

Level 1 Acting: Grade 3 Solo

A-Typical Rainbow

by **JJ Green**

Little Women

by **Anne-Marie Casey**, adapted from the novel by **Louisa May Alcott**

Life of Pi

by **Lolita Chakrabarti**, adapted from the novel by **Yann Martel**

A Little Princess

by **Frances Hodgson Burnett**, adapted by LAMDA

Blue Tongue

by **Evan Placey**

Dido, Queen of Carthage

by **Christopher Marlowe**, adapted by LAMDA

Proud

by **Hannah Kennedy**

Crusaders

by **Frances Poet**

The Old Bachelor

by **William Congreve**

Red Dust Road

by **Tanika Gupta**, adapted from the novel by **Jackie Kay**

A-Typical Rainbow

JJ Green

Boy, who has Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), is at school. In class, he observes his teacher's mannerisms and presentation. Boy realises that his teacher is struggling and asks if she is okay.

BOY: She said she was fine but everything around her added up to something else. I may not be able to do long division without getting distracted but surely everyone can see that?

Can't they?

Ten a.m. she enters the classroom and slightly trips on the rug. That rug has always been there. It's *her* rug.

Ten-oh-four she missed Georgia off the register.

Ten thirty-two she started the class two minutes, exactly a hundred and twenty seconds late. She was never late. Ten forty-one spelled 'Morning' M-O-U-R-N- I-N-G on the whiteboard. Ten fifty-seven checks her phone under the desk, you can tell because the light slightly illuminated her glasses enough to see a brief moment of reflection as the Nokia screen danced across her lenses. Eleven twenty-eight a.m. dismisses us exactly a hundred and twenty seconds early for breaktime, remains behind in the classroom despite it being chocolate biscuit day. Those are her favourite. She said those were her favourite. You remember people's favourite things. That and carrot cake which is gross. She has no taste. We return from playtime. Murder scene. Exhibit A: coffee cup still on desk exactly where she left it approximately seventy degrees from her untouched pile of papers. Coffee mug empty, kettle remains by the sink untouched. Exhibit B: whiteboard hasn't been rubbed down from last lesson. It's always rubbed down from the last lesson to hide her spelling mistakes. Exhibit C: new addition to attire: small scrunched-up tissue being held to wrist by watch strap. Watch is on time. D: slightly messy hair on the right side of her head indicating a phone has been held. E: phone charger attached to rear desk plug. F: nail on left-hand index finger where immaculate polish once stood is now chipped, bitten. G: ever so slight red mark on right side of face, she's been leaning on it. H: pigeon hole remains empty no papers collected from staff room.

Clearly this is a woman who's falling apart at the seams.

Miss, are you okay?

Scene 5, 'Parent's Evening/Murder in a Classroom'

Little Women

Anne-Marie Casey, adapted from the novel by Louisa May Alcott

Beth is the second youngest of the March sisters. She is very unwell with scarlet fever. In this speech, Beth speaks to her older sister Jo. Beth acknowledges the reality of her death, expresses how much she'll miss her family, and encourages Jo to embrace her own life.

(Beth, who is indeed very fragile looking, is lying on the sofa. Beth reaches her hand across to Jo, who starts to cry.)

BETH: Jo dear, I'm glad you know it. I've tried to tell Pa and Marmee and Meg, but I couldn't. I'm not getting better. I'm getting worse. I've known it for a good while and now I'm used to it, though sometimes it's still hard to bear.

I want to get better. I try but every day I lose a little bit of strength, I feel more tired. It's like the tide, it goes slowly but it can't be stopped.

Jo, I'm grown up now and I have to believe this is what God wants for me or I can't. You must speak to Pa and Marmee. The doctor says that the people who love you the most are the blindest to such things. I asked the doctor to tell me the truth and although I'm sure it cost him dearly he did. He told me it was hopeless, Jo, but that I would not suffer too much at the end. I was so scared of that you see.

