

SCENE FIVE: SARA'S BEDROOM

The girls are gathered around Sara; Ermengarde sits on her right, Lottie on her left. The rest of the girls are sitting around her. Becky, the kitchen maid, is also there. She has a coal scuttle in her hand and a brush... she is generally tidying. Every so often, she stops to listen and watches Sara.

Sara: The mermaids swam softly about in crystal- green water, and dragged after them a fishing net woven of deep sea pearls. The Princess sat on a white rock and watched them.

Becky suddenly drops her bucket and cries out in alarm.

Lavinia: That girl has been listening.

Sara: I knew she was listening. Why shouldn't she?

Lavinia: Well I do not know whether your Mamma would like you to tell stories to servant girls, but I know **MY** mamma wouldn't like **ME** to do it.

Sara: My mamma! I don't believe she would mind in the least. She knows stories belong to everybody.

Lavinia: I thought *your* mamma was dead. How can *she* know things?

Jessie: Lavvie! Sssh!

A few of the girls are now looking uncomfortable and start to mutter

Sara: Do you think she DOESN'T know things?

Lottie: Sara's Mamma knows everything. So does my mamma. In Heaven the streets are shining and there are fields and fields of lilies and everybody gathers them. Sara tells me all about Heaven when we go to bed.

Lavinia(to Sara) You wicked thing, making up fairy stories about Heaven. Get that girl out of here. She should not be listening to us. *(turning to Becky)* Get out you wicked girl. Miss Minchin will be hearing about this.

Becky: Oh please Miss, *please!* She'll tell cook and I'll get a beatin'.

Lavinia: Well you should have thought of that before you eavesdropped on our conversation. Get out! *(she moves as if to hit Becky, who runs out quickly)*

Sara: You had no right to do that Lavinia. You may now remove yourself from my room.

Lavinia: Do you really think I would stay a second longer in a room where dirty maids are made welcome? Come along Jessie, Victoria.

She storms out, followed by Jessie & Victoria.

Alice: Will you tell us more of the story another time Sara?

Isobel: Oh do please. I so want to know what happened to the Prince Merman who fell in love .. *(she sighs)*

Beatrice: Really, Isobel, you are so silly – it is only a story.

Isobel: Yes, but I want to meet a prince one day and be married and live in a palace and....

Beatrice: O come along Isobel .. *(she takes Isobel out, followed by Alice)*