

# **The Little Princess**

*A play for children and grown-up children in three acts*

*By Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett*

## CHARACTERS

Sara  
Miss Minchin  
Becky  
Lottie  
Lavinia  
Janet  
Nora  
Jessie  
Mazie  
Lilly  
Donald  
Ermengarde  
Amelia  
Mrs. Carmichael  
Ram Dass  
Barrow  
Carrisford  
James (*Servant*)  
Emma  
Blanche  
Ned

## ACT I

**SCENE:** *A large schoolroom at Miss Minchin's boarding school. Central window with view of Snow Street. Fireplace with fire lighted. On the walls, four bracket-lams and four maps. A green carpet. In front window a platform on which there is a blackboard easel. The room contains a large table, a sofa above fireplace, a piano with bench behind it, and several chairs. Lace curtains behind central window curtains for Ermengarde.*

*At the rise of curtain: Jessie at piano; extra children, Lilly and others in ring. Lavinia and one of the girls sitting. Amelia up stage. Jessie plays a waltz. Children dance, singing "one, Two, Three, Four."*

CHILDREN: *(singing)* One, two, three, four.

*[All around the other way. Change dance]*

One, two, three, four.

*[Repeat]*

AMELIA: *(breaking in upon the noise)*. Stop, stop, children; do stop. I only wanted to try the music before the company came. *(Children stop and get into lines)* Let me look at you all. *(Lavinia crossing)* Don't poke your head forward. Please turn out your toes. *(Lilly has crossed to right)* Lilly, your sash is untied. Let me tie it for you. *(Does so)* You know Miss Minchin—

LAVINIA: Huh! Huh!

AMELIA: I will be very angry if there is any rude or unlady-like conduct this afternoon. The lady and gentleman who live across the street in number 46 are coming in to see you. They have a very large family—nearly all old enough to go to genteel school. That's why dear Sara is giving you this party.

LAVINIA: Dear Sara...huh!—

AMELIA: Now, Lavinia, what do you mean by that?

LAVINIA: Oh, nothing, Miss Amelia.

ERMENGARDE: Oh, she did it because she's jealous of Sara.

LAVINIA: I didn't.

ERMENGARDE: You did.

LAVINIA: I didn't.

ERMENGARDE: Did—

LAVINIA: Didn't!

*[This ad lib. Three times.]*

ERMENGARDE: Did.

AMELIA: *(coming between them)*. Stop. I never saw such rude conduct *(Lavinia laughs)* You are a spiteful child, Lavinia. I believe you *are* jealous. It's very nice indeed of Sara to give you all this party on her birthday. It's not every child who cares about her schoolfellows. And she has not looked at one of her beautiful presents yet because she wanted you to have the pleasure of seeing them unpacked.

*[Children crowd around her.]*

CHILDREN: Ah...! *[Dance around her.]*

ERMENGARDE: Are they going to be unpacked here?

CHILDREN: Yes, yes, yes!

LAVINIA: *(Sarcastically)* Did her papa send them all from India, Miss Amelia?

LILLY: Did he?

AMELIA: *(Grandly)* Most of them came from Paris.

CHILDREN: Oh...! Paris.

AMELIA: There is a doll that was ordered months ago.

CHILDREN: Oh, a doll!

AMELIA: And a whole trunk full of things like a real young lady.

LOTTIE: *(jumping up and down)* Are we going to see them right this minute?

AMELIA: Miss Minchin said they might be brought in after you had tried the new waltz.

LOTTIE: Tra-la-la! *(Dancing)*

AMELIA: I am going to tell her you have finished. *(Laughter)* Now *do* be nice and quiet when I leave you. *(Ermengarde swings Lottie around)* Lottie, don't rumple your new sash. One of you

big girls must look after her. (*Lottie picks up pillow from sofa, ready to throw at Lavinia*) Now do (*at door*) be quiet.

[*Exit. As Amelia exits, Ermengarde runs up to door. Children, except Lavinia, form picture on platform*]

ERMENGARDE: It's all right, girls. She's gone. (*Lottie throws pillow at Lavinia and runs, with Lavinia in suit. Ermengarde runs to Lottie's rescue*)

LOTTIE: (*As Lavinia catches her and drags her*). Ermy, Ermy. Oh! Oh! (*Ermengarde catches Lottie's other hand and drags her away from Lavinia; other Children watch*)

CHILDREN: Now. (*Jessie playing piano, Children begin to do "ring around" again, laughing and chattering the while*)

LAVINIA: I wish you children wouldn't make so much noise. Jessie, stop playing that silly polka.

CHILDREN: No, no, go on, Jessie, go on. (*Lottie runs over and pushes Lavinia twice; falls the second time—hurts her knee*)

LOTTIE: Oh! Ah! Oh!

LAVINIA: I never saw such rough things. I wish Miss Minchin would come in and catch you.

LOTTIE: I guess it's all right.

BLANCHE: You girls think you are so big. You always try to stop the fun. Jessie, go on. (*Piano begins again*) We're not going to stop, just because you want to talk.

ERMENGARDE: I'm going to be the leader. (*Jessie stops playing suddenly*)

CHILDREN: What's the matter?

JESSIE: Oh, girls! Ermengarde has thrown all the music into the piano. (*Girls crowd around her, and take music out of piano. Ermengarde laughing*)

LAVINIA: You'd stop fast enough if it was the Princess Sara talking.

ERMENGARDE: Oh, we all *like* Sara. *We're* not jealous of her.

CHILDREN: (*Exclamations of assent; playing "London Bridge."*)

LAVINIA: Oh, of course you like Sara, just because she's the rich girl of the school and the show pupil. There's nothing so very grand in having a father who lives in India, even if he *is* in the army. (*Jessie plays*)

LOTTIE: At any rate he's killed *tigers*, and he sends Sara the most beautiful presents! (*Pulls Lavinia's hair*)

LILLY: And he's told Miss Minchin that she can have *anything* she wants.

ERMENGARDE: She's cleverer than any of us. My father says he'd give thousands of pounds if I were as clever as she is. She actually *likes* to read books. I can't bear them.

LAVINIA: (*contemptuously*) We all know that.

ERMENGARDE: Well, if I am the stupidest girl in the school, Sara's the nicest. You don't see Sara walking with her friends and saying spiteful things. (*Bell rings off. Children run into straight lines. Ermengarde to blackboard and draws a cat. Lavinia up stage.*)

CHILDREN: Miss Minchin's coming, Miss Minchin's coming!

LAVINIA: Yes, and leading Sara by the hand as if she were a "Little Princess."

ERMENGARDE: (*pointing to board*) That old cat, Miss Minchin. (*Children laugh. Enter Miss Minchin, leading Sara, followed by James, William, Emma, and Becky. Servants carry presents.*)

MISS MINCHIN: (*Sweeping grandly down*) Silence, young ladies...James, place the box (*doll*) on the table and remove the lid. William, place yours there. (*Trunk*) Emma, put yours on the table. (*Nine books*) Becky, put yours on the floor (*Becky looks at the Children*) Becky, it is not your place to look at the young ladies. You forget yourself. (*Waving servants off*) Now you may leave us. (*Exeunt servants. Becky starts to follow them. Sara stops her*)

SARA: Ah, please, Miss Minchin, mayn't Becky stay?

MISS MINCHIN: Becky—my dearest Sara—

SARA: I want her because I'm sure she would so like to see the doll. She's a little girl, too, you know.

MISS MINCHIN: (*amused*) My dear Sara—Becky is the scullery-maid. Scullery-maids are not little girls—at least they ought not to be.

SARA: But Becky *is*, you know.

MISS MINCHIN: I'm sorry to hear it.

SARA: But I don't believe she can help it. And I know she would enjoy herself so. (*Crosses to Miss Minchin*) Please let her stay—because it's my birthday. (*Becky backs into the corner in mingled terror and delight*)

MISS MINCHIN: (*Dignified*) Well, as you ask it as a birthday favour—she may stay.

SARA: Thank you.

MISS MINCHIN: Rebecca, thank Miss Sara for her great kindness.

BECKY: (*comes forward, making little charity curtseys, words tumbling over each other*) Oh, if you please, Miss—thank you, Miss. I am that grateful, Miss. I did want to see the doll, Miss—that—that bad. I thank you, Miss. (*Sara nods happily to Becky, who bobs to Miss Minchin*) And thank you, Ma'am, for letting me take the liberty.

MISS MINCHIN: Go stand over there. (*Pointing grandly to corner*) Not too near the young ladies. (*Becky backs into corner, rolls down sleeves, etc.*) Now, young ladies, I have a few words to say to you. (*Sweeping grandly up to platform*) You are aware, young ladies, that dear Sara is thirteen years old to-day.

CHILDREN: Yes, Miss Minchin.

MISS MINCHIN: There are a few of you here who have also been thirteen years old, but Sara's birthdays are different from most little girls' birthdays.

CHILDREN: Yes, Miss Minchin.

MISS MINCHIN: When she is older she will be heiress to a large fortune which it will be her duty to spend in a meritorious manner.

ERMENGARDE: No, Miss Minchin—I mean, yes, Miss Minchin.

MISS MINCHIN: When her papa, Captain Crewe, brought her from India and gave her into my care, he said to me, in a jesting manner, "I'm afraid she will be very rich, Miss Minchin."

CHILDREN: Oh!—Ah!—Oh!

MISS MINCHIN: My reply was, "Her education at my seminary, Captain Crewe, shall be such as will fit her to adorn the largest fortune." (*Lottie sniffs loudly*) Lottie, do not sniff. Use your pocket-handkerchief. (*Ermengarde wipes Lottie's nose. Lottie sniffs again. Miss Minchin coughs Lottie down*) Sara has become my most accomplished pupil. Her French and her dancing are a credit to the seminary. Her manners—which have caused you all to call her Princess Sara—are

perfect. Her amiability she exhibits by giving you this party. I hope you appreciate her generosity. I wish you to express your appreciation by saying aloud, all together, "Thank you, Sara."

ALL: Thank you, Sara.

ERMENGARDE: *(alone)* Thank you, Sara.

BECKY: Thank you, Miss.

SARA: I thank *you* for coming to my party. And you. *(Retires)*

MISS MINCHIN: Very pretty indeed, Sara. That is what a real princess does when the populace applauds. I have one thing more to say. The visitors coming are the father and mother of a large family. I wish you to conduct yourselves in such a manner as will cause them to observe that elegance of deportment can be acquired at Miss Minchin's seminary. *(Ermengarde poses in corner)* I will now go back to the drawing-room until they arrive. Sara, you may show your presents. *(Exits. Ermengarde imitates her walk)*

ERMENGARDE: Sara, you may show your presents!

AMELIA: *(coming out from behind)* Ermengarde—

ERMENGARDE: Oh! Miss—*(Amelia crosses to door)* Amelia, please forgive me—I did—didn't—*(Exit Amelia. Children laugh and flock around the boxes on table, etc.)*

SARA: *(getting chair from piano)* She caught you that time, Ermy. *(Getting on chair behind table)* Which shall we look at first? *(Picking up books)* These are books, I know. *(Trying to untie them)*

CHILDREN: Oh—books—Oh! *(Disgusted)*

ERMENGARDE: *(Aghast)* Does your papa send you *books* for a birthday present? He's as bad as mine. Don't open them, Sara.

SARA: *(laughing)* But I like them the best—never mind though. This is the doll. *(Uncovering long wooden box)* I'll open that first. *(Stands doll upon its feet. Doll is on a metal stand.)*

CHILDREN: Oh!—Ah!—Oh!

LILLY: Isn't she a beauty? *(Becky gets stool from above door and stands on it to see doll)*

JESSIE: She's almost as big as Lottie.

LOTTIE: *(dancing down)* Tra-la-la.



LILLY: She's dressed for the theater. See her magnificent opera-cloak. (*Lavinia does not get on floor*)

ERMENGARDE: She has an opera-glass in her hand.

