
Tom's Midnight Garden

Q: How relevant is Philippa Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden* to today's reader? Select a few themes from the novel to support your arguments.

The novel *Tom's Midnight Garden* that was written by Philippa Pearce is one of the most famous poems in children's literature. The importance of this novel is seen in its representation of various issues that concern people in general. The present essay discusses the relevance of Tom's Midnight Garden to today's readers.

Is the novel relevant to today's readers is a question that need analyzing two main things in order to answer it. The first main thing is related the expectations of today's readers. Today's readers or modern readers seek to have entertaining on the one hand, and knowledge on the hand. These two characteristics can be seen as the expectations of readers in all times. However, modern readers look for entertaining and knowledge in literary works that send a clear message away from vulgarity and pretense. Therefore, if the novel fulfills these two characteristics, it can be considered as relevant to modern readers.

Therefore, the second main thing concerns the ability of the novel to represent the mentioned two characteristics. Tom's Midnight Garden includes different themes that make the novel entertaining as well as knowledgeable. For instance, the theme of fantasy represented by Tom finding a magical garden presents the reader with a beautiful story that can entertain them. The magical garden provides entertaining because of the depiction of its visual views. Moreover, the theme of fantasy moves the readers from a melancholic situation, the exile of Tom, to a very joyful one. In addition, the knowledge of the novel is represented through its moral lesson that concern all readers. This moral lesson indicates the importance of ceasing time as much as possible.

Moreover, the novel presents some realistic issues that concern the adults. For instance, the transformation of the relationship between Tom and Hatty stands as a realistic issue that most adults experience in their real life, as they pass from the stage of childhood into adulthood. In addition, the novel also presents a unique variety of themes that provides both entertaining and moral lessons. The theme of fantasy, for instance, adds more excitement and invites readers to enjoy reading the novel. The magical garden that Tom found serves to provide amusement, as the garden includes magical views. Additionally, the theme of time is very significant in showing the reality. Moving to adulthood makes people appreciate the simplicity of childhood. The theme of time provides



a moral lesson that invites people to live their days, as this day will become beautiful memories when facing the hard reality.

To sum up, we can conclude that Tom's Midnight Garden fulfills the expectations of the modern readers. Therefore, the novel stands as relevant to those readers.

Q: Analyze the passage below from P. Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden* focusing on Tom's sudden change of mind.

"His thoughts ran on the garden, as they always did nowadays. He reflected how dangerously near he had been to betraying it, just now. Fortunately, his uncle and aunt had only laughed at him; if they had been more attentive and sympathetic, he might have been trapped into telling more. They might have found out his secret. The very next time he visited the garden, they would have insisted upon going with him"

Tom's Midnight Garden, Chapter 7

The mentioned passage is very important passage from the novel *Tom's Midnight Garden* by P. Pearce. The importance of this passage lies in the fact that it represents a crucial change that occurs in Tom's personality. The central idea in this passage involves the sudden change that is seen in Tom's mind about his time in the garden.

The passage is about a discussion between Tom and his aunt Gwen about the time he will stay with them. The reason of this discussion is because Tom's changing appearance. Tom is afraid that his aunt and uncle suspect his secret and they are going to know about it. Therefore, his situation makes his aunt check his health. However, in her try to ease him, she told him that if he is sick, he is going to spend more time away from his home. "It would mean your staying away from home several weeks longer, perhaps, instead of only ten days." This stands as the turning point in the passage to show the major change that Tom shows. His aunt told him that

At this point, Tom realizes that he has only ten days of his adventure in his magical garden. Ten days for him is very short period of time. Therefore, he immediately shows his dissatisfaction. His tone refers to that dissatisfaction when he states, "only ten days?" Tom's change is represented in his opposition, as well as his realization of the importance of time. He does not like to leave the garden after having outstanding adventure in the it. Therefore, he starts to think about his miserable situation without visiting the garden. For Tom, home now is not the preferable place for him. Instead, he is frightened by losing all the pleasure he has in experiencing the magical garden and spending amazing time with Hatty there. Therefore, instead of being pleased by returning home, Tom is now considering his home an unpreferable place. In fact, his home becomes a place of misery for him because he is forced to leave a place where he enjoys visiting.

In conclusion, the way in which Tom represents a major change of his personality indicates the importance of this passage. The passage shows different changeable sides of Tom in which he is no longer preferring to go back



to his home. The passage shows that leaving the garden forms a sudden change in Tom's personality. That change depicts his undesirable wish to returning home and to lose his beautiful time in the garden.

Q: Do a close reading of the passage from P. Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden* focusing on the importance of nature and companionship.

...There was a Sensitive Plant, too, and Hatty showed Tom how, when she touched a leaf-tip, the whole frond drooped and shrank from her by folding itself together. The plant's sensitivity was something quite out of the ordinary; it seemed to feel even Tom's touch. He was so delighted that he worked his fingers over the whole plant, and left it in one droop of nervous dejection."

