

# Level 2 Acting: Grade 5 Solo

## Titles in Level 2 Acting: Grade 5 Solo

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## A Few Good Men

*Daniel Kaffee is defending two US Marines in a military trial. The Marines are charged with killing a fellow Marine and Daniel is questioning the witness, COLONEL JESSEP. During questioning, it emerges that it was Colonel Jessep who ordered the hazing ritual known as a code red, which led to the death of the Marine.*

**COLONEL JESSEP:** You want answers!?

You want answers!!??

You can't handle the truth!

*(Pause)*

'Cause the truth is that we live in a world that has walls, and those walls need to be guarded by men with guns. Who's gonna do it? You? You, Lt. Weinberg? I have a greater responsibility than you can possibly fathom. You weep for Santiago and you curse the Marines. You have that luxury. The luxury of the blind. The luxury of not knowing what I know: that Santiago's death, while tragic, probably saved lives. And my existence, while grotesque and incomprehensible to you, saves lives. You can't handle it. 'Cause deep down in places you don't talk about at parties, you want me on that wall. You need me on that wall.

*(Pause)*

We use words like honor, code, loyalty...We use these words as the backbone to a life spent defending something. You use them as a punchline. I have neither the time nor the inclination to explain myself to a man who rises and sleeps under the blanket of the very freedom I provide, then questions the manner in which I provide it. I'd prefer you just said thank you and went on your way. Otherwise, I'd suggest you pick up a weapon and stand a post. Either way, I don't give a damn what you think you're entitled to.

*(Pause)*

I did the job you sent me to do.

*(Is asked if a code red was ordered)*

You're goddam right I did.

(There's a stunned pause... the Court is informed that this admission means an Article 39A session, a session of a Court Martial, can be called. There's silence – not unsympathetically)

What the hell's going on? Captain? What the hell's going on? I'm not familiar with Article 39A. I did my job. I'd do it again. Now I'm getting on a plane and going back to my base.

(A voice is heard shouting to guard the prisoner)

What?!

I ordered a code red and everybody's going to pieces like a ladies auxiliary.

(COLONEL JESSEP's legal rights are read but continues talking over the reading) I'm being charged with a crime? I'm – that's what this is – What – this is funny, you know that, this is –

(Makes a quick move towards Kaffee but is stopped)

I'm gonna tear your eyes right outa your head! You messed with the wrong Marine!!

(Looks around the courtroom)

You have no idea how to defend a nation. All you did was weaken a country tonight, Kaffee. That's all you did, give yourself a pat on the back. You put people in danger tonight. Sweet dreams, son.

By Aaron Sorkin

## Pygmalion

Professor Higgins, Colonel Pickering, and ELIZA Doolittle return home from a night of partying. It seems Professor Higgins has won a bet to transform Eliza from a flower girl into a duchess. Professor Higgins and Colonel Pickering are discussing the evening; they have not congratulated Eliza and are now bored with the project.

**ELIZA:** (ELIZA is sitting on the floor, she snatches up Higgin's slippers, and hurls them at him, one after the other) There are your slippers! And there! Take your slippers; and may you never have a day's luck with them!...

(Breathless) Nothing wrong—with YOU. I've won your bet for you, haven't I? That's enough for you. I don't matter, I suppose... I want to smash your face. I'd like to kill you, you selfish brute. Why didn't you leave me where you picked me out of—in the gutter? You thank God it's all over, and that now you can throw me back again there, do you?

(She shakes her fist at him frantically, and gives a suffocated scream of fury) What's to become of me? What's to become of me? You don't care. I know you don't care. You wouldn't care if I was dead. I'm nothing to you—not so much as them slippers. (Bitterly) Those slippers. I didn't think it made any difference now.

(Pause as ELIZA collects herself) No. No. No. No. Thank you. No. Nothing more for you to worry about.

(She suddenly rises and moves away from Higgins) Oh God! I wish I was dead. I don't understand. I'm too ignorant. I heard your prayers. 'Thank God it's all over!'

(Pulling herself together) What am I fit for? What have you left me fit for? Where am I to go? What am I to do? What's to become of me? We were above that at the corner of Tottenham Court Road. I sold flowers. I didn't sell myself. Now you've made a lady of me I'm not fit to sell anything else. I wish you'd left me where you found me. What else am I to do?