I don't know how to express myself, and shouldn't try to anyone but you because I can't speak except to you. I only mean to say, that I have a feeling that it was never intended I should live long. I'm not like the rest of you; I never made any plans; I never thought of being married, I couldn't seem to imagine myself anything but stupid little Beth trotting about at home, of no use anywhere but there. I never wanted to go away, and the hard part now is the leaving you all. I try not to be afraid, but it seems as if I should be homesick for you even in heaven. *(Pause.)* Don't hope any more, Jo; it won't do any good, I'm sure of that. We won't be miserable, but enjoy this time together. You have to promise to help me, Jo. Then when I'm gone, you have to help Pa and Marmee as Meg will have John and the new baby to comfort her and Amy will have her new, wonderful life.

I'm not so good as everyone thinks, but I have tried to do right and I know that you and I have loved each other as much as any two sisters could. You must keep writing your splendid books when it's hard remember that.

Act 2, Scene 14, 'The March House'

A Little Princess

Frances Hodgson Burnett, adapted by LAMDA

Sara is enrolled in boarding school by her father who serves in the Army. Upon her father's death, eleven-year-old Sara is left an orphan with nowhere to go. The stern headmistress Miss Minchin takes away all of Sara's possessions and forces her to live in a cold, worn attic, away from all her friends. At the start of this speech, Lottie discovers Sara's living situation.

SARA: Lottie! How did you get in here? No – shh. Shh. You must be quiet. Miss Minchin will be very angry with me if she finds you here. You mustn't cry or make any noise. Okay?

(Lottie is looking around the room, shocked. Sara follows her gaze.)

It's – it's not such a bad room, Lottie. Look – you can see all sorts of things you can't see downstairs. Like chimneys – quite close to us – with smoke curling up in wreaths and clouds and going up into the sky – and sparrows hopping around and talking to each other just as if they were people – and other attic windows where heads may pop out any minute and you can wonder who they belong to. And it all feels as high up as if it was another world.

(Sara peers out of the attic window.)

Come here and you can see. I wish someone lived over there! It is so close that if there was somebody in the attic, we could talk to each other through the windows and climb over to see each other, if we were not afraid of falling. And look at that sparrow!

(Sara giggles and walks around the room.)

We're so high above everything it's almost like a nest in a tree. The slanting ceiling is so funny. See, you can scarcely stand up at this end of the room; and when the morning begins to come, I can lie in bed and look right into the sky through that flat window in the roof. It is like a square patch of light. If the sun is going to shine, little pink clouds float about, and I feel as if I could touch them. And if it rains, the drops patter and patter as if they were saying something nice. Then if there are stars, you can lie and try to count how many go into the patch. It takes such a lot. And just look at that tiny, rusty grate in the corner. If it was polished and there was a fire in it, just think how nice it would be. You see, it's really a beautiful little room.

(Sara hears noises downstairs.)

You must go, Lottie – before Miss Minchin finds you here. Quick. And remember to be quiet!

(Sara ushers Lottie downstairs and re-enters her attic, alone. She stands in the middle and looks around. She sits down and lets her head drop in her hands.)

It's a lonely place. Sometimes it's the loneliest place in the world.

Chapter 9

Dido, Queen of Carthage

Christopher Marlowe, adapted by LAMDA

Following a storm at sea, Trojan soldier Aeneas finds refuge in Carthage, which is ruled by Queen Dido. Although Aeneas thinks himself safe, the Gods decide to interfere. Goddess Venus sends Cupid – disguised as Aeneas' son (Ascanius) – to prick Dido with his arrow, forcing her to fall madly in love with Aeneas. Dido and Aeneas' all-consuming relationship begins. However, fate dictates that Aeneas must build a new Troy in Italy. In this speech, Hermes – the Messenger God – arrives with the real Ascanius and urges Aeneas to attend to his fate in Italy.

(Enter Hermes with Ascanius.)

HERMES: Aeneas, stay! Jove's herald bids thee stay.

Why, cousin, stand you building cities here,
And beautifying the empire of this queen,
While Italy is clean out of thy mind?
Too, too forgetful of thine own affairs,
Why wilt thou so betray thy son's good hap?
The king of gods sent me from highest heav'n,
To sound this angry message in thine ears:
Vain man, what monarchy expect'st thou here?
Or with what thought sleep'st thou on Lybia's shore?
If that all glory hath forsaken thee,
And thou despise the praise of such attempts;
Yet think upon Ascanius' prophecy,
And young lulus, more than thousand years,
Whom I have brought from Ida, where he slept,
And bore young Cupid unto Cypress Isle.

