



I wish I'd written? The Secret Garden

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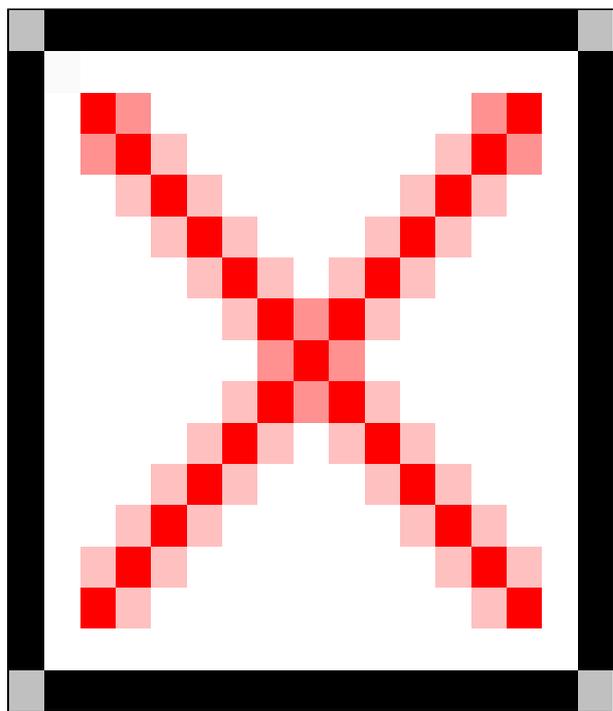
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I Wish I'd Written

Byline:

Cathy Hopkins chooses Frances Hodgson Burnett's **The Secret Garden**.



Cathy Hopkins on a book that is full of transformations?

I wish I'd written **The Secret Garden** by Frances Hodgson Burnett. It's one of my favourite books and is about Mary Lennox, an orphan who is sent from India to live with her uncle, a reclusive widower in an English manor. Life has dealt her a tough hand and she arrives there, a sour faced girl who lets everyone know she's not happy. What I love about this book though is that it is about transformation: Mary blossoms from being a misery to an outgoing, inspiring girl; her cousin, Colin changes from a bedridden sickly child to one who walks again; the house from a dark, sad place to a bright home once more but most of all, the secret garden which has been neglected for years is brought back to life by the children. I've reread it many times and it always makes me feel good with its underlying message that people, places and states of mind can change, heal and grow with the right care and attention.

I've just moved to Bath in Somerset. Along the lane at the back of the house, I've just discovered there are five secret, walled gardens, three have been totally neglected and used as dumping grounds and that is why when asked to pick a book I wish I'd written, I thought it has to be **The Secret Garden**.

Now, where are my gardening gloves and my spade?

The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett is available in many editions but the cover featured is from the Walker Illustrated Classics edition illustrated by Inga Moore (978 1 4063 1803 6, £9.99 pbk).

Cathy Hopkins? latest book is **Million Dollar Mates** published by Simon & Schuster (978 1 84738 757 8, £6.99 pbk).

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