a governess, sir?

MASTER CRAVEN. By all means.

MRS. MEDLOCK. Shall I bring Miss Mary down in the morning, sir?

MASTER CRAVEN. That won't be necessary, Mrs. Medlock. I'm hardly fit company.

MRS. MEDLOCK. And the governess, sir?

MASTER CRAVEN. Governess? Quite right. We'll attend to that. Another time.

MRS. MEDLOCK. Anything else, sir?

MASTER CRAVEN. You may go now. And no more interruptions, please!

MRS. MEDLOCK. (*Curtsying, she crosses out annoyed. Addresses audience.*) A fine kettle of fish! Here am I, seeing after a coachman, two footmen, a butler, a cook, the scullery maid, one upstairs maid, two downstairs maids, and three gardeners! Plus that sour-faced brat! Well, the gent as pays the piper calls the tune! (*Exits*)

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(*Mary's upstage quarters with clothes tree or offstage closet. Entering cheerfully, Martha sets down tray, tiptoes over to peek at Mary, asleep.*)

MARY. (*Sits up.*) Who are you?

MARTHA. Martha ... Martha Jane Appleby.

MARY. (*Haughty.*) Are you my servant?

MARTHA. I'm Mrs. Medlock's servant. I'm to clean here and wait on thee a bit. But tha' won't need much waitin' on.

MARY. (*Looks out imaginary window.*) Is that the moor?

MARTHA. Does tha' like it?

MARY. No. I hate it.

MARTHA. 'Tis fair luv'ly in spring when heather's in flower.

MARY. (*Stands stiffly, arms raised.*) Who's going to dress me?

MARTHA. Our 'Lizbeth Ellen's only four an' never stands round waitin' to be dressed like a doll.

MARY. Ayah always dressed me.

MARTHA. (*Takes off Mary's nightgown.*) 'Tis high time to learn. Tha' canna' begin any younger.

MARY. (*Sits on bed.*) You are a very strange servant! (*Thrusts out foot, demanding a shoe.*) Well? (*Stamps floor, thrusts foot again.*)

MARTHA. (*Complying, puts shoes on Mary.*) When I heard tha' was from India, I was hopin' tha'd be brown as chocolate, 'stead o' milky pale —

MARY. You thought I was a native! You — you — daughter of a pig!

MARTHA. Callin' me names? That's no way for a young lady to talk!

MARY. Natives are servants! They bow and kiss your hand. I've a good mind to slap your face. (*Raises arm up.*)

MARTHA. (*Grabs her wrist.*) I might take a notion to slap thee right back!

MARY. In India I'd have you beaten! You know nothing about India! (*Leaps to bed, sobbing.*)

MARTHA. (*Afraid.*) Beggin' thy pardon, Miss. Tha' mustn't cry like that!

MARY. You're no proper servant!

MARTHA. (*Crosses for dress.*) I'm common and talk too Yorkshire. By rights I'd be down in th' scull'ry. Here, put on thy dress.

MARY. Ayah put on my clothes. It was the custom.

MARTHA. (*Helps with dress.*) Maybe tha' should o' brung Ayah here to Yorkshire!

MARY. I can't. She's dead too.

MARTHA. I'm sorry. I see tha' misses her.

MARY. Not really. Never cared much for Ayah. The other servants ran off and left me behind. I don't seem to belong to anyone.

MARTHA. Why they've brung thee here is past understandin'. (*Heads for table.*)

MARY. You haven't brushed my hair. Don't you know anything?

MARTHA. I'm just a cottage lass from down th' road. Never been trained up for a lady's maid. (*Unfolds napkin.*) Here's a fine hearty breakfast.

MARY. (*Sits at table.*) I'm not hungry.

MARTHA. No porridge? Tastes ever so good —

MARY. I said I don't want any.

MARTHA. If Appleby children was at this table, they'd clean it bare. There's eight — all hungry as young hawks!

MARY. (*Stands.*) I'm through with breakfast.

MARTHA. (*Gets coat and hat.*) Wrap up warm an' run out an' play.

