

Level 1 Acting: Grade 2 Solo

Titles in Level 1 Acting: Grade 2 Solo

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The Brave Little Tailor

Charlie Humdinger (REPORTER) is outside the palace. Charlie is reporting on the story of the brave little tailor who has returned from completing some difficult tasks for the King. In return for completing these tasks the King has promised half his kingdom and the Princess's hand in marriage.

REPORTER: Look Bill, I'm telling you, this story is huge! I'm outside the palace now and there's so much coming and going it's like Grand Central Station. I managed to grab a few of the servants as they were coming off the night shift and although it took a bit of bribery, I managed to corroborate the story that she hired a couple of hoodlums to come in in the dead of night and ship him off somewhere, then they reckoned she'd spread the story that he'd disappeared. I wouldn't be surprised if her father was behind it mind you because I don't think he ever imagined he'd complete all those awesome tasks and he'd have to keep his promise and give him half the kingdom and his daughter. I mean, how stupid is that? Someone you've only just met tells you they're a great hero and you believe them. Did he look him up on YouTube? I think not? Did he check his criminal record? No he didn't.

Well yes, he did do all those tasks, getting rid of the giants and the unicorn and the boar, but does that make him the right person to be king? Of course the anti-monarchy lobby is out in force and they were only too keen to share their views. I quote: 'We spend our money on keeping these people in an archaic situation of privilege and they turn out to be no better than common criminals.' Strong words Bill, strong words and I don't know that I agree with them, but if he does turn out to be nothing more than a common little tailor then that rubbishes their argument and good luck to him I say.

Hello, there's more activity now. I think it's the Princess's car. She hasn't been seen in public or made any statement yet and what we've heard has just been speculation. Is he with her I wonder?

No, she seems to be on her own.

(Rushing over to the car) Princess! Princess! Is it true that you and your husband are splitting up?

Can you give us a statement Princess?

No, she didn't give any indication of what's going on.

What's that Bill?

He is?

Now?

OK. Live on air in two. How do I look? Yeah I know I've been up all night but at least tell me I don't look like it.

5-4-3-2-1

Good morning. This is Charlie Humdinger live at the palace bringing you all the latest on the sensational news story that has just broken. I understand we are about to go over to the palace library where his majesty the King will make a statement...

By Eleanor McLeod

I'm Not Ready

EVAN enjoys playing the saxophone and attends lessons with Miss Angela. Miss Angela has decided that it's time Evan took his first grade exam, but Evan doesn't feel ready.

EVAN: 'Turn that music down!' That was my mum's reaction to me practising my saxophone. On a positive note, no pun intended, she thought I was playing one of my CD's so I must be improving.

I love playing my sax, it's so relaxing after a long and slightly boring day at school. When I first started learning it was really hard and I couldn't even make a sound out of it, then I progressed to a squeak, and now apparently I sound like an actual CD. Although Mum has had a glass of wine so I'll take that compliment loosely.

My teacher Miss Angela keeps saying, 'Evan you're ready to take your first grade,' but I'm not. I don't like playing in front of strangers; she tells me there will be just one examiner in the room but even one unfamiliar face makes my heart race, my legs wobble and my saxophone squeak. I'm not sure why anyone would choose to be in that situation. I'm happy just playing my instrument to the four walls of my bedroom, and Chip my hamster who I'm sure runs around his wheel faster when I play.

My mum said she would give me a tenner if I do it, surely that's bribery, although there is this awesome computer game I've been saving for so it's worth some consideration. I just need to work on my jelly legs and shaky fingers or I'm going to be hitting all the wrong notes and I won't sound like a CD, I'll sound like a chorus of mice squeaking their way through a poor rendition of Somewhere Only We Know.

Mum always says a nice glass of wine steadies her nerves, apparently it's called Dutch courage, so maybe there is an answer to my predicament, yes that's it, I'm going to wait until I'm eighteen to take my grade one examination.

By Joanne Watkinson

His Dark Materials

LYRA lives in a parallel universe. She has been captured by Iofur Ragnison, the King of the bears, and is in prison guarded by Chief Bear. Iofur enters the room where Lyra is kept. Lyra has come up with a plan to trick Iofur, so she can escape from prison.

LYRA: (Is asked if she is a spy) No! No! I'm not!

I'm his daemon.

(Iofur is surprised by this and asks how this is possible)

It was an experiment at Bolvangar. There was a doctor, he pressed a button and I appeared.

(Iofur queries why she is in human form)

It's 'cause... I'm an animal's daemon. Humans have animals, animals have humans. It's like, back to front, all right?

(Iofur queries how she has travelled so far)

I'm like a witch's daemon. And beside... he's not very far away. He's coming to Svalbard really soon, and he's gonna raise up all the bears against you... 'cause he's heard how they grumble about you.