(Aeneas tries to speak to Ascanius.)

Spend'st thou thy time about this little boy,
And giv'st not ear unto the charge I bring?
I tell thee, thou must straight to Italy,
Or else abide the wrath of frowning Jove.

(Hermes exits.)

Act 5, Scene 1

Blue Tongue
Evan Placey

Jamie is at the GP's, chatting to the doctor about their fluorescent blue tongue. They try to convince the doctor to agree to their plan before their Mum re-enters the room.

JAMIE: Let's level with each other, yeah?

Human to human.

Let's pretend you're not in the doctor coat, and I'm not in the school uniform blazer. We're just two people who have about two minutes to come to an agreement before my mother comes back in here.

And we know how this is going to go down.

You're going to reassure her there's nothing wrong –

She's going to insist there clearly is – it's not every day her child has a fluorescent blue tongue –

And she'll start threatening all kinds of things – local press, a lawsuit, maybe even our street WhatsApp group, since most of them are your patients too and that group is vicious –

I mean you don't want to have been there when someone put out their bins on the wrong day and a fox decorated the pavement with all manner of colourful debris – chicken bones and fish and chips grease-paper and some Play-Doh or perhaps moldy birthday cake icing, hard to tell – let's just say Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat has nothing on the gaudy patchwork of stuff scattered about our street that day.

And so just as mum's yelling about second opinions and how everyone on our street is going to leave your surgery, you'll be tempted to calmly explain my blue tongue is merely a byproduct of having stolen a blue lolly from the box mum bought for my little sister's birthday party bags next week.

Now. I would argue that 'stolen' is a pretty strong word given they were sitting on the table, packet open, taunting me.

But the fact remains that Mum would turn her ire away from you and onto me and it's unlikely then that the videogame I asked for will be making an appearance anytime soon.

So.

Good Doctor. What I'm asking is that you simply tell my mum – in fifty-seven seconds when she returns – that I do in fact have some kind of terrible illness.

While you are very clever – you went to med school afterall – or so I'm assuming or you've got bigger problems than me – even the smartest person would struggle to come up with something in the next forty-four seconds. Not to fear, doc, for I have come armed with my own diagnosis.

The giraffe.

Because I bet you didn't know that giraffes have blue tongues.

But I, the saviour of your career and the street WhatsApp group, do know this.

And it just conveniently happens that my class made a trip to the Zoo just last

week.

Sometimes fate does have a way of helping out. So you just need to tell Mum that the blue-tongued giraffe transmitted some of its saliva when I was feeding it.

Or maybe it's some sort of airborne –

Or like birdflu

Or madcow

Or

Look I can't do everything for you doc, you need to take a bit of initiative.

I have every faith in you.

And look, there's a delicious blue lollipop in it for you if you pull this off.

Okay, here we go – I'd know the squeak of those shoes anywhere.

And as ironic as it feels saying this to my doctor:

Break a leg, Doc.

Proud
Hannah Kennedy

Frankie is getting ready for their school prom. Their mother is disappointed that they have decided not to wear the outfit picked out for them.

FRANKIE: Before you say anything, I know! I know this isn't what you picked out for me. I know that this isn't how you wanted me to wear my hair, either. I know nothing about the way that I look right now is what you had in mind, but here's the thing, mum, I don't want to look like what you have in mind.

I tried it on, what you picked out, I did, and I tried so, so hard to like it. I wanted to like it for you but I can't. Because it doesn't look like me. That shade of green isn't me. The way it fits around my neck and my hips doesn't feel like me. I stood in front of the mirror, and I stared at myself, I took in every single inch of me from the tips of my toes all the way to the top of my head, and it felt like I was looking at a different person. As if the very atoms of who I am had transformed me into a person that I didn't recognise.

