



CEC READING LIBRARY • GRADE 4 • R3 CHALLENGE

# The Secret Garden

12 Chapters

Day 1-12

Q2 W21-W24

Read the story. Then think about each question.



## Chapter 1: The Rusty Key

**VOCABULARY** lonely, hidden, door, garden

Mary Lennox came all the way from India to live in her uncle's enormous house on the moor. The house had one hundred rooms, but most of them were locked, and the long halls echoed with silence. Mary felt lonely and bored, because nobody played with her and the wind howled outside all day. A kind gardener told her that one garden had been shut up for years. Mary could not stop wondering about it. One windy morning she followed a robin along the old stone wall, and the bird hopped onto a patch of loose earth. There, half-covered by ivy, was the round end of a rusty key. She dug it out, pushed aside the ivy, and found a hidden door. The key turned with a creak. ★

**Mary found a garden.** Her heart beat fast, and for the first time she did not feel bored at all.

**THINK** Why did Mary feel lonely?

## Chapter 2: Wild and Forgotten

**VOCABULARY** garden, locked, weeds, excited

Mary pushed the old door open and stepped inside very carefully. The garden was wild and messy. Gray vines crawled over the walls, and the rose bushes looked like tangled gray wire. Weeds grew everywhere, and the grass was thick and long. Nothing had been touched for ten years. Yet Mary was excited, because it felt like walking into a story. She knelt down and looked closely at the ground. A few tiny green spears were poking up through the dirt. Perhaps some things were still alive! ★ **Mary found a secret and locked garden.** She wondered why someone had shut such a beautiful place away. Then she made up her mind: she would bring it back to life, all by herself.

**THINK** What did the rose bushes look like?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



## Chapter 3: The Sad Story

**VOCABULARY** uncle, secret, hidden, key

Little by little, Mary learned the sad story behind the garden. Her uncle's wife had loved it more than anything in the world. She used to sit under an old tree there, and the roses she planted climbed everywhere. One day a branch broke, and she was badly hurt and died. The uncle was so full of grief that he locked the door and buried the key. He could not bear to look at the place again. Mary understood now why the house felt so quiet and sad.

★ **Mary found a hidden secret garden behind the old wall.** She decided to keep it as her own special secret, and she promised herself that no one would take it away. The garden had waited so long, and now it had a friend.

**THINK** What happened to the uncle's wife?

## Chapter 4: Mary Gets to Work

**VOCABULARY** cared, secret, garden, old

For the first time in her life, Mary had something that needed her. Every morning she hurried to the secret garden with a small trowel she had found in the toolshed. She pulled up the weeds and cleared away the dead branches. She dug little holes and planted seeds, one by one. At first her hands were sore, and her arms ached. But she did not stop. Mary had never cared for anything before, and she loved the feeling. The old garden was quiet except for the chirping robin who watched her from the wall. ★ **She cared for the**

**garden.** And as she worked, she began to feel strong and proud, as if the garden were caring for her too.

**THINK** What tool did Mary use?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



## Chapter 5: Green Buds

**VOCABULARY** garden, buds, branches, changing

Spring came a little closer every day, and the secret garden began to wake. The robin sang from the wall while Mary worked below. One morning she found new buds on the old brown branches. They were tiny and green and so alive! The next week a patch of crocuses pushed up, purple and gold. Mary clapped her hands with joy. The garden was slowly coming alive, and Mary was changing too. She was no longer the grumpy, pale girl who had arrived in the gloomy house. Her cheeks were pink from the fresh air, and her appetite had grown. ★ **She cared for the garden every day.** She laughed out loud, and the sound surprised even her.

**THINK** What flowers pushed up?

## Chapter 6: Joy in the Morning

**VOCABULARY** joy, morning, garden, alive

Every morning, Mary woke up before the sun was fully up. She dressed quickly and ran down the stairs, past the sleeping servants, and out to the secret garden. Nobody told her to go. Nobody made her. She went because something pulled her there. When she saw a new bud open, her heart leapt with happiness, and the whole garden felt alive. When she heard the robin sing, she sang along. She no longer felt lonely, because the garden felt like a friend who was always waiting for her. Some days she worked until her fingers were dirty and her back was tired, and she still smiled. ★ **She cared for it every day because it gave her joy.** And that was the best reason of all.

