

Stupid Seven

Begin DL. 2 pairs of straight back chairs place on stage. One pair is place UC and the other pair is placed LC. A copybook is placed under the chair furthest right. Start to walk in groups of 3-4 steps across the stage, pause occasionally to look around and to look in the direction of the chairs, searching. Eventually become awash with relief and joy, the search for child self is over so come to rest in a casual, relaxed stance behind the chair furthers right.

That's me (*point to the chair in the pair UC, furthest right*) in Mrs Carey's classroom. I loved her!

That's Mary sitting next to me (*nod left, in the direction of the second in pair LC*).

You know, she was an awful rogue. I was always finished first. Mrs Carey would ask me to fly around and help the other girls because it came as naturally to me as it did to her ... well almost.

I was as happy at school, always having my identity as a good girl, a clever girl, affirmed.

Move to the right of the pair of chairs and speak in the direction of the first chair.

Good girl Jayne!

Return thoughtfully to stand behind the first chair.

They told me who and what I was and I complied happily, ALWAYS living up to their expectations.

Bend down next to the first chair and turn slightly to look at it pensively, becoming sombre before turning back to the audience

Vividly, I can remember the three times in school when I was reprimanded in any way. Those things stand out for a girl (*nod in the direction of the first chair*) who (*sarcastically*) always got 10 out of 10 in her spelling test.

Stand up with enthusiasm, adjusting and dusting off clothing, flicking hair gleefully before carefully sitting on the edge of the first chair, the epitome of prim and proper, adjusting clothing once more and smoothing out skirt.

Excited and child-like, speaking in the direction of the second chair.

Did you know it was my birthday today? Ya, SEVEN, imagine!

Enthusiastically take copy from underneath chair and with pride notice the similarity.

Super in my copy and AND super on my badge! (*Delightedly*)

Open copy and over-enthusiastically draw horizontal and vertical margins. Pause as if interrupted and lean in to listen to whisper from the right chair.

Shush Mary we've to work now. I'll tell you after.

Listen again to another imaginary whisper, becoming impatient.

It's page 37. Wouldn't you know if you were listening! (*Rolls eyes*)

Begin to write ferociously and then gradually slow down, face awash with confusion turning slowly to despair. Make multiple attempts to clarify the confusion for self, counting on fingers and shaking head in impatience. Slowly, sheepishly put hand up and change mind before finally addressing the teacher downstage and above own height,

Am, Mrs Carey, Mrs Carey, I'm stuck.

Walk downstage with uncertainty towards the teacher, hand still up, looking at her.

Morph into larger figure by snapping right hand down and turning slightly in that direction to look down at where the child stands, engage powerful stance, feet shoulder width apart, disgusted at this interruption.

Stuck, Jayne, what do you mean you're stuck? Show me that copy and don't be blackguarding me at this hour of the morning!

Mutter under breath while reading copy ferociously and impatiently, slowly a malice-filled smirk forms and air of smug satisfaction is apparent in a dismissive tone of voice.

Well, would you look at this? Listen to me here girls. *(Addressing audience directly)* More like STUPID seven! *Effortlessly flicks copy over shoulder and on to the floor.*

Sit down. And pick up that copy! *(Dismissively and thoughtlessly)*

Frantically shrink body to become the child. Retrieve copy hugging it closely. Look around the room and display utter shock and heart-break, voice quivering slightly, grasping anxiously at the tightly clenched copy.

48 eyes pierced through me.

Look at individual audience members. Before naming each emotion, show it using facial expression, as though mirroring the emotion the other children would have felt.

Scared.

Shocked.

Sympathetic.

Continue to retreat, looking around, come to rest in front of the first chair and look to second chair, showing Mary's expression.

Satisfied.

Sit down again in the first chair, heavy hearted and embarrassed. Continue to look cautiously around the room and at audience for any remaining staring eyes, change demeanour to represent attempt at indifference. Struggle to keep a neutral facial expression while on the verge of tears and trying to settle back down to work.

I don't know. *(Full of dismay, close copy, defeated)*

Sit for a while, unsure, and return copy to under the chair. Attempt to place hands in lap, but fidget as if battling with incessant mental chatter. Come to rest after a moment and begin to show resolution and an eventual sense of peace in order to show a conclusion has been reached. Smile softly and stand up, walking confidently to the left side of the second chair and bend down, speaking in that direction, voice full of understanding and reassurance.

Of course you know. I bet you do. Look how well you have managed part A. I can really see that you tried it and I am very pleased that you did your best on the first part. I know part B was tricky but I think you can have a go at it and if you're still not sure, we can easily go over it again.

Pause briefly, looking pensive out over the audience.

If I remember correctly, I used to get stuck on those ones too. But then I would say to myself 'once you get to 10, begin again (*as if to the child*) so maybe that will help you too.

Stand up, looking out at the audience, confident, assertive and content.

Now, does anyone else feel stuck?