SARA: So she has. (*Getting down*) Here's her trunk. Let us open that and look at her things; Ermy, you open the other. (*Takes trunk with Jessie down stage; opens it. Ermy takes other one with help of Jessie and opens it too. Children crowd around trunks, sit on floor, looking at the clothes. Becky looks on from behind*) Here is the key.

CHILDREN: Oh!

SARA: This is full of lace collars and silk stockings and handkerchiefs. Here's a jewel-case with a necklace and a tiara of diamonds. Put them on her, Lilly. All of her underclothes. Ah, look. (*showing*)

ERMENGARDE: Here's a velvet coat trimmed with chinchilla, and one lined with ermine, and muffs. Oh, what darling dresses! A pale cloth, trimmed with sable, and a long coat. (*Lottie takes coat and puts it on*) A pink, covered with white little buttons, and a white tulle dress, and dresses, dresses, dresses!

SARA: And here are hats, and hats, and hats. Becky, can you see? (*Rises*)

BECKY: Oh, yes, Miss, and it's like 'eaven. (*falls off stool backwards*)

SARA: (*Rises*) She is a lovely doll. (*Looking at doll*) Suppose she understands human talk, and feels proud of being admired.

LAVINIA: You are always *supposing* things, Sara.

SARA: I know I am—I like it. There's nothing so nice as supposing. It's almost like being a fairy. If you suppose anything hard enough, it seems as if it were real. Have you never done it?

LAVINIA: (*contemptuously*) No—of course not—it's ridiculous.

SARA: Is it? Well, it makes you happy at any rate. (*Lavinia turns away; changing her tone*) Suppose we finish looking at the doll's things when we have more time. Becky will put them back in the trunk. (*Lottie goes up to doll, to see tiara.*)

BECKY: (*comes forward quickly—shyly*) Me, Miss? Yes, Miss. Thank you, Miss, for letting me touch them. (*Down on knees, wiping hands*) Oh—my—they are beautiful.

LAVINIA: *(At table, catching Lottie touching doll)* Get down this minute. That's not for babies to touch. *(takes her)*

LOTTIE: *(Crying)* I'm not a baby—I'm not—Sar-a, Sar-a—oh!

JESSIE: There now, you've made her cry,—the spoiled thing.

SARA: *(runs to Lottie; kneeling)*. Now, Lottie. *(Pus her on side)* Lottie, dear, you mustn't cry.

LOTTIE: *(howling)* I don't want to stay in a nasty school with nasty girls.

SARA: *(to Lavinia and Jessie)* You ought not to have scolded her. She's such a little thing. And you know she's only at boarding-school because she hasn't any mother. *(Children sympathetically. Jessie to door)*

LOTTIE: *(wailing)* I haven't any mamma.

JESSIE: If she doesn't stop, Miss Minchin will hear her. *(Ermengarde gets tiara from doll)*

LILLY: And she'll be so cross that she may stop the party. Do stop, Lottie darling. I'll give you a penny.

LOTTIE: don't want your old penny.

ERMENGARDE: Yes, do stop, and I'll give you anything. *(offering box)*

LOTTIE: She called me a baby *(crying)*

SARA: *(petting her)* But you will be a baby if you cry, Lottie, pet. There, there.

LOTTIE: I haven't any mamma.

SARA: *(Cheerfully)* Yes, you have, darling. Don't you know we said that Sara'd be your mamma. Don't you want Sara to be your mamma? *(Lottie stops crying)* See. *(Rising and giving doll to Lottie)* I'll lend you my doll to hold while I tell you that story I promised you.

LILLY: Oh, do tell us a story, Sara. *(Puts doll on chair)*

JESSIE: Oh, yes, do.

CHILDREN: Oh!

SARA: I may not have time to finish it before the company comes—but I'll tell you the end some other time. *(Lottie takes doll to chair)*

LAVINIA: That's always the way, Princess Sara. (*Passionately*) Nasty little spoilt beast. I should like to *slap* her.

SARA: (*firing up*) I should like to slap you too. But I don't want to slap you—at least I both *want* to slap you and should *like* to slap you.

CHILDREN: (*in group, interested in fight*) Oh, Oh!

SARA: WE are not little gutter children. WE are old enough to know better.

LAVINIA: Oh, we are *princesses*, I believe—or at least one of us is—Jessie told me you often pretended to yourself that you were a princess.

SARA: (*getting control of herself*) It's true. Sometimes I do pretend I'm a princess. I pretend I am a princess so that I can try to behave like one.

CHILDREN: Ah!

ERMENGARDE: You *are* queer, Sara, but you're nice. (*Hugs her*)

SARA: I know I'm queer, and I try to be nice. Shall I begin the story?

CHILDREN: (*ad lib*) Story. Oh, oh! Yes, yes, begin, Sara, do.

SARA: I'm going to turn all the lights out. It's always so much nicer to tell a story by firelight. (*Turns out brackets with switch above fireplace; gets on sofa for story. All the children sit, except Lavinia, who stands near the piano. Children on the floor in front of the sofa. Ermengarde goes up to the window and pulls curtains apart and makes up in them for ghost.*)

LILLY: It's such fun to sit in the dark.

SARA: Once upon a time—

ERMENGARDE: (*From behind curtain*) Woo-o-oo—

JESSIE: What's that?

SARA: It's nothing but the wind. Once upon a time—

ERMENGARDE: (*coming down in curtains*) Whoo-oo-oo-oope— (*frightens Children. Sara turns on lights. Children scream and get up; fall on Ermengarde and takes curtain off her. Laugh.*)

CHILDREN: Oh, it's Ermengarde.

LILLY: Begin again, Sara. (*Sara turns out lights*)

ALL: Yes.

SARA: (*all seated as before—Sara on sofa*). Once upon a time—long ago—there lived on the edge of a deep, deep forest a little girl and her grandmother.

LILLY: Was she pretty?

SARA: She was so fair and sweet that people called her Snowflower. She had no relations in the world but her old grandmother, Dame Frostyface.

JESSIE: Was she a nice old woman?

SARA: She was always nice to Snowflower. They lived together in a little cottage thatched with reeds. Tall trees sheltered it, daisies grew thick about the door, and swallows built in the eaves.

CHILDREN: Oh, Lottie!

LILLY: What a nice place!

SARA: One sunny morning Dame Frostyface said, “My child, I am going a long journey, and I cannot take you with me, and I will tell you what to do when you feel lonely. You know that carved oak chair I sit in by the fire. Well, lay your head on the velvet cushions and say, ‘Chair of my grandmother, tell me a story,’ and it will tell you one.”

CHILDREN: Oh!

SARA: “And if you want to travel anywhere, just seat yourself in it, and say, ‘Chair of my grandmother, take me where I want to go.’”

ERMENGARDE: Oh, I wish I had a chair like that.

LOTTIE: Oh, go on, Sara.

CHILDREN: Do go on.

ERMENGARDE: And so—

LOTTIE: And so—

SARA: And so Dame Frostyface went away. And every day Snowflower baked herself a barley cake, *and every night the chair told her a beautiful new story.*

ERMENGARDE: If it had been my chair, I should have told it to take me to the King's Palace.

SARA: That is what happened—but listen. The time passed on, but Dame Frostyface did not come back for such a long time that Snowflower thought she would go and find her.

LOTTIE: Did she find her?

SARA: Wait and listen. One day she jumped into the chair and said, "Chair of my grandmother, take me the way she went." And the chair gave a creak and began to move out of the cottage and into the forest where all the birds were singing.

ERMENGARDE: How I *wish* I could have gone with her.

SARA: And the chair went on, and on, and on—like a coach and six.

LOTTIE: How far did it go?

SARA: It traveled through the forest and through the ferns, and over the velvet moss—it traveled on day, and two days, and three days—and on the fourth day—

LILLY: What did it do?

SARA: (*slowly*) It came to an open place in the forest where a hundred workmen were felling trees and a hundred wagons were carrying them away to the King's Palace.

ERMENGARDE: Was the King giving a ball?

SARA: He was giving seven of them. Seven days' feasting to celebrate the birthday of his daughter, the Princess Greedalend.

LOTTIE: Did he invite Snowflower?

SARA: Listen. The chair marched up to the palace, and all the people ran after it. And the King heard of it, and the lords and ladies crowded to see it, and when the Princess heard it was a chair that could tell stories she cried until the King sent an order to the little girl to come and make it tell her one.

LOTTIE: Did she go in?

LILLY: Oh, how lovely.

SARA: The chair marched in a grave and courtly manner up the grand staircase and into the palace hall. The King sat on an ivory throne in a robe of purple velvet, stiff with flowers of gold. The Queen sat on his right hand in a mantle clasped with pearls, and the Princess wore a robe of gold sewn with diamonds.

LILLY: Oh, what splendid clothes!

SARA: But Snowflower had little bare feet, and nothing but a clean, coarse linen dress. She got off the chair and made a curtsy to the grand company. Then she laid her head on the cushion, and said, "Chair of my grandmother, tell me a story," and a clear, silvery voice came out from the old velvet cushion, and said, "Listen to the story of the Christmas Cuckoo." (*Door-bell peals*)

ALL: (*Jumping up from floor and sofa, forming two lines, in readiness for the visitors*) Miss Minchin is coming—Miss Minchin is coming. (*Enter Miss Minchin, followed by Amelia. Becky under table*)

MISS MINCHIN: What are you naughty children doing in the dark? Amelia, turn up the lights immediately. (*She does so with switch above fireplace*) How dare you?

SARA: I beg pardon, Miss Minchin. It was all my fault. I was telling them a story, and I like to tell them in the firelight.

MISS MINCHIN: (*changing*) Oh, it was you, Sara. That is a different matter. I can always trust you.

LAVINIA: (*aside*) Yes, of course, if it's the Princess Sara, it's a different matter.

MISS MINCHIN: (*speaking off to Mrs. Carmichael*) Won't you come in, Mrs. Carmichael? (*Enter Mrs. Carmichael, followed by Donald, Mazie, Nora, and Janet in a line. Donald has mother's skirt in his hand, playing horse; three children are dressed for the street. They follow their mother to sofa and sit down*)

MISS MINCHIN: She is (*referring to Sara*) such a clever child. Such an imagination. She amuses the children by the hour with her wonderful story-telling.

MRS. CARMICHAEL: She has a clever little face. (*Ermengarde offers to make friends with Donald, who fights her into corner*)

MISS MINCHIN: Won't you sit here, Mrs. Carmichael? (*Indicating sofa*)

MRS. CARMICHAEL: I hope I won't disturb the dancing if I am obliged to leave you suddenly.

MISS MINCHIN: You will not disturb us, although we shall, of course, be very sorry.

MRS. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Carmichael has just had bad news from an important client in India. The poor man has suddenly lost all his money and is on his way to England, very ill indeed.

MISS MINCHIN: How distressing!

MRS. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Carmichael may be called away at any moment. He said he would send a servant for me if he received a summons to go. If it comes I shall be obliged to run away at once. The children wanted so much to see the dancing that I did not like to disappoint them.

MISS MINCHIN: Sara, my dear, come here. *(Aside to Mrs. Carmichael)* Her mother died when she was born. Her father is a most distinguished young officer—very rich, fortunately. *(To Sara)* Shake hands with Mrs. Carmichael. *(Sara does so. To Mrs. Carmichael)* Sara is thirteen years old to-day, Mrs. Carmichael, and is giving a party to her schoolfellows. She is always doing things to give her friends pleasure.

MRS. CARMICHAEL: *(motherly woman, pats Sara's hand)* She looks like a kind little girl. *(Lottie brings doll over to sofa and shows it to the Carmichael children)* I'm sure my children would like to hear her tell stories. They love stories, and some day you must come and tell them one. *(Turns and sees doll)* Oh, and what a splendid doll! Is it yours?

