

# Search for the *Hidden Garden*

Friends  
with the  
**SAINTS**

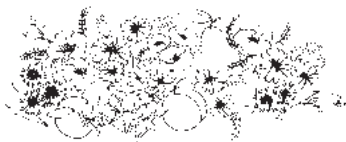


A Discovery with  
*Saint Thérèse*

Written by Sherry Weaver Smith

Illustrated by Rebecca Thornburgh

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*Hidden Garden*



A Discovery  
with Saint Thérèse

By Sherry Weaver Smith

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This is a novelized story including Saint Thérèse of Lisieux. While Saint Thérèse is a real historical figure, elements of this story—including other characters, conversations, the plot, and events—are fictional products of the author's imagination.

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# *People and Places*

## **Who you will meet in this story**

Charlotte Masson (shar-LOT mah-SON)

A ten-year-old girl who would like to go on an adventure

Anne

Charlotte's best friend

Sister Saint Francis

A teacher and nun at Charlotte's school

Louise Bouchard (boo-SHARD)

A classmate of Charlotte and Anne

Thérèse Martin (teh-REHZ)

A fifteen-year-old girl soon entering a monastery—a place for nuns to live, work, and pray

Madame Masson (ma-DAHM mah-SON)

Charlotte's mother

Madame Bouchard (ma-DAHM boo-SHARD)

Louise's mother

Monsieur Jean-Marc Dubois (miss-YEEUH

ZHAHN-MARK doo-BWAH)

The gardener for the Bouchard estate

Elena (EL-en-ah)

A maid for the Bouchard estate who also watches over Monsieur Dubois

Olivier Bernard (oh-LI-vee-ay bear-NARD)

Charlotte's ten-year-old friend who does not attend her school

Marc

Olivier's six-year-old younger brother

Vincent

Louise's older brother who is twelve-years old

Theo (TAY-oh)

Charlotte's six-year-old younger brother

Monsieur Bouchard (miss-YEEUH boo-SHARD)

Louise's father and a wealthy businessman

Inspector Dufour (an-spek-TOR due-FOOR)

A police detective

Monsieur Masson (miss-YEEUH mah-SON)

Charlotte's father

## **Where and when this story takes place**

This story takes place in the town of Lisieux in northern France. The region around Lisieux is called Lower Normandy. The time is the spring of 1888.

## **What you will encounter in this story**

Baguette (bag-ET)

a long, thin, and crusty loaf of bread

Carmel (car-MEL), Carmelite (CAR-muh-lite)

Carmelites can be men or women. Carmelite women, called sisters, serve God by living together in monasteries called Carmels. Inside the gardens and walls of the monastery, they help the world by praying and working. Carmelite sisters spend hours of each day praying alone as well as together.

Copybook

a blank book for notes or homework, usually for writing examples over and over again. Students often used copybooks for handwriting and math.

Estate

a mansion, which is a big house, surrounded by a large area of land.

Madame (mah-DAHM)

the French word for Mrs.

Monastery

a place where men or women live, work, and pray together to serve God.

Monsieur (miss-YEEUH)

the French word for Mr.





# *A Treasure Map*

## 1

“Disruptive,” the teacher said as she wrote on the blackboard. “Write it in your copybook. It is your first spelling word.”

All of the girls dipped their pens into the inkwells on their desks. With one tap, they each shook off the extra ink and began to write—everyone but Charlotte Masson.

Charlotte wished that she could drift away like the white feather floating away from her desk. But she wasn't on an adventure, at least not yet. Instead, she was sitting in a classroom in a town in northern France.

She made one dot and stopped. Charlotte planned to start some “disruptive” trouble at any minute. Her mother wouldn’t be happy if she misbehaved. But this time, it would be for a good reason. She just *had* to take a closer look at the map she’d seen in the library the day before. Charlotte’s plan was to get in trouble so that she would have to clean the library as a punishment. It was the only way she could think of to see the map alone.

“Discovery. Think of finding something wonderful,” the teacher said. “The next word is . . .” *Something wonderful*, Charlotte thought, *like the map in the library. It might even be a treasure map!*

Charlotte’s teacher was a nun, or a religious sister. She wore a long black dress with a white triangle bib and a black veil on her head. Charlotte jumped in her seat when her teacher tapped a pointer stick on her desk. *She can’t know that I’m up to something, can she?* thought Charlotte.