MARY. On a day like this?

MARTHA. Tha' must o' played outdoors in India?

MARY. I was sick a lot.

MARTHA. (*Helps with coat.*) There's naught to do indoors, Miss Mary.

MARY. Who'll go with me?

MARTHA. Gracious, tha'lt go alone! Me brother Dickon's out on th' moor for hours, makin' friends wi' wild ponies. Birds come an' eats from his hand. (*From imaginary window.*) That way's to th' gardens. (*Secretive.*) One's all locked up!

MARY. (*Interested.*) Why?

MARTHA. Master had it shut years ago, when th' wife died so sudden. 'Twas her garden. Master locked th' door an' buried th' key.

MARY. Why did he bury the key? If he loved his wife so much?

MARTHA. Enough questions! Go through th' courtyard, past th' marble fountain. Tha'lt come to a long walkway — wall's covered in ivy. Behind th' wall is mos'ly kitchen gardens. (*Mary exits glumly.*)

(*Downstage left: section of ivy-covered wall.*)

Children o' rich folk! A miracle they don't turn out fair fools, expectin' maids to dress 'em, take 'em for walks like they was puppies! Mother don't approve o'

young'uns always gettin' their own way or never gettin' it! Can't say which is the worstest! (*Exits*)

MARY. (*Enters down.*) Seems like the whole world's gone off and left me. (*Sound Cue #5 – Flashback music.*)

INDIAN SERVANT. (*Voice-over.*) Master dead! Mem Sahib dead! Ayah gone!

MARY. (*Fearful.*) Why does no one come? Why am I forgotten? (*Gruff old gardener, Ben enters with spade and kneels to work. Aloof.*) Where did you appear from?

BEN. (*Curt.*) Th' garden. Kitchen garden.

MARY. What's it for?

BEN. Winter vegetables. 'Taters. Cabbage.

MARY. Why is everything ugly? No flowers in bloom. No leaves on trees.

BEN. Winter!

MARY. It's all so dull and drab. Dead.

BEN. Aye.

MARY. Can I go into the orchard?

BEN. (*Grows.*) There be no dog at the door to bite thee.

MARY. Where's the door to that other garden?

BEN. (*Stands, speaking sharply.*) What other garden?

MARY. Beyond the orchard. I saw a bird singing in the tree tops – (*Sound Cue #6 – Robin chirping.*)

BEN. (*Smiles.*) Hello, tha' little scamp. (*Imaginary Robin approaches. Ben crosses stage left.*) Where's tha' been, tha' cheeky little beggar?

MARY. (*Follows, amazed.*) Does he always come when you call?

BEN. Aye, that he does. Knowed 'im since a fledglin'. His brood flew off. But Robin lad got left behin'.

MARY. His eyes sparkle! Like shiny black dewdrops!

BEN. He's a conceited one, 'wants folks talkin' 'bout 'im!

MARY. Where did the brood fly off to?

BEN. Scattered to th' winds. Poor chap knowed he was lonely.

MARY. (*Crosses, speaks softly.*) Robin, I'm lonely.

BEN. Art tha' th' lass from India? No wonder tha't lonely.

MARY. (*Impudent.*) What is your name?

BEN. Ben Weatherstaff. (*Tips cap.*) One o' th' gardeners. I'm lonely, too. Robin's me only friend. Head gardener, he is! Sees things Master Craven never bothers to find out.

MARY. You suppose I'll ever meet my uncle? I know I wouldn't like him. And he certainly wouldn't like me.

BEN. How's that?

MARY. People never like me. And I don't much care for them.

BEN. (*At work.*) In Yorkshire we've a habit o' speakin' out blunt. Lass, we're a good bit alike. Us two was wove o' th' same cloth.

MARY. (*Superior.*) You and I?

BEN. Neither of us is good lookin'. (*She scowls.*) Both as sour as we look! (*Bigger scowl.*) An' we've th' same nasty temper, I warrant!

MARY. (*Stamps foot.*) I haven't a nasty temper! (*Sound Cue #7 – Robin chirps.*)

BEN. He's made up his mind to make friends wi' thee. (*Aside.*) Dang me! Th' lad's took a fancy to th' girl!

