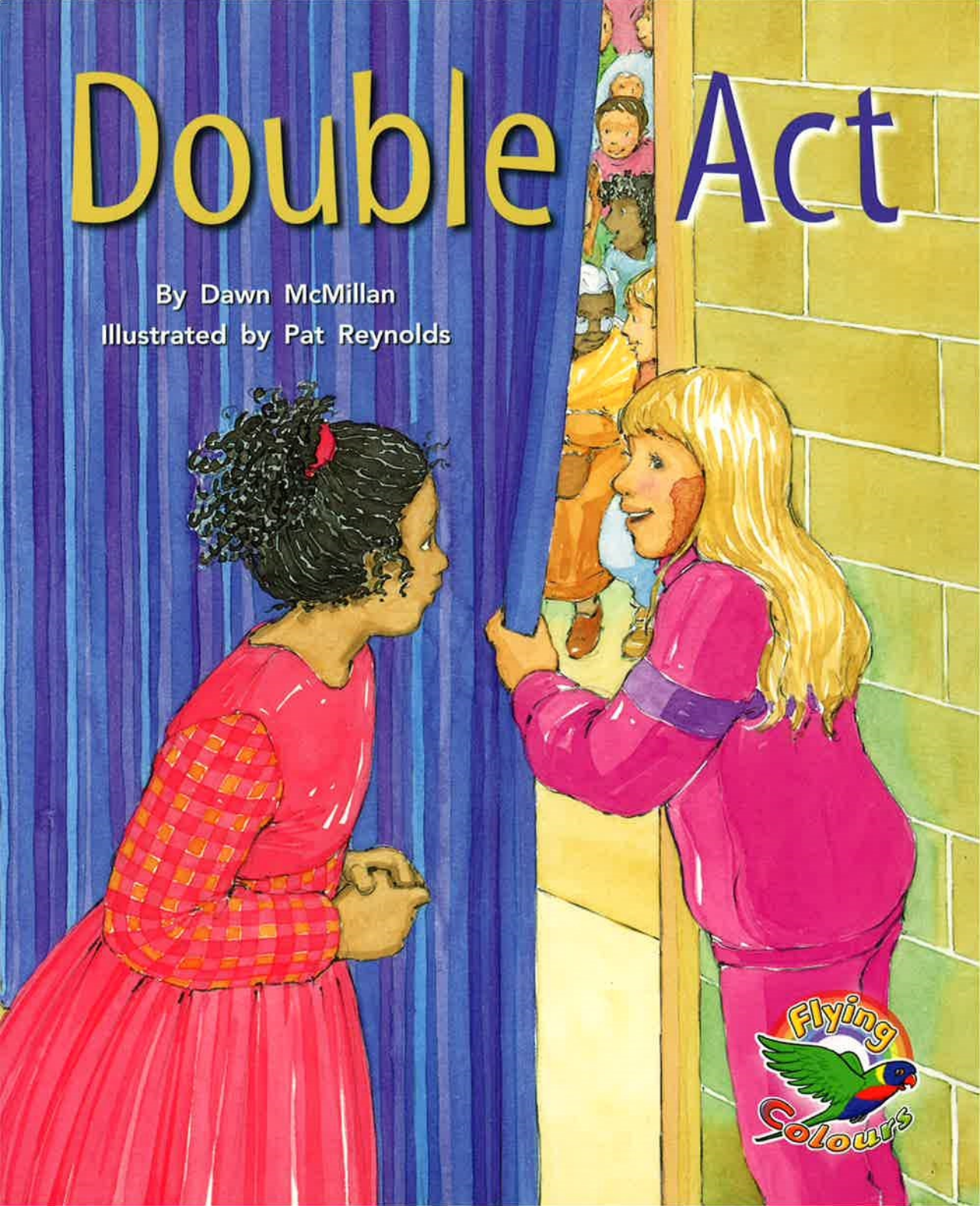
Double Act

By Dawn McMillan

Illustrated by Pat Reynolds





Title	*Double Act*
