

Name _____

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Author's Craft: Settings

Setting plays a central role in *The Secret Garden*, where the physical transformation of the garden parallels the emotional growth of the characters. Burnett uses detailed and sensory descriptions to symbolize healing, renewal, and connection with nature.

Read the excerpt from *The Secret Garden* and answer the questions about how the setting influences the story and characters.

Excerpt:

"The garden was a tangled mass of overgrown plants and weeds, but there was a strange beauty to it. Rays of sunlight broke through the canopy of leaves, illuminating patches of wildflowers. Birds sang in the distance, and the air was filled with the earthy scent of soil. As Mary pushed aside the vines, she felt a sense of wonder—this hidden place seemed alive, waiting for someone to care for it."

Meet the Author:

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1849–1924) was a British-American novelist and playwright. Her works often explore themes of resilience, hope, and the transformative power of nature and human connections.

1. How does Burnett use sensory details to bring the overgrown garden to life?

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2. What does the garden symbolize in the story, and how does it reflect Mary's emotional journey?

3. How does Burnett's background influence her emphasis on the healing power of nature?

Describe a setting that symbolizes change or growth in a short paragraph.

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Author's Craft: Settings – Answer Key

Burnett uses sensory details like “earthy scent of soil” and “rays of sunlight” to make the garden vivid and immersive, creating a sense of wonder.

2. What does the garden symbolize in the story, and how does it reflect Mary’s emotional journey?

The garden symbolizes healing and renewal. Its transformation mirrors Mary’s growth from a lonely, closed-off child to someone who learns to connect with others and herself.

3. How does Burnett’s background influence her emphasis on the healing power of nature?

Burnett’s love for nature and her belief in its restorative power are reflected in the garden’s role as a place of healing and transformation.

Describe a setting that symbolizes change or growth in a short paragraph.