MISS MINCHIN: *(grandly)* Her papa ordered it in Paris. Its wardrobe was made by a fashionable dressmaker. Nothing is too superb for the child.

LOTTIE: *(to Sara)* Sara, may that little boy hold your doll?

SARA: Yes, dear. *(Lottie takes doll to Donald, who boxes it away from him, boy fashion)*

LOTTIE: *(Taking doll out of harm's way)* He's one of the large family across the street—the ones you make up stories about.

MRS. CARMICHAEL: *(good-naturedly)* Do you make up stories about us?

SARA: I hope you won't mind. I can see your house out of my window, and there are so many of you, and you all look so happy together, that I like to pretend I know you all. I *suppose* things about you.

LILLY: *(the Children have been standing in two lines listening to all this)* She has made up names for all of you.

MRS. CARMICHAEL: Has she? What are they?

SARA: They are only pretended names—perhaps you'll think they're silly.

MRS. CARMICHAEL: No, I shall not. What do you call us?

LOTTIE: *(solemnly)* You are Mrs. And Mister Mont-mor-ency.

MRS. CARMICHAEL: *(laughing)* What a grand name! And what do you call the children?

SARA: *(shy but smiling)* The little boy in the lace cap is Ethelbert Beaucham Montmorency—and the *second* baby is Violette Cholmondeley Montmorency, and the little boy with the fat brown legs and socks is Sidney Cecil Vivienne Montmorency.

LOTTIE: *(Interrupting and dancing)* Then there's Lillian Evangeline—and Guy Clarence—and Maude—Marion—and Veronica Eustacia—and Claude Audrey Harold Hector. *(Laughs and goes into corner)*

MRS. CARMICHAEL: You romantic little thing!

SARA: *(apologetically)* I shouldn't have *supposed* so much about you if you hadn't all looked so happy together. *My* papa is a soldier in India, you know, and my mamma died when I was a baby. So I like to look at children who have mammas and papas.

MRS. CARMICHAEL: *(kissing Sara)* You poor little dear, --Miss Minchin *must* let you come and have tea with us.

MISS MINCHIN: Certainly, certainly. Sara will be delighted. Now, young ladies, you may begin the entertainment Sara has prepared for Mrs. Carmichael. *(Enter Maid)*

MAID: A gentleman would like to see you, Ma'am. He says he comes from Messrs. Barrow & Skipworth.

MISS MINCHIN: The lawyers? *(Annoyed)* What can he want? I cannot be disturbed at present. Ask him to wait.

MAID: And if you please, Ma'am, a note for Mrs. Carmichael. *(Delivers same to Mrs. Carmichael, who rises to receive it, and goes down stage. Exit Maid.)*

MRS. CARMICHAEL: A note for me? *(Takes it. Opens note)*

MISS MINCHIN: Not bad news, I hope?

MRS. CARMICHAEL: Very bad, I am afraid. My husband's client, poor Mr. Carrisford, has just landed, dangerously ill. Much worse. Mr. Carmichael wants me to go and see him at once. I am so sorry to run away like this. It has all been so charming. Thank you for asking us. Come, children. Say good afternoon. Papa needs us. *(Shaking hands with Miss Minchin)* Your school is



delightful. *(Exit Mrs. Carmichael and Children in same order as entrance, Donald driving his mother as before.)*

DONALD: Geddap—whoa—go along.

ALL: Good-by. Good afternoon, etc.

AMELIA: What a pity she was obliged to leave so soon.

MISS MINCHIN: She was evidently very much pleased.

MAID: *(entering)* Will you see the gentleman from Messrs. Barrow & Skipworth, Ma'am?

AMELIA: *(meekly)* The children's refreshments are laid in your parlour, sister. Could you see him in here while the children have their cake and sherry and negus?

MISS MINCHIN: Yes. *(To Children)* Now, young ladies, you must go and enjoy the nice things Sara has provided for you. *(Children all troop out.)*

CHILDREN: Cake and sherry and negus.

MISS MINCHIN: *(To servant)* Bring the gentleman in here. *(Exit Servant. Enter Barrow, ushered on by Servant. Barrow is a middle-aged, high-class lawyer, well-dressed)*

MAID: Mr. Barrow, Ma'am. *(Exit Maid)*

MISS MINCHIN: Good evening, sir. Be seated. *(Indicating sofa)* Of the legal firm of Barrow & Skipworth, I believe?

BARROW: Yes, Madam, representing the late Captain Crewe, of the—

MISS MINCHIN: *(Startled)* The late Captain Crewe? You don't mean to say that Captain Crewe is—

BARROW: *(sits on sofa)* Dead, Madam, dead of jungle fever.

MISS MINCHIN: *(Shocked)* It seems impossible. How shocking! How sudden!

BARROW: It was sudden. The firm thought that you should be told at once, as his child is in your care.

MISS MINCHIN: Very right and proper. Poor Captain Crewe! Poor little orphaned Sara. *(Handkerchief to her eyes)* She will need my care more than ever.

BARROW: She will indeed, Madam.

MISS MINCHIN: What do you mean?

BARROW: That, as she has apparently no relations to take charge of her, she is fortunate in having such a friend as yourself.

MISS MINCHIN: Most certainly. An heiress to so large a fortune—for I believe it is a very large fortune? (*Barrow clears throat significantly. Miss Minchin takes him up sharply*) What do you mean? You certainly mean something. What is it?

BARROW: She has *no* fortune, Madam, large or small. She is left without a penny.

MISS MINCHIN: Without a penny! It's impossible. Captain Crewe was a rich man.

BARROW: Ah! *Was*—that's it, Madam, he *was*.

MISS MINCHIN: (*leaning forward excitedly*) You don't mean he has lost his money? Lost it?

BARROW: Every penny of it. That young man had too much money. He didn't know what to do with it, so he let a speculating friend—a very dear friend—(*sarcastically*) play ducks and drakes with it. The friend was mad on the subject of a high diamond mine—put all of his own money into it—all of Captain Crewe's—the mine proved a failure—the dear friend—the very dear friend—ran away. Captain Crewe was already stricken with fever when the news came—the shock was too much for him. He died delirious. (*Rises*) Ruined.

MISS MINCHIN: Do you mean to tell me that he has left *nothing*? That Sara will have no fortune—that the child is a *beggar*—that she's left on my hands a little pauper instead of an heiress?

BARROW: She is certainly left a beggar—and she is certainly left on your hands, Ma'am.

MISS MINCHIN: (*rising*) It's monstrous. She's in my drawing room, at this moment, dressed in a pink silk gown and lace petticoats, giving a party at my expense.

BARROW: She's certainly giving it at your expense, Ma'am, if she's giving it. Barrow & Skipworth are not responsible for anything. Captain Crewe died without paying our last bill, and it was a considerable one.

MISS MINCHIN: That is what happened to me. I was always so sure of his payments that I have been to all sorts of expenses since his last check came. I actually paid the bill for that ridiculous doll and its' ridiculous fantastic wardrobe. The child was to have *anything* she wanted. She has a carriage and a pony and a maid, and I've paid for all of them.

BARROW: You hadn't better pay for anything more unless you want to make presents to the young lady. She has *not a brass farthing to call her own*.

MISS MINCHIN: But what am I to do?

BARROW: There isn't anything to do, Ma'am. Captain Crewe is dead. The child is left a pauper. Nobody is responsible for her but you.

MISS MINCHIN: I'm not responsible for her. I refuse to be made responsible for her.

BARROW: I have nothing to do with that, Ma'am. I only know that Barrow & Skipworth are not responsible. (*Bows and turns to go*)

MISS MINCHIN: But you cannot go like that and leave her on my hands,—I won't have it. I have been cheated; I have been swindled; I'll turn her out into the streets.

BARROW: (*impersonally*) I wouldn't, Madam, if I were you; you can if you like, but I wouldn't. Bad for the school—ugly story to get about. Pay you better to keep her as a sort of charity pupil.

MISS MINCHIN: This is infamous. I'll do nothing of the sort.

BARROW: She might teach the little ones, run errands, and that sort of thing.

MISS MINCHIN: Ah, you want to foist her off on me. I won't have her foisted off on me.

BARROW: Just as you please, Madam. The matter is entirely in your hands. Good evening. Very sorry the thing has happened, of course. Unpleasant for all parties. Good evening. (*Exit. Children off stage singing*)

CHILDREN: (*Singing*) "Here we go round the mulberry bush, the mulberry bush, the mulberry bush,—here we go round the mulberry bush, so early in the morning." (*Miss Minchin stands a moment glaring after Barrow. Then she starts toward door. Stops as Amelia enters*)

AMELIA: What's the matter, sister?

MISS MINCHIN: (*Fiercely and hoarsely*) Where is Sara Crewe?

AMELIA: (*Astonished*) Sara? Why, she's with the children in your room.

MISS MINCHIN: Has she a black frock in her sumptuous wardrobe?

AMELIA: (*Stammering*) Why—what—she has only an old black velvet one that is much too small for her—it is too short for her to wear.

MISS MINCHIN: Go tell her to take off that preposterous pink silk gown, and put the black one on, whether it is too short or not. She is done with finery.

AMELIA: Sister, what can have happened?

MISS MINCHIN: Captain Crewe is dead.

AMELIA: Oh!

MISS MINCHIN: He died without a penny.

AMELIA: Oh!

MISS MINCHIN: That spoilt, pampered, fanciful child is left a pauper on my hands.

AMELIA: Oh! Oh!

MISS MINCHIN: Hundreds of pounds have I spent on nonsense for her—hundreds of pounds—I shall never see a penny of it.

CHILDREN: (*Outside*) Ha, ha, ha! (*Applause*)

MISS MINCHIN: Go, put a stop to that ridiculous party of hers. Go and make her change her frock.

AMELIA: (*Gapes and stares*) M-must I go and tell her now?

MISS MINCHIN: (*Fiercely*) This moment. Don't stand there staring like a goose. Go. (*Exit Amelia*)

CHILDREN: (*Singing*) "Here we go round the mulberry bush."

MISS MINCHIN: Hundreds of pounds! I never hesitated at the cost of anything. Princess Sara, indeed! The child has been pampered as if she had been a queen. (*Loud snuffles from Becky under table*) What's that?

BECKY: (*Coming from under table*) If you please, Ma'am. (*Sobs*) It's me, Ma'am. I hadn't ought to, but I hid under the table when you came in, and I heard.

MISS MINCHIN: You impudent child!

BECKY: (*Sobs frequently*) Oh, please 'm, I daresay you'll give me warnin', but I'm so sorry for poor Miss Sara—she is such a kind young lady, Ma'am.

MISS MINCHIN: Leave the room.

BECKY: Yes, 'm, I will, 'm, but I just wanted to arst you—Miss Sara's been such a rich young lady—'m—she's been waited on and—poor—and—what'll she do, Ma'am, without no maid? If—if—oh, please, would you let me wait on her after I'm done my pots and kettles? I'd do them so quick—if you'd let me wait on her—now she's so poor—oh—poor little Miss Sara—Ma'am—that was called a princess.

MISS MINCHIN: No, certainly not. She'll wait on herself and on other people too. *(Stamping foot)* Leave the room this instant—or you—leave this place.

BECKY: *(At door, turns)* Wouldn't you?

MISS MINCHIN: *(In pantomime, says, "Go." Exit Becky. Fiercely)* Wait on her! No, she will not be waited on. *(Enter Sara, with doll in arms, in black dress)* Come here. *(Sara advances a little)* Put down that doll. You will have no time for dolls in future.

SARA: She was the last thing my papa gave me before he died.

MISS MINCHIN: He did not pay for her, at any rate. I paid for her.

SARA: *(Crossing to chair and putting doll on it)* Then she is your doll, not mine.

MISS MINCHIN: Of course she is my doll. *(Crossing to table)* Everything that you have is mine. For a whole year I've been spending money on all sorts of ridiculously extravagant things for you, and I shall never be paid for one of them. I've been robbed, robbed, robbed!