Before you go, sir—do my clothes belong to me or to Colonel Pickering? He might want them for the next girl you pick up to experiment on. I don't want to hear anything more about that. All I want to know is whether anything belongs to me. My own clothes

were burnt. I want to know what I may take away with me. I don't want to be accused of stealing. I'm sorry. I'm only a common ignorant girl; and in my station I have to be careful. There can't be any feelings between the like of you and the like of me. Please will you tell me what belongs to me and what doesn't?

*(She removes her jewellery)* Will you take these to your room and keep them safe? I don't want to run the risk of their being missing. *(Taking a ring off)* This ring isn't the jeweller's: it's the one you bought me in Brighton. I don't want it now.

*(Professor Higgins dashes the ring violently into the fireplace)*

I'm glad. I've got a little of my own back, anyhow. *(Pertly)* You'd better leave a note for Mrs. Pearce about the coffee; for she won't be told by me.

*By George Bernard Shaw*

### Private Peaceful

*CHARLIE and Tommo are soldiers. Charlie has been given a Court-Martial for disobeying orders to leave his wounded brother, Tommo. Here, he is awaiting execution when Tommo arrives to see him in his cell for the last time.*

**CHARLIE:** I hoped you'd come, Tommo, I didn't think they'd let you. I want no tears, Tommo. This is going to be difficult enough without tears. Understand? You'll tell Mother, and Molly how it really was, won't you? It's all I care about now. I don't want them thinking I was a coward. I don't want that. I want them to know the truth.

I tried my very best. They had their one witness, Sergeant Hanley, and he was all they needed. It wasn't a trial, Tommo. They'd made up their minds I was guilty before they even sat down. I told them everything, just like it happened. I had nothing to be ashamed of, did I? So I told them, yes, I did disobey the sergeant's order, because the order was stupid, suicidal – we all knew it was – that I had to stay behind to look after you. They knew a dozen or more were wiped out in the attack, but that no one got as far as the German wire.

I asked for you, Tommo, but they wouldn't accept you as a witness, because you're my brother. I asked for Pete, but they told me he was missing. So they heard it all from Sergeant Hanley. They believed what they wanted to believe... just tell them the truth, Charlie, and you'll be all right. That's what I thought ... How wrong could I be? The whole Court Martial took less than an hour. That's all they gave me. One hour for a man's life. It'll be over very quick. You still have my watch. Keep it ticking for me, and when the time comes, give it to Little Tommo, so he'll have something from me. I'd like that. You'll make him a good father – like Father was to us.

*(CHARLIE starts to sing, softly, 'Oranges and Lemons')*

I'll be singing in the morning. It won't be God Save the ruddy King or All Things bleeding Bright and Beautiful. It'll be Oranges and Lemons, for Big Joe – for all of us.

*By Michael Morpurgo*

*Adapted by Simon Reade*

## Josephine and I

*JOSEPHINE is a performer; she is working with the Jones Family Band when she is spotted by Red, the Stage Manager of the Booker T Washington Theatre. He needs a replacement dancer for the chorus act.*

**JOSEPHINE:** Red is looking at me.

Red says, 'You'.

I say, 'Yes'.

Red says, 'What's your name?'

I say, 'Josephine'.

Red says, 'You know the chorus girl routine I seen you do?'

I say, 'Uh-huh'.

Reds says, 'You reckon you can do that routine now?'

I say, 'Uh-huh'.

Red says, 'You reckon you could do that routine now on the stage of the Booker T?'

I say, 'I gotta think about it'.

Red says, 'Well, if you're gonna be like that...'

I say, 'Outta my way! Which way to the stage?!'

I'm standing in the wings of the Booker T watching the same chorus girls up close! But up close, they look different. They look ...old.

And they dance like they just aren't there ...

Why would they do that?

They're living my dream!

*(A costume gets thrown at JOSEPHINE)*

Somebody throws a costume at me –

*(She puts on the costume as she speaks)*

I'm all fired up,

I'm chomping at the bit,

I'm straining at the start,

I'm, I'm, I'm – I'm wearing the ugliest costume I've ever seen in my life. It's eight sizes too big!

But I don't care!

I know the routines inside out and I'm ready.

I'm ready! I'm ready! I'm coming! I'm ready!

*(The Song 'Cake Walkin' Babies' is playing)*

And now I'm on with the chorus girls and I'm dancing.

I can't believe this, I'm dancing up here!

And check me out, I'm on the Booker T stage.

And check me out, check me out, check me –

What the hell?

*(She hears jeering, heckling sounds)*

The crowd is jeering, wolf-whistling, cat-calling and heckling.

