

A LITTLE PRINCESS

By Eleanor V. Lindsay

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Here is a faithful adaptation of the book by Frances Hodgson Burnett, originally commissioned and produced by the Dallas Children's Theatre. Set in Victorian England, Sara Crewe, arrives at Miss Minchin's Select Seminary for Young Ladies. There the young, beloved heiress shines as the star pupil — until the death of her wealthy father completely reverses her fortune. Greedy Miss Minchin and her timid sister Amelia, force Sara to become a servant at the academy and live in a cold, miserable attic room. But the change in her life is difficult. Soon Sara is not only penniless, but friendless as snobby schoolmates shun her. Sara uses her vivid imagination not only to overcome adversity and loss but even bring happiness to her faithful friend, Ermengarde, and the scullery maid, Becky. Ram Dass, a lascar from India, who serves, Tom Carrisford, a friend of Sara's father, narrates this story of a girl who never loses the richness of spirit and eventually regains her rightful material wealth. Multiple simple sets.

Originally commissioned and produced by Dallas Children's Theatre.

ORIGINAL CAST

Sara Crewe.....Jessica Angleskhan, Hope Rodgers
Captain Crewe.....Cooper John Dunston
Miss Minchin.....Sharon Bunn
Amelia Minchin.....Emily Scott Banks
Becky.....Diane Mull
Lottie.....Christin Siems, Caroline Straty
Ermengarde.....Jessica Eads-Rundel, Julia Lott
Lavinia.....Alana Gay, Claire Jordan
Jessie.....Sara Mokuria, Shannon Wilson
Ram Dass.....Heland Lee
Mr. DeFarge / Mr. Carrisford.....Thomas Walker
Mr. Barrows / Mr. Carmichael.....Reese Chapman
Lady Pitkin / Cook.....Sarah Einerson
Directed by.....Artie Olaisen

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7 m, 11 w)

SARA CREWE: 10-13 years of age.
MISS MARIA MINCHIN: A spinster - approximately 40.
MISS AMELIA MINCHIN: Her sister - mid 30s.
BECKY: A cockney in her late teens.
ERMENGARDE: A young schoolgirl 11-13.
LAVINIA: A schoolgirl 13-15.
JESSIE: A schoolgirl 13-15.
LOTTIE: A schoolgirl 9-10.
COOK: The cook.
ANNE: A beggar 9-10.
LADY PITKIN: parent of potential students
CAPTAIN CREWE: Sara's father - late 20s, early 30s.
MR. BARROW: A solicitor.
MR. CARMICHAEL: A solicitor - mid 30s.
MR. CARRISFORD: A businessman, late 30s.
RAM DASS: A lascar from India.
M. DeFARGE: A French teacher.
MAN ON THE STREET

*NOTE: Some of these roles may be doubled by one actor.

SETTING

A Little Princess takes place in various rooms of the Minchin's school, Mr. Carrisford's study, and the streets of London. In order to keep the action flowing smoothly, a unit set can be used with minimum furnishings rather than a fully realistic look.

A Little Princess

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SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Prologue:: A London Street.
Scene 1: Miss Minchin's study.
Scene 2: Schoolroom.
Scene 3: Schoolroom, later that afternoon.
Scene 4: Schoolroom, a few weeks later.
Scene 5: The hallway.
Scene 6: Schoolroom, several months later.
Scene 7: Miss Minchin's study and hallway.
Scene 8: Captain Crewe's study.
Scene 9: Schoolroom.

ACT II

Scene 1: The hallway.
Scene 2: The street.
Scene 3: Sara's attic room.
Scene 4: The street.
Scene 5: Carrisford's study.
Scene 6: Sara's attic room.
Scene 7: The hallway.
Scene 8: Sara's attic room.
Scene 9: The hallway.
Scene 10: Mr. Carrisford's study.
Scene 11: The hallway.
Scene 12: Sara's attic room.
Scene 13: The kitchen, a few days later.
Scene 14: A muddy London Street.
Scene 15: The hallway.
Scene 16: Sara's attic room.
Scene 17: The hallway, some time later.
Scene 18: The attic, moments later.
Scene 19: Mr. Carrisford's study.
Scene 20: The street and hallway.
Scene 21: The attic.
Scene 22: Mr. Carrisford's study.

ACT I
Prologue

(BEFORE CURTAIN: A London street. SOUND of Indian music is heard. As this fades, the SOUNDS of turn-of-the-century London grow increasingly louder, with the sound of a horse-drawn carriage traveling over cobblestones finally dominating. RAM DASS is illuminated.)

RAM DASS: This is the story of a storyteller. Storytellers are rare and to be cherished. I, Ram Dass, was privileged to know this one. But not at the beginning. This story began on a dark winter's day, when the yellow fog hung so thick and heavy in the streets of London that the lamps were lighted and the shop windows blazed with gas, as they do at night. Beneath one lamp a little girl stood with her father. She felt as if she had lived a long, long time. Her father held her very closely in his arms as they gazed into the big, dull square in which stood the house which was their destination.

End of Prologue

Scene 1

(AT RISE: The study in Miss Minchin's school. SARA CREWE, a small child with dark hair and a very serious face, and her father, CAPTAIN CREWE, stand in the middle of the study in a tight embrace. There are a number of packages scattered about. Sara is holding a beautiful doll.)

SARA: Papa, is this the place? Is it, Papa?

CAPTAIN CREWE: Yes, little Sara. It is.

SARA: Well, Papa, if we are here I suppose we must be resigned. It doesn't look at all like India. The furniture is all straight and hard.

CAPTAIN CREWE: Of course not, this isn't India. This is England.

SARA: I'm not sure I like it, but I dare say soldiers, even brave ones, don't really like going into battle.

CAPTAIN CREWE: *(Laughing.)* Oh, little Sara. What will I do when I no longer have you to say solemn things to me? And it isn't a battle. It's a school. And it will be your new home.

(MISS MARIA and MISS AMELIA MINCHIN enter. Miss Maria is tall and thin with a pinched look in her face. She is dressed severely. Miss Amelia, her younger sister, is plumper with a more kindly expression.)

MISS MINCHIN: Good afternoon. Captain Crewe is it? I am Maria Minchin, and this is my sister, Amelia.

CAPTAIN CREWE: Good afternoon. As you see, we have finally arrived.

AMELIA MINCHIN: Captain Crewe. We are delighted to welcome you and your daughter. I trust your voyage was a pleasant one.

CAPTAIN CREWE: It was almost too short, knowing that I would be leaving Sara at the end of it. She will miss India I think.

SARA: No Papa, I will miss you.

CAPTAIN CREWE: You see what a treasure she is.

End of Freeview

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