Mary Lennox was a spoilt, rude and bad-tempered child. She was never really well, and she was thin, miserable and sour-faced. No one liked her at all.

None of this was really Mary’s own fault. She was born in India, where her father worked. He was always busy with his work and paid no attention to his daughter. Her mother was very pretty, and cared only for parties and pleasure. She left Mary in the care of an Indian nursemaid, who gave the little girl everything she wanted so that she would not cry and upset her mother. So not surprisingly, Mary grew up into a spoilt and most unpleasant girl.