

Harmony Tree International Speech Festival (HTISF)
2025-2026 Set Pieces for Asia Division

FINAL

Dramatic Duologue
Born in 2007-2009

Choice B
Time Limit:
5 minutes

Mad Margaret's Revenge

by Lesley Ross

(Margaret is a woman who has worked for some time at the local grocery store. She was hoping for the manager's job there but Peter Mervin was promoted above her. She feels her life is a big disappointment and secretly thinks about directing movies as an escape. Gemma is one of her imaginary creations with whom she can talk to about her ideas. Together they construct numerous film versions of Margaret's life.)

- GEMMA:** Why don't you become a film director?
- MARGARET:** What?
- GEMMA:** You've got real talent, you tell great stories, why don't you write one?
- MARGARET:** Wouldn't know where to begin, would I? I'm good at peas: I know where the peas go. You're looking for peas, Madam, aisle four.
- GEMMA:** Aisle four.
- MARGARET:** By the cauliflower cheese. Lovely.
- GEMMA:** What about him?
- MARGARET:** What, Peter Mervin? I'm so mad at him, and his promotion. My promotion. I quit. I've had enough. What?
- GEMMA:** I didn't mean Peter. I meant *him*.
- MARGARET:** Oh, yeah, I could easily write a movie about him. He was lovely.
- GEMMA:** Where would you set it?
- MARGARET:** Well, at the fairground.
- GEMMA:** Okay, yeah, that's obvious. But when?
- MARGARET:** Er... New Year's Eve.
- GEMMA:** Liking it.
- MARGARET:** Um... and he's Spanish.
- GEMMA:** Nice. Makes him seem more desirable and mysterious.
- MARGARET:** And our heroine, Gemma.
- GEMMA:** Jodie?
- MARGARET:** Gemma, she's up in Birmingham with her childhood friend Mary and she falls in love with this bloke on this ride called the Chinese Dragon.
- GEMMA:** This huge metallic monstrosity that spins you in a million different ways.

MARGARET: Spins you till you're sick!
GEMMA: And he works on this ride?
MARGARET: Yes, and he's called Antonio, and he just keeps noticing her.
GEMMA: Long shot of her getting off the car at the end of the ride.
MARGARET: And he's still smiling at her.
GEMMA: Close up of this gorgeous Spaniard.
MARGARET: Gorgeous.
GEMMA: He's even got a part in the new Bond movie.
MARGARET: What?
GEMMA: I was elaborating, sorry.
MARGARET: No, no, it's good when you elaborate. Especially when you don't. Okay?
GEMMA: Sorry. Keep going.
MARGARET: Antonio knows that she's the one for him. It's there, it's...well, chemistry. She's his angel. He jumps from the ride.
GEMMA: The camera following him as he goes.
MARGARET: For nearly a minute of film, the Beatles playing on the soundtrack, he searches for her, through the New Year's Eve revellers, searching. Suddenly we hear people chanting.
BOTH: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 — Happy new year!
MARGARET: Long shot of fireworks, a champagne cork blows, and then he sees her, soft focus, as her hair is lit by the neon lights of the ride behind her.
GEMMA: Gemma's friend Mary is kissing someone she's never met before.
MARGARET: One of the extras.
GEMMA: And then Gemma turns her face and stares at him.
MARGARET: The camera shoots between them as they move in towards each other. People singing in the background. The angels kiss. He says 'Swindon, 4th of January'. She looks at him meekly.
GEMMA: Soft focus, once more.
MARGARET: 'I'll be there.'
GEMMA: Says Gemma.
MARGARET: What? Oh, yes, says Gemma.
GEMMA: I'll be there.
MARGARET: So, do you like it?
GEMMA: I love it. Write it, go on write it!
MARGARET: Where've I got time to write a bloody movie? I've hardly got time to separate the full fat from the semi-skimmed.

- The End-

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The Lucky Ones

by Tony Marchant

(JOE and TIMOTHY are co-workers. Joe is in the basement eating lunch alone when he picks up his banana and pretends that he is talking to his girlfriend's mum. Timothy arrives and sees, what Joe is doing.)

TIMOTHY: What's wrong with you — delirium or a personality disorder?

JOE: *(Sheepish)* Just talking to myself...thinking out loud sort of thing.

TIMOTHY: Well I didn't think you'd be reciting one of Shakespeare's sonnets.

JOE: You're back early.

TIMOTHY: I haven't been out. I suppose the other two are.

JOE: Sandwich bar, yeah. Where you been then?

TIMOTHY: I've been using my free time like a good boy should — to the tune of twenty-four quid. Not a bad little investment portfolio is it? *(Holding aloft an envelope.)*

JOE: Is that how much you've collected?

TIMOTHY: 'Fraid so. Acting on behalf of my client Mr Gulley, I went out onto the floor selling shares of charm and persuasion at optimum price. Sufficient capital was raised from pockets to box and transactions completed at one-fifteen. I think I'm a born broker. Or jobber. Whatever's necessary. A dealer, anyway.

JOE: Lawrence'll be impressed won't he?

TIMOTHY: The thought had crossed my mind. He who collects most shines brightest.

JOE: You'll be in his good books.

TIMOTHY: Quite right. That'll be my commission.

JOE: Seems like you've put a lot of effort into it. Debbie and Dave don't seem all that bothered.

TIMOTHY: No, that's why when I've got a partnership, they'll still be putting bits of paper in envelopes. Yeah, when I'm helping to promote the industrial expansion of this country, they'll still be arguing about who's turn it is to get the coffees.

JOE: You've got your sights set then?

TIMOTHY: Can I ask you something? What are you here for — or what'd you think you are here for?

JOE: Well... steady job for a start, I suppose. Good place to be in, lot of prestige, like - people are really impressed when I tell 'em I work for a stockbroker's - and there are two sofas in the reception. Lots of prospects for getting on. Opportunities, sort of thing. That's what it said in the brochure I wrote off for anyway. And it's better than being in one of the YOP Schemes.

TIMOTHY: And what did you say to Lawrence when he asked you how you were getting on?

JOE: I said it was all right.

TIMOTHY: Exactly.

JOE: What'd you mean exactly?

TIMOTHY: All right wasn't a word he wanted to hear. You sound about as enthused as someone who forgot to make a detour around a lump of faeces. Thrusting young executives of tomorrow don't say all right. Great or very well thank you, was what he wanted to hear. Or rather, what he thought you should have said.

JOE: D'you reckon?

TIMOTHY: I don't reckon. I know. What you have to do here is make yourself visible, but never be a nuisance or a bore or a threat. Be acceptable.

JOE: I don't get what you mean.

TIMOTHY: Keen but not gushing, ambitious but benign with it, responsible but with a sense of humour. A decent, healthy one of course. One of the lads, but not one of the lads. D'you know what I'm trying to say?

JOE: The right attitude.

TIMOTHY: The right touch. When Lawrence makes a joke, participate, but don't compete, laugh and enjoy his wit but don't threaten it with your own. When he asks you something, don't be monosyllabic, get a conversation going. But make sure you let him say all the important things. Your job is just to chip in every now and again. D'you know that one of the section supervisors in claims is only twenty-five. Not a graduate entrant either. Lawrence recommended him. He's bright enough, but not exactly outstanding — but he was one of the only clerks to bring a briefcase into work with him - had nothing in it of course, except the Daily Express and his ham sandwiches. But he looked like he took the job seriously.

- The End-