No wonder the girls look miserable.

No respect, no appreciation, this wasn't glamorous at all.

Is this what I have to look forward to?

No. I want more. I want bigger. I'm getting out. I'm dancing out.

And now I'm leaving St Louis, I'm outta here!

I'm touring with the Booker T Show.

I'm travelling all the time.

'Cause I'm a show person now and we are always on the move!

*By Cush Jumbo*

## Lost Crutch

*BAILEY is in high school and has been using crutches due to a broken leg, but one crutch has just been stolen. Bailey is talking to a friend about this and why Bailey needs the friend's crutch.*

**BAILEY:** I've been practising my clarinet all morning and I really thought I was gonna get in this time. I know marching band is competitive, especially for the hockey team, but I had a good feeling about it all morning. Fifth time's a charm, my mum said.

Then that guy who wears all the jewellery stole my crutch. My mum said it was okay for me to practise my song outside, since it wasn't raining and I was only playing marches. But he ran up to me from across the street. He was yelling something like, 'shut the hell up!' or something. And he knocked my stand over and grabbed one of my crutches. I tried to run after him, but I'm not very fast on one crutch. I didn't let him get my clarinet though! I had to toss it under the picnic table, and I think one of my keys got bent a little, but at least I saved it.

Anyway, now I have to sort of hop and walk to get anywhere. I don't think I can make it to the gym on time with only one crutch. And since you have that crutch you used in fourth grade when you were Tiny Tim, I was wondering if I could maybe borrow it. I know you want it to stay in mint condition, but I won't mess it up. I'd have to bend over a little, since it's a kiddie crutch, but my mum said I have a strong back. I don't mind.

Hey, you're the reason my leg is broken anyway. You're the one who told me to jump off the truck so Taylor would see and fall in love with me. But since the truck was going 30 miles an hour—and you weren't supposed to be going that fast—I just got this broken leg instead. The hospital did have a TV though. My mum and dad won't let me watch TV at home. I saw an entire season of Game of Thrones in one day!

But Taylor didn't fall in love with me and now I have to hop and walk. So I don't care if you don't want fingerprints on your Tiny Tim crutch. I think you owe me! This is my chance to get in the marching band and show Taylor I'm worth something. So give me your crutch or I'm gonna tell your mum.

*By Tara Meddaugh*

## Sucker Punch

*LEON is sixteen years old and is a boxer. He is ready for his first amateur fight. In need of appreciation, love and acceptance from his trainer, Charlie, Leon enters the ring with a lot to prove.*

**LEON:** The first fight I'm having is with some tall, skinny-looking kid. From the minute I step into the ring, he's staring me out, like I burgled his house. What am I doing here ...? Oh! He lands one right on me. I'm going dizzy, I'm all numb. I wanna go home. I'll keep out of his way.

*(Bell rings)*

Crowd seem to like it when I move around. I'll go a bit faster then. They're lapping it up. Let's see if they like this. Bop my shoulders, spin my arm like Sugar Ray Leonard, now they're cheering, can't get enough. Skinny white boy don't know what to do with me! I get in a jab, and it hurts him, my first punch as well. A bit of fancy footwork now, I think. Crowd are loving it, I'm loving it. Another jab! Then a sweet uppercut! Skinny kid is down like a heap! I'm taking him out, me! My first ever fight, and I took him out. Yes! What a feeling. Starting to like this. Next up is a fighter from Repton. Mark Saunders. Half-caste fighter from Brick Lane. Trying to find a way in here, but he's not having any of it. It's like he can see me coming. I go with the footwork. He can't keep up with me. I'm tiring him out, he's dazzled by my speed. That's it, that's it, keep him coming, keep him coming, now, have that!

*(He hits out with a flurry of punches)*

Oh yes! I look to Charlie, he's gotta love it!

*(He takes a hit)*

Oh that was stupid. All I can see is gloves, get me out! My ears are ringing, I've got pins and needles all inside, gotta take it, gotta keep up, make it to the next round, come on!

*(Ref stops the fight. Bell rings)*

What? What ... what the ... what you mean he's won? Ref? I didn't go down! I didn't go down, I was getting back up, I had him.

*By Roy Williams*

## Blithe Spirit

MADAME ARCATI sits at a table with Dr and Mrs Bradman and Mr and Mrs Condomine. They are performing a séance. The music that was playing in the background has now stopped and there is only silence.