(Iofur roars)

Wait, wait, wait... And I don't want that to happen, I don't, 'cause he's a poor, sad, drunken disgrace of a bear, and you're a king with a magnificent palace. So what you gotta do... you gotta tell your guards, that when he arrives... they mustn't attack him...

... an' I'll pretend that I'm still on his side... and then you gotta challenge him in single combat! On your own! And when you've beaten him, that'll prove that you're the strongest, and then I'll belong to you! I'll be your daemon! I'll have a little throne of my own, right next to yours, and humans will come from all over the world to wonder at you! King Iofur Ragnison, the bear with a daemon!

By Philip Pullman

Adapted by Nicholas Wright

The Little Match-Seller

It is Christmas Eve. A poor barefoot MATCH-SELLER is walking through town in the snow trying to sell matches.

THE MATCH-SELLER: Oh, it is so cold, and it is snowing so fast. It's almost dark and I dare not go home because I have sold no matches today and my father will scold me.

(To a passer-by) Please sir, will you buy some matches?

(He ignores the MATCH-SELLER and moves on)

No one wants to buy matches. They are all sitting by their fires and keeping warm. My feet are so cold... Oh! There is a corner between two houses where the snow is not so thick. Perhaps I can shelter for a while.

(The MATCH-SELLER sits in the shelter and huddles up)

I am so cold. My hands are freezing. Perhaps one match will warm them.

(The MATCH-SELLER strikes a match)

Oh, what a lovely warm light, like a candle. It burns so bright. Oh! It's gone out! I'll light another. *(Lighting another match)* I can see through the wall into a room... there is a fire shining in the stove and polished brass ornaments. There is a table spread with a roast goose, stuffed with apples... oh! The match has gone out!

(Another match is lit)

What a beautiful Christmas tree with thousands of tapers lighting up the branches, like stars in the sky. *(Looking at the stars)* One of them has a long fiery tale. Grandmother used to say when a star is falling, someone is going to die. Oh Grandmother, dear Grandmother, you're there! You look so beautiful and stately... Oh! The light's going out! Don't go Grandmother. I've lit all the matches I have left. Don't go. Please stay! Please, please don't leave me. Please take me with you... please.

(The MATCH-SELLER succumbs to the cold and dies)

By Hans Christian Andersen

AYANA enters, wearing a navy blue dress and a slight frown. She doesn't wear shoes. She paces around and pauses to inspect the ends of her hair. She looks to the sky and hums a folk song she heard on the radio the day before. She stops pacing and sits.

AYANA: Why does everyone keep on asking me that? Mama says it's because they think it's pretty. But I don't think it's pretty.

If they say that, I think they're lying. When Mama brushes it out in the morning, I scream and scream but she keeps on pulling. And even though she pulls her hardest, it never looks right. I try and fix it once she brings me to the bus stop, but frizz just gets frizzier no matter what. They always want to touch it. They don't even ask. Sophie and all the other kids try and pull my curls and I run and I run and I run but they keep on coming. And Mama always says hate is a strong word. But I think I hate it. I don't ask to touch Mary Ann's hair, even though I want to. Mary Ann is pretty. She has these golden specks in every strand, and it's not too straight but not too curly like mine. And when she runs, it bounces in the wind and it trails right behind her like a wave. And her skin is silky and smooth and it looks like milk.

I saw a doll in the toy store the other day — it looked just like Mary Ann. It had these big, big blue eyes like oceans and a fancy pink dress with frills and white tights. I asked Mama if I could buy it and she said I should wait until my birthday because I have too many dolls already. I never see any dolls that look like me. Mama says they're all bought because everyone likes them too much. And then she looks at me, and she smiles, and she says 'I wish I coulda gotten you one of those dolls before they sold out'. But I don't think I want one. I think I'm maybe a little glad they sold out. I wish —

I wish I could cut off all my hair. And I wish it would grow back long and yellow like a corn field, like Mary Ann's. Don't tell Mama I said that, she'd be angry. Real angry.

By Amira Danan

ASHLEY has been ordered to tidy the bedroom by Mum. Left alone to tackle the mess, Ashley decides to deliver an important message to an imaginary audience in the guise of a charity appeal with vacuum cleaner in hand.

ASHLEY: *(Calling)* Don't stress, Mum! It's all in hand. I've used a vacuum cleaner before, you know! *(Holding the vacuum cleaner and studying each part, as if it's an alien being. ASHLEY finds the hose and decides to use it as a microphone)* Today, here in East Sussex, you'll find the bedroom of Ashley Pritchard, a well-respected and highly intelligent member of the Pritchard family. It has been rumoured for some time now that Ashley has not only fallen behind with house work, but has appeared reluctant to tidy said room.