SARA: *(Turning from doll, suddenly and strongly)* My papa did not mean to rob you—he did not—he did not!

MISS MINCHIN: Whether he meant to do it or not, he did it—and here I am left with you on my hands. Do you understand?

SARA: Yes, I understand—Miss Amelia told me. *(Kneels, covering face with arms, in doll's lap, and bursting into tears)* My papa is dead—my papa is dead!

MISS MINCHIN: Stop crying. I sent for you to talk to you, and I have no time to waste. *(Sara sobs)* Stop crying, do you hear? *(Pause until Sara rises and faces Miss Minchin)* You are not a princess any longer. Remember that. You have no friends. You have no money. You have no one to take care of you. Your pony and carriage will be sold at once. Your maid will be sent away. You'll wear your plainest and oldest frocks. Your extravagant ones are no longer suited for your station. You're like Becky—you will have to work for your living.

SARA: If you tell me what to do, I'll do it.

MISS MINCHIN: You will be obliged to do it whether you like it or not. If I do not choose to keep you out of charity, you have no home but the street.

SARA: *(Sobbing)* I know that.

MISS MINCHIN: Then listen to what I say. If you work hard, and try to make yourself useful, I may let you stay here. You are a sharp child, and pick up things readily. You speak French very well, and you can help with the younger children.

SARA: Yes, I can help with the little ones. I like them and they like me.

MISS MINCHIN: Don't talk nonsense about people liking you. You are not a parlour-boarder now. You have to earn your bread. You will have more to do than to teach the little ones. You will run errands and help in the kitchen as well as in the schoolroom. If you don't please me you will be sent away. Now go. *(Sara crosses to door to go)* Stop, don't you intend to thank me?

SARA: What for?

MISS MINCHIN: For my kindness to you—for my kindness in giving you a home.

SARA: *(Wildly)* You're *not* kind, you are *not* kind!

MISS MINCHIN: Leave the room instantly. *(Sara starts to go)* Stop. *(Sara stops)* You are not to go to the bedroom you used to sleep in.

SARA: Where must I go?

MISS MINCHIN: In future you will occupy the garret net to Becky's—under the roof.

SARA: The garret, next to Becky's, where the rats are?

MISS MINCHIN: Rubbish! There are no rats there. *(Crossing to door)*

SARA: *(Following to chair)* There are. Oh, Miss Minchin, there are! Sometimes Becky can hardly sleep at all. She says that in the garret next to hers they run about all night.

MISS MINCHIN: Whether there are rats or not, you will sleep there. Leave the room. *(Exit Miss Minchin. Door opens)*

LOTTIE: *(Outside)* Sara. *(Enters)* Sara! *(Embraces Sara who is on her knees)* The big girls say your papa is dead, like my mamma; they say you haven't any papa. Haven't you any papa?

SARA: No, I haven't, Lottie; no, I haven't.

LOTTIE: You said you'd be my mamma. I'll be your papa, Sara. Let Lottie be your papa.

SARA: Oh, Lottie, love me; please, Lottie, love me—love me—

### Curtain

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### ACT II

**SCENE:** *A garret under the roof at Miss Minchin's; rake roof with garret window, outside of which are showing housetops with snow on them. There are rat holes around. A bed, covered with old blanket, sheet, and old coverlet, badly torn. A table with bench behind it. Chairs, an armchair, and a four-legged stool above fireplace. A wash-stand with pitcher, bowl, soap-dish, and mug. An old trunk. A candle in stick unlighted.*

*At the rise of curtain: Wind off stage; window opens and snow flutters through. Stage in semi-darkness. Broken pane in window.*

*Ram Dass appears on platform back of window, with dark lantern. He raises window, examines room from platform, with light, then beckons Guest to follow him. Enter Guest on platform, also carrying lantern.*

GUEST: *(Kneeling beside Ram Dass)* You saw the child go out?

RAM DASS: Yes, Sahib. *(Guest lets himself down by table through window)* She has been sent out upon an errand.

GUEST: And no one ever enters here, but herself? You are sure?

RAM DASS: Sure, Sahib.

GUEST: Then we are safe for a few moments. We must look about and plan quickly. You have sharp ears; stand near the door. If we hear a sound on the stairs, we must bolt through the window.

RAM DASS: *(Going to door)* Yes, Sahib. *(Stands listening)*

GUEST: What a place to keep a child in! *(Going to fire)* No fire—no sign of one. *(Crosses to bed)* Blanket thin, sheet miserable. We must alter this.

RAM DASS: *(At door)* When first my master thought of this plan, it made him smile, and he has not smiled for many days. He said: "The poor child will think a magician has worked a spell."

GUEST: *(Back of table, making notes)* She will indeed. It's a curious plan, but the Sahib is a sick man and lonely. Now listen, Ram Dass. You lascars can be as silent as ghosts. Can you, with the other three to help you, steal in through that window, and do what your master wishes, and make no sound?

RAM DASS: Yes, Sahib, Ram Dass can do it. He knows well how to make no sound at all.

GUEST: Will it be safer to do it while she is out upon some errand, or at night when she is asleep?

RAM DASS: At night when she sleeps. Children sleep soundly, even the unhappy ones.

GUEST: As Mr. Carrisford's house is next door, you and I can bring the things across the roof together. Yes, yes, the window is wide enough to allow them to be passed through.

RAM DASS: Shall it be done to-night?

GUEST: Yes. Everything is ready, --the measurements are correct. What's that?

RAM DASS: *(At door)* On the staircase two flights below. It is the child herself returning.

GUEST: Here—through here, quickly. *(Exit through window)*

RAM DASS: *(In window)* Yes, Ram Dass will do this ting to-night. *(Exit. Enter Sara, shabbily dressed, wet and tired; she closes door and stands a second leaning against it; looks about the room, out of breath and exhausted with climbing up stairs)*

SARA: I thought I should never get back, never, never. *(To table. Lights candle)* How miserable it looks and how tired I am. *(Takes hat and shawl and puts them on chair)* They are as wet as though they'd fallen in a pond. *(Coming down to armchair; sits in same)* I've been sent out on errands ten times since breakfast. I'm cold—I'm wet—I'm as hungry as a wolf. *(Wind. Rats squeak. Sara has dropped head in lap on square stool. Hears rats, looks up. Wind howls during this pause)* What a noise my rats are making; they must have heard me come in. *(1<sup>st</sup> rat runs on)* Oh, there's Melchisedek. Poor thing, he's come to ask for crumbs. *(Puts hand into pocket to hunt for crumbs and turns it out)* Are you hungry, too, poor Melchisedek? I'm very sorry, I haven't one crumb left. Go home, Melchisedek, and tell your wife that there was nothing in my pocket. She's not as hungry as I am. *(1<sup>st</sup> rat off under bed)* Good night. Poor thing. *(Crosses back to armchair, drops into chair, and takes Emily in her arms)* Do you hear, Emily, why don't you say something? Sometimes I'm sure you could, if you tried. You are the only relation I have in the world. Why don't you try? Do you hear? I've walked a thousand miles to-day—errands and errands, and errands and errands. Errands for the cook, errands for Miss Amelia—and for Miss Minchin—and even for the girls—I had to go for pencils for Lavinia. *(Outburst)* Everybody sends me errands. And because I came in late they wouldn't give me any supper. I'm so hungry I could almost eat you. *(Wind. Passionately)* Do you hear? *(Pause, and breaks out again)* You are



nothing but a doll, doll, doll—you are stuffed with sawdust—you never had a heart. (*Throws Emily on stool and cries. Picks her up; sets her in chair, sits on stool, elbows on knees, and gazes at her relentingly*) You can't help being a doll, I suppose, any more than good-natured Ermengarde can help being stupid. I oughtn't have slapped you. You were *born* a doll—perhaps you do your sawdust best. (*Knocks at door*) I wonder who it is. (*Rises hesitating*) Lottie is in bed and poor Becky was crying when I came through the kitchen. The cook was in a passion and she couldn't get away. (*Opens door, sees Lottie alarmed, surprised. Enter Lottie in nightgown, hugging a birthday doll. Wind*) Oh, Lottie, you oughtn't to come here so late. Miss Minchin would be so cross if she caught you. What do you want, darling?

LOTTIE: (*who has run to Sara and is clinging to her*) I want you, mamma Sara. Oh, I had such an ugly dream, and I got frightened—

SARA: (*leads her to armchair, and takes her up in lap*) I'll hug you a minute, Lottie, but you mustn't stay, —it's too cold.

LOTTIE: Hug me and kiss me like a real mamma—Sara, it was such an ugly dream—

SARA: (*Hugs her*) Are you better now, darling?

LOTTIE: Yes. You are such a comfty hugger, Sara—(*Sits up cheerfully, and sees doll on ottoman*) There's Emily. She's not so pretty as Lady Arabella, is she?

SARA: No, but she's the only relation I've got in the world. My papa gave her to me when he brought me to Miss Minchin's, six years ago.

LOTTIE: (*Putting her doll beside Emily*) There, Emily, Lady Arabella has come to see you. (*To Sara*) Have you seen your rat lately, mamma Sara?

SARA: Yes—poor Melchisedek—he came out to-night to beg for crumbs, and I hadn't any for him. But there, Lottie dear, you must not stay in the cold. (*Coaxing her*) You won't have any more ugly dreams—for Sara will keep thinking good dreams for you after you've gone back to bye-lows,—you must run back now, like a sweet Lottie—

LOTTIE: Oh, but Sara, I like to stay with you. I like your old garret and Emily and the rat. (*Wind and snow*)

SARA: But listen to the wind. See the snow coming through the broken window. You mustn't stay here in your little nightie. I'll take you to the top of the stairs and you must go back to bed.

LOTTIE: But mayn't I say my seven times to you before I go? I have to say it to Miss Amelia in the morning. May I sit here on your bed—(*does so*) and say it?

SARA: (*Kneeling in front of Lottie*) Well, you can say it to me once.

LOTTIE: (*Singsong*) Seven times one are seven—  
Seven times two are fourteen—  
Seven times three are twenty-one—  
Seven times four are forty-eight—

SARA: (*caressingly*) Oh, no, Lottie, not forty-eight.

LOTTIE: (*Anxiously*) Not forty-eight—

SARA: (*Suggestively*) Not forty-eight—

LOTTIE: (*Catching at straws*) Not forty-eight—then—it's some-ty other eight—

SARA: (*Encouragingly*) Seven times one are seven—  
Seven times two are fourteen—

LOTTIE: (*Dawning hope*) Seven times three are twenty-one—  
(*Excited haste*) Seven times four are twenty-eight—

SARA: (*Hugs and kisses her*) Yes, that's it—go on.

LOTTIE: (*Much cheered—singsong*)  
Seven times five are thirty-five,  
Seven times six are forty-two,  
Seven times seven are forty-nine—  
Seven times eight are fifty-six—  
(*Slowing up*) Seven times—nine—seven times—seven times—ni—nine—seven times  
nine are—(*Despairingly*) Oh Sara, seven times nine is such a hard one.

SARA: (*slow, suggestively*) Seven times nine—are—si—si—  
Seven times nine are six—

LOTTIE: (*Catching her up with a shout of glee*) Sixty-three—seven times nine are sixty-three—  
(*Rattles off with triumphant glee and ease*)  
Seven times ten are seventy—  
Seven times eleven are seventy-seven and  
Seven times twelve are eighty-four.

