

Digital Book Club

Discussion Questions

Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett

1. Mary and Colin are often described as being unpleasant and rude. Martha, in fact, says Mary is "as tyrannical as a pig" and that Colin is the "worst young newt as ever was." Why are both children so ill-tempered? Whom does Burnett hold responsible for their behaviour?
2. Why does Mary respond so well to Martha? What characteristics of Martha's personality are responsible for awakening the gentleness hidden in Mary?
3. Compare Dickon's upbringing with Mary's and Colin's. How is it different? Is it important, or just incidental, that Dickon is a "common moor boy" rather than a member of the "privileged class"?
4. Could Mary and Colin have found the path to spiritual and physical healing without Dickon?
5. Misselthwaite Manor is a house of masculine rule, whether it be Mr. Craven's or Colin's rule. The garden, however, is a place of fertility and regrowth. This type of symbolism structures the novel. Where else is this structure manifested in the novel?
6. In your opinion, does Mr. Craven, after subjecting his son to years of neglect, deserve redemption?
7. Which narrative features were employed by the author to make *The Secret Garden* speak to children? Why do you think this novel appeals to an adult audience as well? What makes it a classic?

The above questions were taken from litlovers.com to enhance your discussion of the book.