And this is my day. This is my prom. And I've spent my entire life trying to be the person that you want me to be. Be your Frankie. And I've wanted to want that for so long. Every morning, I would wake up and wish that I would want to be the person that you see, but I'm not. I have never been that person, and trying to be that person is rotting me from the inside out.

And I think you know that, don't you? You can see that I hate myself. Actually, no, that's not true. I don't hate myself. I hate the version of me that you think I am, that you think I should be. I love the real me. I love the person I am when I'm with my friends, I love the sound of my name when my friends say it, I love the way I hold myself, I love the way I laugh. I love all the parts of myself that I am too terrified to let you see in case I disappoint you.

But I think I've realised now that I'll always disappoint you. So, I might as well be me with my full chest because spending my prom being miserable is not worth it for a few photos that you'd like to stick in the family album.

This is what I'm wearing to prom. And I like the way I look in it, I like the way I feel in it.

And I hope you'll find it in your heart to be proud of me anyway.

Life of Pi

Lolita Chakrabarti, adapted from the novel by **Yann Martel**

Pi is an Indian boy in his teenage years. Pi is stranded in a lifeboat in the Pacific Ocean with Richard Parker, a Royal Bengal tiger. So far, Pi has encountered zebras and hyenas, sea turtles and orangutans. At the start of this speech, Pi and Richard Parker have been without water for ten days. They stumble across an enchanting island, but it is much more ominous than they first think.

(Pi puts a hand out of the boat and feels solid ground.)

PI: Land! Firm, solid, rooted land! Allah be praised!

(He stands up.)

I crawl to a glittering lake of cool, fresh water. I drink and drink and suddenly I can see again! It's an island! It's so green and lush. We're in paradise. 'Hello?! Hello? Is anyone there?' A babble of voices answer me.

(A cacophony of chattering meerkats reply.)

Meerkats, thousands of them. I have company!

(Richard Parker exits.)

Richard Parker runs inland but I'm so drowsy I'm falling asleep in the boat. I watch all the meerkats climb up to sleep in the trees. I was so happy I could've stayed there forever. A few nights later, I saw something bobbing in the lake, it looked like a dead shark. It dissolved in the water and I thought I must've dreamt it. And then wonder of wonders I found fruit – fragrant, juicy, ripe fruit, at the top of a tall tree. I clambered up, plucked that fruit and took an enormous bite. It was the best thing I'd ever tasted, dripping down my chin, sticky and sweet, but there was something hard inside it and when I took it out of my mouth, I saw it was a human tooth. I tore open another fruit, there was a molar in it and then another, it was the same. It was almost dark, the air was thick with scent, I was getting drowsy again but I knew I had to get to the boat. I ran. The ground burned my feet and that's when I understood – that island was carnivorous. It lured me in with fresh water by the day then deadened my senses at night turning to acid, digesting any flesh it could find. That was a shark I'd seen in the water. That's why the meerkats slept in the trees! They were trying to warn me.

(Frantic squealing of meerkats.)

I had to leave, I ran for the boat but I could hear Richard Parker howling in pain.

(Richard Parker howls.)

I couldn't leave him. He'd saved my life.

Crusaders
Frances Poet

Across the globe, children and teenagers make their way to the 'Holy Land' following visions that the world will end. Seventeen-year-old Meera makes her way to Mount Hermon from Scotland. Halfway up the mountain, her friend Kayleigh dies. In this speech, Meera tries to contact her mum.

(Mount Hermon. Night. Meera is alone. She is wearing many layers of clothes but she is still shivering. It is freezing. She looks at the battery level on her phone and considers. She puts it back in her pocket then, on impulse, changes her mind, pulls it out and dials.)

MEERA: Mum, it's me. I –

(It's her mum's answer machine. She is winded by the disappointment of it. She waits for the beep.)

Hi. You're working the night shift. I pictured you sitting by the phone waiting for my call but I suppose... life goes on. It's me by the way, Meera. Sorry I didn't answer your calls. Maybe you've given up? I'm on a new phone so I don't know if you've been trying me... My old one got a bit... wet. I can't speak for long because I'm low on battery and this is my only torch so... It's so dark here. And cold. I told Kayleigh. I told her it would be freezing at night but she was determined to ditch her layers. It was so hot and the climb was...

