

Mother COURAGE

With two ex-husbands, four children, a teenage mother and a father who never recovered from a bad acid trip, Sadie Frost's family life has never been easy. But she and her daughter Iris, the *aMuse* columnists, are working out their relationship as they go along, discovers **Stephanie Hirschmiller**

A photo-shoot at Sadie's house in Primrose Hill and we're all in the kitchen with its big farmhouse table and doors thrown open to the garden. Sadie's getting her make-up done and 11-year-old Iris has two friends over who alternate between playing with an iPad and a pet tortoise called Percy, commandeering the trampoline in next door's garden and begging Sadie's sister Jade to let them re-enact Iris' school project. It involves dry ice...

"I like having the neighbours' kids over. I've always got people staying and the house is a really warm loving environment," says Frost. She gets this feeling from her father, psychedelic artist David Vaughan, who would often arrive home with a complete stranger he'd picked up on the motorway – "he'd then be his best friend for two weeks". Vaughan also helped people from deprived areas: "He'd teach them to paint, people who didn't even know how to read or write, who didn't know how to fill out a giro."

Sadie is 46 but, notwithstanding four children – Finlay, 21, with first husband, Spandau Ballet's Gary Kemp and then Rafferty, 15, Iris and Rudi, 9, with Jude Law – looks like a fresh-faced teen herself. She's elfin, petite and yoga-honed with good genes and an un-40-something exuberance. Her mother, Mary, was just 16 when Sadie was born and her father, only a couple of years older, had two children already. "It was

the swinging 60s and dad was painting murals on Carnaby Street, working with people like the Beatles, painting John Lennon's Rolls Royce and Paul McCartney's piano, and doing a Kinks album cover."

There was a lot of love and excitement in the family, but little money. They spent time living in squats, sleeping on people's sofas and even riding in a bus down the hippy trail. "My dad had got an American school bus and we lived on that for nearly a year; we drove it from Camden Town to Marrakesh." When he was painting, Vaughan would take Sadie, then a tiny child, everywhere with him. "The first person a girl falls in love with is her father, and that's very important for development. You always hope that if you're a girl you have a good relationship with your dad. Throughout my life, all my relationships have been affected by my relationship with him. I suppose it would be scary though if you have such a great relationship that you're always let down after that," she muses.

"He used to take me out in the middle of the night and I'd be perched up on a wall and he'd be painting some building, and then we'd run away from the police. There was always a drama." The drama, however, took on a darker edge when Vaughan had a bad acid trip. Sadie believes 'he was spiked' and his extreme creativity plummeted into depression. "Things started to unravel and fall apart," she recalls.

MAKE UP: SARA AUSTIN AT OCCASION; HAIR: COLEK HAIR; JEWELRY: JOEL BENJAMIN
© PHOTOGRAPHER: CHRISTOPHER SIMS; ASSISTANT: NICK THOMPSON



Left: Sadie Frost at home in Primrose Hill last month and (above) with Iris.

Vaughan and Mary split when Sadie was four. Her mother remarried and her parents went on to have two other families each: "There were 11 brothers and sisters between us!" For the most part, though, Sadie was brought up by her mother, but confesses that she was a difficult child. "I think you find out stuff about yourself if you challenge your parents, and you want buttons to be pressed otherwise. My mum was a girl, a child. I still saw her as my mother, but really, as I was growing up she was growing up as well. I've never been that far behind, so we're more like friends, or sisters."

In her relationship with Iris, she's now experiencing that button-pressing from the other side. "There was that slightly spiky relationship between me and my mother and I can see that developing with me and Iris," she says now. The pair are evidently close and have a lot in common and you can see they both work hard so things run smoothly, but, as Sadie admits, it's not always easy – "I can see how I irritate my daughter". However: "It's par for the course. The trick, as a mother, is not to respond, not to take offence. You've got to expect that there'll be times when you disagree, as long as you don't worry about disagreeing. Iris is very strong-willed – she's become that and probably all my kids will because of the way their parents are. But she's also very bright. I don't think I was nearly as bright as she is."

Iris is certainly bright, articulate and confident but she's unaffected and unselfconscious with it. She tells me that her jumper is from Religion but she bought it at Urban Outfitters, and that her top is from Wildfox. "But I don't like people knowing," she continues conspiratorially "in case they copy it." She also admits that she originally thought Topshop was "really boring with ugly jeans" until her mum took her shopping there