

Tom's Midnight Garden



By
Philippa Pearce

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

Tom's Midnight Garden

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About the Author: Nat Reed, a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years, served as a full-time instructor at Trent University's Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, please visit reednovelstudies.com.

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Suggestions and Expectations

Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two or three chapters of *Tom's Midnight Garden* and is comprised of four distinct sections:

1. Before You Read
2. Vocabulary Building
3. Comprehension Questions
4. Language and Extension Activities

A **portfolio cover** (page 7) as well as a **Checklist** (page 6) are included so that students may track of their completed work.

Every activity need not be completed by all students.

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to:

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases... including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story... **and many others.**

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include: the nature of time and change, fantasy, friendship, memory as a portal, childhood and imagination, the Victorian era.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying/creating *personification*
4. Identify *similes*
5. Identify *anagrams*
6. Listing compound words
7. Identifying parts of speech
8. Identify *syllables*

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Five W's and an H Chart
3. Create a synopsis
4. Identify the climax of the novel

Character Activities

1. Compare characters
2. Identify the protagonist
3. Relating personal experience

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Create a poem
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Write a description of personal feelings
6. Write a book review
7. Create a journal entry
8. Opinion writing

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a movie poster
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip

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Synopsis

When Tom's brother gets sick, Tom is shipped off to spend what he's sure will be a boring summer with his aunt and uncle in the country. But then Tom hears the old grandfather clock in the hall chime thirteen times, and he's transported back to an old garden where he meets a young, lonely girl named Hatty.

Tom returns to the garden every night to have adventures with Hatty, who mysteriously grows a little older with each visit. As the summer comes to an end, Tom realizes he wants to stay in the garden with Hatty forever.

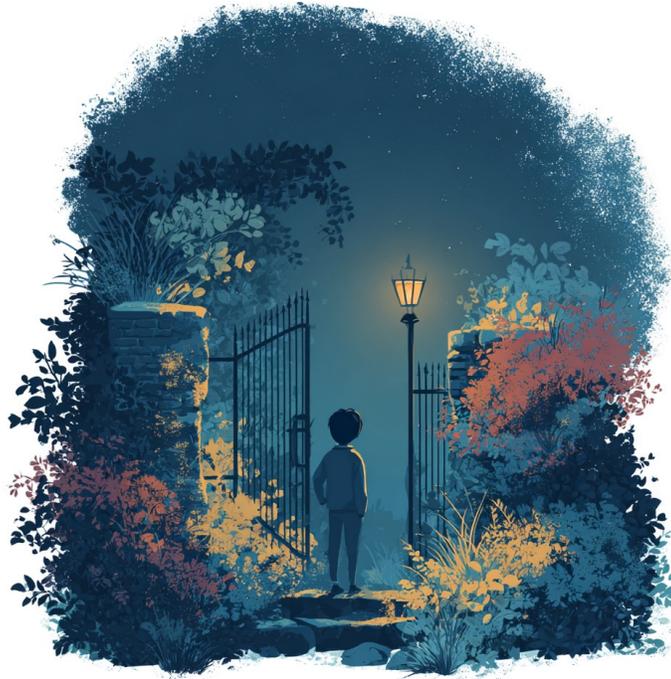
Winner of the Carnegie Medal, *Tom's Midnight Garden* is a classic of children's literature and a deeply satisfying time-travel mystery. (Courtesy of the Publisher)

Author Biography **Philippa Pearce**

The youngest of four children, Philippa Pearce was born on January 22, 1920. While growing up her family lived at the Mill House, by the River Cam in Cambridgeshire. Philippa Pearce didn't start school until she was eight years old because she had been ill as a child. Pearce later attended Girton College, Cambridge, studying English and History. Pearce then moved to London and worked as a civil servant during WWII. In 1951, Philippa Pearce became extremely ill with tuberculosis, but it was during this time that she began writing children's books. Her children's books included *Minnow On the Say* (published in the United States, under the title *The Minnow Leads to Treasure*). Later she wrote *A Dog So Small*, *The Way to Sattin Shore* and many others including her best-known novel, *Tom's Midnight Garden* (1958). Philippa passed away in 2006.



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Name: _____

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Chapters 1-2



Before you read this section:

It is important for an author to create an interesting **protagonist** (main character) for any work of fiction. *Tom's Midnight Garden* features 12-year-old Tom Long, who is sent to spend a few weeks with his aunt and uncle while his brother recovers from measles. Think back on some of the most interesting main characters you have met in previous stories you've read. What do you think makes for an intriguing character that really keeps your attention?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

dismissive	quarantine	disperse	tenant
distinctly	persevere	subdued	contradiction

1. If you wait for that crowd to _____, you'll be waiting a long time.
2. Peter was put into _____ for as long as his symptoms lasted.
3. My brother is a _____ in the Fenwick Apartments.
4. I was angry that the teacher was so _____ about my bright idea.
5. His bold _____ of his father's weak explanation was very convincing.
6. After the visiting team scored the third goal, the crowd became very _____.
7. "I did hear you say her name most _____," Janice exclaimed.
8. You must be sure to _____ at every task, if you want to achieve success.

Questions



1. What is the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One?

2. Chapter One is entitled *Exile*. What was the reason for Tom's *exile*, and where was he being *exiled* to?

3. How would you describe Tom's feelings about this exile? What were his reasons for feeling this way?

4. The landlady's name was _____.

5. Why do you think Tom had so much trouble sleeping?

6. Describe how Tom got into trouble in Chapter 2.

7. Were Peter's parents overcautious by not letting him write to Tom. Why/why not?

8. Explain what stirred Tom from his bed a second time in Chapter Two.

Language Activities



A. The Good Old Indispensable Adverb!

An **adverb** is a part of speech defined as *a modifier (or helper) of a verb* (usually an action word). Often an adverb will end in the letters **ly** (i.e. **slowly**). Our novel features a good many creative adverbs.