Levels	23–24/25
Running words	1037

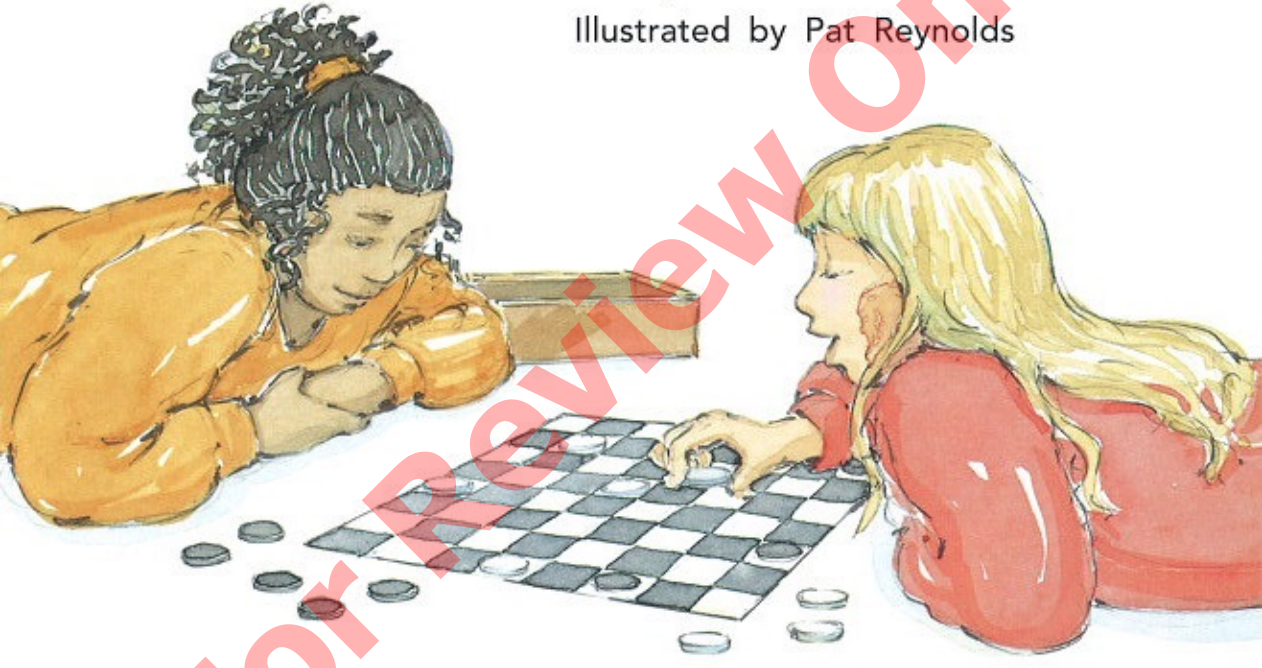
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