

Miss Minchin and Miss Amelia have entered

Miss Am: Come along girls.. form yourselves into lines. We have to be ready to go to church in a civilised fashion please. Come along ...come..*(she is chivvying the girls and getting them in order)*

Miss M: *(she has noticed Sara & Becky standing there)* Becky, Sara. What are you standing around for? The classrooms need to be scrubbed, windows cleaned, fire grates replenished while the girls are out.

Sara & Becky look at each other and exchange a smile

Miss M: You do not look as if you realize that you are in disgrace. Are you absolutely hardened?

Sara: I beg your pardon Miss Minchin. I know that I am in disgrace.

Miss M: Be good enough not to forget it and look as if you have come into a fortune. *(Becky & Sara once again exchange a quick smile)* It is an impertinence. And remember, you are to have no food again today.

Sara: Yes Miss Minchin.

Miss M: Mmm – well get along girls. Try to avoid the young ladies as you pass!

Sarah & Becky exit. A little laugh is heard as they go offstage

Lavinia: She can't be very hungry. Did you see her?

Jessie: Perhaps she is pretending she has had a good breakfast!

A few of the girls laugh.

Miss Am: That's enough girls – now off you go.

The girls exit main doors

Miss M: Sara Crewe looks wonderfully well, given her starvation. *(she calls for Cook who comes hurrying in)*

Cook: Yes mum!

Miss M: Sara and Becky – you have been keeping an eye on them haven't you?

Cook: Oh yes mum! Ev'ry minute of ev'ry day mum. Hah! They'll be no more stealin' on my watch.

Miss M: I should hope not. She is, however beginning to look fat! *(she makes a hand gesture indicating Cook to leave them)*

Cook exits

Miss Am: I have to say, sister, she was beginning to look like a little starved crow.

Miss M: Starved! There was no reason why she should look starved. She always had plenty to eat!

Miss Am: Of – of course.

Miss M: There is something very disagreeable in seeing that sort of thing in a child of her age.

Miss Am: What – sort of thing?

Miss M: It might be called defiance. The spirit and will of any other child would have been entirely humbled and broken by – by the changes she has had to submit to. But upon my word, she seems as little subdued as if – as if she were a privileged student.

Miss Am: Do you remember what she said to you that day in the schoolroom about what you would do if you found out that she was –

Miss M: *(interrupting)* No I don't! Don't talk nonsense.

Cook comes in carrying a parcel.

Cook: 'Scuse me Mum, but this just came addressed to *(reading the label with great difficulty)* "The Little Girl in the right-hand attic".

Miss M: *(snatching the parcel from Cook)* What! Ridiculous! *(she reads)*

Miss Am: But that is Sara.

Miss M: I'm absolutely aware of *who* lives there you silly woman. But what on earth – *who* on earth is sending Sara Crewe parcels. Cook, fetch Sara Crewe here at once.

Cook: Yes mum!

Miss Minchin is muttering, looking at the parcel.

Sara enters

Sara: Yes Miss Minchin?

Miss M: What is this? *(she gives the parcel to Sara)*

Sara: Oh – it is addressed to me.

Miss M: I realise that you ridiculous girl. Open it at once.

Sara opens the parcel, and pulls out gloves, hat, muff, stockings, shoes and a dress.

Sara: Oh, how kind, how beautiful! And look, there is a card: *(reading)* "To be worn every day – will be replaced by others when necessary."

Miss M: *(very agitated)* I – I – have you any idea where this has come from?

Sara: No Miss Minchin.

Miss Amelia takes Miss Minchin to one side

Miss Am: Sister! We need to be careful. This could have come from someone who knows in what conditions we are keeping Sara. If we do not accept these gifts,.... well the school may be under scrutiny.

Miss M: You are right sister. *(she turns to Sara with a false smile)* Well, someone is very kind to you. As the things have been sent, and you are to have new ones when they are worn out, you may as well go and put them on and look respectable. Er, and you need not go out on any more errands today.

Sara picks up the box, looks at Cook, Miss Amelia & Miss Minchin and exits.

Miss M: I don't like this one bit, not one bit.

Exit Miss Minchin with Cook & Miss Amelia following whispering behind her back.