

M.Duf: *(to Ermengarde)* Non, non, non! Mademoiselle St John.. *La mere; le pere; Ce n'est pas difficile.*

Ermengarde: I am sorry Monsieur. I cannot do it. Please don't be angry.
Ermengarde is biting the ribbon on her plait, and beginning to cry.

M.Duf: Mademoiselle St John. Perhaps Mademoiselle Sara can help you. Please, go and sit next to her.

Lavinia: Nothing is going to help that dunce. She cannot even speak English, let alone try and speak French, even if the great Miss Sara does help her.

Jessie: You have to admit, Lavinia, that Sara Crewe is very good at French – much better than the rest of us.

Lavinia: Oh I wouldn't believe that. I bet that was all rehearsed. It's probably the only bit of French she knows.

Alice: Well I think she's very clever. I wish I were as clever.

Victoria: Did you hear her speaking to that ridiculous doll of hers? She pretends that it comes alive when she's not there.

Isobel: Have you seen the doll's wardrobe? So many beautiful clothes.

Lavinia: Well I think it's ridiculous to waste money like that – on a doll.. really!

The girls continue to talk amongst themselves as M Dufarge walks around looking at their work. Ermengarde and Sara are talking together.

Sara: What is your name?

Erm: My name is Ermengarde

Sara: Mine is Sara Crewe. Yours is very pretty. It sounds like a story book.

Erm: Do you like it? I—I like yours. You – you *can* speak French can't you?

Sara: I can speak it because I have heard it all my life. You could speak it if you had always heard it.

Erm: Oh no I couldn't. I could NEVER speak it!

Sara: Why?

Erm: You heard me.. I am stupid. I can't *say* the words. They sound so strange. You are clever.

Lavinia: Just look at Sara making friends with the stupidest girl in the school.

Jessie: Thank goodness. That means we don't have to have anything to do with either of them.

M.Duf: Mademoiselles. The lesson time is over. Please collect the books Beatrice. I will see you all tomorrow when we will learn about my beautiful country. Perhaps Mademoiselle Sara will contribute to that discussion.

There is a general whispering as the girls turn to look at Sara, who is a little embarrassed.

Alice: Come on you two. *(to Beatrice & Isobel)*

Sara: Come along Ermengarde. You need cheering up! I'll introduce you to my doll Emily.