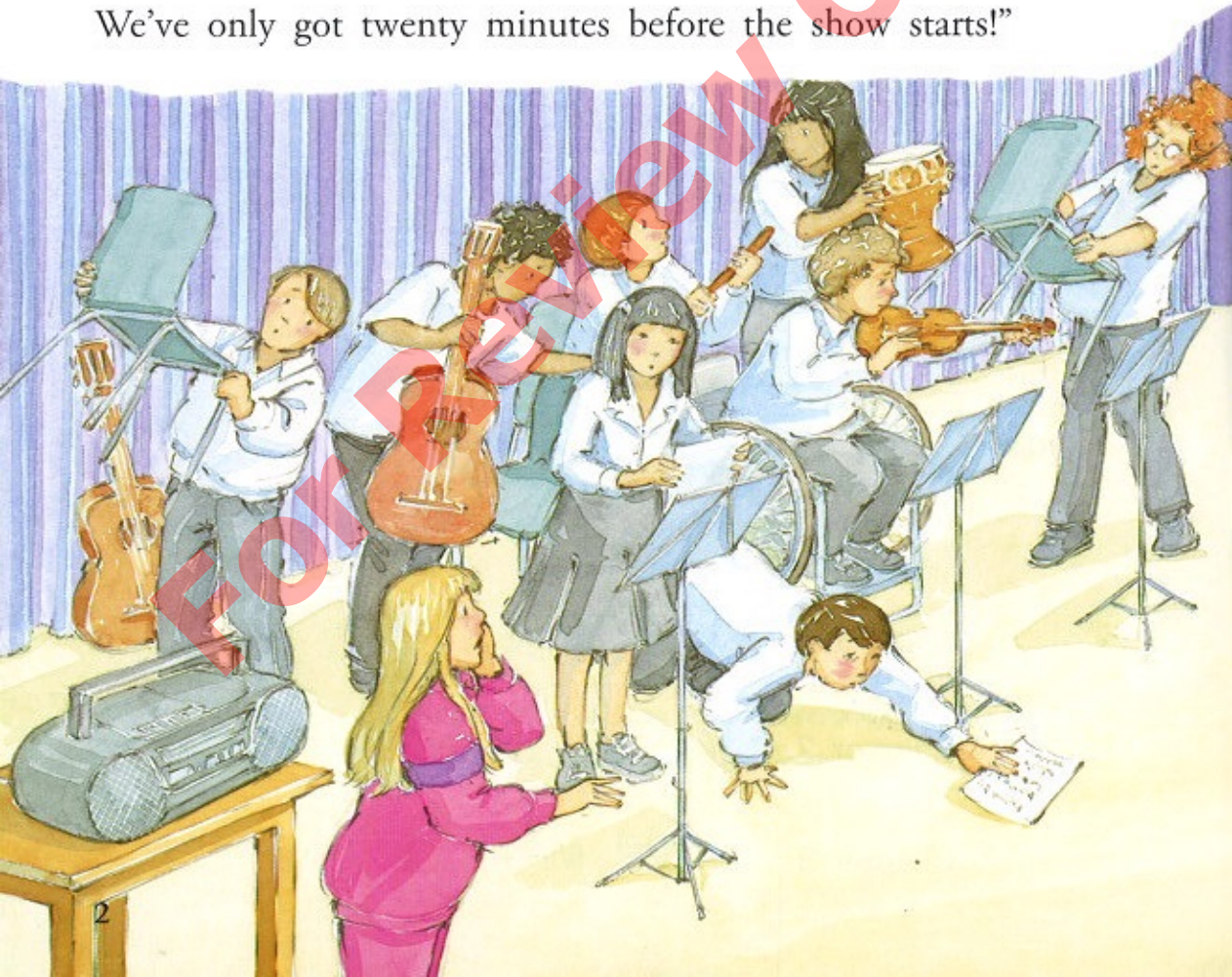
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Chapter 1

