

# CHAPTER I

When Mary came to live with her uncle, she was an unpleasant girl. She had a little thin face, a little thin body, and thin light hair.

She was born in India. Her father was always busy, and her mother was a very beautiful woman who liked parties. Not to see their daughter very often, they found an Indian nanny, Ayah, which took care of the girl. Ayah and all servants always obeyed her. And when she was six years old, she was a bad-tempered and selfish little girl.

It was a very hot morning. Mary was about nine years old. She woke up feeling very cross. And she became crosser when she didn't see her Ayah by her bedside. She saw some other servant.

"Why did you come?" she said to the strange woman. "Send my Ayah to me."

The woman looked frightened. She said that Ayah couldn't come to Missie Sahib.

There was something mysterious in the air that morning. The servants seemed missing and her Ayah did not come. The child went out into the garden and began to play by herself. Oh, how angry she was!

Suddenly, she saw her mother with a young officer. They were talking in low strange voices. Mary stared at them because she seldom saw

her mother and called her Mem Sahib, as all servants in the house did.

"Is it so very bad? Oh, is it?" Mary heard her voice.

"Awfully," the young man answered in a trembling voice. "Awfully, Mrs. Lennox, that you are still here."

"Oh, I know!" she cried. "I only stayed to go to that silly dinner party. What a fool I was!"

Everything was because of cholera in its most fatal form, and people were dying like flies. Ayah also died that morning. Before the next day, three other servants were dead and others ran away. There was panic everywhere. Everybody forgot about Mary. Nobody thought of her, nobody wanted her. Strange things happened, but she knew nothing. She only knew that people were ill.

Once she came into the empty dining-room and ate some fruit and biscuits. She felt thirsty and drank a glass of wine. It was sweet, and she did not know how strong it was. The wine made her so sleepy that she went to her bedroom and fell asleep. She slept so heavily and didn't hear people ran in and out of the house, shouting and crying.

When she awakened, the house was still.

Almost the next minute she heard footsteps on the veranda. They were men's footsteps

and the men entered the bungalow and talked in low voices. One voice said, "I heard there was a child, though no one ever saw her."

Mary was standing in the middle of the room, when they opened the door a few minutes later. A large officer came in. He looked tired and troubled, but when he saw her, he jumped back.

"Barney!" he cried out. "There is a child here! A child alone! In a place like this! Who is she?"

"I am Mary Lennox," the little girl said. "I fell asleep when everyone had cholera. Why does nobody come?"

"It is the child no one ever saw!" exclaimed the man. "Everybody forgot about her!"

The young man, Barney, looked at her very sadly. Mary even saw tears in his eyes.

"Poor little kid!" he said. "There is nobody left to come."

In that strange and sudden way, Mary found out that her father and mother died.

## **EXERCISES**

### **I. Find out adjectives to describe Mary.**

pretty    unpleasant    thin    fat    little  
beautiful    bad-tempered    kind    selfish  
friendly    cross    happy    angry

## II. Match opposite adjectives.

pretty

unpleasant

pleasant

big

thin

unhappy

little

angry

kind

ugly

happy

thick/fat

## III. Open the brackets to write the sentences in Past Simple. Then, place the events in the right order.

- 1) A large officer (*to come*) in and (*to see*) a child.
- 2) Everybody (*to forget*) about Mary, nobody (*to think*) of her.
- 3) Mary (*to become*) angry when she (*not, to see*) her nanny.
- 4) Mary (*to come*) to live with her uncle.
- 5) Mary (*to find*) out that she (*to leave*) without parents.
- 6) She (*to hear*) footsteps on the veranda.
- 7) She (*to know*) that Ayah died.
- 8) She (*to see*) her mother with a young officer.
- 9) She (*to sleep*) heavily.
- 10) She (*to wake up*) feeling very cross.
- 11) The child (*to eat*) some fruit and biscuits, and (*to drink*) a glass of wine.
- 12) The child (*to go*) out into the garden.
- 13) The Indian nanny (*to take*) care of a girl.
- 14) The wine (*to make*) her so sleepy, so she (*to go*) to her bedroom and (*to fall*) asleep.