

**Family
and
Friends 4**

A Little Princess



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OXFORD

Activities

Before reading

Sara Crewe is a very rich little girl. She first comes to England when she is seven, and her father takes her to Miss Minchin's school in London. Then he goes back to his work in India. Sara is sad at first, but she soon makes lots of friends at her new school. But then something terrible happens in India and Sara's life changes. . .

1 Read the introduction to the story. Then tick the correct boxes.

- 1 Sara Crewe is rich.
- 2 Sara comes to England for a holiday.
- 3 Miss Minchin likes Sara because her father is kind.
- 4 Sara is happy when her father leaves.
- 5 Sara is a princess.

Yes No

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2 What do you think happens that is terrible? Tick the boxes.

- 1 Mr Crewe dies.
- 2 Mr Crewe goes to prison.
- 3 Mr Crewe loses all his money.
- 4 Sara is poor, hungry and sad all her life.
- 5 Sara goes back to India.

Yes No

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CHAPTER 1 School in England

One cold winter day a little girl and her father arrived in London. Sara Crewe was seven years old, and she had long dark hair and green eyes. She sat in the cab next to her father and looked out of the window at the tall houses and the dark sky.

‘What are you thinking about, Sara?’ Mr Crewe asked. ‘You are very quiet.’

‘I’m thinking about our house in India,’ said Sara. ‘And the hot sun and the blue sky. I don’t think I like England very much, Father.’

cab a taxi or a carriage pulled by horses



'Yes, it's very different from India,' her father said. 'But you must go to school in London, and I must go back to India and work.'

'Yes, Father, I know,' said Sara. 'But I want to be with you. Please come to school with me! I can help you with your lessons.'

Mr Crewe smiled, but he was not happy. He loved his little Sara very much, and he did not want to be without her. Sara's mother was dead, and Sara was his only child. Father and daughter were very good friends.

Soon they arrived at Miss Minchin's School for Girls and went into the big house.

Miss Minchin was a tall woman in a black dress. She looked at Sara, and then gave a very big smile.

'What a beautiful child!' she said to Mr Crewe.

Sara stood quietly and watched Miss Minchin. 'Why does she say that?' she thought. 'I am not beautiful, so why does she say it?'

Sara was not beautiful, but her father was rich. And Miss Minchin liked girls with rich fathers, because it was good for the school (and good for Miss Minchin, too).

'Sara is a good girl,' Mr Crewe said to Miss Minchin. 'Her mother was French, so she speaks French well. She loves books, and she reads all the time. But she must play with the other girls and make new friends, too.'

'Of course,' said Miss Minchin. She smiled again. 'Sara is going to be very happy here, Mr Crewe.'

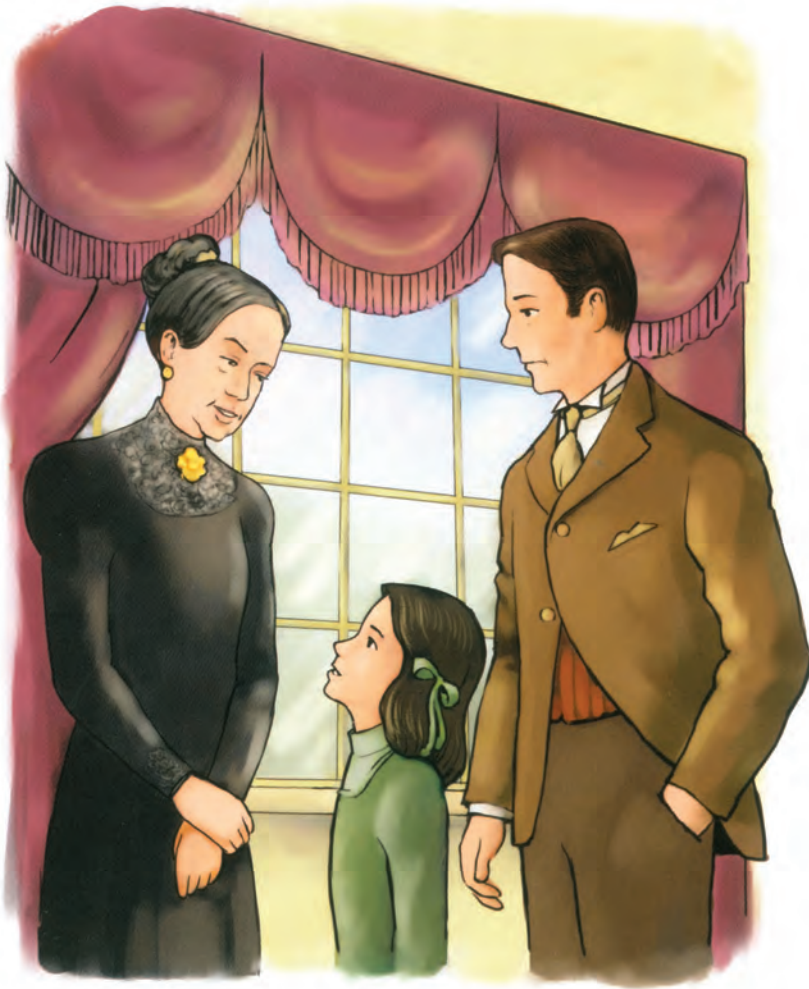
Mr Crewe stayed in London for a week. He and Sara went to the shops, and he bought many beautiful, expensive dresses for his daughter. He bought books, and flowers for her room, and a big doll with beautiful dresses, too.

without not with

rich with lots of money

buy (past bought) to give money for something





Miss Minchin smiled, but she said to her sister Amelia:
'All that money on dresses for a child of seven! She looks
like a little princess, not a schoolgirl!'