Back Stage

Alice was nervous. The school concert was about to begin, and she was going to sing with the orchestra in the final item. As she looked across the stage she saw Miss Jackson pacing up and down.

"Come on, everybody," called Miss Jackson. "Get organised! We've only got twenty minutes before the show starts!"



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"Miss Jackson," said Tania anxiously, from the back of the stage. "I think I've lost the CD music for the dances."

"Lost the CD?" Miss Jackson gasped. "Oh no, you can't have lost it. Not now!"

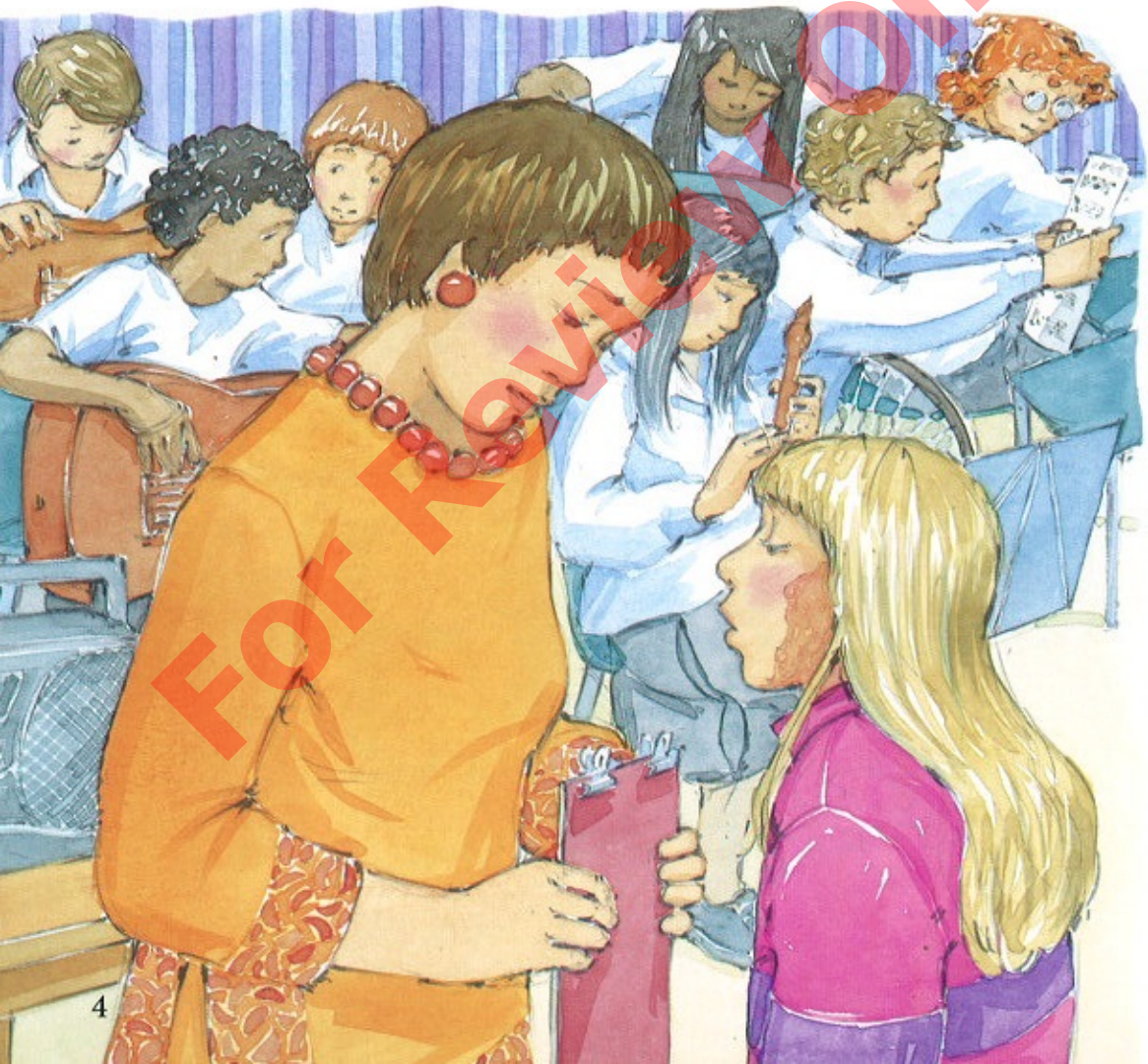
"The CD is in the player," Alice called, and both Miss Jackson and Tania sighed with relief.



