

The Secret Garden

COMPREHENSION GUIDE



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THE SECRET GARDEN

Comprehension Guide by
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THE SECRET GARDEN

How to Use this Guide

This guide is intended to help you study, understand and enjoy *The Secret Garden*. You might ask if a guide is really necessary to read a book. Is the student not just working to improve reading skills while being taught to enjoy reading a book? Certainly, it is the case that the more a child reads, the more he should improve his skills, but quantity is not the only issue. Once a child has received adequate phonetic training he should learn how to read a book. Most educators using this guide will be teaching children in the grammar stage, generally understood to be during the elementary years in a classical education. (For a thorough understanding of classical Christian education, we recommend reading *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning* or *The Case for Classical Christian Education*, both by Douglas Wilson.) The basic goals of reading in the grammar stage are as follows:

The student should be able to:

1. Fluently read a given selection orally.
2. Show an increased desire for reading.
3. Show comprehension on a literal and inferential level.
4. Demonstrate an increased vocabulary.
5. Identify basic biblical values in the literature being read.
6. Identify various styles (myths, poems, fantasy, fiction, nonfiction, etc.)

Answers to the questions are found in the back of the guide. Although the answers in the guide appear in an abbreviated form, the students' answers should be in complete sentences, and they should restate the question in their answer.

Example:

Question: What did Mary find to be one of Colin's chief peculiarities?

Answer: Mary found one of Colin's chief peculiarities to be that he did not know what a rude little brute he was with his way of ordering people about.

Such writing practice trains the student to answer thoroughly, completely and with proper grammar. Another reason is to encourage integration. We want students to understand that how they write something is as important as what they write.

You may wonder how to grade the student's work in this guide. Keep it simple. Unless otherwise indicated you should assume that each question is worth five points.

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Chapter 1—*“There’s No One Left”*

