

Rain began to stream down the carriage window. It was quickly growing dark outside, and soon Mary could see nothing but a dense darkness on either side of the carriage.

‘Eh! We’re on the moor now sure enough,’ said Mrs Medlock.

‘What is a moor?’ said Mary.

‘It’s just miles and miles of wild land that nothing grows on but heather and gorse and broom¹, and nothing lives on it but wild ponies and sheep.’

On and on they drove through the darkness. Mary felt as if the drive would never come to an end; but finally a light appeared in the distance, and the carriage passed through a large gate. At the end of a long avenue the carriage stopped outside an enormous stone mansion.

Once they were out of the carriage, Mary and Mrs Medlock were met by an old manservant. ‘You are to take her to her room,’ he said to Mrs Medlock. ‘Mr Craven doesn’t want to see her.’

Mary was led through a huge entrance door that led into a large, dimly lit hall, which made her feel very small. She was then led up a broad staircase and down a long corridor and up a short flight of steps and through another corridor and another, until a door opened and she found herself in a room with a fire in it and a supper on a table.

Mrs Medlock said unceremoniously²—‘Well, here you are! This room is where you’ll live—and you must keep to it. Don’t you forget that!’

And so it was that Mary was introduced to her new life at Misselthwaite Manor.

¹ *heather and gorse and broom*—three different kinds of shrub.

² *unceremoniously*—bluntly, or without much care.

Chapter 2

The Locked Garden

In the morning a young housemaid called Martha came into Mary’s room to light the fire. She found Mary staring out of the window at the endless, treeless landscape.

‘That’s the moor,’ she said with a good-natured grin. ‘Do you like it?’

‘No,’ answered Mary. ‘I hate it.’

‘That’s because you’re not used to it,’ Martha said. ‘You think it’s too big and bare now. But you will like it.’

‘Do you?’ inquired Mary.

‘Aye, that I do,’ answered Martha as she knelt to light the fire. ‘I just love it. It’s not bare. It’s covered with growin’ things that smell sweet. It’s fair lovely in spring and summer, and there’s such a lot of fresh air. Eh! I wouldn’t live away from the moor for anything.’

Mary was not used to a servant talking to her like this. Servants, she thought, were meant to obey orders, not to talk in a friendly manner.

‘Are you going to be my servant?’ Mary asked in her bossy way. ‘Who is going to dress me?’

Martha sat up on her heels and stared. ‘Can’t you dress yourself then?’ she said in amazement.

‘No,’ answered Mary, quite indignantly. ‘I never did in my life. My Ayah dressed me, of course.’

‘Well,’ said Martha, ‘it’s time you learnt. It’ll do thee¹ good to wait on yourself a bit.’

This made Mary furious. Then somehow she began to feel helpless, and horribly alone and misunderstood—so far away from everything she understood and that understood her. She threw herself face downward on the pillows and began to sob.

¹ *thee*—you.