SARA: (*Hugs her*) That's beautiful—all you have to remember is seven fours are twenty-eight  
and seven nines are sixty-three. Now we must go, pet. (*Sets Lottie down, giving her doll—leads  
her out of room door. Garret left empty for minutes, then cautious knock—outside. Door is  
opened by Ermengarde who at first looks around edge cautiously and enters. Wind. Ermengarde*)

*has pile of books under arm, is dressed in nightgown, with bare feet, and has hair done in curl papers.)*

ERMENGARDE: I wonder where she's gone. *(Rat squeak. Ermengarde screams, runs and jumps on bed)* Oh, these rats—oh—*(ad lib. —Rat comes out from behind wash-stand, stops. Ermengarde drops slipper)* Oh, Melchy—*(to rat)* please go way—oh, do go way and let me get my slipper,—there's a good Melchy—*(As rat moves)* I'll give you a bun to-morrow. *(Rat runs off. Ermengarde, out of bed, hops across floor to get her slipper, and sinks in chair, sighing. She puts on slipper)* I wonder where she's gone. I wonder if that nasty cook has sent her out in all the snow and slush. *(Rises and sees hat and shawl on chair)* No, she's not gone out—there are her hat and shawl, --they are dripping wet. It's a shame. *(Puts books on table)* These came to-day from my papa. He wants me to read every one of them, and he'll ask me questions about them when he sees me. It's awful. *(Impatiently)* I'm not clever like Sara. I'd as soon take castor-oil as read them, and if I did read them, I couldn't remember what's in them. *(Drops books on floor)* I was born stupid. *(Wind. Rises from chair)* I wish Sara would come. *(Goes to bed)* What a horrible little bed. She must nearly freeze to death on these cold nights. Oh, it is a shame. She's treated worse than poor little Becky, the scullery-maid. *(Rat heard squeaking. Ermengarde screams again, runs to chair, and hides feet under her in terror)* I wish she'd come. *(Enter Sara)* Sara!

SARA: I didn't know you were coming here to-night, Ermengarde.

ERMENGARDE: I crept out of my room after the other girls were asleep. Papa has sent me some more books, Sara. *(Dejectedly pointing to table and books on floor)* There they are.

SARA: *(Delightedly)* Oh, has he? *(Runs to books, and sits on floor. Looks at titles on books, opens them)* How beautiful. Carlyle's "French Revolution." I have so wanted to read that!

ERMENGARDE: I haven't. And papa will be so cross if I don't. He'll want me to know all about it when I go home for the holidays. What shall I do?

SARA: *(Excited)* Look here, Ermengarde. If you'll lend me these books, I'll read them, and tell you everything that's in them afterwards, and I'll tell it so that you'll remember it too.

ERMENGARDE: Oh, Sara, Sara, do you think you could?

SARA: I know I can. The little A, B, C children always remember what I tell them.

ERMENGARDE: *(pause)* Sara, if you'll do that, and make me remember, I'll—I'll give you some of my pocket-money.

SARA: I don't want your money, Ermy, I want your books. *(Holds them tight in arms)* I want them!

ERMENGARDE: Take them then, --you're welcome. I wish I wanted them.

SARA: *(Cheerfully)* Well, that's all right. I'm so glad. *(Puts books on floor beside her)* Now let's tell each other things. How are you getting on with your French lessons?

ERMENGARDE: Ever so much better since I began to come up into your garret, and you began to teach me.

SARA: I am glad. *(Looks around room)* The garret would be rather nice if it wasn't so very dreadful. *(Laughs)* It's a good place to pretend in.

ERMENGARDE: *(Eagerly)* What do you pretend, Sara?

SARA: Well, generally I pretend it is the Bastille, and I'm kept a prisoner here like Doctor Manette in "A Tale of Two Cities."

ERMENGARDE: *(Interested)* And what else?

SARA: I pretend I have been here for years—and years and years—and years—and everyone has forgotten all about me, and Miss Minchin is the jailer. And I pretend that there's another prisoner in the next cell, —that's Becky, you know, —I've told her about it—and I knock on the wall to make her hear, and she knocks like this, —you know. *(Knocks three times on wall; listens a moment)* She's not there; if she were she'd knock back. Ah!

ERMENGARDE: Ah, it's just like a story.

SARA: It is a story; everything is a story—you're a story, I'm a story, Miss Minchin's a story. *(Rats squeak)*

ERMENGARDE: *(Gets on stool and screams)* Ah, there are the rats again. Are you never afraid of the rats, Sara?

SARA: *(On floor)* Not now. I was at first, but now they're a part of the story. There were always rats in prisons, and the prisoners tamed them with crumbs. That is how I tamed Melchisedek and his wife. *(Calls rats)* Come on, Melchy dear, come, nice Melchy.

ERMENGARDE: *(Stumbles)* Oh, don't call them out; come back, Sara. Tell me some more stories—they are so nice. *(They resume former positions)*

SARA: Well, I tell myself stories about the people who live in the other houses in the square. The *large* family, you know.

ERMENGARDE: *(Seated on stool)* Did Miss Minchin ever let you go there to tea?

SARA: *(Shakes head)* No, she said visits were not suited to my station.

ERMENGARDE: Old—cat—

SARA: But I watch them out of the garret window there. When I stand on the table under it, I can see all up and down the street. That's how I got to know the lascar and the monkey.

ERMENGARDE: What lascar and what monkey?

SARA: The lascar is the Indian gentleman's servant, and the monkey is the Indian gentleman's monkey.

ERMENGARDE: Where do they live?

SARA: They live next door. He is the rich gentleman who is always ill—*(Stops and listens)* Didn't you hear something at the window?

ERMENGARDE: *(Frightened)* Yes.

SARA: *(Gets up and goes to window)* There's nothing there. *(Laughs)* Perhaps Melchisedek and his wife are having a party under the roof. The lascar lives in the next garret, and the monkey lives with him—one day the monkey ran away and came in through my window, and the lascar had to come after him.

ERMENGARDE: What, that black Indian man in the white turban, Sara? Did he really come in here?

SARA: Yes, and he took the monkey back. I like him and he likes me. I remember enough Hindustani to talk to him a little, —so now he salaams to me when he sees me. Like this—*(Salaams. Stops, and listens again)* I'm sure there's something at the window; it sounds like a cat trying to get in. *(Goes to window. Ermengarde stumbles. Turns from window, pleased)* Suppose it was the monkey who had got away again. Oh, suppose it was—*(Tiptoes to window, lifts it and looks out)* It is the monkey.

ERMENGARDE: *(Crossing to end of table)* He lost his way and saw the light. Are you going to let him in, Sara?

SARA: *(On table)* Yes, it's too cold for monkeys to be out—they are delicate. I'll coax him in. He's quite close; how he shivers. He's so cold—he's quite *tame*. *(Coaxingly)* Come along, monkey darling, I won't hurt you. *(Takes monkey through window—jumps down)*

ERMENGARDE: *(Sara crosses to end of table, and sits. Ermengarde back of table)* Oh, Sara, how funny he is—aren't you afraid he'll bite you?

SARA: Oh, no—nice monkey, nice monkey—Oh, I do *love* little animal things—Oh, you queer little darling.

ERMENGARDE: (*Sits to right of table*) He looks like a very ugly baby.

SARA: I'm glad he's not a baby. His mother couldn't be proud of him—and no one would *dare* to say he was like any of his relations. I do like you—perhaps he's sorry he's so ugly and it's always on his mind. I wonder if he has a mind?

ERMENGARDE: What are you going to do with him?

SARA: I must take him back to the Italian gentleman. But I am sorry—Oh, the company you *would* be to a person in a garret!

ERMENGARDE: Shall we take him back to-night?

SARA: It is too late to-night. I must keep you here, monkey my love, but I'll be kind to you.

ERMENGARDE: Where will he sleep?

SARA: (*Looks around*) Oh, I know—that cupboard—(*Gets up, crosses to cupboard, and opens door*) See, I can make a bed for him here. I'll give him one of my pillows to lie on, and cover him with my blanket. (*Crosses to bed*)

ERMENGARDE: But you'll be so cold.

SARA: But I'm used to being cold and he isn't. I wasn't born in a tropical forest. Let's make his bed now and see if he likes it. (*Takes pillow from bed*) You bring the blanket. (*Ermengarde takes blanket*) Yes, monkey, pet lamb, you shall have nice bye-lows and go rock-a-bye baby.

ERMENGARDE: What?

SARA: I mean rock-a-bye monkey—(*Makes bed in closet*) And Sara will take you back home to your family. (*Noise outside of Becky coming upstairs*)

ERMENGARDE: (*Frightened*) What's that?

SARA: It's only Becky coming up to bed.

MISS MINCHIN: (*Outside door*) Rebecca, Rebecca!

SARA: What, —Miss Minchin, —she might come up. (*Ermengarde, looking wildly about the room, suddenly tucks nightgown around her and rolls under bed. Sara hurriedly shuts monkey up in cupboard*)

MISS MINCHIN: (*Outside*) Remember, Rebecca, you get up at five in the morning.

BECKY: (*Outside*) Yes, mum, thank 'e, mum—(*Miss Minchin heard outside, descending steps. Sara to bed and lifts cover so Ermengarde can get out from under it.*)

SARA: Come out—it's all right. She's gone to bed herself.

ERMENGARDE: (*Sees she's gone—crawling out*) What if she caught us—(*Three knocks heard from Becky*)

SARA: (*Disappointedly*) Oh, that means—"the cook would not give me the cold potatoes."

ERMENGARDE: C old potatoes—were they to feed the rats with?

SARA: They were to feed me with. (*Little laugh. Ermengarde amazed*) You don't know how nice cold potatoes are—if you pretend they are something quite different—and put salt on—that is—if you are hungry.

ERMENGARDE: (*Aghast*) Sara—Sara—are you ever hungry enough for cold potatoes?

SARA: Yes, I am. I am so hungry now that I could eat—I could eat Miss Minchin if she were different—but she'd have to be very different.

ERMENGARDE: She wouldn't be different enough if you'd put pepper on her as well as salt—Sara—(*Suddenly*) I've just thought of something splendid. (*Inspired*) I've just thought of something splendid!

SARA: What is it?

ERMENGARDE: (*Excited hurry*) This very afternoon, I had a box full of good things sent me. My aunt sent it. I haven't touched it. It's got cakes in it—and little meat pies and jam tarts and buns and red currant wine, and figs and raisins and chocolates. I'll creep back to my room and get it this minute. And we'll eat it now.

SARA: (*Clutches Ermengarde's arm*) Oh, it makes me faint to hear of it. You are good, Ermy. (*Hug*) Do you think you *could*?

ERMENGARDE: I know I could.

SARA: Don't make a noise.

ERMENGARDE: *(Runs to door, peeps out, then back to Sara)* The lights are out. Miss Minchin turned out the gas when she went down. I can creep and creep, and no one will hear me.  
*(Dance)*

SARA: Ermy, let's pretend—let's pretend it's a party—and oh, *won't* you invite the prisoner in the next cell?

ERMENGARDE: *(Delighted)* Yes, yes, let's knock on the wall now, —the jailer won't hear.

SARA: *(Goes to wall and knocks once)* That means "Prisoner, the jailer has made his last rounds and we can talk." *(They both listen until two knocks are heard in response)* That means "Are you sure it is safe?" *(Knocks three times herself)* That means "Quite sure, I heard the iron gates clang and the key turn in the lock." *(Becky knocks four times)* That means "Is it safe for me to come to you through the secret passage we have dug under the wall?" *(Knocks smartly one knock—and then two—separated by pause)* That means—"Quite safe—come." *(Knock at door is heard)* Here she comes. *(Opens door. Becky enters. She starts at sight of Ermengarde)* Don't be frightened, Becky. *(Catching Becky, who tries to run off)* Miss Ermengarde is our friend; she's asked you to come in here, because she's going to bring a box of good things up here.

BECKY: To eat, Miss—*(Bursting in)* Things that's good to eat?

SARA: Yes, and we're going to pretend a party.

