

THE SECRET GARDEN

Study Guide

Always Free

Bright Star Touring Theatre

This 45-minute production is a fast-paced, wonderful retelling of the classic story by Frances Hodgson Burnett. We took it all the way from 1910 to today!

About the Play

This classic tale of growth and wonder has never been so entertaining. Bright Star's rendition of *The Secret Garden* is retold by our lovable comic duo Lenny and Mabel. Together, they bring to life the charming characters and lively scenes that make Frances Hodgson Burnett's story so wonderful. This play is full of lessons about perseverance, believing in yourself and helping those around you. Along with these important lessons, humor and playful moments breathe life into this magical story about transforming the world around us.

Other Classic Books from that Time Period

If you loved the classic story of *The Secret Garden*, here is a list of other popular, best-selling reads from the early 1900's:

- *Anne of Green Gables* by L. M. Montgomery

Everyone's favorite redhead, the spunky Anne Shirley, begins her adventures at Green Gables, a farm outside Avonlea, Prince Edward Island. When the freckled girl realizes that the elderly Cuthberts wanted to adopt a boy instead, she begins to try to win them and, consequently, the reader, over.

- *Peter Pan* by J.M. Barrie Peter Pan is filled with unforgettable characters: Peter Pan, the boy who would not grow up; the fairy, Tinker Bell; the evil pirate, Captain Hook; and the three children--Wendy, John, and Michael--who fly off with Peter Pan to Neverland.

- *The Phantom of the Opera* by Gaston Leroux

This is a riveting story that revolves around the young, Christine Daaé. Her father dies and she is raised in the Paris Opera House with his dying promise of a protective angel of music to guide her. After a time at the opera house, she begins hearing the voice of the Phantom of the Opera who eventually teaches her how to sing beautifully. He falls in love with her, but it can only spell disaster. This story is a remarkable piece of Gothic horror literature.

This story touches on the power of living things, the fears we face and the joy of living our lives to the fullest. True joy comes from ourselves and our own perceptions.

"If you look the right way, you can see that the whole world is a garden."

-Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden*



5 Elements of a Story

There are 5 elements or parts that make up a great story. They are:

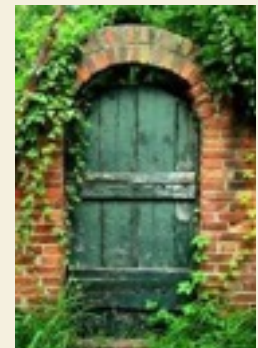
1. **Character**- A person in a novel, play or movie.
2. **Setting**-The place or surroundings where the story takes place
3. **Conflict**-Any struggle between opposing forces. (Usually the main character struggles against someone or something.)
4. **Plot**-The main events of a play, novel or movie.
5. **Theme**-The central topic a story is about.

*Challenge: Can you find all of these in *The Secret Garden*?



Things The Secret Garden Teaches Us

- Looking at and admitting your own problems can be kind of tough to do.
- A lot of people fear things that they don't know much about, but in the end, there isn't much to be afraid of.
- It is wonderful to be able to do things on your own without always relying on others.
- It is always better to smile and be nice to people than to be mean and hateful.
- You can't always play it safe to live a full, happy life.
- It is sad to lose people. It is normal and ok to feel very upset or mad for a while.
- If you give something care and attention, it will become the best it can be.
- Everything will always work out for the better.
- The way you look at problems and situations can determine how those same problems and situations turn out.
- You have the power to do anything you want to do in your life.



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES!

CREATE A REAL GARDEN

Provide each student a pot, some soil and a seed. Have each student write their name on their pot and then come up one at a time to use a small shovel to put soil into their pot. Show them how to plant the seed and then water it. Clear off a large table near a window with lots of sunlight and watch the garden grow!

DRAW A TRANSFORMATION

In the spirit of teaching your students all about a transformation, have each student pick something to draw the before & after of. The only catch is that it have to be something extreme and it can't be a garden. It can be a dirty, messy room that transforms into a clean, tidy, well-decorated room. It can be a park that is all overgrown and rusty that transforms into a beautifully manicured park with all painted equipment. Whatever they choose, have them work on the transformation drawings and then present them to the class. Afterwards, you can line your walls or the hallway outside of your room with the amazing before & after transformations for all to see!

WHAT FRIENDSHIP MEANS

In *The Secret Garden*, Colin wouldn't have made his transition into being a happier person if it wasn't for his friendship with his cousin, Mary. Her friendship was very important for him as a person. Why do you think that is? Have each student create a poem, song, short story or short skit about what friendship means to them and why they think it is important.

LIVING GARDEN

Have the group all gather on the floor facing an open playing space. One by one, go to a different student whispering to them to go up and add something to the garden using their own bodies. You can either include the entire class in the garden or divide the class into groups of two so each group can see the other's finished garden.

FIX THE PROBLEM

Have two students up in front of the class acting out a problematic situation (i.e., failing a test, missing the bus, etc.) Then take suggestions from the class on how they can fix that situation and have them act out a way to fix the problem. Every problem can be fixed.



Quiz Questions:

1. Why does Mary move to England after living in India with her parents?
2. Who owns the manor, or house, that Mary moves into?
3. Who is the little boy that Mary meets at the manor?
4. Who started the secret garden in the first place?
5. How does Mary change once she finds the secret garden?