1. Why was Mary a “tyrannical and selfish little pig”?

2. Why was Mary left alone as the morning went on?
(Hint: Make sure you answer why no one came to check on her.)

3. What caused the servants to wail in their huts?

4. Why did Mary sleep so heavily?

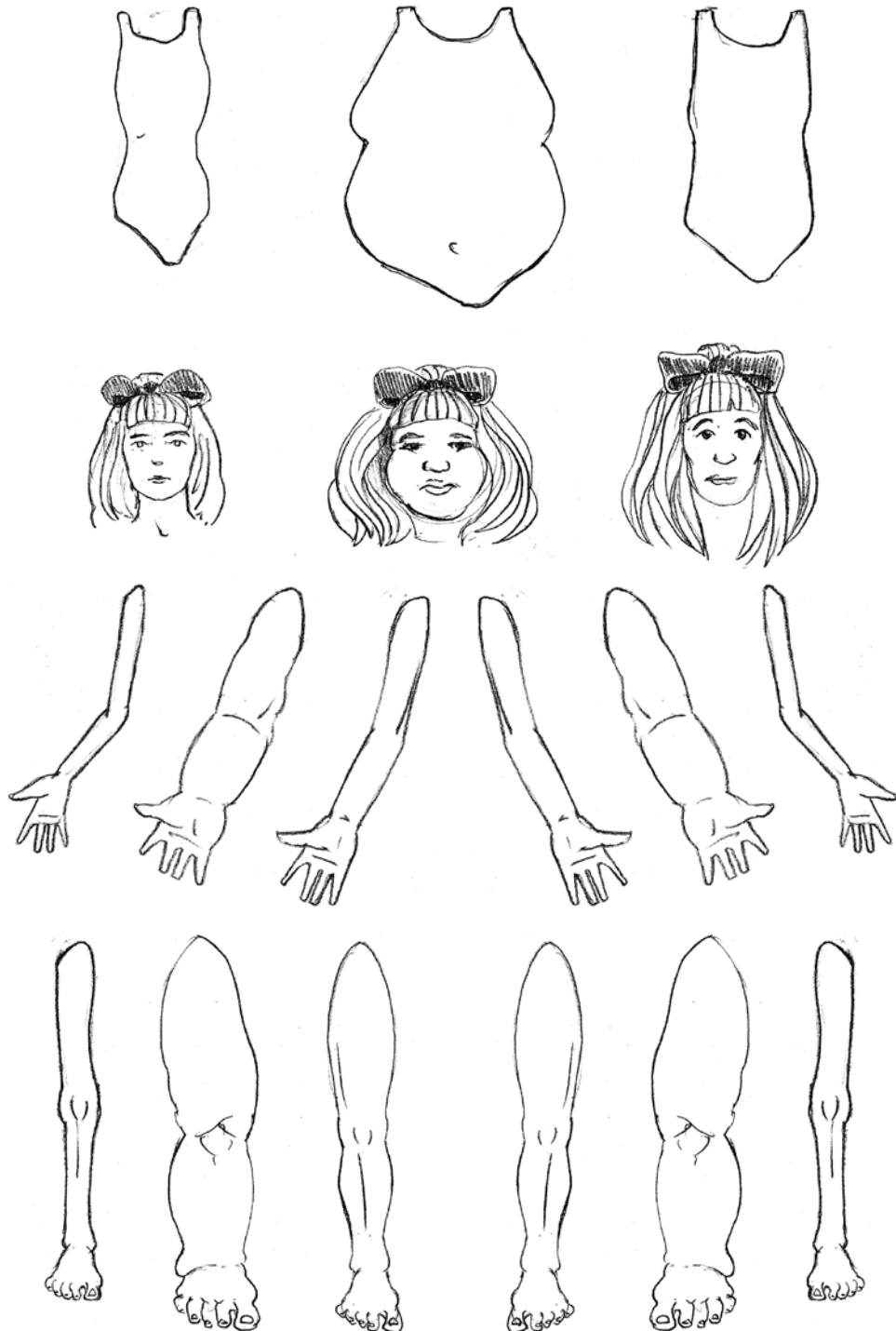
5. Mary said her bungalow sounded “queer and quiet” as if there were nobody there except for herself and the snake. What caused this unusual quiet?



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Chapter 1, Project—Draw Mary

In the beginning of this chapter Mary Lennox is described. Using tracing paper, trace the body parts that best match the description of Mary then add clothes and color in with colored pencils.



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Chapter 2—“Mistress Mary Quite Contrary”

1. Why did Mary not miss her mother at all?

2. What did Mary learn about her uncle, Mr. Archibald Craven from the Crawford family?

3. Mrs. Crawford thought something may have helped Mary be prettier on the inside. What was it?

4. What new thoughts did Mary start to have? Why did she start thinking about these things?



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Chapter 2, Page 2

5. How was Mary related to Mr. Craven?

6. What made Mary feel sorry for Mr. Craven?



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Chapter 2, Project—Mary's Diary

Pretend that you are Mary and write an entry in your journal describing what you have just been told about where you are going to live.



The form is a large rectangle tilted slightly to the right. On the left side, there is a detailed black and white illustration of ivy leaves and flowers, arranged vertically. The leaves are heart-shaped with prominent veins, and the flowers are small and star-shaped. On the right side of the frame, there are approximately 20 horizontal lines for writing, providing space for a journal entry.

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Chapter 3—“Across the Moor”