MADAME ARCATI: Is there anyone there? ... (A long pause) ... Is there anyone there? ... (Another long pause) ... One rap for yes ... two raps for no. Now then ... is there anyone there?

(After a shorter pause, the table gives a little bump)

(Involuntarily) Oh!

Sshhh! Is that you, Daphne? (The table gives a louder bump) Is your cold better, dear? (The table gives two loud bumps, very quickly) Oh, I'm so sorry. Are you doing anything for it? (The table bumps several times) I'm afraid she's rather fretful.

(There is a silence) Is there anyone there who wishes to speak to anyone here? (After a pause the table gives one bump) Ah! Now we're getting somewhere...No, Daphne, don't do that, dear, you're hurting me...Daphne, dear, please...Oh, oh, oh!...Be good, there's a dear child...You say there is someone there who wishes to speak to someone here?

(One bump) Is it me?

(Two sharp bumps) Is it Dr Bradman?

(Two bumps) Is it Mrs Bradman?

(Two bumps) Is it Mrs Condomine?

(Several very loud bumps, which continue until MADAME ARCATI shouts it down) Stop it! Behave yourself! Is it Mr Condomine?

(There is silence for a moment, and then a very loud single bump) There's someone who wishes to speak to you, Mr Condomine.

(To Mr Condomine) I really must ask you not to be flippant, Mr Condomine. Do you know anybody who has passed over recently?

(Hysterically) Are you Mr Condomine's cousin in the Civil Service? (The table bumps violently several times) I'm afraid we've drawn a blank. Can't you think of anyone else? Rack your brains.

Are you old Mrs Plummett?

(The table remains still)

(Shouting as Mrs Plummett is deaf) Are you old Mrs Plummett? (Nothing happens) There's nobody there at all.

(Rising) Well, I'm afraid there's nothing for it but for me to go into a trance. I had hoped to avoid it because it's so exhausting — however, what must be must be. Excuse me a moment while I start the gramophone again. (She goes to the gramophone and starts the music. She then walks back slowly to the stool and sits, moaning as she moves. Suddenly she gives a loud scream and falls off the stool on to the floor)

By Noël Coward

## My Father's House

*JOE is at home with his wife, Mattie, and a local vagrant, Abe. Joe and Mattie's child, Peewee, has been injured and Joe has built a tree house to encourage Peewee to get better. Joe is feeling dejected as Peewee did not react to the tree house, as he had hoped.*

**JOE:** I thought that when Peewee saw what we'd done it might've got some reaction out of him but I guess by now I should've known better...I really don't know what else there is I can do...

*(Mattie leaves the room. Abe takes out his pocket Bible and goes over to JOE to show a certain page)*

What? What are you showing me? I really don't think I can be bothered with all that stuff right now, Abe.

*(Abe is insistent and keeps showing him the book)*

OK, OK, I'll read it...anything for a quiet life...which one? This one?... 'In my Father's house there are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you'...

That's great, Abe, that's a great help but if you don't mind...  
*(He tries to wave him away but Abe won't be cast aside and insists on pointing to the quote in the Bible and then up at the tree house)* What? What are you trying to say? I've read it, 'My Father's house has many mansions'...So what? That don't help me none.

*(Abe repeatedly points at the quote then up to the tree house)* I don't get it...I know that you're trying to tell me something but I'm darned if I know what.

*(Abe points to the tree house and then at the nearby branches)*

What are you pointing at?...The tree house? What about it?...  
What're you saying?...

*(Abe signals)* You think there ought to be more tree houses?...I ain't building no more...No way...

*(Abe tries to signal)*

Not that? Then what?...Not more houses...

*(Abe signals for 'rooms')*

More rooms? Is that what you mean?

*(Abe begins to nod vigorously)*

You think it ought to have more rooms?

*(Abe nods again)*

I get it...How many?

*(Abe shrugs his shoulders. JOE pauses, as the idea begins to grab him)*

I never thought of that...I suppose it's possible...there's nothing really stopping us...we got the timber and the fixings and I guess the tree could take it...that might get him interested...you think perhaps if we put more rooms on, it might work?...I wonder...  
*(He becomes enthused with the idea and gets up)* You know something? You could be right...It's certainly worth a try...  
*(The idea stirs him into action)* Hey, Mattie! Forget the coffee...Me and Abe's got some work to do!

*By Tony Breeze*

## Bird

AVA is in social care. She is meeting her mum, Claire, again for the first time since she was taken into care three years ago.

AVA: I sent you letters.

I didn't have your number.

