

Part One

Scene One

Oli sits alone. A chain runs from an old free-standing radiator to her neck, where it is attached. The stage is dim. She looks tired. Quiet. She thinks she hears something and looks into the audience. Then down again.

A young boy appears. He stands with a plate looking nervously into the room.

David (quietly) Oli. Oli. (Listens) Oli. Why are you sitting in the dark ?
Can I turn the light on?

Oli No.

David I'm scared. I can't come in in the dark.

Oli Don't come in then.

David I've got to. ? Mum said. I've got your dinner.

Quiet.

David (As he turns the light on) Sorry.

He makes the long walk to his sister. He's concentrating hard on not spilling the food. He puts it on the floor just out of her reach.

David There

Oli Bring it nearer.

David You can reach it.

Oli Bring it nearer.

David Why ?

Oli I'm not going to eat you.

Quiet.

Oli Davey. I can't reach it.

David You've not even tried.

Oli I can't reach it.

David You could if you tried. I bet you.

Oli You bet me eh ?

David Yes.

Oli I bet you daren't give it me in my hand

David I do dare.

Oli No you don't

David I do
Oli Go on then
David I can't. Dad said.
Oli Dad said what ?
David He told me not to talk to you.
Oli Well you're in trouble then, cos you are doing.

Quiet.

Oli I won't tell him. Go on . Look .I can't reach it.

**David picks up the food and approaches her slowly.
He hands it to her.**

Oli Thanks
David Are you mad ?
Oli Hungry.

She eats. He watches..

Oli Sit down.

He doesn't.

Oli Must be like this at the zoo.

**Monkey noise. He smiles unwillingly.
Quiet.**

Oli What you been up to ?
David Are you mad ?
Oli Do I look mad ? Chained up eating like next door's dog ?
David Are you ?
Oli You tell me Davey.
David I don't think so
Oli Well maybe I'm not then.
David Will Dad chain me up ?
Oli Perhaps...when you're a big boy...if you're lucky.
David Don't joke.
Oli I wasn't
David Why did he do it ?
Oli And your Mum. Don't leave her out.
David Don't shout. Dad'll hear.
Oli Then you'd be in trouble. Dad told you not to talk to me. You'll be up here with me if you don't watch it.
David No I won't

Oli You'd better watch it.
David I won't be chained up.
Oli O no ?
David No
Oli Why not ?
David Cos I'm not....not a slag and a criminal and a bloody drug addict.
Oli That's what they say is it. Is that it eh ? You soft little sod.
You'd better watch out. It'll happen to you like it happened to me.
One night when you're all tucked up in your snuggly little bed...they'll sit outside your door 'till they know that you're sleep....and they'll sneak into your room...and stand at the side of your bed...and they'll slip the chain over your head and fasten it around your neck...and you wont know anything about it until you wake up in the morning with a stiff neck.... neck like steel ...and they'll have you.
David I'm glad Dad locked you up. He's right. You're all them things...and you're a....shagging bitch.
Oli Oooh. Tutt tutt.
David Shagging bitch
Oli Cry baby. Cry baby. Cry baby.
David I'm not crying.
Oli Cry baby. Cry baby. Cry baby. Cry baby.

Their mother appears at the door. She doesn't want to come in.

Mother **(Loud whisper)** David. Come out. David. Do we have to have this everyday ?

David goes towards her.

Oli Go on. Run to Mummy. Run to Mummy.

Quiet.

Mother Hello. Mummy. Remember me ?
Go downstairs.

David goes.

Mother comes forward.

Quiet.

Oli moves away and her chains shift noisily.

Mother Still my blood in your veins. Don't take it out on him. You used to be like David. Loving. Clinging. You used to hide your face in my legs. They used to say to me "What a pretty girl" . Dad used to call you "Princess". You used to be one. It's not your fault. We know that.

How could you be anything but.....living here, today. We're not wicked. We're not bad parents. This isn't abuse. These are desperate times. Not everyone can say their parents care. At least we care how you turn out. You'll thank us one day. Sitting there not speaking. Ignoring your Mum. We don't want to see you taken from us. God gave us three children.

Oli I feel like the Exorcist.

**She rattles her chains.
Mother puts her hands over her ears**

Mother I can't hear you

Oli I'll tell you what, if I could choke up a bit of that green devil-shit you'd be first in line for a face full.

**Quiet.
Mother removes her hands.**

Mother You'll thank us....when you have a future.

Oli Hell must be like this...a bit warmer probably. You don't even turn the heating on.

Mother It's summer dear.

Oli How do I know that...you've painted up the windows.

Mother You'd only try and attract attention.

Oli You've blocked out everything, Mum.

**Small quiet.
Oli stands and strains on the chains.**

Oli Remember me, Mum. The caravan. Those pictures. Me and you with are hands together in that little sink. On the wall. In the album. On the telly. That child.

Mother Don't shout dear.

Oli Mum. Get these off me. Let me go.

Mother O Where is our Princess ?

Oli I'm fucking here mother.

Quiet.

Mother And you wonder why we chain you up.

Mother starts to go.

Oli There was a hush.

Mother goes.

You could hear their breathing and the women's sobbing and the men's watches ticking. Everyone in black in a black mood. Except the uncle from the outback making a rare appearance in pink and orange. The priest declined the funereal breakfast on account of him having just had satellite tv installed and the snooker on. Mum came in with the Ox-tongue sandwiches. It's like eating someone else's mouth. And Dad caught my eye. He nodded for me to follow him. He led me upstairs. He'd been crying all night and all day and his face was crimson. The room was bright. He sat on the bed and told me to close my eyes. There was furniture in here then. He said that he had a present for me...which was funny because it wasn't my birthday remember...it was my brother's funeral.

Dad appears.

Dad Got a present for you Princess.
Oli Gentle words.
Dad We've lost him now...
Oli He said....
Dad And we'll never get him back.
Oli And there was a feel of cold steel like hands around my neck....
Dad But we'll not loose you. No-one's having my Princess. Not my Princess.

He goes.

Black.