1. Did Mary offer to help Mrs. Medlock with her parcels? Why or why not?

2. Was Mary frightened about this “queer” house she was being taken to?

3. Mary thinks she hears the sea. Does she?

4. How does Mrs. Medlock describe the moor?



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Chapter 3, Page 2

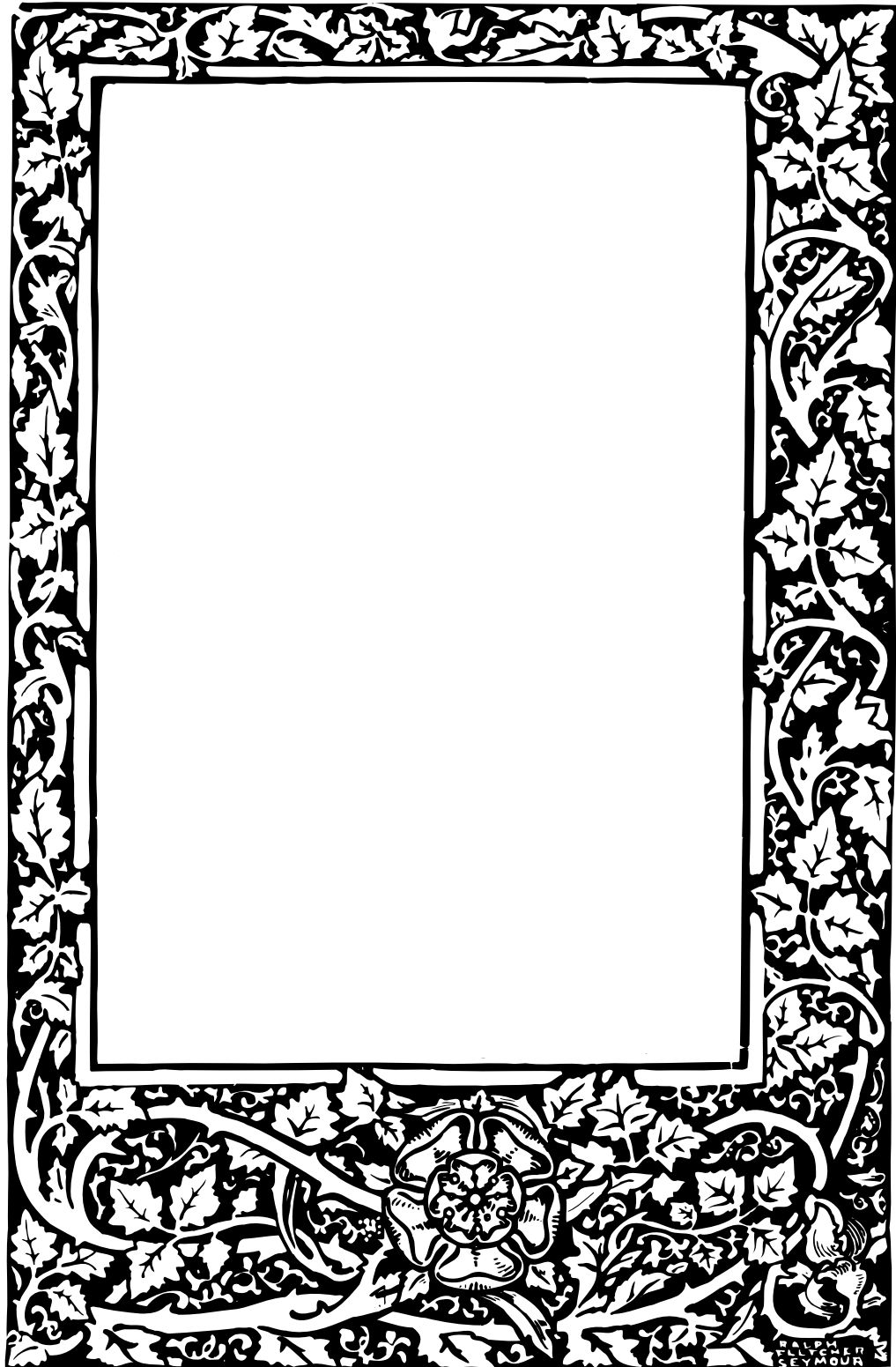
5. Mary did not want to look at the suits of armor when she walked into the enormous hall. Why?

6. What is expected of Mrs. Medlock with regard to Mary?

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Chapter 3, Project—Moor Drawing

In chapter three Mary learns they must go five miles in the carriage across Missel Moor before they get to the Manor. Mary asked Mrs. Medlock, "What is a moor?" In the frame to the right, draw a picture to show what a moor would look like.



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Chapter 4—“Martha”

1. How does Martha describe the moor? Based on their descriptions, do you think Mrs. Medlock likes the moor? Does Martha like the moor?