MARY. (*Crosses, hopeful.*) Would you make friends with me? Would you?

BEN. Tha' spoke as if tha' were a real child – 'stead o' some sharp old woman. Almost like Dickon speaks to his wild things.

MARY. (*Intrigued.*) You know Dickon?

BEN. Blackberries an' heather-bells knows Dickon. Foxes show him their cubs an' skylarks doesn't hide their nests!

MARY. Look! He's flown into the orchard! No, into the garden beyond –

BEN. P'raps he's makin' up to some young madam of a robin what lives 'mong th' old rose bushes.

MARY. There must be a door somewhere.

BEN. None as any can find. (*Warns.*) None what's anyone's business!

MARY. That's the garden my uncle locked up! Isn't it? Tell me!

BEN. (*Harsh.*) Don't be a meddlesome wench pokin' thy nose where it don't belong.

MARY. (*Looking off.*) Who's that?

BEN. (*Rising to check.*) Dr. Spencer. Come to visit.

MARY. Why? Is someone sick?

BEN. (*Angry.*) I told thee not to go meddlin'! Get thee gone an' play. I've no time for blather. (*Stomps offstage right*)

MARY. If my uncle loved his wife so much, why does he hate her garden?

BEN. (*Offstage.*) I said, "Get thee gone!"

MARY. Ben said there's no door — but Martha said my uncle buried the key! (*Mystified.*) How do you explain that riddle? (*Exits.*)

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(*Mary's room: Martha sets table as Mary rushes in.*)

MARY. I like running in the wind.

MARTHA. One week an' there's color in thy cheeks already!

MARY. (*Eating.*) Dinner doesn't taste quite so dreadful today.

MARTHA. Air from th' moor has given thee stomach for food.

MARY. Martha! More potatoes!

MARTHA. Tha's lucky to have both appetite an' means to fill it. At times in our cottage, I've th' stomach but nothin' to put in.

MARY. I rather like playing outdoors. Except for Ben! Whenever I ask him anything, he tromps off!

MARTHA. Ben's a strange one. Not near so cross as he looks. (*Wind noise.*)

MARY. Listen to that wind!

MARTHA. (*Clears table.*) Mercy! Th' wind's roarin' round th' house.

MARY. Sounds like a horrible giant trying to break in.

MARTHA. Th' wind's wutherin' — moanin' an' groanin' for sure. (*Louder wind. Distant, vague cry.*)

MARY. Don't go. I want you to stay here.

MARTHA. Guess I can for a bit. (*Sits.*) Mrs. Medlock's in her parlor, restin' on velvet pillows!

MARY. Martha, why does Uncle Andrew hate the garden?

MARTHA. Still ponderin' that garden?

MARY. Why does he hate it so?

MARTHA. (*Fear.*) Mind you, us ain't to speak o' Master's troubles.

MARY. I won't tell a soul, I promise. (*Sbrug.*) I've no one to tell.

MARTHA. (*Whispers.*) But for that garden, Master Craven wouldna' be th' tortured soul tha' sees today.

MARY. I've never seen him. Thank goodness.

MARTHA. Miss Lily had th' garden made when they was first married. They tended th' flowers theirsels. No gard'ner was ever let go in. Him and her, they'd stay for hours readin' an' talkin' —

MARY. Go on, Martha!

MARTHA. (*At window.*) There was an old tree wi' roses climbin' over an' a swing hangin' from a branch. One day th' branch broke. Miss Lily fell. Hurt so bad she died that night. Th' very night that Master Col — I mean — (*Rattled.*) Aye, she died that night!

MARY. That's why Uncle hates the garden?

MARTHA. (*Rushes off with tray.*) Been locked away ever since. An' he won't let nobody talk 'bout it. So don't go breathin' a word! (*Wind. Crying is more distinct.*)

MARY. Such an eerie sound. What was that?

MARTHA. (*Alarmed.*) The wind, o' course — wutherin'!

MARY. No, I heard something inside!