Tom's Midnight Garden Chapter 10

In the present passage from the novel *Tom's Midnight Garden* by Pearce, the importance of nature and companionship stands as the main interest. The passage focuses on nature and companionship in order to reveal how Tom feels in his special place "the magical garden." The passage directly shows how Tom is integrated with nature and how companionship provides him with a pleasant experience. Nature and companionship have been celebrated in the passage for the sake of presenting different explanations.

The ideas of nature and companionship are seen altogether in the present passage. The passage introduces nature as a fundamental factor in shaping the magical experience that Tom is having in his garden. The passage shows how nature is magical to a way that it is connected to Tom himself, "it seemed to feel even Tom's touch." Therefore, nature presents the main significant part of the garden in Tom's imagination. In addition, the connect between tom and nature shows how Tom can have company by the beautiful nature of the garden. This company gives him a peace of mind because he enjoys everything about nature in the garden.

Moreover, the role of Hatty is very central in this passage to show the effect of companionship. Tom and Hatty are moving in the garden with great pleasant, and they discover everything in it. This companionship provides Tom with great benefit since it prevents him from being lonely on the one hand, and helps him to have great time on the other hand. Therefore, the importance of companionship has the same importance of nature in regard to their role of shaping the characteristics of the main character of the novel Tom. The connection between Hatty and tom is the same as the connection between Tom and nature. This is due to the fact that both relationships have the same effect on Tom. As having peace by the beautiful nature around him, Tom is also having peace through the beautiful company of Hatty. They play together and share their celebration of nature. Actually, their time in the garden, as the passage describes, shows the role of Hatty on Tom, "Hatty bared her arm," "Hatty led Tom back to the doorway of the green-house" and "showed him the coloured panes." It felt as the passage introduces Hatty as a guidance who is ready to fulfill Tom's fancy.



In the end, the passage focuses on presenting the importance of nature and companionship in order to show different aspects related to Tom. In addition, the passage shows a unique connectedness between nature and companionship in terms of their similar effect on Tom.

Q: Philippa Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden* is quite moving and heartwarming. Discuss with reference to the novel.

In children literature, the novel *Tom's Midnight Garden* by Philippa Pearce is considered one of the most versatile novels in terms of presenting ideas and themes. One of the distinguished characteristics about this particular novel is that *Tom's Midnight Garden* can be described as a moving and heartwarming novel. This essay is intended to discuss the elements that make *Tom's Midnight Garden* a moving and heartwarming novel.

Tom's Midnight Garden is described as a moving novel through the unique transmission that the novel presents as a way of narrating its events. The events of the novel begin with a description of the psychological state experienced by the main character, Tom. The first part of the novel is titled as 'exile'. Tom suffers at this stage from a cruel feeling of isolation as he is forced to spend his vacation isolated away from his home. However, this stage ends with Tom discovering a magical garden. At this point in the novel, the novel takes another turn in terms of Tom's enjoyment of his new discovery. Moreover, the friendship between Tom and Hatty is one of the main features that make the novel moving, because that friendship adds a kind of positive change for the characters of the novel on the one hand, and to the course of events in the novel on the other hand.

On the other hand, the novel can be described as heartwarming because the interesting themes that have been addressed in the novel. The theme of friendship is the most important theme in this context. The friendship between Tom and Hattie adds delight to both the characters and the readers. In addition, the theme of friendship raises a delicate issue represented through the end of the innocent relationship between Tom and Hatty.

In conclusion, the mentioned characteristics about the novel *Tom's Midnight Garden* help in describing the novel as a moving and a heartwarming novel.

Fantasy and Reality

Fantasy is a way of distancing ourselves from reality, a way that enables us to make attempts in order to accept reality. Fantasy, fiction, or imagination are inseparable from childhood and the stories of this stage of life. Part of the definition of fantasy involves the supernatural, the magical, the extraordinary and every element that evokes wonder. Several critics define fantasy by the effect it exerts on the reader. Thus, fantasy, for them, should "evoke wonder". Other critics define fantasy by contrasting it with reality. Thus, fantasy involves everything that does



not exist in reality or that which challenges the laws of nature. Since literature is a domain for the writer and the reader to give full rein to them to imagination, fantasy has become part of numerous literary works. Fantasy, however, is dominant in children's literature. However, Pearce's 'Tom's Midnight Garden' is one of the greatest pieces in which fantasy rules over its action. It is a story in which a boy travels through time.

