

SCENE EIGHT: OFFICE OF MISS MINCHIN

Scene opens in Miss Minchin's office. She is sitting at her desk; Sara is standing before her with Emily, her doll, clutched in her arms.

Miss M: *(with a sneer)* Put down your doll. What do you mean by bringing her in here?

Sara: *(coldly, looking directly at Miss M)* No, I will not put her down. She is all I have. Papa gave her to me.

Miss M: You will have no time for dolls in future; you will have to work as a servant and improve yourself. You will have to make yourself **useful**.

She speaks with absolute coldness and hatred to Sara. Her heartlessness is terrifying.

Sara remains silent, fixing her gaze on Miss M.

Miss M: I suppose Miss Amelia has explained matters to you.

Sara: Yes. My Papa is dead. He left me no money. I am quite poor.

Miss M: *(her temper is rising)* You are a **beggar**. It appears that you have no relations and no home and no one to take care of you.

Sara, once again, remains silent, staring at Miss M with defiance.

Miss M rises from her seat, furious and menacing.

Miss M: What are you staring at? Are you so stupid that you cannot understand? I tell you that you are quite alone in the world and have no one to do anything for you, unless **I** choose to keep you here out of charity.

Sara: I understand. *(she breaks her gaze towards Miss M and looks down. In a near whisper she repeats)* I understand.

Miss M: *(almost screaming)* That doll that your father gave to you on your birthday; that ridiculous doll, with all her nonsensical, extravagant things - **I** actually paid the bill for her!

Sara: *(mournfully)* The last doll.

Miss M: *(she comes from behind the desk and towers over Sara)* The last doll indeed. And she is **mine**, not yours. Everything you own is mine.

Sara: Please take it away from me then. I do not want it.

Miss M: *(moving away and purposefully barging Sara away from the desk so that she almost falls to the ground)* Don't put on grand airs. The time for that sort of thing is past. You are not privileged any longer; your maid will be dismissed. You will wear your oldest and plainest clothes. You are like Becky - you must work for your living.

Sara: *(looking up with a brightness in her eyes)* Can I work? If I work it will not matter so much. What can I do?

Miss M: You can do anything you are told to do. You are a sharp child and pick up things readily. If you make yourself useful you may stay here. You speak French well so you can help with the younger children. It will save me money.

Sara: May I? Oh please let me! I know I can teach them. I like them and they like me.

Miss M: *(with a great deal of scorn)* Don't talk nonsense about people liking you. And you will have to do a great deal more than teaching the little ones. You will run errands and work in the kitchen. If you do not please me and do *exactly* as I ask, you will be sent away to a poor house. Remember that. Now go.

Sara said nothing and stood staring at Miss M for a few seconds. She then turned to leave

Miss M. STOP! Don't you intend to thank me?

Sara: What for?

Miss M: *(with a menacing coldness)* For my kindness to you. For my kindness in giving you a home.

Sara: *(moving towards Miss M)* You are not kind. You are **not** kind and it is **not** a home.

She exits swiftly with Miss M standing in absolute horror and rage.