**THINK** Why did Mary go to the garden?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



## Chapter 7: Crying in the Night

**VOCABULARY** crying, night, boy, afraid

One stormy night, Mary woke up to a strange sound. It was someone crying, far away down the long hall. She picked up a candle and followed the sound, her bare feet cold on the stone floor. At last she opened a heavy door and found a large, dim room. In a big carved bed lay a pale boy with a thin face and huge gray eyes. His name was Colin, and he was her uncle's only son. Nobody had ever told Mary about him. ★ **Colin was afraid.** He had stayed in that bed for years, and everyone in the house treated him as if he were made of glass. He believed he was dying, and he was terrified of going outside.

**THINK** What did Mary carry?

## Chapter 8: Too Weak to Live

**VOCABULARY** weak, angry, scared, sick

Colin cried and screamed and threw his pillows whenever he was angry. The servants hurried to do whatever he wanted, because they were afraid of his temper. He told Mary that he would die young, just as he thought his father wanted. He even claimed that he had a lump on his back. ★ **Colin believed he was too weak to live.** But Mary was not like the others. She folded her arms and said, "You are not sick. You are just scared!" No one had ever spoken to Colin that way. He stared at her, too surprised to scream. Mary refused to feel sorry for him, and for the first time Colin felt that someone was challenging him to be brave.

**THINK** Why did the servants obey Colin?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



## Chapter 9: A Secret Shared

**VOCABULARY** garden, outside, sick, wheelchair

The next day, Mary leaned close to Colin and whispered a secret. She told him about the garden behind the old wall, with its roses, its robin, and its green shoots. Colin's eyes grew wide. He could not believe that his mother's garden still existed. He had always wanted to see it. But when Mary said it was time to go, he shook with fear. ★

**Colin thought he was sick but the garden changed him.** His heart pounded as Mary and Dickon, the kind boy who loved animals, pushed his wheelchair outside. The cool air touched his face. The wind smelled of earth and flowers. Then the old door opened, and Colin's eyes filled with tears of wonder.

**THINK** Who was Dickon?

## Chapter 10: Sunshine at Last

**VOCABULARY** warm, sun, healed, alive

The wheelchair rolled slowly into the secret garden. Warm sunshine fell on Colin's pale face, and he closed his eyes. He heard the birds singing high in the trees. He smelled the sweet roses and the fresh, damp earth. A small squirrel scampered along the wall, and Dickon smiled. It had been years since Colin had felt the sun. He opened his eyes wide and whispered, "I shall get well. I shall live forever!" Tears ran down his cheeks, but they were happy tears. ★ **The garden healed them.** Colin felt something he had never felt in his dark room. He felt alive, and he knew that he wanted to get better.

**THINK** What did Colin whisper?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



## Chapter 11: Standing Up

**VOCABULARY** stand, stood, life, strong

Colin came to the garden every day, and every day he grew a little stronger. He drank fresh milk and ate big, tasty lunches. One bright morning, he said, "I want to try to stand." Mary and Dickon looked at each other. Then they took his arms very gently. Colin pushed himself up, and his legs shook like thin branches in the wind. But he stood. The robin chirped, and Mary cheered. ★ **The garden brought them back to life.** Colin laughed and cried at the same time. The boy who had believed he would die was learning how to live again. He took one small step, then another, and the sun seemed to shine brighter than ever.

**THINK** What did Colin eat and drink?

## Chapter 12: Father Comes Home

**VOCABULARY** walk, run, father, laughing

Soon Colin could walk, and then he could run. One afternoon, the three friends were racing along the garden path, shouting and laughing. At that very moment, Colin's father came home from his long travels. He heard laughter coming from behind the old wall, and he followed the sound in wonder. The door opened, and a tall, healthy boy burst out and ran straight into his arms. Mr. Craven could not believe what he saw. His sick son was strong, rosy, and happy! ★ **Fresh air and care brought the children back to life.** Mary stood nearby, grinning. She had also changed from a grumpy, lonely girl into a kind friend. The secret garden had healed everyone with nature and love.

**THINK** What did the father hear from the wall?