*(No response)*

I would have texted.

It felt weird.

Posh like.

Sending you letters. I put 'Dear Mam'.

I thought if it was a text.

I think I would have put, 'Alright' or something like that.

But with letters.

It's weird init?

Did you get them?

I never knew.

So I just kept writing them.

Like on them shows when they gets lost family together and stuff they says that don't they.

They says, 'For years I got you a birthday card' and they shows them a big pile of cards and Christmas presents and stuff.

When is your birthday?

I was thinking I don't know when your birthday is.

I know it's March some time but I don't know exactly when.

Cos we could do something couldn't we. We could do something nice.

Did you get the letters?

*(Claire confirms that she did)*

I didn't know.

*(Claire says she can't read well)*

I didn't know that.

I never knew that about you.

I didn't think.

It makes sense.

Now I'm thinking of it, that makes sense of a lot of things.

Forms an' stuff.

It makes sense.

Anything official.

I can help with that.

Paul likes his forms.

Me and Tash. She's my friend.

Me and Tash laughs about that.

But he's alright is Paul. They're not all like him.

Social workers. But he is.

He'd help you. With your reading an' that. Forms.

I thought you could come by, you know and or we can do this. Meet. And. Start. It's a start.

I thought. I thought it would be.

Get back to normal.

Then in time, you know.

*(Claire says that she has to go)*

Got things to do have you?

It's been three years.

It has, yes.

*(Claire asks her age)*

Fifteen.



I'm sixteen next month.

I need to talk to you. I'll be sixteen and it all changes. You know.

Will you give me your number?

I could text you.

*By Katherine Chandler*

### Ballyturk

*1 and 2 live together in Ballyturk. One day the wall of the room they live in falls down, revealing the outside world, and 3 enters. 3 talks to 1 and 2; 3 is musing about death.*

**3:** Right.

*(A pause. Then –)*

Everything you've imagined – it is. All life. It's out there. Everything.

*(Like a light has gone off inside – 3 visibly fades. 3 looks spent – older. 3 begins talking)*

There's a man and he wakes alone. His eyes open and he's conscious of his first breath, of his first movement, of his first thought which may be of food or may be to shuffle himself to his bathroom and relieve himself. And those first beginnings lie on top of twenty-three thousand mornings that have passed where he has aged invisibly, definitely – where he carries half-remembered bits of his life, of the people he has met and hated and loved, of his brothers and sisters who were once his world and now only exist to make him feel older. He carries a billion pictures of life that have no consequence to him and a few pictures which will always haunt or please him. He's made from purpose and mistake and controlled by the movement of this planet around a star – yet in the second he's led by some great need or some little urgency. Only occasionally he's conscious that around him life is beginning and ending to the beat of time – that millions of others are walking in the exact same moment that he is – are travelling with the same purpose but with singular histories – but travelling nonetheless with the same basic need – to keep on living. How unremarkable and how faintly unique to wake and walk in this way – with doors pushing open into a sky bizarrely blue and giving to us systems of weather, shaping us with forever-movable seasons. And too hard it is to think how rain is made – how the sun can push light through darkness – and what it is that holds us up here imperceptibly in space – that man stands and walks in life as it is now – with geographies to navigate – with journeys to his wife, to his work, to lunches, to beaches, to churches, to secret meetings with potential lovers, to parks, to other parts of the village, or town, or city, or countries even. A lifetime of walking distances in the

vain hope of making things that bit more fulfilling – of packing his time with experiences some of which will change him greatly and others with no consequence other than wasting a little more of his life. And to stand there in the magnificence of this world with all these animals and plants and trees too many to ever imagine clearly – and standing with the you as was made – in a life that is so chaotically structured by nature – to continue living – to remain upright and to be able to carry on searching for something other than what you have – some love or money or experience or cat or cake or son or anything at all – something which makes you continue without the mindfulness of it all ending at any moment – for everything is here and we are here to lay down legacy – to give life purpose by reaching its edge. *(Slight pause)* And it's time for you two and for what you've made – time for one of you to walk away and into your passing. In leaving you're giving shape to life – some design and purpose for being what you are – for this is the order that all life demands – *(Slight pause)* it needs a death.

*(A long pause. 3 is finished. Then –)*

I can't see the start of my life to figure out how I've come to this... this work. *(Slight pause)* You give me a choice of biscuits – I give you a choice as to which one of you will step outside, walk the twelve seconds to me and die.

*By Enda Walsh*