There was a rustling sound off in the corner where the students’ satchel bags hung like soldiers at attention.

“Discover . . . ?” Sister Saint Francis repeated by mistake. Charlotte looked at the satchels out of the corner of her eye. All of the other girls turned their heads, all except Charlotte’s best friend, Anne.

Anne looked right at Charlotte. In response Charlotte shrugged so hard her shoulders almost hit her ears. She didn't want Anne to get in trouble, too. The sounds stopped until . . .

A crash came from the frosted glass windows on the other side of the room. Something was scraping and trying to break in. Then, a fluffy, white shape fluttered up and down outside the window.

A squeak came from the corner. A number of chirps followed fast.

The white shape at the window clucked. Looking pale, Anne stood up. "I think that there might be a hen outside our window. But why it's knocking on the glass, I don't know . . ."

Suddenly, a ball of yellow burst out of Charlotte's satchel. A few feathers floated after it. A terrified chick skittered this way and that.

Charlotte reached down and scooped up the chick with her hands. But the bird knew how to break out of eggs and bags—and hands, too. It pecked so hard that Charlotte had to let go. The chick scrambled down to her desk and ran across her paper.

Flapping wings much smaller than its round body, the chick fluttered over to the desk of Louise Bouchard. The little bird's foot landed right in a blob

of ink. Over and over, the chick stamped Louise's work—"disruptive, discovery"—with spiky prints.

Charlotte had not planned for this.

What would her teacher say?

## 2

"This, this *thing* is ruining my spelling!" Louise wailed. Sister Saint Francis tried to herd the chick with her long skirt.

"We must stay calm so we can catch the chick," Anne said. Dressed like a scary crow, the nun just made the little bird run faster.

"Stay calm!" girls shouted, in anything but a calm way. The hen flapped her wings and hovered outside.

Charlotte crept closer to the chick and opened her hands to form a bowl. "Come on," she whispered. "Thank you for creating a disruption. Now, let's get you out of here." With a stretched neck, the little bird stepped up into her hand.

Anne opened the door to the outside. Charlotte led the hen, stabbing at her heels, to the fence between the schoolyard and the next-door farm. She

dropped the chick on the other side, and it fluttered down like a little falling patch of sunshine. The hen followed, flapping over the fence.

When Sister Saint Francis asked where the chick had come from, Louise said she had seen it come out of Charlotte's satchel. *Of course, Louise would tell on me*, thought Charlotte. *It's not like Louise is my friend*. But when the teacher said Charlotte was in trouble, she could hardly keep from smiling.

As Charlotte had hoped, her punishment was to clean the library. The chick had done her part. Charlotte even got some of the hen's feathers to add to a grand hat she planned to make.

As her classmates went to recess, Charlotte burst into the empty library. Even on a bright day, the library was a mysterious place. The top shelves were so high that it seemed like a forest of books. Charlotte could never read all their pages, just like she could never see the tops of all the trees in a forest.

Charlotte spotted a piece of paper on top of some books. There it was—the map—right next to the globe and near an open Bible. Alone in the library, she rushed over to look at the paper.

She had seen the map from far away when she'd visited with her whole class. Now she could look at it up close. Charlotte read the words aloud:

“Garden for Children.

Enter at the door near the flowers  
that are the color of dawn.

To complete the mission,  
find the four hidden fruit trees!

Follow four white stone paths,  
one for each tree.

