



THE SECRET GARDEN Ages 7+

Frances Hodgson Burnett's beloved children's novel comes to life in this delightful adaptation for stage. After Mary Lennox's parents pass away, the strong-willed, "difficult" girl is sent to live in her uncle's gloomy English estate. Mary soon discovers her reclusive uncle's young son, Colin who never leaves his room and is convinced he is an invalid. Mary's most exciting discovery is a strange, enclosed garden locked away for years. The gardener's apprentice Dickon helps Mary restore the garden, and she discovers Dickon communicates with animals. The secret garden has magical effects on the entire manor, helping Colin regain his health and ultimately healing the estranged relationship with his father. This exciting non-musical play runs just over one hour.


This is a fun play for actors who enjoy using British accents. There are great roles for all skill levels – from veteran performers and for those who have little or no experience!

AUDITIONS: Choose one audition slot (7 maximum per slot):

Monday, July 14—4:00p-5:00p


Tuesday, July 15—4:00p-5:00p

Saturday, July 19—4:00p-5:00p

 **CASTING:** The director will choose one cast. 2025 Xclaim! Summer campers get extra consideration, but casting is based on BEHAVIOR, LACK OF CONFLICTS, and ability to best perform audition material. Gender is not a factor in casting most roles. Race will not be a factor in any casting decisions.

REHEARSAL PERIOD: July 23 – August 11

Rehearsals will depend role (usually 3 days per week but could be more). Please see the audition form for possible rehearsal times on each day of the week.

 **REHEARSAL CONFLICTS** affect casting. We will try to work conflicts, but you can only perform the roles for which you can rehearse. If cast, the director accepted conflicts on your audition form, but later conflicts will NOT be accepted and WILL result in re-casting your role. **NO conflicts allowed beginning 2 weeks before the show.**

READ THROUGH: Wednesday, July 23 at 5:30p.

A brief Parent/Company meeting follows read through at 7:15p.



PERFORMANCES: September 12-21, 2025

Fridays & Saturdays at 7:00pm and Sundays at 3:00pm. Possible School Day Performance on Tuesday or Wednesday, September 16 or 17 TBA



BACKSTAGE & TECHNICAL POSITIONS:

We are accepting submissions for technical positions in stage management, costuming, make-up, lighting and sound techs. Interested parties should register for an audition slot.



CONTACT INFO:

For more information, visit the website www.xclaiminc.com or email: info@xclaiminc.com



EXPECTATIONS, FEES & EXPENSES:

All cast members must contribute the following to our production:

\$125 Activity Fee (*due at 1st rehearsal*)

Assistance with individual costumes

Personal undergarments/dressing, footwear and make-up

A minimum of 8 volunteer hours for production needs

Strike will occur following the final performance on Sunday, Sept. 21.

All cast members MUST stay to strike. Cast party after until 7:00p.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

MARY LENNOX – “difficult” child, orphan age 10 or 11

COLIN CRAVEN – Mr. Craven's invalid child, age 10

DICKON SOWERBY – kind, young gardener, a few years older than Mary

MRS. MEDLOCK – tough housekeeper

ARCHIBALD CRAVEN – master of the manor, reclusive father of Colin

MARTHA SOWERBY – young teenage maid in the manor

MRS. SOWERBY – kindly, wise, motherly friend and neighbor, adult

NURSE – staff assigned to care for Colin

DR. CRAVEN – Archibald's greedy cousin, turns out to be a “villain”

MRS. CRAWFORD – proper English lady, escort Mary from India to England

JANE SOWERBY – housemaid, child of Mrs. Sowerby

BETTY SOWERBY – housemaid, child of Mrs. Sowerby

MISS WIGGIN – proper English young lady, governess for Mary

KANCHI – Mrs. Crawford's Indian servant

COOK – household staff

PHIL SOWERBY – stable boy, child of Mrs. Sowerby

JOHN SOWERBY – young footman, child of Mrs. Sowerby

BELLBOY/MAID – at the London hotel

LILIAS – memory from the past, Archibald's wife who passed away

ENSEMBLE – other household servants, other children, fairgoers

See Audition Sides to prepare for the Audition.



AUDITION SIDES

Prepare 2 sides to perform at auditions. The director may ask you to perform additional sides as well!

MRS. MEDLOCK: *(to the new governess)* I do wish young Dr. Craven had spoken to me. You come as a complete surprise. I'm not complaining. I think a governess for Miss Mary is an excellent idea. I can't tend to my duties and watch her as well. She's not an easy child to deal with. She's the sort of girl who gets on one's nerves. Books and lessons will do her some good. The girl needs discipline.

MARY: *(to Mrs. Medlock)* You don't mean you're to be a governess to me? I don't need a governess. I don't want a governess. I'm quite intelligent for my age. *(stamps her foot.)* No, no, no. No governess. I won't have a governess.

(to COLIN) My parents died in India. There was an outbreak of cholera. I can't remember much about them. Servants raised me. Father was always away on military maneuvers. Mother spent most of her time getting ready to attend parties. She was a great beauty. I'm nothing like her. I expect she found me something of a nuisance.

DICKON: *(to MARY)* 'Morning, Miss. I'm Dickon Sowerby. And, yes, I do know a lot about flowers and animals. I ain't ashamed to admit that. And I'm not the head gardener. I help out a few days a week. Only it's every day now that old Ben is laid up with a broken leg. You're Mary Lennox. You've come all the way from India. I guess you've met all kinds of strange animals and such. Elephants and the like. I envy you.

COLIN: *(to his NURSE)* I don't want it! I won't take it! No! No! No! Stop giving me medicine I don't want. You're supposed to humor me. You're supposed to do everything I say. I wish to be left alone. Get out! Get out! Get out! I'll scream until I wake up the whole household! You know I'm capable of that. *(HE screams and throws a temper tantrum.)*

(to MARY) I am Colin Craven. Mr. Craven is my father. He won't let people talk about me. The servants are forbidden to. If I live, I may be a hunchback instead of just an invalid. My father hates to think I may be like him. I cry because it makes father wretched to look at me.

MRS. SOWERBY: *(to MARY)* Lillas. That was your aunt's name. There's some say she only married Archibald Craven because he was rich—him with a crooked back, and all. But I think they loved each other dearly. Now he does nothing but hide himself away from the world, traveling here and there to forget. Poor man.

ARCHIBALD CRAVEN: *(to MARY)* I fear I know nothing of children. I sent for you today because Mrs. Sowerby said I ought to see you. I'm fond of her; she is kind and respectable to her advice. . . . As for your request, you may have as much earth as you wish to plant things that grow. *(Remembering his dead wife LILLIAS)* You remind me of someone else who loved the earth and things that grow. When you see the earth you want, take it child. Make it come alive for you.

*All characters have speaking roles.
The above sides will be used to cast all roles.*