

LCM Speech Festival Hong Kong 2024

Reading Aloud • 7-8 years

An extract from
The Secret Garden
by Frances Hodgson Burnett

In the middle of the night Mary woke up. Suddenly she heard crying again. This time she decided to discover who it was. She left her room, and in the darkness followed the crying sound, round corners and through doors, up and down stairs, to the other side of the big house. At last she found the right room. She pushed the door open and went in.

It was a big room with ancient, handsome furniture in it. On the bed was lying a boy, crying fretfully. Mary wondered if she was in a real place or if she had fallen asleep again and was dreaming without knowing it.

The boy had a sharp, delicate face the colour of ivory and he seemed to have eyes too big for it.

Mary stood near the door with her candle in her hand, holding her breath. The light attracted the boy's attention and he turned his head on his pillow and stared at her, his grey eyes opening so wide that they seemed immense.

"Who are you?" he said at last in a half-frightened whisper. "Are you a ghost?"

"No, I am not," Mary answered, her own whisper sounding half frightened. "Are you one?"

He stared and stared and stared. "No," he replied after waiting a moment or so. "I am Colin."

