

Beyond the Secret Garden

Book Club Discussion Questions

1. What turned Frances into a 'pen driving machine'? Was it always that her 'object was remuneration' as she said herself (aged 18) sending her first story to a magazine?
2. Would you consider her 'an early role model for ambitious young women', as it says on the back of the book?
3. What makes you like or dislike Frances?
4. Does the biographer give you enough evidence why, loving her sons as she said she did, she spent so much time away from them?
5. The letter from her servants at Maytham is a remarkable tribute to Frances. Why do you think they wrote as they did?
6. Was Frances a snob?
7. Elizabeth Jane Howard, in her review of the first edition in 1974, congratulated Ann Thwaite on 'finding someone so extraordinary and so neglected' to write about. Do you realise this is one of the main concerns for a biographer? Who would you choose to write about?
8. Do you think it a problem or an advantage for Frances that she was neither wholly English or wholly American?

We believe that Ann Thwaite's eye-opening biography of famed children's author Frances Hodgson Burnett is a book worth talking about. We have created these questions so your book club can get the conversation started.

The book will be published on 6th August 2020 ahead of the release of the new film, *The Secret Garden*, starring Julie Walters and Colin Firth.

