

SCENE FOUR: THE SCHOOLROOM

Alice & Beatrice, with Isobel & Victoria enter

Alice: Life in the seminary..

Beatrice: (interrupting) .for Young Ladies...

Alice: ...continued without much excitement.

Victoria: Except for the fact that Lavinia became more and more jealous of Sara Crewe..

Isobel: ..as Sara's beautiful velvet coats; silk dresses and petticoats, sable muffs and ostrich feathers, meant that Miss Minchin chose her above everyone else to head the line.

Alice: This, of course, having been previously the privilege of Lavinia.

Victoria: Yes, well Lavinia is beautiful and rich too.

Lavinia and Jessie enter.

Jessie: There's one thing about Sara Crewe; she's never 'grand' about herself the least bit, and you know she might be, Lavvie. I believe I couldn't help being—just a little—if I had so many fine things and was made such a fuss over.

Victoria: It's disgusting, the way Miss Minchin shows her off when parents come.

Lavinia: (*mimicking Miss Minchin*) 'Dear Sara must come into the drawing room and talk to Mrs. Musgrave about India'.

The girls start to giggle

Lavinia: 'Dear Sara must speak French to Lady Pitkin. Her accent is so perfect.'

Victoria: O Lavinia, you are funny!

Lavinia: She didn't learn her French at the Seminary, at any rate. And there's nothing so clever in her knowing it. She says herself she didn't learn it at all, and as for her papa, there is nothing so grand in being an Indian officer.

Jessie: *Well, he's killed tigers. He killed the one in the skin Sara has in her room. That's why she likes it so. She lies on it and strokes its head, and talks to it as if it was a cat.*

Victoria: She's always doing something silly.

Lavinia: My mamma says that way of hers of pretending things is silly. She says she will grow up eccentric.

Enter Miss Amelia, with a screaming Lottie at her side.

Miss Am: Please, please Lottie. Do stop this ridiculous behaviour.

Lottie: *(weeping, and struggling to break free from Miss Amelia's hold)* O! O! O! I haven't got any Mama!

Miss Am: Oh Lottie! Do stop darling! Don't cry! Please don't!

Lottie: O! O! O! Haven't – got – any – Mam- ma-a-a!

Miss A: I know you haven't any mamma, poor—If you don't stop, Lottie, I will shake you. Poor little angel! There--! You wicked, bad, detestable child, I will smack you! I will.....

Miss Minchin enters

Miss M: What in heaven's name is all this awful noise about? Miss Amelia – please take control of this ridiculous child.

Miss A: Oh sister. It is Lottie again. You know what she is like when she gets into one of her moods. She is completely uncontrollable.

Miss M: Nonsense. The child should be whipped. Do you hear me Lottie – you should be whipped.

Lottie renews her wails and tries to struggle free of Miss Amelia

Miss A:*(becoming tearful and agitated)* Please Lottie dear, please. Try to calm down.

Miss M: It's no use molly coddling the child Miss Amelia. Show her some discipline. If you won't ..I WILL! *(she moves towards Lottie as if she is going to hit her)*

Miss Amelia quickly draws Lottie away.

Miss A: Please sister. Please don't hurt her.

Throughout all this commotion, a crowd of girls has gathered to witness Lottie's demise. They are very scared of Miss Minchin, who turns on them, threatening.

Miss M: And what on earth do you think you are all looking at. This isn't a side-show. I shall punish any of you in the same way as Lottie if you don't leave NOW!

The girls are terrified and quickly disperse, except for Sara, who stands her ground and faces Miss Minchin.

Sara: I stopped because I thought, perhaps, just perhaps, I could make Lottie be quiet.

Miss M: *(with sarcasm)* If you can. You are a clever child. I dare say you can manage her. Go on. *(she steps aside and with a slight smile of disapproval, allows Sara to deal with Lottie)*

Sara: May I try Miss Amelia?

Miss A: Oh, Sara. We never had such a dreadful child before. I don't believe we can keep her.

Sara: *(taking hold of Lottie)* Lottie! Lottie! Look at me.

Lottie: *(a little less hysterical)* I haven't - any - ma- ma - maa-a!

PAUSE

Sara: Neither have I.

Lottie stops instantly and stares at Sara

Lottie: Where is she?

Sara: She went to heaven. But I am sure she comes out sometimes to see me—though I don't see her. So does yours. Perhaps they can both see us now. Perhaps they are both in this room.

Lottie: What is it like in Heaven?

Sara: There are fields and fields of flowers. . And the streets are shining. And people are never tired, however far they walk. All the people in Heaven look down onto the earth and smile, and send beautiful messages.

Lottie: I want to go there.....*(starting to cry again)*I—haven't any mamma in this school.

Sara: I will be your mamma. We will play that you are my little girl. And Emily shall be your sister. Come, let us go and I will introduce you to Emily.

Lottie smiles and stands up and catches Sara's hand. She is now pacified. Miss Minchin watches, astonished, as Sara leaves the stage.

Miss A: There sister. Sara is a very special child. I always knew it.

Miss M: Well, we shall see sister. I wonder what might happen to her when things are not always easy!