Philippa Pearce's Tom's Midnight Garden experiments with the concept of reality. It is a story of a boy called Tom who leads adventures in two parallel worlds. The ending of the novel is significant as it adds a final comment on what reality is. Though the concept is difficult, it accounts for both children and adults. Tom is about to leave his aunt and uncle's house. His comments and actions are significant. In this passage, Tom is eager to tell his brother Peter about a secret garden in which a secret friend, Hatty, lives, "Peter, I've the secret of the other garden to tell you, and I've an invitation for you from Hatty". The passage shows that Peter has met Mrs. Bartholomew just that morning, but he hugs her as if he has known her for years, which strikes Aunt Gwen with wonder. She does not understand the relationship that binds Tom and Mrs. Bartholomew. The only way to understand the significance of the ending is to see the background. Tom and Mrs. Bartholomew strike friendship in the garden that Tom discovers and visits only when the clock strikes 13. Many adults will not believe at first that this is real, as it appears mere childish fantasy. In the garden, Tom becomes friend with Hatty, who turns out to be Mrs. Bartholomew herself. The friendship that grows between Tom and the old woman is the result of something real that happened in the garden. This is how the novel comments on reality. Tom's Midnight Garden is a novel for both children and adults. It presents an important question about the nature of reality. While many may argue that the garden and the people there are mere fantasy, Pearce suggests that the garden is a real world.

The magic, as well as supernatural events, and elements contribute a lot to Pearce's story being a fantasy. When Tom sees it for the first time, he notices that it is an empty large hall with some travel posters, laundry boxes, and empty milk bottles. However, when Tom enters the hall while he is wandering the house at night, he is shocked by how the hall changes: there are "no laundry box, no milk bottles, no travel posters on the walls. The walls were decorated with a rich variety of other objects instead: a tall Gothic barometer, a fan of peacock feathers, a huge engraving of a battle and many other pictures". Then, just before his eyes, the extraordinary objects started to disappear. Tom "wondered more calmly on what he had seen in the hall. Had it been a dream? Another possible explanation occurred to him: ghosts". Furthermore, invisibility enhances fantasy and wonder in the story. Tom is invisible to all the people in the garden except one, Hatty. Tom notices that when time overlaps, and he gets into the garden, nobody seems to notice his presence, "it was a relief really to see people, even when they ignored his presence: the maid, the gardener and a severe-looking woman in a long dress of rustling purple silk face to face with whom Tom came unexpectedly, on a corner. She cut him dead".



Throughout *Tom's Midnight Garden*, one cannot escape the fact that the garden plays an important role and has a great influence. Besides its being one of the supernatural elements that strike us with wonder, its significance lies in its symbolic value. Midnight gardens, magic wells", the garden metaphorically symbolizes the time of childhood. The bright garden stands for childhood, innocence, freedom, imagination, and beauty. It offers a space for both Tom and Hatty to escape the limitations of the real world where they cannot show the child inside each of them. In real life, Tom feels frustrated. He cannot convey his feelings and ideas to people around him, his aunt and uncle in particular. They do not seem to understand what he says or how he feels. Uncle Alan, for example, gets angry when he finds Tom out of bed at night, and he does not bother to inquire about the reason. He also does not seem to understand Tom when the latter asks about time. Thus, the garden is an Eden for Tom where he can avoid all that subdues his spirit. Also, Hatty, who represents Mrs. Bartholomew's childhood memories, prefers the garden because it also allows her to escape her terrible present which involves nothing but loneliness. What is also interesting about the garden is that it makes its appearance when the grandfather clock strikes the thirteenth hour after midnight. Thus, it associates the garden with mythical time, which seems not to exist in real life.

Though the story involves a great deal of fantasy and imaginary things, Pearce does not let his readers get separated from reality. Every night, Tom travels between the two types of time: linear time, which moves forward and marks day and night without any possibility for a shift or overlap, and mythical time, which is not counted in the real time and moves forward or backward. Thus, no matter how long Tom stays in the garden where time is mythical, he goes back to the real world to face the same issues he has left behind. However, he tried desperately to stay in the garden; Tom falls asleep and returns to the real world. When Tom tries to go back to the garden, he finds that it disappeared and starts screaming at this loss "he screamed to her for help: Hatty, Hatty!". This shows that though he cannot accept it, Tom has to grow up and leave the stage of childhood to live in the real world. At the same time, Pearce insists that fantasy is important. The author emphasizes the significance of the fantastic by making it seem part of the real world and vice versa. For example, Tom sends many letters for Peter telling him about his adventures in the garden and asking him to keep that as a secret, which makes us feel that the garden is there and part of the real world and that it could be hidden. Pearce uses the fantastic to comment metaphorically on reality, with the story finally expressing the "deeper truth" of fantasy that enables communication between distant generations. Two generations meet in the story. In the garden, Tom makes a strong friendship relationship with Hatty. This relationship paves the way for communication and friendship between Tom and old Mrs. Bartholomew, who returned in time to her childhood, to be Hatty.

To conclude, Tom is the main character and the protagonist, who has a specific role to play. He has been seen as a hero of a fantasy because he has created his own world far from adult's authority and connected with the real world. Tom has failed at some places, but he has succeeded to spend his holiday in his own world. However, the different definitions of fantasy can be attempted, and critics offer a diversity of definitions on this subject. We

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find also that fantasy is an inseparable part of many children stories. *'Tom's Midnight Garden'* is a fantasy and can be classified as children literature. Tom has changed the real world and made it a part of his imaginative one mixing the two worlds and make the others wonder about his change at the end.