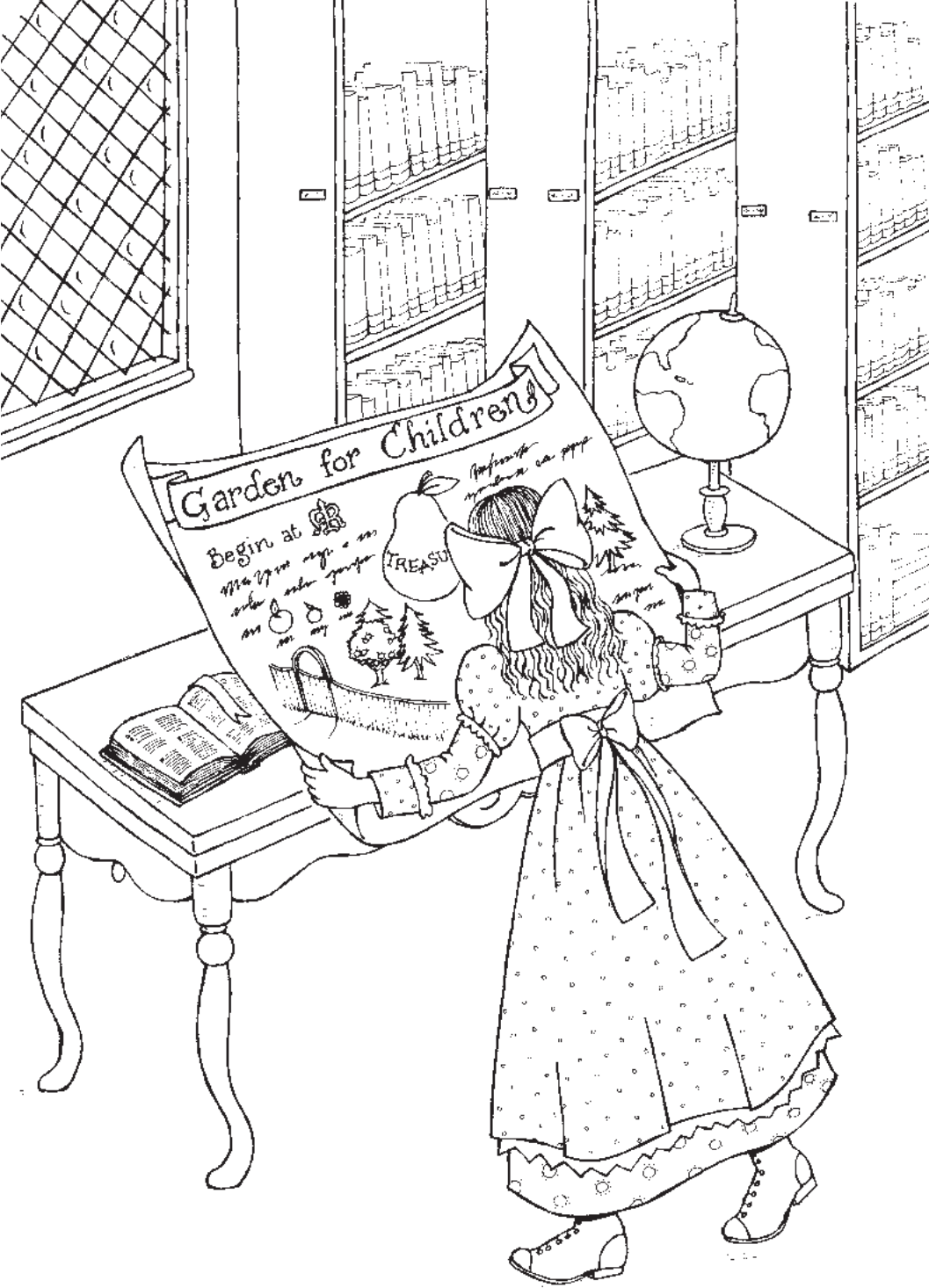
Careful! Ferns, leaves, and pine needles  
might have covered up the paths.

On the stones, I’ve painted different kinds of fruit.

You must find four fruit trees:  
apricot, clementine, red currant, and pear.”

*A mission! An adventure!* Charlotte studied the map. It showed a stone wall that circled a large garden full of leafy trees and evergreens. There was only one door. *That must be the way in*, Charlotte thought. The mapmaker had added a small group of flowers there. *Are those the color of dawn?* Charlotte wondered. *What color could that be? Mysterious!*

Right after the door, the map showed a path of yellow flowers inside the garden. She read again, “Follow four white stone paths, one for each tree.” The map didn’t show the stone paths, only the flower path. And it didn’t show the hidden fruit trees either. *Finding the paths and trees must be part of the mission*, she thought. *I’ll have to find them myself.*



# Garden for Children

Begin at   
The first step is to  
select the proper  
seed.



Professors  
have a paper  
on this  
subject.

She wondered also about the painted fruits on the stones. *What were these different kinds of fruit? Also mysterious!*

In the center of the map, the word “treasure” was written inside a pear.