MARTHA. (*More nervous.*) Wutherin' sounds like someone's out on th' moor, lost an' wailin'. Wind's got all sort o' sounds.

MARY. (*At doorway*) Martha, I heard something down one of those long corridors. (*Louder cry*) There! Someone's crying, I'm sure!

MARTHA. (*Frantic*) I told thee it's wutherin'! An' — if it ain't — it's — it's little Betty Butterworth, th' scull'ry maid! Had a toothache all day!

MARY. (*Dubious*) Are you sure?

MARTHA. Been sufferin' somethin' terrible! Poor soul. (*Flees*)

MARY. I heard someone crying, and not a grown up! This place is a complete puzzle. A hidden garden, a house with a hundred rooms. It's all so peculiar. Like something from a book. (*Lights fade on Mary*)

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(*Mary's room: Mrs. Medlock enters.*)

MRS. MEDLOCK. Mary! (*Checks*) Hmmph! Dust! I'll give Martha a piece of my mind! That girl needs a good talking to! Never would've allowed the creature upstairs if this'd been a proper sort of manor. With a Mistress and all. Mary!

MARY. (*Enters from closet with clothes*) What are you doing here?

MRS. MEDLOCK. So happens, I've come to check on you.

MARY. More rain. And fog too. I hate this weather.

MRS. MEDLOCK. (*Indifferent*) So it seems.

MARY. (*Dons stockings*) What's there to do indoors?

MRS. MEDLOCK. I haven't time to entertain you, that's sure and certain.

MARTHA. (*Enters cheerfully with dustcloth*) Mornin', Mrs. Medlock.

MRS. MEDLOCK. Martha, dust proper or you'll be down in the kitchen scrubbing pots and pans. (*Martha cleans*) As for you, young lady, keep to your quarters! And be quiet about it!

MARY. You'd think someone was dying! (*Ladies exchange quick glance*) Why must I be so quiet?

MRS. MEDLOCK. That's the rule hereabouts.

MARY. You're only the housekeeper. You can't tell me what to do!

MRS. MEDLOCK. Hold your tongue, Miss High and Mighty.

MARY. You're not my uncle. You're not even my aunt!

MRS. MEDLOCK. I'm the one what heads up this house. If not for me the place would fall to ruin. Master won't have you wandering and neither will I! (*Exits*)

MARY. (*Holding out foot*) Martha, my shoes!

MARTHA. Hasn't tha' got good sense? Our 'Lizabeth Ellen's twice as sharp. (*Mary puts on shoes*.)

MARY. What about my dress?

MARTHA. Sometimes tha' looks fair soft in the head. I'll button th' back if tha' needs help.

MARY. (*Puts on dress, mocking*.) Keep to your quarters! Don't go poking about!

MARTHA. Aye, them's her orders.

MARY. Why must I listen to that old witch!

MARTHA. (*Warns*.) Best pay heed, Miss Mary! (*Exits*.)

MARY. (*Schemes*.) I'm sure the coast is clear: Medlock's in her parlor gobbling chocolates!

(*Stage darkens. Mary slowly goes down an imaginary corridor.*)

Hundreds of rooms I've never seen ... they can't all be locked. (*Studies imaginary portraits*.) What enormous paintings! Are you thinking, "Who is this strange girl?" (*Takes a few steps*.) A boy with puffed sleeves! Buckles on his shoes! (*A few steps further, she studies another portrait*.) Hello! Is your name Mary? You must be my age. If only you lived here now. (*Afraid*.) Have I taken a wrong turn? (*Hears fretful, childish whine*.) Crying!

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(Voices offstage: Doctor, Nurse enter. Mary ducks into shadows.)

NURSE GREY. Dr. Spencer, I'm giving notice! Two weeks! That's all!

DR. SPENCER. Nurses come and go with the wind!

NURSE GREY. I'm not cut out for this line of work. It was Father's idea.

DR. SPENCER. But you promised six months!

NURSE GREY. Very well, I'll stay till June first. Not a day more! *(Pair exits. Louder whine.)*

MARY. *(Steps out.)* Crying — closer than before — and it is crying.