ERMENGARDE: And you shall have all you want to eat—*(All dance and exclaim. Becky stops them by—)*

BECKY: Sh—*(Points down)*

ERMENGARDE: Oh, that old cat, Miss Minchin—but there's Magus and Brazil nuts and lots of good things—

BECKY: Ow 'ev'nly. *(Ermengarde drops shawl)*

SARA: Ermy, you go for the box and we will set the table. *(Puts Ermengarde out the door)*

BECKY: Oh, Miss—oh, Miss, I know it's you that asked her to let me come. It makes me cry to think of it.

SARA: *(Cheerfully, embracing her)* No, no, you mustn't cry. We must make haste and set the table. What can we put on it? *(Sees red shawl)* Here's her shawl—I know she won't mind. It will make such a nice red table-cloth. *(Picks it up and spreads it on table with Becky's help)* What next? Oh! *(Clasps hands delightedly)* I know, I'll look for something in my old trunk, that I used to have when I was a princess. *(Runs to trunk, opens it and rummages in it. Stops and sees Becky)* Becky, do you know what a banquet is?



BECKY: No, Miss, is it something to be 'et, or something to be wore?

SARA: *(Sitting by trunk)* It's a magnificent feast. Kings have them, and Queens, and Lord Mayors. We are going to have one. Now begin to pretend just as hard as ever you can—and straighten the richly embroidered table-cloth. *(Sara turns to trunk again, as Becky straightens table-cloth. Becky then stands, squeezing her eyes tight shut, clenching her hands and holding her breath. Sara takes package of handkerchiefs from trunk, rises to go to table, sees Becky and laughs)*

SARA: What are you doing, Becky?

BECKY: *(Opening her eyes and catching her breath)* I was pretending, Miss. It takes a good bit of strength.

SARA: Yes, it does—just at first. But it doesn't take so much when you get used to it. I'm used to it. Now what do you suppose these are?

BECKY: *(Delighted)* They looks like 'ankerchiefs, Miss, but I know they ain't—

SARA: No, they are not. They are plates and napkins. Gold and silver plates and richly embroidered napkins—to match the table-cloth. These are the plates and these are the napkins. *(Giving each bundle to Becky separately)* You must not take the napkins for the plates, or the plates for the napkins, Becky.

BECKY: Lor', no, Miss. They ain't nothin' like each other.

SARA: No, they're not. If you pretend hard enough. *(Steps back)* Don't they look nice?

BECKY: Jest lovely, Miss. Particular them gold and silver plates.

SARA: Yes, but the embroidery on the napkins is beautiful; nuns did it in a convent in Spain. *(Suddenly)* Oh, Becky, I forgot to tell you. This isn't the Bastille now.

BECKY: *(Eagerly)* Ain't it, Miss? Lor' now, what has it turned into?

SARA: *(Grandly)* It's a marble hall.

BECKY: A marble hall? I say—

SARA: Yes, it's a marble hall in a palace—it's a banquet hall.

BECKY: *(Looking around room, opening eyes wide)* A banket hall!

SARA: No—a banquet hall—that window opens into the vast conservatory where the tropical plants grow—*(Suddenly)* OH, that reminds me of flowers. We ought to have some flowers.

BECKY: Oh, yes, Miss, we ought to have some flowers.

SARA: Where can we get flowers from? Oh, the trunk again—*(Runs to trunk, tumbles out the contents. Drags out old summer hat with flowers on it)* Here they are—*(Tears flowers off hat)* What shall we put them in? *(Looks about and sees wash-stand)* Becky, there's something that looks like a toothbrush mug—but it isn't. It's a crystal flagon—bring it here. *(Becky brings it—Sara arranges flowers in it)*

BECKY: There you are, Miss, that looks like a soap dish—but it ain't. Shall I get it?

SARA: *(Nods "Yes")* Yes. *(Becky brings it)*

SARA: *(Takes it from Becky)* It's a gold epergne encrusted with gems. *(Wreathes flowers about it)* Oh, Becky, Becky—*(They both gaze with delight. Becky clutches her lips with one hand and lifts them up and down)* Now if we had something for bonbon dishes—there, I remember—I saw something this minute. The darling old trunk—*(Crosses to it)* It's like a fairy. *(Takes out bundle of wool, wrapped in scarlet and white tissue-paper. Goes back of table, tears off paper and twists into shapes of little dishes)*

BECKY: Ah, Miss Sara, this 'ere Blanket Hall—I mean Barket 'all, and all them golden gems—ain't them beautiful? *(Sara puts candle on table from mantel shelf. Enter Ermengarde with hamper of goodies. She starts back with exclamations of joy)*

ERMENGARDE: Oh, Sara, you are the cleverest girl I ever saw.

SARA: Isn't it nice? They are things out of my old trunk.

ERMENGARDE: And here's the hamper—*(Sets it on chair)* You take the things out, Sara. You'll make them look nice.

BECKY: Yes, Miss, you take them out—I don't dast trust myself.

SARA: Thank you—*(Looks in box)* What a lovely cake. *(Takes out same and puts it on table)* And mince pie—a chicken patty—and grapes—and oranges—and plum buns with sugar on—and crystallized fruit in an angel box and chocolate caramels.

BECKY: Chocolate camels—*(Arranging the goodies, etc., until table is quite decorated)*

SARA: There.

ERMENGARDE: It's like a real party.

BECKY: It's like a Queen's table.

ERMENGARDE: *(Sudden thought)* Sara, do you ever pretend you are a princess now? *(Becky puts basket on bed, and chairs at table)*

SARA: Oh, yes, I have to pretend it all the time. It helps me to be polite to people when they are rude to me. I'm a princess in rags and tatters, but I'm a princess inside.

ERMENGARDE: *(Suddenly)* I'll tell you what, Sara. Pretend you are a princess now, and that you are giving a banquet.

SARA: But it is your banquet—you must be the Princess, Ermy. We'll be your maids of honour.

ERMENGARDE: Oh, I can't—I'm too stupid—and I don't know how—you be her.

BECKY: Yes, Miss—go on, you be her.

SARA: Well, if you want me too—*(Pause, —then suddenly)* But I've thought of something else—*(Goes to fireplace)* Yes, there is a lot of paper and rubbish left in here. If we light it, it will blaze up for a few minutes, and we can pretend it's a real fire. If we only had more paper.

ERMENGARDE: *(With sudden inspiration, running to books)* I know—books—

SARA: No, no, don't tear the books, Ermy.

ERMENGARDE: *(Pause, then quickly)* The curl papers then. *(Runs to Sara, kneels before fire. Sara pulls papers off Ermy's head)* Oh, oh, they hurt.

SARA: By the time it stops blazing we shall forget it's not being real. *(Strikes light on box, starts fire. The three girls before it)* Doesn't it look real? Now we will begin the party—*(From behind table)* Oh, girls—this—*(paper off a cake)* shall be my crown, and this my sceptre. *(Making spill of paper)* Advance, fair damsels, and be seated at the banquet table—*(Sara sings)* Tra-la-la—tra-la-la—*(Beats time with paper)* Take each other's hand and advance—*(Becky not knowing how)* No, no; Ermy, show Becky how, you know—show Becky. *(Sings again)* Tra-la-la—*(Becky and Ermengarde join hands and dance to music. Becky falls over books. Finally at end of strain both are in chairs, —all sit together)* My noble father, the King, who is absent on a long journey, has commanded me to feast you. *(Addressing air)* What ho, there—*(Looking into mid-air. Ermy and Becky look puzzled, not understanding)* Minstrels, strike up with your viols and your bassoons. *(Ermengarde and Becky look puzzled. Sara explains to them, resuming her natural manner.)* Princes always have minstrels at the feast. Pretend there's a minstrel gallery up there. *(Points up toward audience)* What ho there—strike—*(Ermengarde and Becky stare at her in rapture, then jump to feet. Imitate trombone, humming "Johnny, get your hair cut." At end of song they sit)* Now we will begin.

Close your eyes tight now and fancy  
How Grandmother looked when a girl,  
With soft dimpled cheek and manners so sweet,  
With her powder, patches and curl.  
Suppose I pretend I am like her  
With her quaint, dainty ways, at a ball,—  
See the dance she is in—'tis about to begin;  
Can you fancy scene, costumes and all?

Suppose you were al at this old-fashioned ball,  
Suppose, suppose, suppose—  
Here's what you would see if you could be  
Her guest at a dance of '73.

Suppose in a far-off country,  
In the days of long ago,  
You've entered the gate at the time of a fete  
In a garden of Tokio.  
Can you see the Japanese maidens  
With their dainty figures so small,  
See the dance they are in—it's about to begin.  
Can you fancy scene, flowers and all?

Suppose you are hid in Snowflower's chair,  
Suppose, suppose, suppose,  
See their black heads bow low as they dance to and fro?  
These quaint little geishas of Tokio?

Suppose in the fairies' country,  
Where the moss makes a carpet green  
Out under the trees with their rustling leaves  
At the Court of the Elfin Queen,  
You could hide yourself in a tree-top  
And peep into Hazel Brush Hall,  
See the dance they are in—'tis about to begin.  
See the Brownies, moonbeams and all?

Suppose you are there, unseen to the stare,  
Suppose, suppose, suppose,  
Here's what you would see if you could be  
A visiting sprite in the top of a tree.

*(Door is thrown violently open. Enter Miss Minchin. Ermy dives under table. Becky cowers with cake in hand; afterwards puts cake back on table. Sara stands behind table with crown on.)*

MISS MINCHIN: What does this mean?

ERMENGARDE: *(Under table)* It's a party.

MISS MINCHIN: *(To Becky)* You audacious creature. You leave the house in the morning.

BECKY: Yes, mum.

ERMENGARDE: Don't send her away, please. My aunt sent me a box full of good things—

BECKY: Yes, mum—an' we're only just 'avin' a party.

MISS MINCHIN: *(Witheringly)* So I see, with the Princess Sara at the head of the table. *(Turns on Sara)* This is your doing, I know—Ermengarde would have never thought of such a thing. You decorated the table, I suppose, with this rubbish. *(To Becky)* Go back to your garret. *(Becky crosses, steals off, face in apron)*

MISS MINCHIN: *(To Ermengarde)* Ermengarde, put those things in the hamper. *(To Sara)* As for you, I will attend to you to-morrow. You shall have neither breakfast, dinner nor supper!

SARA: I've had neither dinner nor supper to-day, Miss Minchin.

MISS MINCHIN: Then all the better. You will have something to remember. Don't look at me like that. *(Sara has not taken her eyes from Miss Minchin. To Ermengarde, after seeing her books on floor—Sara front of table)* Ermengarde, you have brought your beautiful new books into this dirty garret; pick them up and go back to bed. You will stay there all to-morrow, and I shall write to your papa. What would he say, if he knew where you are to-night?

ERMENGARDE: I don't know, Miss Minchin.

MISS MINCHIN: Take that hamper.

ERMENGARDE: Yes, Miss Minchin. *(Does so. Exits, turning at door)* Cat—*(Noise heard of her falling down stairs)*

MISS MINCHIN: *(Turning on Sara fiercely)* What are you thinking of—why do you stare at me in that fashion?

SARA: *(Quietly)* I was wondering.

MISS MINCHIN: What?

SARA: *(Not pertly but sadly and quietly)* I was wondering what *my* papa would say if he knew where I am to-night.

MISS MINCHIN: *(Threateningly)* You insolent minx, how dare you! I will leave you to wonder. Go to bed at once. *(Exits)*

SARA: *(Left alone, takes up Emily, sits on ottoman)* There isn't any party left, Emily—there isn't any princess—there's nothing left but the prisoner in the Bastille. *(Head down and cries softly)* I won't cry. *(To table with Emily)* I'll go to bed and sleep. I can't pretend any more to-night. *(Blows out candle)* I wish I could. *(Going to bed)* I'll go to sleep and perhaps a dream will come to pretend for me—*(Takes off shoes—in bed)* I'll suppose a little to make it easier. Suppose there was a bright fire in that grate—with lots of little dancing flames—suppose there was a soft rug on the floor and that was a comfortable chair—and suppose the attic was furnished in lovely colours—*(Voice becomes dreamy)* And suppose there was a little table by the fire with a little hot supper on it—and suppose this was a beautiful soft bed with white sheets and fleecy blankets and large downy pillows—suppose—sup-p-ose—sup-o-se—*(Falls asleep)*  
*(Ram Dass appears at window with three other lascars. He carries one dark lantern. Surveys the room, sees Sara asleep, raises window, enters with others, and without noise makes the trick change, bringing everything through window. First, three men help Ram Dass to clear away the old furniture. After furniture is cleared, Indian stuff is brought on and placed. At end of change three lamps are brought on. Ram Dass lays fire in grate and before lighting same stands with lighted taper in front of grate which is signal for other lascars to light their lamps. Discovered, three lascars standing by their respective lamps with folded arms. Ram Dass then takes books from tray on table, puts them on cushions, and exits through window)*  
*(Sara wakes slowly, sees the wonderful change and is bewildered)*

SARA: What a nice dream. I feel quite warm. *(Stretches out arms, feels blanket dreamily)* I don't want to wake up—*(Trying to sleep)* Oh, I am awakening. *(Opens eyes, sees everything—thinks she is dreaming)* I have not wakened. I'm dreaming yet. *(Looks around smiling, bewildered but waking)* It does not melt away, —it stays. I never had such a dream before. *(Pushes bedclothes aside, puts feet on floor, smiling)* I am dreaming, it stays real—I'm dreaming, it feels real. *(Moves forward, staring about her)* It's bewitched, or I'm bewitched. *(Words hurrying themselves)* I only think I see it all. But if I can only keep on thinking it, I don't care, I don't care. *(Sudden outburst of emotion. Sees fire and runs to it)* A fire, a little supper. *(Kneels at fire—hands before it)* A fire I only dreamed wouldn't be hot. *(Jumping up, sees dressing-gown and slippers)* A dressing gown! *(Holding it to face, then putting it on)* It is real—it is, it must be. It's warm, it's soft. *(Puts feet in slippers, cries out)* Slippers—they are real too. They are real, it's all real. I am not—I am not dreaming. *(Sees books on cushions. Runs to them.)* Books, books—*(Opens one, turns over leaves rapidly)* Some one has written something. Oh, what is it? *(Runs to lamp. Reads aloud)* "To the little girl in the garret, from a friend." *(Clasping book to her breast, grabs up Emily and hugs her)* Oh Emily, oh papa—*(Kneels)* Papa, I have a friend, I have a friend!

**Curtain**

### ACT III

**SCENE:** *Mr. Carrisford's study in house next door to Miss Minchin's seminary for young ladies. Room handsomely furnished. Window looks out on winter street. Chairs, bric-a-brac cabinet, curtains, with soft cushions on window seat, lady's writing-desk, fireplace with fire-dogs. A table with books on it, and a big armchair nearby. Oriental rugs on floor with a tiger's head rug for Donald. Large sofa beside baby grand piano. Noah's ark with animals in it.*

*At the rise of curtain: Door opens. Enter Ram Dass, followed by Donald, Mazie, Nora, and Janet Carmichael. Ram Dass stands up stage. Donald with a whoop sits on tiger's head. Mazie and Nora to piano, to play with toys in ark.*

JANET: Please tell Mr. Carrisford we can wait as long as he likes. We'll go away if he doesn't want us. We're only come to cheer him up a little.

RAM DASS: The Sahib will be glad. I go. *(Exits)*

DONALD: I'll sit here on the tiger's head. Gee up—gee up—gee up! I'm on the tiger's head.

JANET: Now, Donald, you must *remember*. Mr. Carrisford has been very ill, and when you come to cheer up a person who is ill you don't cheer him up at the top of your voice.

DONALD: *(Riding tiger's head)* Well, I can cheer him up better when I'm sitting on the tiger's head than I can on a chair. Gee up—*(Falls off)*

JANET: You can sit there, if you'll be quiet. *(Crosses and sits in chair)* Mr. Carrisford is very anxious to-day. He is waiting for papa to come back from Paris. Mamma said we might help pass the time for him—because he likes us when we're quiet. *(At piano with animals)* I'm going to be quiet.

MAZIE: *(With her)* So am I.

DONALD: *(Riding tiger boisterously)* We'll all be as quiet as mice.

JANET: *(To him)* Mice don't make a noise like that.

DONALD: A whole lot of mice might. A thousand mice might.

JANET: *(Severely)* I don't believe fifty thousand mice might. And we have to be as quiet as one mouse. I'm the oldest and I'm responsible. *(Mazie gets down from the piano, and pushes Donald off tiger's head on to the floor. He retaliates by pushing her off on to floor)*

MAZIE: Oh, Donald, you are rough!

DONALD: You pushed me off, I pushed you off. *(Sits on tiger again)*

JANET: (*Arranges pillows*) Now, that will be ready for him when Ram Dass brings him in, poor thing. (*Leans head on hands on table*) Oh, dear, I wish papa would come. I do hope he will say he has found the lost little girl.

DONALD: Yes.

NORA: Perhaps he will bring her back from Paris.

DONALD: I wish he would. She could tell us about when her papa shot this tiger in India. Mr. Carrisford said Captain Crewe shot it.

MAZIE: I want her to be found because I want to play with her.

NORA: I want her to be found because I'm sorry for her.

JANET: I'm sorry for her. Perhaps she's a poor little beggar in the streets. She has no father and no mother, and Mr. Carrisford does not know where she is. He only thinks she was sent to a boarding-school in Paris. (*Donald throws animals into ark*)

CHILDREN: Oh, ah, Donald!

NORA: Papa has been to ever so many schools to look for her.

MAZIE: But he could never find her.

JANET: But he went to Paris on Thursday because he heard of a school where there was a little girl whose papa died in India. If he doesn't find her this time, he says he shall not know what to do. (*Donald bangs the piano*)

JANET and MAZIE: Oh, Donald, Donald!

NORA: Oh, I wish it was time for him to come. (*To window*) Perhaps she is cold and miserable somewhere. And all the while, Mr. Carrisford wants her so much.

MAZIE: (*Tearfully*) Perhaps she's out in the wet in bare feet and torn frock. It makes me want to cry.

DONALD: (*Taking stage manfully*) I say, if papa doesn't bring her back from Paris, let's all go and look for her, —every one of us. Let's go to the park and stand at the gate, and every time we see a little girl let's ask her what her name is.



JANET: *(Desperately)* We can't let her stay lost and be poor always when she ought to be so rich and live in such a beautiful house. I can't bear it. *(Door opens. Enter Carrisford and Ram Dass. They cross to armchair)*

CHILDREN: *(When they see him)* Oh, Mr. Carrisford, there you are! Oh, how do you do. *(Running to him and leading him down)*

CARRISFORD: How do you do, my dears; it's very good of you to come and see me.

CHILDREN: Oh, no!

NORA: We like to come.

JANET: *(Who has fixed pillows for Carrisford)* Mamma said we might come and see you on our way from the party.

MAZIE: We wanted to show you our party frocks.

DONALD: We're not going to make a noise. *(Blows whistle)*

CARRISFORD: Oh, dear me, let me see—how smart you all are. Let me look at you. *(Donald struts, showing coat and pants)*

DONALD: Would you like to see the back? *(Showing it)*

NORA: Mamma lent me her locket.

MAZIE: *(Showing frock)* Mine is quite a new frock.

DONALD: I have four pockets. *(Showing them)* One, two, three—*(Loses fourth; suddenly finds it)* Ah, four.

CARRISFORD: I have only two.

DONALD: Oh, ho, he has only two!

JANET: Do you think you are any better, Mr. Carrisford?

CARRISFORD: I'm afraid not, Janet. I'm anxious and it isn't good for me. I shall be better if your papa brings me good news. Ram Dass, you may go. *(Exit Ram Dass)*

NORA: He won't be long now. When he comes from Paris, he always comes in the afternoon.

DONALD: I say, I'll go to the window and watch for the cab. Mazie, you come and watch too.

JANET: Mr. Carrisford, do you think he will come back and say he has found the lost little girl?

CARRISFORD: I hope so, Janet, I hope so. I shall be very unhappy if he does not.

NORA: Do you think that perhaps she is so poor that she is begging in the streets this very minute—while we are waiting for her to be found?

CARRISFORD: (*Startled and miserable*) I hope not—I hope not—Heaven knows what she may be doing. That is what makes me so miserable.

DONALD: (*Shouts from window*) Here's a cab, here's a cab—

ALL: Oh—

DONALD: I believe it's going to stop here. (*Carrisford rises, partly turns up stage. Nora and Janet rise*) Oh, no, it isn't, and there's only a fat old lady in it with a blue bonnet on. (*Carrisford sinks back into chair*)

JANET: Oh, Donald, you must be careful.

DONALD: I was careful. It was a cab. The cabman looked at this house when the umbrella was poked out.

CARRISFORD: (*Pats Janet's hand*) You are a nice little girl, Janet. Thank you.

JANET: (*Kneels beside him*) I wish I could cheer you up until papa does come—but when anyone feels ill perhaps cheering up is too loud.

CARRISFORD: Oh, no, no—

JANET: May we talk about the little girl?

CARRISFORD: I don't think I can talk about anything else just now.

NORA: We like her so much. We call her the little lost Princess.

CARRISFORD: Do you, —why?

JANET: Because she will be so rich when she is found that she will be quite like a little princess. Is it true that her papa gave all of his money to one of his friends to spend in a mine that had diamonds in it—and then his friend thought he had lost all and ran away because he felt as if he was a robber?

NORA: But he wasn't really, you know!

CARRISFORD: NO, he wasn't really. The mine turned out well after all. But it was too late. Captain Crewe was dead. If he had lived he and his little girl would have been very rich indeed.

JANET: I'm sorry for the friend.

CARRISFORD: Are you?

JANET: I can't help it.

CARRISFORD: I am sorry for him too. *I am the friend, Janet.*

JANET: OH, de-ar—*Poor Mr. Carrisford.*

NORA: Oh, papa must find her!

JANET: Yes, he must find her!

DONALD: *(From window, dancing up and down in seat with Mazie)* Here he is, here he is.

ALL: Oh, ah—

CARRISFORD: *(Trying to rise)* I wish I could get up, but it's no use, I cannot, I cannot—*(Nora and Janet to window)*

JANET: *(Coming down)* But there isn't any little girl. *(Enter Ram Dass)*

RAM DASS: Sahib, Mr. Carmichael is at the door.

ALL: May we go?

CARRISFORD: Yes, yes, go, go—*(Children exeunt running, followed by Ram Dass)*

CARMICHAEL: *(Outside)* No, no, children. Not now—

CHILDREN: Daddy, Daddy—

CARMICHAEL: Now, now, —you can come in after I have talked with Mr. Carrisford. Go away and play with Ram Dass.

CHILDREN: All right. *(Enter Carmichael)*

CARRISFORD: (*Shaking hands*) I am glad to see you—very glad. Pray sit down. What news do you bring?

CARMICHAEL: (*Sits*) No good news, I am sorry to say. I went to the school in Paris and saw the little girl. But she is not the child you are searching for.

CARRISFORD: Then the search must begin all over again.

CARMICHAEL: I'm afraid so.

CARRISFORD: Have you any new suggestions to make?

CARMICHAEL: Well, perhaps. Are you quite sure the child was put in a school in Paris?

CARRISFORD: My dear fellow, I am sure of *nothing*.

CARMICHAEL: But you thought the school was in Paris?

CARRISFORD: Because her mother was a French woman, and had wished that the child should be educated in Paris. It seemed only likely that she should be there.

CARMICHAEL: I assure you I have searched the schools in Paris thoroughly. The journey I have just returned from was really my last hope.

CARRISFORD: Carmichael, I must find her, —I shall never get well until I do find her and give her the fortune the mine has made. It is hers, and she, poor child, may be begging in the streets. Poor Crewe put into the scheme every penny he owned, and he died thinking I had ruined him.