Discussion Questions:

1. What was your favorite character in the play? Why were they your favorite? What did they do that you admire most?
2. Do you like the story of The Secret Garden? If no, what could make the story better?
3. What was your favorite scene in the play? What made it stand out to you?
4. What was Mary like when she lived in India?
5. Who is Collin and why is he important to the story and to Mary?
6. What are some other secrets in this story other than the secret garden?
7. Did you like the narrators, Lenny and Mabel, telling the story? Did they add or take away from the original story?
8. The Secret Garden often brings up the idea of magic? What is magic and how would you explain the magic that they experience?
9. Do you think that being in nature makes you feel better if you are sick?

Building Vocabulary

*** Can you use any of these vocabulary words in a sentence today? ***

Contrary - to do the opposite of what is expected or desired

Desolate - a place deserted by people, empty.

Enrapture - very joyfully

Hysterics - an emotional or exaggerated reaction

Moor - unused land

Pilgrimage - a journey or mission

Ravenous - extremely hungry

Reproach - to find fault or blame to a person or a group

Vigor - physical strength and good health

Facts About The Author:

Frances Hodgson Burnett

- Frances was born in Manchester, England.

- In 1865, her family immigrated to the United States and settled near Knoxville, TN.

- She started writing scribbling stories in her journal as a little girl, but she published her first book at the age of 19!

- She had two sons that she dressed in very fancy clothing.

- Frances bought a big home in England that had a beautiful garden. That same garden is what inspired her to write The Secret Garden!

- The Secret Garden was initially intended for young audiences, but it ended up gaining



THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THEATRE!

After a play is over and everyone goes home, there is always a light left on backstage. It's called a ghost light!

When plays ended in Ancient Greece, audiences used to stomp their feet instead of clapping.

The oldest play that is still around was written by an Ancient Greek named Aeschylus. It's almost 2500 years old!

The longest performance on stage was over 23 hours long! It happened in New Jersey in 2010.

William Shakespeare is a famous play writer. He wrote 37 plays and is still quoted by many people. There are 157 million google pages that mention him--the most of any famous person ever!

In theatre, it's considered bad luck to tell an actor, "Good luck" before a performance. Instead, you're supposed to say, "Break a Leg!"

The word "theatre" comes from a Greek verb meaning "to behold".

BEFORE YOU SEE THE PLAY...

Attending the theatre is very different from watching TV or going to the movies. For one thing, the actors are real people who are performing right then and there. They can see and hear everything that happens in the audience. Because of this, you are an important part of the play and it's important to do your job as an audience member well.

Here are some tips before you see the play.

1. Please be quiet and respectful so everyone else around you can hear what's happening and so the actors can do their job.
2. The actors may ask you to participate. Don't be afraid to respond, ask a question or volunteer!
3. Please keep your hands to yourself and your eyes up front.
4. If you like the play, be sure to clap at the end.
5. Notice how the story is being told by the actors. How do they use their body and voice to be different characters?
6. Listen to the facts that are in the play to understand the what the world was like at the time.



After seeing the Play...

Write your own review of the play! A review is a way of telling your thoughts about a play, movie or book. Consider the following when you are writing your review.

Who was your favorite character? What was the setting or location of the story? Can you summarize the play in your own words? If you had written this play, would you have done anything different? Would you recommend this play to a friend? Name one new thing you learned from watching this play!

Color Your Own Secret Garden!





A mini-van is our hip and favored mode of transportation for touring the country!

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THEATRE VOCABULARY!

Actor: The people on-stage performing the play.

Backdrop: The background for the play.

Props: Anything that an actor holds while on-stage--a cane, book, a pen, etc.

Downstage: the area closest to the audience a long time ago stages were built at angles.

Upstage: The area away from the audience, like the back wall of the a stage.

Director: The person who told the actors where to go while they were on-stage and helped them create the characters they played.

Costumes: The wigs, clothing and glasses that the actors wore to help flush out their characters .

Cheating Out: When actors turn their faces toward the audience.

Facts about us!

1. Did you know we're owned by an Emmy winning actor?
2. Our actors average 1,000 miles a week traveling the country to entertain young audiences.
3. Our programs have been seen in almost every corner of the country and even around the world.
4. We watch over 1200 actors audition before we cast our season.
5. We offer dozens of different shows a season from Black History to anti-bullying and literary classics.
6. We toured Moscow with performances of our Aesop's Fables.
7. We're based in Asheville, NC.

ABOUT US!

Founded in 2003, Bright Star Theatre tours the nation offering high quality, affordable programs to every imaginable venue. We've had countless engagements at the National Theatre, toured to Moscow and are so grateful to be in your very school today!



Auditions: How an actor gets a role is by auditioning. They may have to interview, pretend to be a character from the play or read something from it.

Set Designer: The person who decided what should be on the background and who painted or created it.

The Process of a Play:

1. Actors audition
2. Directors cast the show (that means they choose actors)
3. The directors and actors rehearse the play (that means they practice it).
4. A team of people works on building the set, costumes and props.
5. The play opens (that means it is performed for the first time)!

Were there other terms that came from the experience of seeing the live play that you'd like to learn more about?



BRIGHT STAR THEATRE

Bright Star Touring Theatre performs across the country from Seattle to New York and many schools, museums theaters and community events in between. Each season our shows run the gamut from Black History to anti-bullying, from literary classics to biographical shows. Our shows are available throughout the year for any event in any part of the world.

THE SECRET GARDEN

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Learn more about this show, this company & our whole Season:

www.brightstartheatre.com

*The Secret Garden
Made it's debut in May 2013*

We want every show to be special and remarkable for our audience. Please feel free to connect with us at anytime to tell us about your experience:

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