

Road to Friendship

Mary Lennox “was not an affectionate child and had never cared much for anyone.” And no wonder. Ignored by her parents and raised by servants, she had no concept of what life was like outside of India. Other children called her “Mistress Mary Quite Contrary,” because she didn’t like to share and always insisted on having her own way.

When Mary was 9 years old, her parents died of cholera and she was sent to live at her uncle’s home in England. The move did nothing to improve her disposition. She expected anyone and everyone to jump when she snapped her fingers.

Gradually, however, Mary began to change. Realizing how lonely she was, she asked a robin in the garden to be her friend. She began treating her maid with more respect. Won over by the guilelessness of her maid’s little brother, Dickon, and craving his approval, Mary found herself seeking his advice. She even revealed to him the location of her secret garden. Eventually, Mary convinced her crippled cousin, Colin, to grab hold of life with both hands.

By the last page of *The Secret Garden*, Mary’s transformation is complete. She is happy with herself and surrounded by friends.

The experience of Mary Lennox illustrates one of life’s important principles. To make a friend, you first must make a choice to become a friend.

And that is a choice we can exercise everyday in Life Care, American Lifestyles and Life Care at Home.

--Beecher Hunter