2. How were the servants in India different from Martha?

3. Why doesn't Mary understand Martha?

4. What made Mary feel enraged and humiliated?

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Chapter 4, Page 2

5. Why did Mary throw herself onto her pillows and cry?

6. If Martha had been a well-trained lady's maid, how would she have behaved?

7. Why did Mary begin to be interested in Dickon, and why was this a good thing?

8. Why did Mary decide to go outside to see what the gardens were like?

9. Why was one of the gardens locked up?

10. Why did the robin bring a smile to Mary's sour little face?

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Chapter 4, Page 3

11. What made Ben Weatherstaff look quite different to Mary?

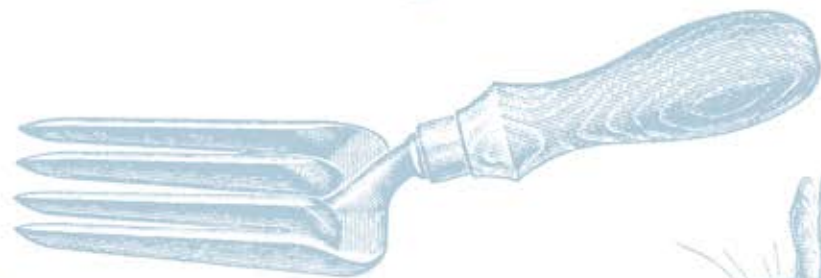
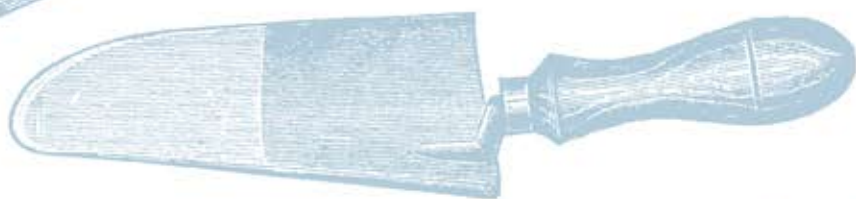
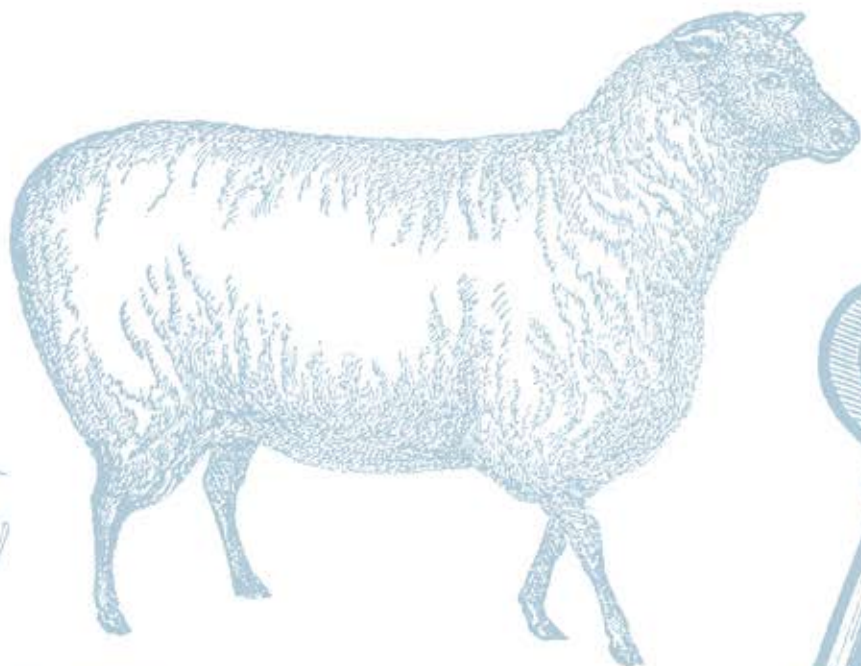
12. Why did the robin come to Ben whenever he called him?

13. What was one of the things which made Mary feel sour and cross.

14. What did Ben tell Mary made them a "good bit alike."

15. Why did Ben tell Mary that the robin had made up his mind to make friends with her?

16. Where did the robin live?



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