1. "Very kind," Tom repeated **bitterly**.

→ In this sentence, which verb does **bitterly** modify? _____

2. Tom waved good-bye **angrily** to his mother . . .

→ In this sentence, what verb does **angrily** modify? _____

3. Tom examined the room **more closely**.

→ In this sentence the adverb _____ modifies the verb _____

B. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. You will find many examples of personification in the first two chapters. Here is one example: ... *the grandfather clock struck one with stately emphasis*. Explain how this is an example of personification.

Write a sentence about an apple tree including an example of personification.

Why do you think the author uses personification so much in these chapters?

C. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **WAS** can also form the word **SAW**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:



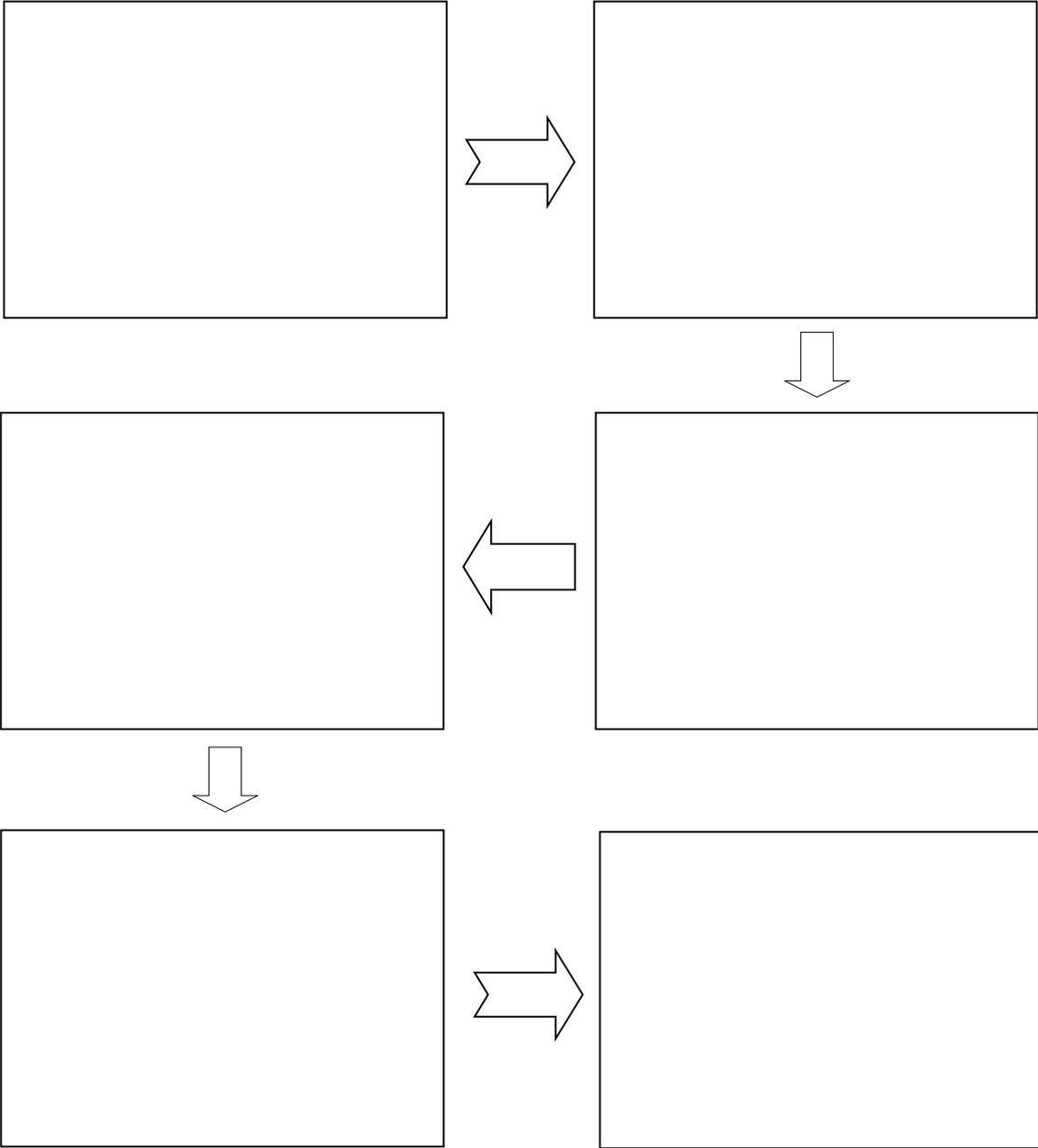
a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in this section of *Tom's Midnight Garden*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
instead		Keeps someone from proceeding.
seven		Not odds.
wrong		Progressed to maturity.
steady		Remained in the same place.
reason		Spanish madam.
needs		Thick; heavy.

D. Sequence Chart

Choose what you consider to be the six most important events in this section. In each of the six boxes below list the six events that you have chosen, describing what happened and telling why you consider this to be an essential part of the story.



Extension Activity



A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words

Use the three boxes to describe and illustrate the beginning, middle and end of this section.



Beginning Picture:	Beginning:
Middle Picture	Middle:
Concluding Picture:	Concluding: