

Thursday 4th June 2020

Guided reading –

WALT - retrieve and infer to answer comprehension questions

Good morning children.

Yesterday we learnt that the Cholera disease had broken out and the servants in Mary's home had fallen sick to it. Mary has woken up after falling asleep in the dining room. She is angry because her parents and staff have not bothered to look for her.

The Secret Garden

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fond of. When people had the cholera it seemed that they remembered nothing but themselves. But if everyone had got well again, surely someone would remember and come to look for her.

But no one came, and as she lay waiting the house seemed to grow more and more silent. She heard something rustling on the matting and when she looked down she saw a little snake gliding along and watching her with eyes like jewels. She was not frightened, because he was a harmless little thing who would not hurt her and he seemed in a hurry to get out of the room. He slipped under the door as she watched him.

'How queer and quiet it is,' she said. 'It sounds as if there was no one in the bungalow but me and the snake.'

Almost the next minute she heard footsteps in the compound, and then on the veranda. They were men's footsteps, and the men entered the bungalow and talked in low voices. No one went to meet or speak to them and they seemed to open doors and look into rooms.

'What desolation!' she heard one voice say. 'That pretty, pretty woman! I suppose the child, too. I heard there was a child, though no one ever saw her.'

Mary was standing in the middle of the nursery when they opened the door a few minutes later. She looked an ugly, cross little thing and was frowning because she was beginning to be hungry and feel disgracefully neglected. The first man who came in was a large officer she had once seen talking to her father. He looked tired and troubled, but when he saw her he was so startled that he almost jumped back.

'Barney!' he cried out. 'There is a child here! A child alone! In a place like this! Mercy on us, who is she?'

'I am Mary Lennox,' the little girl said, drawing herself up stiffly. She thought the man was very rude to call her father's bungalow 'a place like this!'. 'I fell asleep when everyone had the cholera and I have only just wakened up. Why does nobody come?'

'It is the child no one ever saw!' exclaimed the man, turning to his companions. She has actually been forgotten!'

'Why was I forgotten?' Mary said, stamping her foot. 'Why does nobody come?'


The young man whose name was Barney looked at her very sadly. Mary even thought she saw him wink his eyes as if to wink tears away.

'Poor little kid!' he said. 'There is nobody left to come.'

It was in that strange and sudden way that Mary found out that she had neither father nor mother left; that they had died and been carried away in the night, and that the few native servants who had not died also had left the house as quickly as they could get out of it, none of them even remembering that there was a Missie Sahib. That was why the place was so quiet. It was true that there was no one in the bungalow but herself and the little rustling snake.

Questions –


Use the text to help you answer the questions below.


 *If you see a light bulb next to the question, you will need to think about your own thoughts or opinions, based on what you have read.*

6. Why isn't Mary frightened of the snake?

7. Why is Mary frowning when she is found?

8. How can you tell that Mary is angry that she has been forgotten?

 9. Why do you think that the servants who haven't died have left the house quickly?

 10. How do you think Mary feels at this point in the story?

Answers –

6. Why isn't Mary frightened of the snake?

He is a harmless little thing that won't hurt her. He is in a hurry to get out of the room.

7. Why is Mary frowning when she is found?

She was beginning to get hungry and felt disgracefully neglected.

8. How can you tell that Mary is angry that she has been forgotten?

She stamps her foot

💡9. Why do you think that the servants who haven't died have left the house quickly?

Appropriate answers, e.g. They left the house because they are scared that they are going to get cholera too and die like the others. The text says how quickly it spread and so they don't want to be at risk of catching it.



💡10. How do you think Mary feels at this point in the story?

Appropriate answers, e.g. I think Mary feels scared but she is hiding it by appearing angry and annoyed with the two officers that have found her. Although she doesn't often like people or care about them, I think she will be worried about what will happen to her now that no one is around to look after her.