

Harmony Tree International Speech Festival (HTISF)

2026-2027 Set Pieces for Asia Division

Dramatic Duologue

Born in 2011-2012

Flicker

Flicker Hannah Kennedy (Adapted Version)

CHOICE A
Time Limit:
5 minutes

EVE and MAY are siblings who recently lost their mother. A storm is outside. The power has just gone out.

(Lightning. Thunder.)

EVE: May! May?! The power's gone off!.

(May enters, phone torch on.)

MAY: You don't say. Don't we have candles somewhere?.

EVE: I can't remember where... I think Mum kept them somewhere strange.

(Lightning. Thunder.)

MAY: Hold on.

(May exits. A moment. Thunder. She returns with candles and matches.)

MAY: Found them.

(She starts lighting them.)

EVE: What are they?.

MAY: Candles.

EVE: I mean—what scent?.

MAY: Vanilla, I think. Or something like that.

EVE: Where were they?.

MAY: Bathroom cupboard.

EVE: Of course.

(Beat.)

MAY: At least they still work.

(Lightning. Thunder.)

EVE: Mum never used to light them.

MAY: She kept them for guests, didn't she?.

EVE: Yeah. "For guests." Like guests were ever coming.

(Beat. Thunder.)

EVE: Have you ever done that thing—when there's a storm—and you try to catch the lightning and thunder at the same time? Like you point, and you try to get them to match?.

MAY: No.

EVE: It feels like... if you get it right, something lines up. Like you're in control of it for a second.

MAY: That sounds like something you made up to pass time.

EVE: Maybe.

(Beat.)

EVE: I used to do it with clocks too. Like waiting for it to turn eleven, and I'd point at the exact second it changed. Like I could sync myself to it.

MAY: And did it do anything?.

EVE: Not really. But it felt like it might.

MAY: Is there a point to this?.

EVE: No. Just talking. It's quiet otherwise.

(Lightning. Thunder.)

EVE: Missed it again.

MAY: You do know you're not Zeus, right?.

EVE: I know.

(A beat. The candles flicker.)

EVE: I listen to storms sometimes. When I can't sleep.

MAY: Of course you do. This one's giving me a headache already.

EVE: Do storms actually cause that? Headaches?.

MAY: Either the storm or you. Hard to tell which one.

EVE: We could just sleep.

MAY: Good idea. Blow out the candles. Power'll be back in the morning.

(Eve hesitates, then blows them out.).

(Darkness. Lightning briefly reveals them. Then dark again.).

EVE: I sometimes think if I point at the sky and it thunders... it means she's here. Like she's answering.

(She points. Nothing.).

MAY: I used to think if I wished hard enough before opening the door after school... she'd be there when I got home.

(Beat.).

EVE: Can I sleep in your room tonight?

(Lightning. Thunder.).

MAY: I miss her too.

EVE: You never talk about her.

MAY: I don't need to.

EVE: I want to.

MAY: I know.

EVE: Why don't you think you need to?.

MAY: Because I'm not sad anymore. Not like before.

EVE: Are you sure?.

MAY: I'm not sad all the time.

EVE: So you are sometimes.

MAY: I think I'll always be a little bit sad. Just... sometimes.

(Beat.)

MAY: Let's sleep.

EVE: Okay. Goodnight.

(No reply.)

EVE: May... goodnight?.

MAY: Goodnight, Eve.

(Eve looks up. Lightning. Thunder.)

~ The End ~

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Dramatic Duologue

Born in 2011-2012

Glow

by Manjinder Virk (Adapted version)

CHOICE B
Time Limit:
5 minutes

Ant and Kul are best friends. Kul is a fourteen-year-old British Asian girl, and Ant is a fourteen-year-old Caucasian boy. They are watching Pop Idol when a classmate appears on TV.

(Ant's living room. They watch TV. Someone sings Christina Aguilera's "Beautiful.")

ANT: Oh my god—it's Tracey Ramsey!

KUL: What?

ANT: It's Tracey Ramsey!

KUL: I heard you the first time.

ANT: She's on telly, Kul!

KUL: So? Everyone ends up on telly.

ANT: No they don't.

KUL: My dad's mate did—some documentary about his house or something.

ANT: Like Home Improvements?

KUL: Yeah. Easy.

ANT: I'd go on telly.

KUL: Who'd want to watch you?

ANT: Who'd want to watch you?

KUL: I never said I wanted to—but when I make it, everyone's gonna know me anyway.

ANT: Sure.

KUL: I'll have people knocking my door down. I'll move somewhere far so no one finds me. Like the countryside. Or abroad. Like Posh and Becks.

I'll have my own gym, no school, loads of money. I can do what I like.

ANT: Sounds like a dream.

KUL: It is. Don't look at me like that. You're lucky you've got me as a mate.

ANT: I'm gonna get on telly too.

KUL: Yeah—Teletubbies.

ANT: Ha.

KUL: You can't just be on telly for no reason.

ANT: Why not? Tracey Ramsey did it.

KUL: Did she win?

ANT: Dunno.

KUL: What's the point if you don't win?

(Beat.)

KUL: So what do you want to be, then?

ANT: Dunno.

KUL: Not "dunno." Proper answer.

ANT: Why do you care?

KUL: Because you just want to be on telly for nothing.

ANT: I don't want to.

KUL: You said you did.

ANT: So?

KUL: You should learn to fight.

ANT: I'm alright.

KUL: I'll teach you.

ANT: Nah.

KUL: I'm not always gonna be there.

ANT: I never ask you to be.

KUL: I've seen you. In the corridor. Dunks and Calvin taking your bag. If I wasn't there, they'd have smashed you up.

ANT: Alright, Kul.

KUL: No one messes with me at school.

ANT: They still call you names though.

KUL: What names?

ANT: It doesn't matter.

KUL: Say it.

ANT: They're just... racist, aren't they.

(Beat.)

KUL: They wouldn't dare say it to my face. That's why you need to learn to fight.

ANT: I want to be a hobbit.

KUL: What?

ANT: Or a superhero.

KUL: You could be a hobbit, short arse.

ANT: It's like I disappear when I watch films. I'm somewhere else. In another world.

KUL: On another planet more like.

ANT: In films I'm there—fighting, running, flying. In Lord of the Rings I'm Frodo. Saving everything. Magic powers, heroes, wizards... it's like anything's possible. I love it.

Then it ends and Mum shouts for tea and it's just... gone.

(Beat.)

ANT: The only time I really disappear is at the cinema. That's when it feels real.

KUL: Yeah, well... it isn't real life.

Life doesn't have magic.

~ The End. ~