CARMICHAEL: You were not yourself at the time. You were stricken with brain fever two days after you left the place—remember that.

CARRISFORD: Yes, and when I returned to consciousness, poor Crewe was dead.

CARMICHAEL: You did not remember the child; you did not speak of her for months.

CARRISFORD: No, I had forgotten, and now I shall never remember.

CARMICHAEL: Come, come. We shall find her yet. (*Rises*)

CARRISFORD: We will find her if we search every city in Europe. Help me to find her. (*Shakes hands*)

CARMICHAEL: We *will* find her. As you say—if she is alive she is *somewhere*. We have searched the schools in Paris. Let us try London.

CARRISFORD: There are schools enough in London. Bu the way, there is one next door.

CARMICHAEL: Then we will begin there. We cannot begin nearer than next door.

CARRISFORD: There's a child there who interests me. But she is not a pupil. *(Enter Ram Dass)*  
She is a little forlorn creature as unlike poor Crewe as a child could be. Well, Ram Dass?—

RAM DASS: Sahib, the child, she herself has come—the child the Sahib felt pity for. She brings back the monkey who had again run away to her garret. I have asked that she remain. It was my thought that it would please the Sahib to see and speak with her.

CARMICHAEL: Who is she?

CARRISFORD: God knows. She is the child I spoke of. *(To Ram Dass)* Yes, yes, I should like to see her. *(Children enter, except Donald, crying and dancing with joy)*

JANET: Mr. Carrisford, Mr. Carrisford, papa, papa, the little girl, she's the little girl we saw at the school—

CARMICHAEL and CARRISFORD: At the school?

NORA: She was quite a rich little girl in a beautiful frock.

MAZIE: And now she's poor and thing and ragged—at least almost ragged. *(Enter Mrs. Carmichael)*

MRS. CARMICHAEL: My dears, my dears, what are you talking about—all at once?

JANET: It's the little girl who made up names about us—and now she's quite poor and shabby.

MAZIE: She brought the monkey back.

DONALD: *(Runs on—joining clamour)* I say, I say, she won't come in, she won't come in, —I want her to come in! She talked Indian to Ram Dass, but she won't come in. *(During this he jumps behind Mr. Carrisford, pulls his bath robe—is taken away by his father.)*

CARRISFORD: *(To Ram Dass)* She spoke Hindustani?

RAM DASS: Yes, Sahib, a few words.

CARRISFORD: Ask her to come here. *(Exit Ram Dass)*

CARMICHAEL: *(To Carrisford)* You must compose yourself. Remember your weakness. The fact that the child knows little Hindustani may mean nothing. Don't prepare yourself for another disappointment.

CARRISFORD: No, no.

CARMICHAEL: *(To Donald)* Here, you young rascal. *(Spanking. Enter Sara with monkey in arm)*

MRS. CARMICHAEL: I believe it is the same child, but I should not have known her.

SARA: Your monkey got away again. He came to my garret window and I took him in last night. I would have brought him back if it had not been so late. I knew you were ill and might not like to be disturbed.

CARRISFORD: That was very thoughtful of you.

SARA: Shall I give him to the lascars?

CARRISFORD: How do you know he is a lascar?

SARA: Oh, I know lascars. I was born in India.

CARRISFORD: *(Excited)* Were you? *(Holds out his hand)* Come here. *(To Ram Dass)* Ram Dass, take the monkey away. *(Exit Ram Dass with monkey. To Sara)* Come, you live next door, do you not?

SARA: Yes, sir, I live at Miss Minchin's.

CARRISFORD: She keeps a boarding-school. But you are not a pupil, are you?

SARA: I don't know what I am.

CARRISFORD: Why not?

SARA: At first I was a pupil and a parlour-boarder, but now—

CARRISFORD: What now?

SARA: I sleep in the garret next to the scullery-maid. I run errands for the cook and I teach the little ones their lessons.

MRS. CARMICHAEL: *(To Mr. Carmichael)* Poor little thing.

CARRISFORD: (*Gestures to Carmichael as if agitation was too much for him*) Question her, Carmichael, —I cannot.

CARMICHAEL: What do you mean by “at first,” my child?

SARA: (*Turning to him*) When I was first taken there by papa.

CARMICHAEL: Where is your father?

SARA: My papa died. He lost all his money, and there was none left for me, and so—

CARRISFORD: Carmichael!

CARMICHAEL: (*Pantomime with wife*) And so—you were sent up into the garret and made a little drudge? That’s about it, isn’t it?

SARA: There was no one to take care of me. I belong to nobody.

CARRISFORD: (*Breaking in*) How—how—did your father lose his money?

SARA: He didn’t lose it himself. He had a friend he was very fond of—he was very fond of him—it was his friend who took his money. I don’t know how. (*To Carmichael*) I don’t understand. (*To Carrisford*) He trusted his friend too much.

CARRISFORD: (*Agitated*) But the friend might not have meant to do harm. It might have happened through a mistake.

SARA: But the *suffering* was just as bad for my papa. It killed him—

CARRISFORD: (*Faints*) Carmichael! (*Confusion. Carmichael goes to Carrisford. Sara stands before them, bewildered; she picks up shawl and starts to go*)

SARA: I think I had better go.

CARRISFORD: (*Recovering*) Stay. What was your father’s name?

SARA: His name was Ralph Crewe—

CARRISFORD: Oh—

SARA: Captain Crewe—perhaps you knew him. He died in India.

CARRISFORD: Yes, yes, yes—Carmichael, it is the child!

SARA: (*Looking from Carrisford to Carmichael, trembling*) What does he mean? What child am I?

CARRISFORD: I was your father's friend—he loved me—he trusted me—if he had lived he would have known—but now—(*Sinks back*)

MRS. CARMICHAEL: (*To Sara*) My dear little girl. My poor little girl! (*Children start to go to Sara; Janet stops them*)

SARA: Did he know my papa? Was *he* the wicked friend? Oh, do tell me!

MRS. CARMICHAEL: He was not wicked, my dear; he did not really lose your papa's money—he only thought he had lost it—he was ill—and when he got well—your poor papa was dead, and he didn't know where to find you.

SARA: And I was at Miss Minchin's all the time.

MRS. CARMICHAEL: Yes, he saw you pass by, and he was *sorry* for you, and he told Ram Dass to climb through your attic window and try to make you comfortable—

SARA: (*Joyfully*) Did Ram Dass bring the things, —did he tell Ram Dass to do it? Did he make the dream that came true?

MRS. CARMICHAEL: Yes—yes—my dear—he did. He is kind and good, and was sorry for you.

SARA: (*Going to Carrisford*) You sent the things to me—the beautiful things—the beautiful, beautiful things—you sent them?

CARRISFORD: Yes—poor dear child—I did.

SARA: Then it is you who are *my* friend. (*Kneels to Carrisford*)

SERVANT: (*Outside*) Pardon me, Madam, but Mr. Carrisford is not well enough to see visitors.

MISS MINCHIN: (*Partly off stage*) I am sorry (*Enters door*) to disturb Mr. Carrisford, but I must see him at once. I have explanations to make. (*Meeting Carmichael*) I am Miss Minchin, the proprietress of "*The Young Ladies' Seminary*" next door.

CARMICHAEL: So you are Miss Minchin?

MISS MINCHIN: I am, sir.

CARMICHAEL: In that case you have arrived at the right time.



MISS MINCHIN: I have come to explain that an insolent charity pupil of mine has intruded here without my knowledge. *(Sees Sara)*

CARRISFORD: *(To Sara)* There, there, it's all right.

MISS MINCHIN: You are here still—the forwardness of such conduct—*(indignantly)* go home at once—you shall be severely punished! Go home at once, at once! *(Sara rises and starts to go)*

JANET: Oh, please don't let her go.

ALL CHILDREN: *(Going to Mr. Carrisford)* Oh, please don't let her go!

CARRISFORD: No, no—she is not going.

ALL CHILDREN: Ah—*(Children back to sofa)*

MISS MINCHIN: Not going—

CARRISFORD: No, Miss Minchin. She is not going *home*—if you give your house that name. Her home for the future will be with me.

MISS MINCHIN: With *you*, with *you*, —what does this mean?

CARRISFORD: That she is done with you, Madam, —with you and her misery and her garret.

MISS MINCHIN: I am dumbfounded. Such insults. *(To Sara)* This is your doing—come back to the school at once. *(Starts forward as though to take her)*

CARMICHAEL: *(Coming down)* That will not do, Miss Minchin.

MISS MINCHIN: *(Violently)* Not do? How dare you interfere! *(To Carrisford)* How dare *you*? She shall go back if I have to call in the police.

CARRISFORD: The lady is too violent for me, Carmichael, —please explain to her.

CARMICHAEL: I am Mr. Carrisford's lawyer, Madam. Mr. Carrisford was an intimate friend of the late Captain Crewe—the fortune which Captain Crewe supposed he had lost is in the hands of Mr. Carrisford.

MISS MINCHIN: *(Startled)* The fortune—Sara's fortune? *(Turns, and stares aghast at Sara)*

CARMICHAEL: It will be Sara's fortune—it is Sara's fortune now.

MISS MINCHIN: *(To Carmichael)* Captain Crewe left her in my charge. She must return to it until she is of age. The law will interfere in my behalf.

CARMICHAEL: No, the law will not, Miss Minchin. Captain Crewe constituted Mr. Carrisford her guardian long ago. If Sara herself wishes to return to you, I dare say he would not refuse her. But that rests with Sara.

MISS MINCHIN: Then I appeal to Sara. *(To Sara)* I have not spoiled you, perhaps, but I have always been very fond of you.

SARA: Have you, Miss Minchin? I did not know that—

MISS MINCHIN: Yes. Will you not do your duty to your poor papa and come home with me?

SARA: *(Steps forward)* No, I will not. You know why I will not go home with you, Miss Minchin, you know—*(This spoken quietly, steadily, and politely, looking squarely at her.)*

MISS MINCHIN: *(Spitefully)* Then you will never see your little companions again, —Ermengarde and Lottie.

CARMICHAEL: Oh, yes, she will, she will see any one she wishes in her guardian's house. *(Miss Minchin goes wrathfully to Carmichael)*

CARRISFORD: Ram Dass—show this lady out. *(Miss Minchin makes for Carrisford)* That is all, Miss Minchin—your bill will be paid. *(Miss Minchin looks around and, putting shawl over head, exits. Donald whistles)*

CHILDREN: *(Delightedly)* Good-bye. *(Ram Dass follows her off)*

SARA: *(Goes toward Carrisford, drawing in breath; shuts eyes and then opens them wide with wondering expression, like waking from dream of night before)* I—I—did not wake up from the other—last—night—that was real. I shall not wake up from *this*, shall I?

CARRISFORD: No, no, you shall never wake up again to anything that is not happiness.

SARA: But there was another little girl—she was as lonely and cold and hungry as I was—*could* you save her too?

CARRISFORD: Yes, indeed. Who was she?

SARA: Her name is Becky—she is the scullery-maid. She has no one but me, and she will miss me so. She was the prisoner in the next cell.

CARRISFORD: You shall take care of her—Carmichael—(*who turns*) will bring back to us the prisoner in the next cell.

CHILDREN: (*Rushing around her*) You're found—you're found, —we are so glad you're found.  
(*All joyfully*)

SARA: I didn't know I was lost, and now I'm found I can't quite believe it.

MRS. CARMICHAEL: What shall we do to make her feel that her troubles are over and that she may be happy as she used to be?

DONALD: I say, you said you would tell us a story. Tell us one now.

SARA: Shall I?

ALL: Yes, oh, yes, a story.

SARA: Just as I used to—?

CHILDREN: Just as you used to.

SARA: Well, —once upon a time, long ago—there lived a little Princess—

**Curtain**