

A LITTLE PRINCESS

BOOK, MUSIC and LYRICS by KITTY NESIUS BELETIC  
"MAGIC" MUSIC by MICHAEL McCLAIN

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Shoebox Theatre, Inc.  
2015 Old Orchard Drive  
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## CHARACTERS

SARA CREWE:

Ten year old English girl. Mother died at childbirth. Raised by her father. Pampered, but not spoiled, Sara has inner strength. Her greatest gift is her generous spirit. She accepts differences in people and treats all equally. She is private and quietly social which is often confused with snobbery. Insecure people are threatened by her self-assuredness and poise.

CAPTAIN RALPH CREWE:

Sara's father. Optimistic and a bit of a dreamer. Does his best to make Sara happy. Has plenty of money and spends much of it on Sara. Sara is the light of his life and he would do anything for her.

MISS MARIA MINCHIN:

Although she is not old, she is already bitter and mean. She is an active character, believing she makes her own fortune. She is an opportunist, but for her own gain. She is the OPPOSITE in character of Sara. Everything she does, thinks and says has a motivation that directly relates to herSELF. She has no respect for children.

MISS AMELIA MINCHIN:

Miss Maria Minchin's younger sister. She is prissy and childlike. Her personality is effusive and abundant. She is easily delighted by the prospects of a party and fun. Although she is only a couple years younger than Maria, she is treated like an adolescent by her sister. Amelia obeys her sister, even when it is against her nature. She is not used to making any decisions, so when she is forced to do so, it is a BIG production.

## TWO

### CHARACTERS (Cont'd)

- BECKY:** Nine year old servant in Miss Minchin's School for Girls. She is small and somewhat frail. She works hard and hardly speaks out of fear of reproach. She LOVES dolls. She has never had one. She is amazed at Sara's finery and adores Sara because Sara treats her with respect. She is soulful and loving.
- ERMENGARDE ST. JOHN:** Sara's age, but acts younger. Her self-esteem is very low. Intellect is not her strong suit. She is slow and often doesn't understand things. Others make fun of her (including Miss Maria Minchin) and she becomes even younger acting when this occurs. She adores Sara, because Sara is generously patient and inclusive.
- LAVINIA DUPREE :** Before Sara came to school, Lavinia was the "queen bee". She is jealous and spiteful and petty. No one has ever loved Lavinia ; her parents don't even write or come to see her. She identifies with Miss Maria Minchin and looks up to her. She would do ANYTHING to please her. Sara is threatening and personifies everything Lavinia wishes she could be. She hates Sara because she hates herself.
- JESSIE COLLINS:** Very shallow character. She is Lavinia's best friend. She's NOT REALLY Lavinia's best friend because Lavinia doesn't like ANYBODY. Jessie so desperately wants to be liked, she will suffer being Lavinia's friend at all cost. Jessie mimics Lavinia's behavior and has no original thoughts. She DOES have an affection for Miss Amelia because she thinks Miss Amelia is funny.

### THREE

MISS OLIVIA CARRISFORD:

Sister to Mr. Cecil Carrisford, Captain Crewe's best friend. At the deathbed of her brother, she promises to find Sara and care for her. She is loyal and brave and very much like Sara. She is generous and persistent, sophisticated and strong.

SITA BAI:  
(seeta bye)

East Indian assistant to Miss Carrisford. Sita Bai most often speaks through her facial expressions and her actions. She is silent when she walks, fairly gliding wherever she goes. She is loyal until death to Miss Carrisford. She is mystical and often has visions. She loves children and stories.

MR. CARMICHAEL:

A neighbor of the Minchin sisters. He is a solicitor (lawyer) and has a huge family. He is friendly and shrewd and outspoken. He acts as solicitor in the case of "the missing Sara", representing Miss Carrisford.

MRS. CARMICHAEL:

Outgoing and abundant. Mother of 9 children, she is abundant and sometimes bewildered by all of the commotion and teasing of such a large family. She is loving and extremely friendly.

CARMICHAEL CHILDREN:  
(12-16)

Approx. 10 of them (includes 2 sets of twins). Fun-loving and loud. Wealthy but not spoiled.

DOLL MERCHANT, 2 VALETS,  
BUTLER/HOUSEKEEPER,  
MESSENGER:

Doll Merchant in all production scenes. Butler/Housekeeper works for Maria. Messenger brings news to Maria of Sara's father's death.

SCHOOL CHILDREN:  
(8-11)

Attendees at Miss Minchin's School for Girls. Also, attendees from Stephenson Boys School of London. All invited to Sara's GRAND birthday party celebration. Wealthy children.

## FOUR

### CHARACTERS (Cont'd)

PICKPOCKETS:  
(5-7)

Homeless boys who work the streets of London. Mischievous and fun little thieves. Like Fagin's bunch.

### TIME AND SETTING

Story takes place early in the 1900's in London proper. The differences in "class" structure were vast: extremely rich and extremely poor.

### ABOUT THE ORIGINAL STORY

Written by Frances Hodgson Burnett (author of "The Secret Garden"). Miss Burnett grew up in Manchester, England. She moved to Tennessee in her teens. Her stories were popular and published in American magazines. She wrote constantly and produced more than 40 books and countless short stories. She died in 1924.

### FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

As a child, "The Secret Garden" was one of three books I read again and again. Miss Burnett is one of my favorite authors because she brings so much of herself to the characters. Her themes always include respect for children as people. It is one of the strongest themes in my life and I am honored to borrow Miss Burnett's story to echo her ideas in my own way.