MRS. MEDLOCK. *(Appears suddenly.)* What are you doing here? What did I tell you!

MARY. *(Frightened.)* I turned the wrong corner! I was lost. I didn't know which way to go. I heard crying.

MRS. MEDLOCK. You heard nothing of the sort. Come along, back to your room or I'll box your ears! *(Tugs Mary to room.)*

MARY. Is someone sick? Does Betty Butterworth have a toothache?

MRS. MEDLOCK. Toothache! Whatever are you jabbering about!

MARY. *(At room.)* But I heard —

MRS. MEDLOCK. Stay where you belong or I'll lock you up! Master had better hire a governess, to keep an eye on the likes of you! *(Exits.)*

MARY. There was crying. I heard it twice. One of these days, I'll find out. And you can't stop me!

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(Craven's study: Mrs. Medlock enters.)

MRS. MEDLOCK. It's Mary Lennox, sir.

MASTER CRAVEN. Is there a problem, Mrs. Medlock?

MRS. MEDLOCK. The girl needs looking after, as I said before. She's been here two weeks now —

MASTER CRAVEN. My, two weeks. Already?

MRS. MEDLOCK. We've no children here. I mean — Mary is without companions. I doubt you want the child roaming the halls — *all on her own*.

MASTER CRAVEN. You know my orders. I won't have them disobeyed.

MRS. MEDLOCK. If you don't mind me saying so, the girl needs discipline. Lessons in deportment.

MASTER CRAVEN. Oh, you mean a governess?

MRS. MEDLOCK. (*Beams*) Shall I advertise the position, sir? I'm certain you'll find excellent prospects!

MASTER CRAVEN. Splendid idea. I'll attend to that.

MRS. MEDLOCK. (*Triumph*) Thank you, sir.

MASTER CRAVEN. Yes. The moment I return.

MRS. MEDLOCK. (*Sigh*) Leaving again, sir?

MASTER CRAVEN. Tomorrow, Mrs. Medlock.

MRS. MEDLOCK. (*Frozen smile*.) When may we expect you?

MASTER CRAVEN. A few weeks perhaps ... a few months ... Should some difficulty arise, contact my solicitor in London.

MRS. MEDLOCK. Will that be all, sir?

MASTER CRAVEN. See that Mary's made comfortable. I am her guardian after all. Though a poor one indeed. Surely the child deserves a happier place than Misslethwaite.

MRS. MEDLOCK. (*Hopeful smile*.) A boarding school perhaps?

MASTER CRAVEN. Perhaps. Meanwhile, take care of things, Mrs. Medlock. That is your duty after all.

MRS. MEDLOCK. (*Irrked*.) Long as I know what's expected of me.

MASTER CRAVEN. You may go now. And send in Pruitt.

MRS. MEDLOCK. Might I extend good wishes for a safe journey. (*Curtsy and exit. Craven opens music box. Sound Cue #8 – Lilies' waltz.*)

MASTER CRAVEN. Lilies ... I keep running away — anywhere. Here, I turn a corner ... open a door ... still expecting to find you ...

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(Mary's room: a sunny morning, Martha cleans)

MARY. *(At window.)* Look at the moor! Come look at the moor!

MARTHA. Aye. Th' storm's over for a bit.

MARY. I've never seen the sky so blue! Maybe a giant came in the night and swept away the mist and clouds. *(Dons pinafore.)*

MARTHA. 'Twas the wind more likely. *(Aside.)* Did anyone ever see th' like! Girl's doin' somethin' for hersel'!

MARY. I thought Yorkshire was always gloomy grey.

MARTHA. Soon tha'll see butterflies flutterin', larks soarin' up, singin'! Tha'll want to wake at dawn an' live on th' moor same as Dickon!

MARY. Amazing! I like Dickon, though I've never seen him.

MARTHA. Rabbits an' wild sheep an' ponies theirsels likes Dickon. I wonder what Dickon would think o' thee?

MARY. He wouldn't like me. No one does. Even Ayah never liked me.