* * *

When Mr Crewe left London, he was very sad. Sara was
very sad too, but she did not cry. She sat in her room and
thought about her father on the ship back to India.

princess the
daughter of a king
or queen

**leave (past
left)** to go away
from someone or
something

ship a big boat



‘Father wants me to be happy,’ she said to her new doll. ‘I love him very much and I want to be a good daughter, so I must be happy.’

It was a very big and very beautiful doll, but of course it could not answer.

Sara soon made new friends in the school. Some little rich girls are not very nice – they think they are important because they have money and lots of expensive things. But Sara was different. She liked beautiful dresses and dolls, but she was more interested in people and books, and telling stories.

She was very good at telling stories. She was a clever child, and the other girls loved to listen to her. The stories were all about kings and queens and princesses and wonderful countries across the sea.

‘How do you think of all those things?’ asked her best friend, Ermengarde.

‘I have all these pictures in my head,’ said Sara. ‘So it’s easy to tell stories about them.’

Poor Ermengarde was not clever. She could never remember any of her school lessons, and Miss Minchin was always angry with her.

Sara often helped Ermengarde with her lessons.

‘Listen, Ermie,’ she said. ‘You remember that French king, Louis the Sixteenth? Well, this is a story about him. One day in 1792 ...’

clever quick-thinking, able to learn and do things well

remember to think about something you know

And so Ermengarde learnt her lessons with Sara’s stories, and she loved her friend very much. But not everybody was Sara’s friend. Lavinia was an older girl. Before Sara came, Lavinia was the richest and the most important girl in the school. But Sara’s father was richer than Lavinia’s father. So now Sara was more important than Lavinia, and Lavinia did not like that.

‘Oh, Sara is so clever!’ Lavinia sometimes said. ‘Sara is so good at French! Her dresses are so beautiful! And she is so rich! Of course Miss Minchin likes her best!’ Sara did not answer when Lavinia said these things. Sometimes it was not easy, but Sara was a kind, friendly girl, and she did not like to be angry with anyone.



Activities

1 Complete the sentences with these words.

clever expensive lessons like princess sad ~~rich~~ richer

- Miss Minchin liked Sara because her father was rich.
- Mr Crewe bought many _____ things for his daughter.
- Miss Minchin thought Sara looked like a little _____.
- When Mr Crewe left London, Sara was very _____.
- Sara's friend Ermengarde was not _____, so Sara helped her with her school _____.
- Sara's father was _____ than Lavinia's father, and because of that, Lavinia did not _____ Sara.

2 Who said this? Write the names.

Miss Minchin Ermengarde Lavinia ~~Sara~~ Mr Crewe

- 'I don't think I like England very much.' Sara
- 'I must go back to India and work.' _____
- 'All that money on dresses!' _____
- 'How do you think of all those things?' _____
- 'Sara is rich! Of course Miss Minchin likes her best!' _____

3 Rewrite these words from Chapter 1. Then complete each sentence with one word.

1 ynagr a **ngry** _____

2 eretintsed i _____

3 pinttroma i _____

4 ufeabitul b _____

5 oogd g _____

6 erermemb r _____

7 hicr r _____



a 'What a _____ child!' Miss Minchin said to Mr Crewe.

b Sara did not like to be **angry** with anyone.

c Miss Minchin liked girls with _____ fathers.

d Sara was _____ in people and books, and telling stories.

e 'I want to be a _____ daughter,' thinks Sara.

f Some rich children think they are _____ because they have got a lot of money.

g Ermengarde could never _____ her lessons.

CHAPTER 2 The diamond mines

mine place where people look for diamonds under the ground

diamond a very expensive stone that usually has no colour

And so three years went by. Sara's father wrote to her every week, and Sara wrote lots of letters back to him. One day a very exciting letter arrived. Everybody in the school talked about it for days.

'My friend,' wrote Mr Crewe, 'has some mines in northern India, and a month ago his workers found diamonds there. There are thousands of diamonds in these mines, but it is expensive work to get them out. My friend needs my help. So, Little Missus' (this was Mr Crewe's special name for Sara), 'I am putting all my money into my friend's diamond mines, and one day you and I are going to be very rich ...'



Sara was not interested in money, but a story about diamond mines in India was exciting. Everybody was very happy for Sara, but not Lavinia, of course.