I'm on a mountain called Mount Hermon. It's probably where Jesus was transfigured into divine form. It might also have been where Moses was given the Ten Commandments. Lots of people have different theories why we might come here as opposed to, I don't know, Mecca or Machu Picchu or Kashi Vishwanath or Glastonbury Tor. I wish it had been Glastonbury. You could have driven us.

The Arabs just call it Snow Mountain but Hermon has a really complicated meaning in Hebrew. An Israeli guy explained it to me. It's when something changes and part of it is lost. A bit like the food we eat, our body takes nutrients, transforms them into energy and expels the rest as... you know. Poo. So there's death but only in the context of transformation, of change. But I googled it and a baby name website said it just meant 'devoted to destruction' which is... well, a little worrying.

I'm a bit scared if I'm honest, Mum. I'd really like you to –

(She looks at her phone. It has gone black.)

Damn it!

(She shouts into the void.)

Anybody have a charger I can borrow?

(She laughs and then she cries but not for long. She pulls herself together.)

Bye, Mum.

'Saturday'

The Old Bachelor
William Congreve

*Speaking directly to the audience, the Prologue introduces the audience the play.
In this comedic speech, the actor forgets their lines.*

PROLOGUE: How this vile world is changed! In former days
Prologues were serious speeches before plays,
Grave, solemn things, as graces are to feasts,
Where poets begged a blessing from their guests.
But now no more like suppliants we come;
A play makes war, and prologue is the drum.
Armed with keen satire and with pointed wit,
We threaten you who do for judges sit,
To save our plays, or else we'll damn your pit.
But for your comfort, it falls out to-day,
We've a young author and his first-born play;
So, standing only on his good behaviour,
He's very civil, and entreats your favour.
Not but the man has malice, would he show it,
But on my conscience he's a bashful poet;
You think that strange – no matter, he'll outgrow it.
Well, I'm his advocate: by me he prays you
(I don't know whether I shall speak to please you),
He prays – O bless me! what shall I do now?
Hang me if I know what he prays, or how!
And 'twas the prettiest prologue as he wrote it!
Well, the deuce take me, if I han't forgot it.

(Runs off.)

Prologue

Red Dust Road

Tanika Gupta, adapted from the novel by Jackie Kay

Jackie (Nigerian Scottish heritage) is growing up in Scotland in the 1970s. She is the adopted child of Helen and John. In this speech, sixteen-year-old Jackie admires Angela Davis for her activism and bravery, whilst seeing herself reflected in Angela.

(Jackie is in her bedroom reading. A poster of Angela Davis is hanging up. Jackie kisses Angela Davis' face on the poster again and again and then steps forward.)

JACKIE: On my bedroom wall is a big poster

of Angela Davis who is in prison

right now for nothing at all

except she wouldn't put up with stuff.

My mum says she's only 26

which seems really old to me

but my mum says it is young

just imagine, she says, being on

America's Ten Most Wanted People's List at 26!

I can't.

Angela Davis is the only female person

I've seen (except for a nurse on TV)

who looks like me. She had big hair like mine

that grows out instead of down.

My mum says it's called an Afro. If I could be as brave as her when I get older

I'll be ok.

Last night I kissed her goodnight again

and wondered if she could feel the kisses

in prison all the way from Scotland.

Her skin is the same too you know.

I can see my skin is that colour

but most of the time I forget,

so sometimes when I look in the mirror

I give myself a bit of a shock

and say to myself *Do you really look like this?*

as if I'm somebody else. I wonder if she does that?

I don't believe she killed anybody.

It's all a lot of phoney lies.

My dad says it's a set-up.

I asked him if she'll get the electric chair

like them Roseberries he was telling me about.

No he says the world is on her side.

Well how come she's in there I thinks.

I worry she's going to get the chair.

I worry she's worrying about the chair.

My dad says she'll be putting on a brave face.

He brought me a badge home which I wore

to school. It says FREE ANGELA DAVIS.

And all my pals says 'Who's she?'

Act 1, Scene 12