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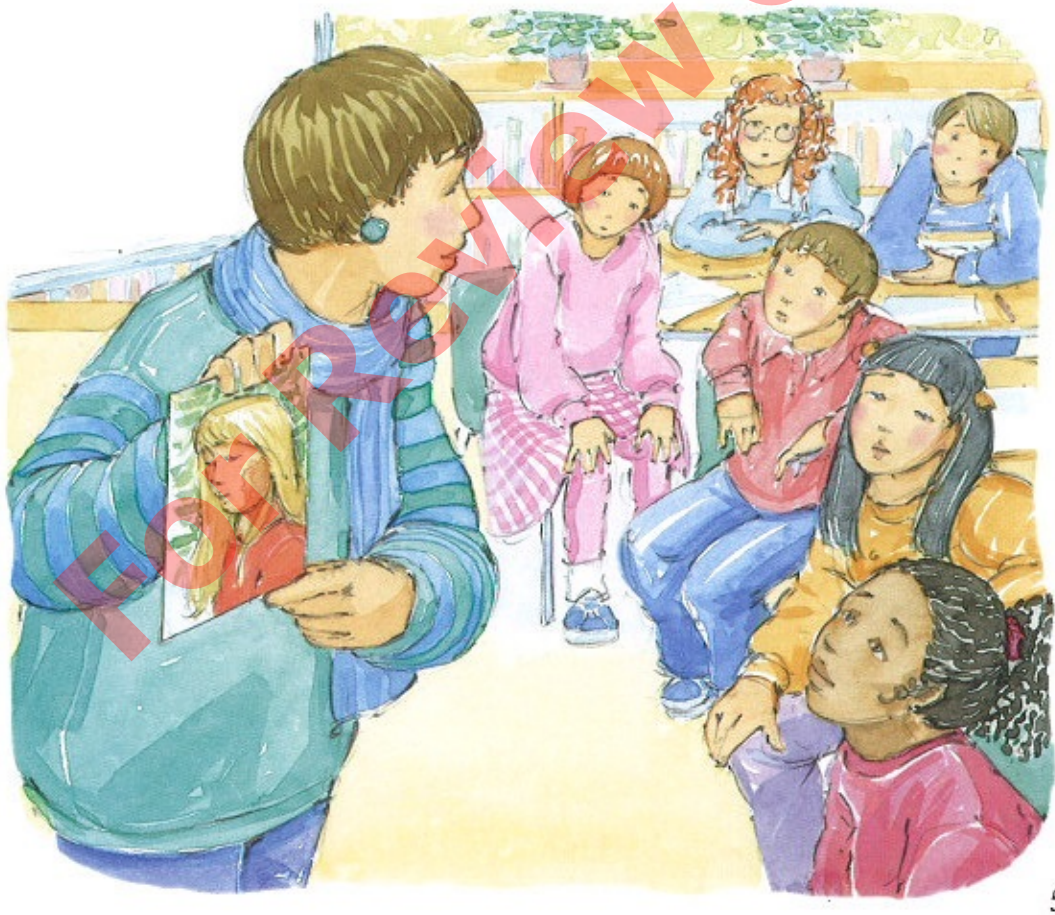
"You should be performing in the concert, Tania, not working a CD back stage," said Miss Jackson gently. "You're such a talented girl," she added.

"Thank you, Miss Jackson," Tania replied. "But I don't want to be on stage with all those people looking at me."



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Alice looked across at Tania and thought how hard it must be for her to cope with her scarred face. She remembered the day when Tania came to their school. Before she arrived, Miss Jackson had shown the class a photo of her. In the photo Alice noticed Tania's long blonde hair swinging around her face. She saw the angry red skin stretching from her left cheek, all the way down her neck.



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"Tania has been in a car accident," Miss Jackson explained. "The car burned, and the rescue team got her out just in time. She's lucky to be alive! Her dad thought that you should all see her photo so that you'll know what to expect when you see her. He thought it would make it easier for you to meet her."

But Alice remembered standing in front of Tania and thinking that it wasn't easy to meet her at all. She remembered asking herself, "What do I do? If I look at her, she might think I'm staring – being rude! If I don't look at her, she'll think I don't like her because of her scars!"



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Now, a year later, Tania was her best friend. They did everything together, and Tania's dad often said as he laughed, "You two are a double act!"

Alice didn't think about Tania's burns, not until she noticed how her friend hated people looking at her. Then she wished she could make the scars vanish.



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