

## SCENE SIX: THE SCHOOLROOM

**Beatrice:** It was a few weeks later when Sara received an important letter from her father.

**Isobel:** By this time Becky had become a firm friend of Sara's and some of the other girls began to accept her too.

**Alice:** Besides Victoria, Jessie & Lavinia, we were all getting used to Becky being with Sara whenever she could, to hear Sara's stories.

**Isobel:** Everyone agreed that Becky was beginning to look much better.

**Alice:** But we all still witnessed Miss Minchin and Cook being very cruel to her.

**Beatrice:** We were gathered in the classroom and Sara was telling us about the contents of her letter before Miss Minchin arrived. Becky was listening as she cleaned the floor.

*Sara, Ermengarde, Lottie, enter followed by Jessie, Lavinia & Victoria.*

*Becky follows with a mop & bucket. She sidles round to where Sara is reading the letter.*

**Sara: (reading)** ... "And so my dear girl, this school friend of mine who is the owner of a large tract of land here in India has, to our good fortune, found diamonds. We are now partners in the business and once the diamonds have been extracted we will share in the most enormous fortune." My dear Papa will be rich I think.

**Isobel:** Oh it sounds like something out of the Arabian Nights.

**Lottie:** I bet there are long winding passages in caves where sparkling stones are embedded in the walls and ceilings..

**Alice:** ..and strange men are digging them out with heavy picks.

**Lavinia:** My mamma has a diamond ring, which cost forty pounds, and it is not a big one, either. If there were mines full of diamonds, people would be so rich it would be ridiculous.

**Jessie(giggling)** Perhaps Sara will be so rich that she will be ridiculous.

**Victoria:** She is ridiculous without being rich!

**Lavinia:** I don't believe in mines full of diamonds.

**Jessie:** Well, people have to get them from somewhere.

**Lavinia:** I'm bored of hearing about that everlasting Sara.

**Victoria:** One of her "pretends" is that she is a princess. She plays it all the time, even in lessons.

**Jessie:** She says it makes her learn better. She wants Ermengarde to be one too.

*They all start to giggle*

**Victoria:** She says it has nothing to do with what you look like, or what you have. It has only to do with what you *think* of and what you *do*.

**Lavinia:** I suppose she thinks she could be a princess if she was a beggar.

*Lavinia suddenly catches Becky listening again to Sara's tales of the Diamond Mines*

**Lavinia:** You are listening AGAIN you impudent creature.

*She slaps Becky at the back of her legs  
Becky jumps and rushes out off stage.*

**Sara:** How DARE you slap Becky. I should like to slap you – but I won't slap you. We are not gutter children. We are both old enough to know better.

**Lavinia:** Ah, yes, your royal highness. The school ought to be very fashionable now Miss Minchin has a princess for a pupil.

**Sara:** Sometimes I do pretend I am a princess. I pretend I am a princess, so that I can try and behave like one.

**Lavinia:** Dear me. I hope, when you ascend the throne, you won't forget us.

**Sara:** I won't.

*Girls exit as the dinner gong is heard.*