Charlotte almost cheered. But she couldn't. She was in the library. Right then and there, however, she decided that she would complete the mission by finding the four hidden fruit trees. Charlotte would become the most adventurous girl in the school—much more adventurous than Louise Bouchard!

Then Charlotte noticed something else. At the bottom of the map, the mapmaker had signed his name:

Jean-Marc Dubois, Master Gardener,  
the Bouchard Estate.

“*Bouchard.*” Charlotte wrinkled her nose. The gardener worked for Louise's family. She didn't want Louise to know about the map, but she'd have to find a way to talk to the gardener.

For now, Charlotte would keep the whole thing quiet. She went to check the window. Across the abbey school's meadow, Charlotte didn't see anyone, only a grove of trees. She closed a large panel, like the cover of a book, over the glass, and left the darkened library.



# 3

When Charlotte was almost finished cleaning, her stomach began to hurt. She looked at a statue of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, on a shelf in the hallway. What would her own mother do when she found out about the chick? Her mother wanted her to be more like Thérèse Martin, who had been a top student at the school. Charlotte got a few wildflowers she had picked that morning. She dusted around the statue and put the flowers at the bottom.

She heard footsteps, but it wasn't Sister Saint Francis. It was someone coming from the chapel: Thérèse. The older girl had left the school a few years before, but everyone knew who she was. Thérèse sometimes visited the school chapel to pray. Everyone liked her because she was so kind. Thérèse, like Charlotte, had been a day student, who didn't live at the school.

“Good afternoon, Thérèse. I'm Charlotte.”

Thérèse smiled. She was five years older than Charlotte, who was ten, and much taller. She seemed to walk everywhere with a purpose.

Charlotte said, “Is it true that you are going to Carmel to become a nun? Don’t nuns pray all the time?” Everyone was talking about how Thérèse was going to enter the convent soon, even though she was only fifteen. Once inside, she would no longer be allowed to walk around the town. She would simply stay there and pray.

“Well, yes,” said Thérèse warmly, “You see, Carmelite sisters pray and stay inside a monastery. Other types of sisters, like your teacher, Sister Saint Francis, pray but also work outside in schools or hospitals. I want to serve Jesus and pray as much as I can, so I am becoming a Carmelite.”

“But I heard no one ever comes out of there! I could *never* do something like that. Praying is a good thing, but praying *that* much would be boring.”

“Boring?” Thérèse asked, smiling.

As fast as a chick could disrupt a classroom, Charlotte knew she should have kept silent. Thérèse’s family was probably proud of her. Not like Charlotte’s mother. Charlotte felt her face redden.

“Did you get in trouble today, Charlotte?” Thérèse said. She must have noticed Charlotte’s face.

“Yes, I did. I’m worried my mother will be upset. But it was for a good reason . . .”

“Everyone makes mistakes, Charlotte.”

“It wasn’t exactly a mistake. But I’m sure you don’t make any.”

“Of course I make mistakes. Once I asked my family’s maid to get an inkstand down from a shelf on the fireplace. She was tall and I was too small to reach it. She said she wouldn’t do it, so I dragged over a heavy chair. It scraped on the floor, and I stomped my feet. I even shouted at her that *she* was a brat. My older sister told me to say I was sorry. But I wasn’t. Not at all.”

Charlotte laughed. “How old were you?”

“Maybe eight? Jesus understands our mistakes. Just as the sun shines on every plant in the forest, his love reaches everyone. Just try to do as many small, good things as you can.”

“But I’m in big trouble. It might take a lot of very big things to balance that out.”

Thérèse pointed to the statue of Mary. “It looks like you put flowers there. Maybe you pray and do more good than you think. I’ll ask Jesus to help you and your friends discover many small, good things to do every day!” With that, Thérèse said goodbye.

After Sister Saint Francis checked her work, Charlotte stuffed into her satchel the letter to her mother about her latest bad behavior. But happily, she folded the map inside a special copybook she kept for adventures.

Charlotte wanted to search for the garden the first chance she got. The first step would be to find the gardener, Monsieur Dubois. Since the map had the Bouchard's name on it, she would have to be careful. Charlotte remembered that a party was coming up at Louise Bouchard's house. If her mother still allowed her to go, that might be a good time to start.