This is not an uncommon problem *(serious)* but there are signs known only to the female of the species i.e. Mother, that this something is starting to smell and smell bad. *(Moves to a point in the room and bends down)*

Take this discarded sock for instance. It has been festering away alone for some weeks now in the hope that its partner would return and bring harmony again to a broken household, and the most important member, Thomas, the cat, who has made it his home.

(Standing, moving towards the bed) Ashley's bed. Yes, ladies and gentlemen. Have you ever seen such a sight? No, not anywhere south of Watford Gap have such appalling conditions ever been witnessed or indeed understood by man or beast. Such shocking conditions can only lead to loneliness, isolation and finally death. But it doesn't need to be like this.

(Sits. In earnest) All it takes is a phone call. If you can spare just five pounds a week you will be helping a loved one by keeping their child's clothes clean, fed regularly, and making sure Ashley gets to school on time. Ashley's parents are at their wits end and let's face it not getting any younger. In return for this generosity you will receive a letter from Ashley's parents showing progression and a picture of said room improving, plus, as long as the payments are regular, Ashley will personally invite you to the family home to see the progress made. Finally, if you can make the

cheques payable to Ashley Pritchard, it's a lot easier, as Ashley's parents are frail and don't wish for publicity. So please, help this particular child now. Thank you. *(Switches vacuum on. Hides behind bed. Calling)* Mum? The vacuum's making a funny noise. I think it's broken.

By Antony Wieland

Ernie's Incredible Illucinations

ERNIE is in a public library with his dad. An old tramp is on one side of the library eating his sandwiches from a piece of newspaper. Ernie has a lively imagination and powers that can turn his illucinations into reality.

ERNIE: (ERNIE and his dad enter the library. To the audience) I didn't really think much of this idea of my mum's...

(ERNIE is told to be quiet)

(Whispering) I didn't really think much of this idea of my mum's. It was a bit like sitting in a graveyard only not as exciting. The trouble is, in library reading-rooms, some bloke's pinched all the best magazines already and you're left with dynamic things like The Pig Breeder's Monthly Gazette and suchlike. I'd got stuck with The Bell Ringer's Quarterly. Which wasn't one of my hobbies. Nobody else seemed to be enjoying themselves either. Except the bloke eating his sandwiches in the corner. I reckoned he wasn't a tramp at all, but a secret agent heavily disguised, waiting to pass on some secret documents to his contact who he was to meet in the library and who was at this very moment lying dead in the Reference Section, a knife in his ribs. Realizing this, the tramp decides to pick on the most trustworthy-looking party in the room – my dad!

(ERNIE's narrative has now become real and he watches as the tramp knocks into his dad and thrusts a newspaper parcel into his dad's hand. His dad opens the parcel)

What is it?

(ERNIE's dad says it's old blueprints and asks ERNIE if he is responsible)

No, Dad.

(They are distracted by an attendant who enters the library with a step-ladder to change a light bulb; ERNIE describes the scene as if the attendant is climbing a mountain)

And now, as Captain Williams nears the summit of this, the third highest mountain in the world never before climbed by man...

He pauses for a moment through sheer exhaustion...

GRADE 2 SOLO

ERIE/DA/ERIE

(The attendant slips and ERNIE's dad moves to help)
And here comes Major Fraser, ace daredevil mountaineer to the rescue.

(ERNIE's dad brings the attendant down)

And here comes the gallant Major Fraser, bringing the injured Captain Williams to safety...

(ERNIE's dad turns again to him)

Yes, Dad?

(ERNIE's dad asks if he is also responsible for this. ERNIE replies innocently)

Me, Dad?

(A librarian enters screaming and ERNIE's dad looks at him, to see if this is also caused by him. ERNIE replies solemnly)

Sorry, Dad.

By Alan Ayckbourn

A group of children are rehearsing the village anthem, which they will later perform. They are rehearsing in an enclosed paddock, with CCTV cameras surrounding the paddock. The children have started arguing and LISA tries to bring order.

LISA: *(Hysteria rising in her voice)* Well, we can't all be as clever as you, Douglas. And actually, sometimes it's nice not to have to think. I mean: I for one was quite pleased not to have to make a wardrobe decision today. Because – often – I find it impossible deciding what to wear. Yes! I do! I find myself staring into the wardrobe. For hours! I can be there for hours! My mother thinks I'm lazy and that I take ages to get out of bed, but I've been standing there since six deciding between a tie-front and a denim. We have way too much choice! It's terrifying. I panic when I have to make any decision. Sometimes I panic so much, I throw up. Isn't it lovely, just for once, Douglas... Isn't it lovely, just to be told what to do?

(Everyone's looking at LISA)

(She barks her name) Liza!

(Then collects herself and smiles through gritted teeth at the camera with her thumbs up)

Everything's fine! Everything's fine! Come on, everyone. Chop, chop! Let's rehearse. Tubbsy, you really ought to be thinking about getting into your costume. Let's remind ourselves of who we are!