MARTHA. How does tha' like thyself?

MARY. What an odd question!

MARTHA. Once, when I was in bad temper, Mother roars: "Tha' young vixen! Grumblin' 'bout this one an' that one! How does tha' like thyself?"

MARY. Not much, I guess. Never thought about it. Stay with me, Martha.

MARTHA. Heavens, no! 'Tis me day off. Go out an' play. Tha's never used them legs since tha' was born!

MARY. *(Runs off.)* I'll run round and round the fountain. Ten times!

•

(Downstage right: Mrs. Appleby enters with bench.)

MRS. APPLEBY. In one day they was all dead an' gone?
From th' ep-i-demic?

MARTHA. (*Follows*) Servants as didn't die ran home to
their villages.

MRS. APPLEBY. In mercy's name!

MARTHA. This colonel gent finds Mary alone in the
house, mutterin' "Why does no one come? Why am I
forgotten?"

MRS. APPLEBY. (*Sits, mending.*) Little lost soul ...

MARTHA. Mother, th' girl's spoilt till salt won't save
her. I've yet to hear a "please" or "thank you".

MRS. APPLEBY. Misselthwaite's no life for a child!
Praps if she'd a garden to tend, like Dickon. Praps Master
Craven —

MARTHA. Master pays th' girl no mind!

MRS. APPLEBY. Still grievin' after Miss Lily, poor
fellow.

MARTHA. Well, he's gone off. Never set eyes on Mary
Lennox!

MRS. APPLEBY. Don't like that one bit! Seems like
Mary's been deserted again! (*A young teen, Dickon enters
with baby rabbit.*)

DICKON. Nothin' like th' smell o' doughcake in th'
oven.

MARTHA. Dickon! Has tha' a new rabbit friend?

DICKON. Found him on the moor after th' rains.
Climbed a bit o' rock an' rescued th' wee chap.

MRS. APPLEBY. Near half dead he was. Lost his ma,
poor lad.

MARTHA. If you ain't a pair for rescuin' motherless
creatures!

DICKON. Did tha' tell Martha 'bout th' skippin' rope?

MRS. APPLEBY. (*Uneasy.*) Martha, a peddler come
drivin' by this mornin'.

DICKON. He calls out, "Skippin' ropes. Wi' red an blue
handles."

MRS. APPLEBY. (*Stands.*) Martha —

MARTHA. (*Puzzled.*) Aye.

MRS. APPLEBY. Tha's brung me all thy wages an I've five places for each penny. Well — (*Blurts.*) I took tuppence to buy Mary a skippin' rope!

MARTHA. (*Sbrugs.*) Th' money's thine, to spend as tha' will.

MRS. APPLEBY. (*Presents rope.*) Martha, skippin' in fresh air'll put strength on th' lass!

MARTHA. (*Troubled.*) Mother, Mary's been, you know, hearin' things. Askin' all sorts o' questions.

DICKON. (*Concerned.*) Does tha' dare say anythin', Martha?

MARTHA. An' lose me place at th' Manor? Gracious, no!

MRS. APPLEBY. That's a good girl. Don't let on — not a word! (*Looks off right.*) 'Lizbeth Ellen! Tha's had thy share o' doughcake. (*Exits, lights fade.*)

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(*Downstage, Ben enters with wheelbarrow, whistling while he works.*)

MARY. (*Enters smiling.*) Isn't the sunshine wonderful! If only I could hop on that snowy white cloud and float over the countryside!

BEN. Springtime's a long way off, but comin'!

MARY. (*Aside.*) Sunshine even brightens up this old grouch.

BEN. Earth's bad-tempered in winter. Then plantin' time comes round!

MARY. It all smells so clean and fresh.

BEN. Things stir down below in th' dark cause th' sun warms 'em.

MARY. India was so hot after the rains, plants grew overnight.

BEN. Takes time hereabouts. They push out a bud this day, uncurl a leaf that day. (*Sound Cue *9 — Bird chirps.*) Mornin', Master Robin! Dang, he's hoppin' straight over to thee!

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