'Huh!' she said. 'My mother's got a diamond. Lots of people have got diamonds. What's so interesting about diamond mines?'



'But there are thousands of diamonds in these mines,' said Ermengarde. 'Maybe millions of them!'

Lavinia laughed. 'Is Sara going to wear diamonds in her hair at breakfast, then? Or is it "Princess Sara" now?'

Sara's face went red. She looked at Lavinia angrily, but said quietly, 'Some people call me "princess". I know that. But princesses don't get angry or say unkind things, so I'm not going to say anything to you, Lavinia.'

'To me, you *are* a princess,' Ermengarde said to Sara later. 'And you always look like a princess in your beautiful dresses.'

* * *

Sara was a princess to another girl, too. This was Becky. She was a servant in Miss Minchin's school, and she was only fourteen years old, but she worked all day and sometimes half the night. She carried things upstairs and downstairs, she cleaned the floors, she made the fires, and she was always tired and hungry and dirty. She and Sara had very different lives.

But one day Sara came into her bedroom, and there was Becky, sleeping in a chair.

'Oh, you poor thing!' Sara said.

millions many thousands

servant a person who works for someone rich

fire something that burns and makes the room hot





Then Becky opened her eyes and saw Sara. She got up at once. ‘Oh, Miss!’ she said. ‘I’m very sorry, Miss! I just sat down for a minute and—’

‘Don’t be scared,’ said Sara. She gave Becky a friendly smile. ‘You were tired. That’s all.’

‘Are you – are you going to tell Miss Minchin?’ asked Becky. She began to go to the door.

‘Of course not,’ said Sara. ‘Please don’t run away. Sit down again for a minute. You look very tired.’

‘Oh, Miss, I can’t!’ Becky said. ‘You’re very kind, Miss, but Miss Minchin—’

‘Please,’ said Sara. She took Becky’s hand. ‘You’re only a little girl, like me. Let’s be friends.’

And so Becky sat down again, and soon she and Sara were friends.

Nobody knew about this, of course. Rich little girls at Miss Minchin’s school did not make friends with servant-girls, and it was a wonderful thing for Becky. Every day

party a fun,
happy time with
food and games

she and Sara met in Sara’s bedroom, just for five or ten minutes. Becky was always hungry, and Sara bought nice things for her to eat. They sat and talked, and sometimes Sara told Becky some of her stories. Becky loved that.

‘Oh, Miss,’ she said. ‘You tell stories so beautifully! Sometimes I like your stories better than things to eat.’

And after those visits to Sara’s room, Becky always felt better – not so tired, and not so hungry.

* * *

Some months later Sara had her eleventh birthday. Lessons stopped for the afternoon and there was a big party for all the girls in the school.

‘This party is expensive for us,’ Miss Minchin said to her sister Amelia. ‘But it looks good for the school.’



lawyer a person who knows about the rules of the country

That afternoon there was a visitor to the school – Miss Minchin’s lawyer. He went with Miss Minchin into her office and they closed the door. In the schoolroom next door there was a lot of noise from Sara’s party. Everybody in there was very happy.

But in the office Miss Minchin was not happy. She looked at the lawyer angrily. ‘What are you saying? Mr Crewe has no money? What about the diamond mines?’

‘There are *no* diamond mines,’ said the lawyer. ‘Well, there are mines, but there are no diamonds in them.’



'But Mr Crewe's good friend—' began Miss Minchin.

'Mr Crewe's good friend,' said the lawyer, 'ran away with all Mr Crewe's money. Ralph Crewe was ill with a fever, and when he heard about this, he got worse. A week later he was dead.'

'Dead!' cried Miss Minchin. 'But what about his daughter Sara? And this expensive birthday party?'

'Sara Crewe has no money,' said the lawyer. 'Not a penny in the world, Miss Minchin. Not a penny.'

'She must leave my school at once,' Miss Minchin said angrily. 'She must go this afternoon!'

'Where?' said the lawyer. 'Out into the streets? An eleven-year-old girl? That's not going to look very good for your school, Miss Minchin.'

Miss Minchin's face went red.

'You can't put her out in the streets,' said the lawyer. He stood up. 'But maybe she can work for you.'

The lawyer left, and Miss Minchin called her sister Amelia. 'Bring Sara Crewe here at once,' she said.

Two minutes later Sara, in her beautiful blue party dress, stood in front of Miss Minchin.

'Have you got a black dress, Sara?' Miss Minchin said coldly.

'Yes, Miss Minchin,' said Sara. 'But it's very old.'

'Go and put it on at once,' said Miss Minchin. 'Your father is dead. There were no diamond mines, and your father's friend ran away with all his money. You have nothing. Not a penny. But I am going to be very kind to you. You can stay in my house, but now you must be a servant and work for your bread. You can sleep in a servant's room upstairs, next to Becky's room.'

fever when you are ill with a very hot head and body

penny a small coin, money

Family and Friends

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