

## **Dialogue: Suffer little children**

### Scene 1

*[Many adults sit round a large table in the garden of a restaurant. Children sit at the table, briefly, and then disappear, one by one.]*

**Big male:** What do you say when you want to get down?

**Male child:** May I get down?

**Big male:** That's right.

**Male child:** May I get down?

**Big male:** You haven't asked me if you may get down; so sit round properly and enjoy your tea.

**Male child:** May I get down?

**Big male:** No.

**Big woman:** Oh why not? Let him go.

**Big male:** No.

*[The male child is the only child still at table. One other is lying on flagstones, drawing. Two others are whispering together under a shrub. The male child gets down.]*

**Big male:** Jonathan!

**Big woman:** Let him go.

## Scene 2

*[The male child is standing at a door of the restaurant, looking at a man, alone at a table, reading]*

**Male child:** Hallo.

**Man at table:** Hallo.

**Male child:** Hallo.

*[Male child beckons to Female child. They whisper together and, after a while, go away.]*

*[Sounds of adult conversation – bullshit words, arrogant tones.]*

**Male child:** Hallo.

Hallo.

Hallo.

**Female child:** Hallo.

**Male child:** Hallo.

Hallo.

**Man at table:** I've said Hallo. Now do go away, please.

**Big male:** Jonathan? Ssh! Don't annoy people.

**Male child:** Hallo.

Hallo.

Hallo.

**Female child:** Hallo.

**Male child:** Hallo.

Hallo.

Hallo.

**Female child:** Hallo.

**Male child:** Hallo.

Hallo.

Hallo.

**Female child:** Hallo.

**Male child:** Hallo.  
Hallo.  
Hallo.

**Female child:** Hallo.

**Male child:** Hallo.  
Hallo.  
Hallo.

**Female child:** Hallo.

**Man at table:** I asked you to go away. Now please do so.

**Male child:** Hallo.  
Hallo.  
Hallo.

**Female child:** Hallo.

**Man at table:** *[loudly] Go away! I have asked you. Do I have to complain about you to your parents?*

**Big male:** Jonathan? Come here please!  
Come here now.  
Please.  
Now!  
*[Male child goes.]*  
Right, Sir. You will stay away from that door. Do you understand me? Good.

### Scene 3

*[Adults huddle at the counter, talking bollocks to each other and the waiter, challenging the bill tentatively. Big man does not join in but glares unrelentingly at the man at the table, even turning his head awkwardly as he leaves in order to maintain the glare for as long as possible. All leave.]*

**Waiter:** *[to Man at table] Beats me what some people let their children get away with.*

**Man at table:** I hate people like that.

**Waiter:** Me, too. Mind you, I hate customers in general  
*[laughs demonstratively]*

*ttt*