

## CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE

By Susie Stead and children from the Headington Partnership of Primary Schools 2011

*Alice's room – suitcase and things to put in it accessible.*

*Alice stands in the middle of the 'stage' holding bits of paper. Recorded voiceover of her mum and her dad. She keeps running from one side of the stage to the other, stopping in the middle, twirling round – 'yes mum', 'no dad', getting more and more disorientated.*

Mum: Tell your father to make sure you go to bed on time.

Dad: Tell your mother to stop being so strict all the time!

Mum: Tell your father to grow up!

Dad: Tell your mother to mind her own business!

Mum: Give your father this note: John, you're being lazy and uncaring. She won't concentrate at school if she sleeps late.

Dad: Give your mother this note: Liz, if she has problems with concentration, it's because you're such a stressy mother.

Mum: If I'm stressed it's because of you!

Dad: You're the problem not me. That's why I left. Try not to take it all out on your daughter.

Mum: How dare you! You slob! It's all your fault and you don't even pay your way!

*[Alice rips up the bits of paper and screams at the audience]*

Alice: STOP! I'VE HAD ENOUGH! CAN'T YOU STOP ARGUING OVER ME FOR ONE DAY!

*[She gets a bag out and starts throwing clothes into it. When its full she sits on it to close it. She starts to look dreamy].*

LIGHTING DIMS DURING FOLLOWING SPEECH.

MUSIC ON QUIETLY IN BACKGROUND..

ALICE: Wouldn't it be great if I could just turn into a bird and fly away from here. *[she flaps her arms imagining herself a bird]* Look! I can see Katie's house and she's playing outside.... It's so fun! Flying away from all my troubles. Look, there's mum and dad below crying cos they can't find me. Now they're sorry. Look they're putting their arms around each other. They're back together. Awwh!

*[She sinks back on to a bean bag or 'bed' and looks asleep. We hear a shout 'Katie's here', Alice sits up and Katie comes in..]*

MUSIC FADE

LIGHTS UP

KATIE: Hi Alice, your mum said to come in... you got her to let you go dancing yet?

ALICE: No.

KATIE: What you doing?

ALICE: nothing... shall we go to the park?

KATIE: What's the matter?

ALICE: nothing.

KATIE: I won't tell anyone. Cross my heart!

ALICE: You're lucky. You've got no trouble in your life. I'm running away.

KATIE: You going to live with your Dad?

ALICE: No. I'm just running away! My Mum's in a right strop at the moment. I can't say anything. Katie, my parents are behaving like little kids!

KATIE: What they doing?

ALICE: Giving me stupid notes, saying rude things to each other ! I'm fed up with my parents...

KATIE: That's hilarious!

ALICE: No, it's not Katy!

KATIE: I'm sorry. What do they say?

ALICE: Stuff like: 'you're a crap parent' and 'you're lazy'. Then they rip up the bits of paper and take it out on me! You gonna help me pack?

KATIE: Yeah, sure... *[she and Alice mess around getting stuff to pack - maybe having a laugh – but Katie is thinking...]* Remember when you and me fell out at school? Miss Hutchinson made us talk to each other and sort it out. Someone should lock your parents in a room and make them talk!

ALICE: That would be funny! Miss Hutchinson telling my parents off!  
[getting into role]: Now, say something you like about the other person! Come on! After all you did marry each other. You must have liked something!

*[Katie gets into role as Alice's parents]*

KATIE: Yes Miss Hutchinson. No, Miss Hutchinson. We're very sorry Miss Hutchinson! We won't argue any more Miss Hutchinson!

*[They roll around laughing]*

KATIE: I know what you should do! You don't have to run away! I've got a brilliant idea!

ALICE: what?

KATIE: You rip up the notes your parents give you and make up your own notes...even better, do that 'tell your mother', 'tell your father' thing to them.

ALICE: What if they find out? I'd be so dead!

KATIE: You said they never talk to each other. They'll never find out!

ALICE: I don't know...

KATIE: It'd be like in the Parent Trap – when they fool the parents! You're always saying you want to do stuff like they do on the dvd!

*[pause]*

ALICE: You're right! I'll do it!

KATIE: Then sort out about going dancing with me! You know you want to!

ALICE: ok, ok! But first help me with this! This is going to be fun!

KATIE: Yeah!

*[They stand back to back on the stage ]*

ALICE: Dad's making me go to bed on time now mum.....

KATIE: Mum's not so stressed now, Dad.....

ALICE: Dad's taken the telly out of my bedroom now mum....

KATIE: Mum really liked the dance shoes you got me, Dad....

ALICE: Dad's says he still loves you.

*[They turn back to each other and the 'room']*

ALICE: Katie, this is going to be so cool! Maybe they'll fall in love with each other again....

KATIE: So you coming to dance classes tomorrow?

ALICE: I can't. I told you. Mum can't afford it.

KATIE: Get the money off your Dad then.

ALICE: Mum would get in a right strop with Dad! She hates it when he treats me - says he's buying me off and that he doesn't give her enough money for us to live on. She'd throw a total wobbly!

KATIE: She doesn't have to know.....durrh!

ALICE: She does durrh! When I go to the dance lessons!

KATIE: You just tell her, you're at my house – My mum'll take you and bring you back.... It's easy.

ALICE: I don't know.... I don't like lying to my mum.

KATIE: You don't have to lie. You just don't tell her everything! *[FREEZE]*

*ACTOR steps forward to ask question.*

ACTOR: Alice is stuck in the middle! What should she do? Run away, fly away, lie to her parents, or bring her fierce teacher home?!....

What needs to change?

LIGHTING FADE OUT AND THEN BRING UP FOR ACTOR ASKING QUESTION. THEN FADE AFTER ACTOR FINISHES.

MUSIC ON BETWEEN END OF SCENE AND ACTOR ASKING QUESTION. THEN FADE BACK IN UNTIL BEGINNING OF NEXT PLAY...  
"IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT".