

## ENGLISH STANDARD: CREATIVE PIECE

### The Child I Was

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*Am I invisible! Do they give a damn! I hate this family! I wish I could divorce them instead I have to put up with their non-sense.*

I remember boarding the plane, mum was in Cape Town, South Africa with her new love. I hated her selfishness, dad was distraught. But I guess I knew so very little about relationships and how complex they can be. It tore me up seeing them like this; I knew one day our family would split.

*Am I the child or the parent? Dad has been crying in the corner crouched in the foetal position on the couch. I wish he would grow up! She's gone! I hate her; she wanted me to join her soon. The flight attendant gave me a drink. I guess I looked a lot older than I am. The thought of joining her and her lover repulses me. How am I supposed to fit in to this new 'family'? She already destroyed my once perfect family, I just think is she going to make me suffer pain again?*

I got off the plane in Cape Town, South Africa; it was so different to West Wyalong, country New South Wales. I met Roger, wanted to hate him and I certainly tried. What I didn't realise then was that he was a patient man, a compassionate man who had chosen to help the children in the community orphanage. He died recently, he was eighty two. Mum still carries his photograph in her purse. I guess I do experience a bit of grief, seeing my mum crying every night because her love for him was so strong. Not only that, he handed the orphanage down to me, this makes me feel special and as though he accepted me into my new 'family', knowing I was something special to mum.

*On the plane I read the letter my father gave to me at our emotional farewell. He said, 'I hope I can visit you one day'. I started to tear knowing that I was on my way to live with my mum who has already caused so much pain in the family and destroyed OUR happy relationship, MY happy relationship with my father. What is going to happen? What is it going to be like? Can I live through this?*

The books say that we fall in love forever but in reality it is never that easy. Each relationship has a use by date. I know this now! But a child is forever. I realise, once I got married five years ago, that it is normal for there to be arguments in relationships. It's never perfect! My husband and I had a child together, Cynthia is her name. I know now she is forever, her position in this family is extremely important; we try not to destroy her self-esteem through careless arguments and disagreements. I don't want her to experience the trauma I had suffered.

*Mum is happy! I am no longer angry. They argue but do not fight. They don't get personal like she did with dad. I love going to the orphanage with Roger and helping the children. Roger accepts me for who I am, he knows that I am not going anywhere and how much I mean to mum. He treats me as though I am his child. Still I miss my dad I wish he were here too, to see me grow up and the effort I put into helping the less fortunate children in the orphanage.*

I love this place; it's such a part of me. It's hard to believe I ever lived in West Wyalong, country New South Wales. My adult life has been a happy one, working with orphan children. I brought my child up the way I thought would be healthy and happy for her, in an environment she will like. My husband and I get along well. We argue but don't get violent. I knew that my relationship to him was the same as the one mum and Roger had. I have this feeling I belong with him, we will be together until we grow old, and we will watch our daughter grow up together forevermore. Going through my parents' horrific divorce opened my eyes to how hard the adult world truly is. I pray for my daughter every night hoping she doesn't experience what I did and pray that she develops a strong sense of belonging both within the family and in her community.

*I call dad, he's happy now! He has met a new woman. I'm meeting her at Christmas. Back to West Wyalong for three weeks, the place where I grew up, where all my childhood memories have been stored. It still brings back the trauma when my family was ripped apart tearing a hole in my heart. I have two mothers and two fathers what more could a girl ask for!*

I move on with life, keeping the memories buried in the back of my mind, yet every day I feel as though there has been a little slice of my heart ripped out. No longer there! Cannot be mended!