(Manic) I'm going to warm up now, and I really think it would be a good idea if other people joined in with me because if they don't I'm going to get very, very angry! Jamie! Accompany us. Something soothing.

(Jamie immediately begins to play the theme tune from Schindler's List)

(She barks) NOT THAT!

(Jamie plays the melody of the Northbridge anthem. The children, including LISA, start to warm up)

By Dafydd James

Tikki Causes Trouble

HIRO's parents are holding a party in their new house and have told Hiro to not let Tikki, their new puppy, out of the room. Towards the end of the party Hiro decides to let Tikki out and carries her down the stairs, but unfortunately Tikki jumps out of Hiro's arms, causing havoc. Hiro has just run after Tikki into the study, but the door locks shut behind them...

HIRO: Tikki, come back here right now!

Oh no. *(HIRO goes to the door and tries to open it)*

It's locked shut! We're trapped!

Oh you silly dog! I thought I could trust you, but now look what you've done.

(HIRO looks through the key hole) I can see everyone... they didn't notice us come in here. HELLO? MUM? DAD? CAN YOU HEAR ME? I'M TRAPPED, THE DOOR IS LOCKED!

(HIRO waits for someone to respond, but no one does) No one can hear me, the music is too loud... and they are all busy fixing the mess you made, Tikki.

All I wanted was for you to join the party, I thought it was so unfair Mum and Dad said you couldn't leave my room. But I guess they were right. I told you to stay in my arms and not make a noise, but as soon as I got to the bottom of the stairs and you saw the cake you jumped out of my arms and onto the table, knocking the whole thing over and all the drinks spilled everywhere.

Dad spent ages cleaning the house from top to bottom making sure the party was going to be perfect. But now, icing sugar and cream is all over the place. I hope Ms Raleigh isn't too upset her silk dress is now covered in lemonade.

Oh, Tikki, how are we going to get out of here? I have no idea where the key is.

Mum always has clever ways of hiding important things. This room has her computer in it, so I bet she's hidden the key really well. She's probably used a riddle as a clue to find the key.

Hang on, there's that riddle about a door isn't there?

(HIRO tries to remember it) I know!

When is a door not a door? Hmm. When is a door not a door?
When it's a JAR!

That's it! Maybe mum hid the key in a jar – quick Tikki, help me try and find one in here.

(HIRO looks around for a jar) Aha! I found one... Look Tikki! There's a key in here.

(HIRO takes the key out of the jar and goes to the door) Fingers and paws crossed!

(HIRO put the key in the door and the door opens) YES! It's unlocked. Let's get out of here, Tikki, we can escape! We're FREEEEEEEEEEE! Yippee!

(HIRO jumps up and down until Mum, Dad and Ms Raleigh come over!) Oh... hi Mum. Hi Dad... Ms Raleigh...

Sorry about the mess.

By Louisa Worley

ROSIE's family have agreed to give a home to a stray cat from the local sanctuary. Rosie goes through a checklist with her younger sister Lily, as they wait for their father to return with their new pet.

ROSIE: Pink feeding mat... check. Mrs Drake at school said her cat drops bits of food on the floor next to its feeding bowl. Mum's always mopping up, even when there's nothing actually there. She'll go mad if there's bits of half-chewed fish lying about; I mean, cats don't go around with brushes and dustpans do they? I'm sure I've never seen a cat with a vacuum cleaner.

Pink feeding bowl... check. One side is for wet food and the other is for biscuits. I've tried but I can't open the box. It says on the side 'Easy to open' but I think it's some kind of 'in joke' amongst cat people. It's a job for Dad when he gets back, no, better ask Mum; I think his thumb's still swollen from when he bashed it with a hammer when he was installing the cat flap. It's his own fault. There are professional cat flap installers.

Pink bowl... check. That's for her water. According to Mrs Winn at the post office, some cats can't digest milk, which means they tend to be sick and Mum hates it if she sees sick. She told me that the last time you were sick she was sick herself and was surrounded by sick so she fainted... and we can't have that, Dad hates it when people faint.

Scratch-pole... check. Bed with toys in... check. Litter box with litter in... check. They don't do pink litter, believe me, we tried every pet store in town. Dad said we tried every pet store in the world but you know how he exaggerates. That's why he was sulking last night. Why do men hate shopping so much?

Have you noticed how everything's set out? According to the man from the takeaway, you'll have a happier cat if you set out their things in a certain way. He drew a diagram last night when he delivered their set meal for two.

Pink flea collar... check. All we need to do now is decide on a name. I've got down to a shortlist of twenty-five. We need a family meeting round the dining table at... shall we say seven o'clock? Right, I'll tell mum and don't be late, you know she gets angry when we're late for school and this is far more important.

By Nick Teed