

Harmony Tree International Speech Festival (HTISF)

2026-2027 Set Pieces for Asia Division

Dramatic Duologue

Born in 2015-2016

Like Lennon

Rosa Hesmondhalgh

CHOICE A
Time Limit:
3 minutes

As Cam rushes to leave for school, Harri daydreams about being the lead singer of a band, with Cam as the guitarist or drummer. Initially, Cam resists Harri's fantasies, but is eventually moved and won over by Harri's words.

(Cam is rushing to leave the house, Harri is lounging on the sofa, deep in thought.)

CAM: Ok Harri, we need to leave right this second.

HARRI: If we were in a band, would I be the lead singer, or would you be the lead singer, do you think?

CAM: Huh? No-no time for that, we need to go.

HARRI: I think you have a slightly better singing voice but I have more stage presence. I think I have dance moves and an exciting look.

CAM: Honestly we need to walk through that door in two minutes or — wait. An exciting look?

HARRI: Yes.

CAM: That haircut? You'd call that an exciting look?

HARRI: What's wrong with my haircut?

CAM: The hair, mainly.

HARRI: My Mum says I look like John Lennon, when I've got my glasses on.

CAM: Go on. Put'em on.

(They do.)

CAM: I'm not seeing it. You look like your Mum.

HARRI: Well, my Mum looks a bit like John Lennon. Speaking of which, he was a great leader of a band, so if I look like him, my point is proven.

CAM: I don't know how we've got onto this, but we really do need to leave. We're going to be late, as usual.

HARRI: Musicians are famously late.

CAM: Yes, but we're not musicians.

HARRI: Not with that attitude. What about: I'm the lead singer, but you get to have like, a fun guitar solo?

CAM: I don't play guitar.

HARRI: Drums then.

CAM: We're not in a band! This argument has no logical basis. Can we please go?

HARRI: Can I please be the lead singer?

CAM: Oh, fine. Fine! If you insist, and if it will get you out of the door quicker, then sure. Be the lead singer.

HARRI: Oh, this is such a surprise.

CAM: Of a band that doesn't exist.

HARRI: I didn't even have a speech prepared.

CAM: I'm leaving. You can stay here and write your speech.

HARRI: I'd like to thank my Mum, for giving birth to the next John Lennon, and my best friend and bandmate Cam for letting me be the lead —

CAM: You're thanking me?

HARRI: Of course.

(Cam blushes.)

CAM: That's — oh. That's lovely.

HARRI: Thank you to the talented Cam for all the support.

CAM: Keep going.

HARRI: Cam's going to do an amazing guitar solo.

CAM: Yes.

HARRI: And it doesn't matter if that makes us late for school.

CAM: Ah, who cares. We're musicians! We're famously late.

~ The End ~

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CHOICE B
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3 minutes

Oliver Twist

Anya Reiss, adapted from the novel by Charles Dickens

After an altercation with Noah Claypole, ten-year-old Oliver escapes and runs away to London. He is spotted by Jack Dawkins, whose nickname is 'the Artful Dodger'. In this scene, Jack approaches Oliver, who initially confuses him for Noah Claypole having grown sleep-deprived and confused from his travels. Jack warns Oliver of the traps and dangers of London, and then encourages Oliver to follow him to safety.

JACK DAWKINS: Oi Oi. What's the story here then?

(Oliver sees Jack who laughs and approaches, Oliver is distressed.)

OLIVER: Not you!

JACK DAWKINS: Not me?

OLIVER: What?

JACK DAWKINS: What?

(Beat.)

OLIVER: *(Confused.)* You hate me

JACK DAWKINS: I hate you? Do I? Is that right?

OLIVER: You insulted my mother.

JACK DAWKINS: Now why would I do a thing like that?

OLIVER: I don't understand. I... Who are you?

JACK DAWKINS: - My name is Jack. Jack Dawkins. Now can I ask you again, what's the story here, governor?

OLIVER: *(Resigned.)* I don't know what's going on anymore.

JACK DAWKINS: Do any of us

OLIVER: I'm, I'm on my way to London.

JACK DAWKINS: London? Well you made it. You're here.

(Oliver looks around - it doesn't seem like anything's changed.)

JACK DAWKINS: Not like you expected?

(Oliver shakes his head.)

JACK DAWKINS: We should be careful though, traps round here.

OLIVER: Traps?

JACK DAWKINS: Police!

OLIVER: I haven't done anything.

JACK DAWKINS: Think that matters. How green are you?

OLIVER: Green?.

JACK DAWKINS: You're joking right?

(Oliver looks unsure.)

JACK DAWKINS: Innocent. Naive. Like a child.

OLIVER: I am a child.

JACK DAWKINS: So am I but I ain't a fool.

OLIVER: You aren't a child!

JACK DAWKINS: What am I then? A sparrow?

OLIVER: No, I just mean you seem... older *(Beat.)*

JACK DAWKINS: Maybe I'm just a wiser country boy.

(Oliver is confused, Jack moves away.)

JACK DAWKINS: Come on then.

OLIVER: What?

JACK DAWKINS: Got no money, got nowhere to stay, got no family too, I bet. Am I right?

OLIVER: Yes.

JACK DAWKINS: I am right. And this ain't looking that much like London? The one you imagined. The one you heard of. From all the stories.

(Oliver shakes his head.)

JACK DAWKINS: Then I got just the gentleman who would like to meet you.

(Jack grins and claps twice; smoke, noise, colour and a sea of handkerchiefs hanging from above appear.)

JACK DAWKINS: Welcome to London.

~ The End ~