### DEDICATION

To our children. They are precious and so willing to love. We can learn and remember through their eyes ...

ACT I

SCENE I

SETTING: Central theme is Miss Minchin's School for Girls. Action also OUTSIDE School, representing London's best neighborhoods.

AT RISE: Miss Minchin's School is gearing up for the day, as SARA and CAPTAIN CREWE make their way to the School. London comes alive . . .

(Enter CAPTAIN CREWE and SARA, followed by the Captain's 2 VALETS. VALETS are carrying a suitcase and the Captain's coat. They do "business" as Captain and Sara converse)

SARA

Is it very far, Papa?

CAPTAIN

Not very, darling.

(Stops walking and laughs)

I think that is the fifth time you have asked me that question.

(SARA has turned away from him. HE suspects SHE is troubled)

What is it, darling? What is Sara thinking?

SARA

I am thinking I would like you to come live WITH me at the place.

CAPTAIN

(Laughs softly)

Well now, I don't think they would allow that.

SARA

Why is that?

CAPTAIN

Because it is a school for GIRLS . . .

SARA

(Laughs at him)

I know. But surely the GIRLS would like a Papa to be there. Just think of it! You could be Papa to ALL of them! You would have a thousand kisses each morning and a million hugs every evening when you came home from work. Oh Papa! I think it is a GRAND idea! Please?

CAPTAIN

(Really laughing)

Sara darling, it IS a grand idea! And I would love nothing more than to be with you and your new friends every day. . . but I cannot.

SARA

(Hugs him impulsively)

But why not, Papa? I cannot bear to be without you for more than a single day!

CAPTAIN

(Holding her close)

Sweet Sara. I will miss you, too. But my new job requires so much traveling and India is no place for a little girl to be alone. Besides, it is time for you to learn the ways of a young lady. Miss Minchin's School is one of the finest in all of England. You will learn manners and lessons and go to the Opera and do all of the things you should be doing. And you will make many new friends, Sara. When I visit, I will take all of you shopping!

SARA

But Papa, I don't WANT to learn manners and lessons and go to the Opera. And YOU'RE the only friend I need. Please, Papa, don't leave me at the place!

CAPTAIN

(Pulls gently away from her to look into her eyes)

Sara, what is it I always say to you?

SARA

(Hugs him again)

I am your little princess.

CAPTAIN

(Laughs softly)

That's right, darling. And a princess can be happy anywhere. Do you know why?

SARA

No, Papa.

CAPTAIN

A princess can find the beauty in all parts of life. Her hands are born open and so is her heart. And though there may be times when her hands are empty, her heart is always full and she can give things out of that . . . warm things, kind things, sweet things like comfort and laughter. Sara, when you are missing me most, I want you to remember that you are a princess. I want you to open your heart and see the good all around you.

SARA

I will, Papa. I will!

(VALETS try not to notice this tender scene)

CAPTAIN

Now then! We go forward on our mission like brave soldiers, knowing we will see each other again soon!

SARA

(Salutes and turns to go)

Yes sir!

CAPTAIN

(CAPTAIN stops her)

Before we go, however . . .

SARA

(stops and turns with a knowing smile. SHE knows this tone of voice)

Yes . . . ?

CAPTAIN

We must visit every store in all of London in search of a wardrobe fit for a little princess!

SARA

(Squeals with delight)

Oh Papa! Let's!

CAPTAIN

Miss Sara Crewe? You will soon be the finest dressed PRINCESS at Miss Minchin's School for Girls!

ACT I

SCENE II

SETTING: Inside and outside Miss Minchin's

AT RISE: Lights up on interior of School. During song in interior, MISSES MARIA and AMELIA MINCHIN prepare for meeting CAPTAIN CREWE and SARA. RESIDENTS of the school and the SERVANTS also get ready. Outside, the CARMICHAEL FAMILY act out comings and goings of the day. SARA and CAPTAIN and VALETS purchase and acquire more things as they make their way toward school. Last item purchased is a beautiful doll. At the end of the song, SARA and CAPTAIN CREWE are escorted into the parlor of the school.

SONG – MISS MINCHIN'S SCHOOL FOR GIRLS/COMPANY

ALL

WHERE DO YOU LEARN THE NECESSARY LESSONS  
WHERE DOES ONE BECOME A GROWN UP GIRL  
HOW DO YOU LEARN THE WAY TO BE A LADY  
ONLY AT MISS MINCHIN'S SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

WHERE CAN YOU FIND THE WAY TO PROPER MANNERS  
WHERE DOES ONE LEARN HOW TO STEP AND TWIRL  
HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU'VE GROWN TO BE A LADY  
YOU ATTEND MISS MINCHIN'S SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

SCHOOLGIRLS

RISE IN THE MORNING STUDY ELOCUTION  
LEARNING TO EMBROIDER HELPS A GIRL  
FIND A PROPER HUSBAND AT THE PROPER MOMENT  
I ATTEND MISS MINCHIN'S SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

SONG – MISS MINCHIN’S SCHOOL FOR GIRLS (Cont’d)

MARIA, AMELIA, CAPTAIN, VALETS,  
SERVANTS

NO ONE CAN ARGUE THAT A PROPER SCHOOLING  
CAN PREPARE A PERSON FOR THE WORLD  
YOU’LL GET THE FINEST KIND OF EDUCATION  
BY ATTENDING MINCHIN’S SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

ALL

MISS MINCHIN’S SEMINARY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS