



# **A Little Princess (Teachers Top 100 Childrens Books )**

*Frances Hodgson Burnett*

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## A Little Princess

by Frances Hodgson Burnett

A Little Princess is a 1905 children's novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett. It is a revised and expanded version of Burnett's 1888 serialised novel entitled Sara Crewe: or, What Happened at Miss Minchin's Boarding School, which was published in St. Nicholas Magazine. According to Burnett, she had been composing a play based on the story when she found out a lot of characters she had missed. The publisher asked her to publish a new, revised story of the novella, producing the novel.

Based on a 2007 online poll, the National Education Association named the book one of its "Teachers' Top 100 Books for Children." It was one of the "Top 100 Chapter Books" of all time in a 2012 poll by School Library Journal.

## Plot

A Little Princess opens with seven-year-old Sara Crewe and her father, Captain Crewe, arriving at Miss Minchin's boarding school for girls in London. Captain Crewe is very wealthy and states that Sara is destined for a lavish, comfortable future. Despite being pampered all her life in India, Sara herself is very intelligent, polite, and creative. Headmistress Miss Minchin is secretly jealous and dislikes Sara for her cleverness, but openly praises and flatters her because of her father's wealth. Before departing for India, Captain Crewe purchases Sara an elegant wardrobe and a doll whom Sara adores and names "Emily." Sara's friendliness and love for pretending and storytelling makes her popular with most of the school's students. They soon begin regarding her as a princess, a reputation which she embraces. Sara befriends Ermengarde, the school dunce; Lottie, a spoiled four-year-old student; and Becky, the Cockney scullery maid.

Four years later, Sara receives word from Captain Crewe that he and a childhood friend have become partners in a scheme to gain control of a diamond mine which could potentially multiply his wealth enormously. Miss Minchin later treats Sara to a very luxurious eleventh birthday party per Captain Crewe's request. Just as the party is ending, Captain Crewe's lawyer arrives unexpectedly and tells Miss Minchin that Captain Crewe has died of jungle fever and his partner has gone missing. He then adds that business troubles rendered Captain Crewe's estate completely insolvent, leaving Sara an orphaned pauper. Enraged that she will never be reimbursed for all the services and goods spent on Sara since receiving the last cheque, Miss Minchin seizes all of Sara's possessions except for an outgrown black frock and Emily. Miss Minchin then tells Sara that she will live in the attic next to Becky and work as a servant to continue living in the school.



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