

Level 1 Acting: Grade 1 Solo

Is This A Fairytale?

by **Bea Webster**

Cheese and Pickle

by **Rosa Hesmondhalgh**

The Raven

by **Hannah Lavery**

Edward II

by **Christopher Marlowe**, adapted by LAMDA

The Letter

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Androcles and the Lion

by **George Bernard Shaw**, adapted by LAMDA

Off the Grid

by **David Lane**

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by **Philip Osment**

It Makes You Wonder

by **Nick Teed**

Wendy & Peter Pan

by **Ella Hickson**, adapted from the novel by **J. M. Barrie**

Is This A Fairytale?

Bea Webster

Jester is preparing to tell the audience a fairytale. For inspiration, Jester looks at the stories that have come before, but decides to invent a new narrative and ending. In this speech, Jester gets ready to tell their story.

JESTER: Hello! My name is Jester Blank. We are going to tell you a fairytale. But first, let's read the fairytales already out there and see what they are like!

(Picks up a book and starts reading.)

Once upon a time...

Once upon a time...

Once upon a time...

This one is about a Princess who wanted a Knight to come and save her.

EWWWWWWW.

This once is about a Princess who needed a true love's kiss to save her.

EWWWWWWW.

This one is about a Princess who wanted to find a Prince to marry her.

EWWWWWWW!

Wait, hold up, hold up! What is wrong with that? Some Princesses want to marry a Prince. Some don't and that's okay. I mean, one day I want to get married!

But it's straight away, without even getting to know the Prince!

What if the Prince is not a nice person?

Oh. Yeah! I never thought about that before!

EWWWWWWW.

Why are all fairytales the same? They all end the same way.

I feel like this doesn't represent all Princesses well at all. I mean, what if the Princess wants to marry another Princess?

What if the Prince wants to marry another Prince?

What if the Princess doesn't need a Knight and can fight for themselves?

What if the Princess is a they? Like, I mean you can be a Prince or a Princess. But what if you don't feel like a Princess or a Prince? Do we need a new term for that? Like... erm... Princette?

Should we invent a new fairytale?

Should we invent the BEST FAIRYTALE EVER?

Wait... Look! There! We have a Princess up in this tower.

It's like in the books!

Do we need to tell her she doesn't need a Knight to save her if she doesn't want to?

That maybe she doesn't need saving at all?

Does that mean we can change the story?

We should come up with a different ending!

(All Jesters agree with each other!)

Right! Are we all ready?

Let's do this!

Let's start with the Princess!

Hey Princess!

HEY PRINCESS!

PRINCESS!

PRINCESS!

Cheese and Pickle
Rosa Hesmondhalgh

Robin's Grandpa used to work in Darwen, Lancashire. In this speech, Robin recalls a summer when they were staying with their Grandpa. Robin's Grandpa wants to go walking, and although Robin is initially reluctant, they are soon won over by the view from Darwen Hill.

ROBIN: My Grandpa used to work in a factory in a little town in Lancashire called Darwen. In Darwen there is a tower called Darwen Tower, and every lunch time my Grandpa would walk up Darwen Hill and go and eat his sandwiches – cheese and pickle, every day – under the shadow of the big Darwen Tower. It was built about twenty-five years before he was even born, and waaaaaay before he knew he was gonna be my Grandpa. When he retired, he kept walking up there – *every single day*. Last summer, when I was staying with Grandpa, he came into the living room with his hat on and put his hands on his hips.

'Right little'un. It's a wonderful day for walking and walking is what we'll do.'

I said no at first because my cousins said they might come and pick me up and take me shopping at the Trafford Centre. Also I was watching a TV programme about how crisps were made and I was interested to know how they got them so crisp-y. But he wasn't having any of it.

'Before we had the Trafford Centre we had fresh air and walks and views for miles.'

So off we went. We drove to the bottom of the hill, and parked next to the factory where he used to work, and then started up the hill. I don't like walking up hill really.

'Grandpa, I don't like walking up hill, really.'

He pointed, silently, at his calves. I nodded. Very strong calves. I knew he was telling me if I want strong legs like him I should walk up more hills. We got to the top and he got out the sandwiches he'd packed. Cheese and pickle for him, as usual, and one with just ham for me.

Then we looked.

I could see for *miles*.

You could see all the way to Blackpool Tower. The sun was making everything look...

Really beautiful. I suppose.

'So, you used to come here every day?' I asked Grandpa. 'Didn't you ever get bored of the same thing?'

Grandpa looked at his sandwich. 'No.'

And then I looked at Blackpool Tower, and the hills, and my sandwich, and my Grandpa, and I realised: some things just don't get boring.

'Shall we come back tomorrow, Grandpa?'

The Raven
Hannah Lavery

Alex is alone in their room during the pandemic. Since starting secondary school, they have drifted from their friend Fran, and their Mum has become more and more unwell. In this speech, Alex describes their life at home.

ALEX: Headphones on.

Music loud.

As loud as I can stand.

Lights out.

Door shut.

And still, I can hear her...

I can still hear her –

Alex! Alex!

Leave me alone.

Will you just leave me alone!

I throw my phone at the door.

Make a dent.

Break the phone,

and now it's all her,

it's her, all the time...

Alex! Alex!

Leave me alone, Mum!

Please just leave me alone!

Truth is...

She's not always been like this...

I am not sure if I know how to describe it.

She's not herself, that's what my dad says, and that's true, she's not like herself – she's not how I like to think of her.

When Dad's out on shift, she says she's always been this way.

That's not true, I say.

That's not true, Mum.

It's just the lockdown, right?

She was fine before... Mostly things just got too much for her...

Fran's mum used to look after me, when Mum was working and when she got ill. But now, it's all about keeping Fran safe, no room for waifs and strays now, not with the virus – aye, right. Not since her precious wee child... I mean, they shouldn't be prying – right? My mum, my business. I don't need them. We're fine.

My mum is very special, that's what Fran's mum said, but she has never been this ill, not for this long. She doesn't seem that special anymore and it's doing my head in.

(A moment passes.)

I wish I hadn't broken my phone.

Act 1, Scene 2, 'Alex'

Edward II

Christopher Marlowe, adapted by LAMDA

Prince Edward is the son of King Edward the Second, who recently died, leaving Prince Edward to be crowned King at the age of fourteen. As Prince Edward learns of his father's death, he is informed that Mortimer and Queen Isabella – his mother – are suspected of murder. Prince Edward orders Mortimer's death, and in this speech he sends his mother to the tower.

PRINCE EDWARD: Forbid me not to weep; he was my father;
And had you lov'd him half so well as I,
You could not bear his death thus patiently:
But you, I fear, conspir'd with Mortimer.
Mother, you are suspected for his death
And therefore we commit you to the Tower,
Till further trial may be made thereof.
If you be guilty, though I be your son,
Think not to find me slack or pitiful.
Away with her! her words enforce these tears,
And I shall pity her, if she speak again.

(Enter First Lord with the head of Mortimer.)

Go fetch my father's hearse, where it shall lie;
And bring my funeral robes. Accursed head,
Could I have rul'd thee then, as I do now,
Thou hadst not hatch'd this monstrous treachery! –
Here comes the hearse: help me to mourn, my lords.

(Enter Attendants with the hearse and funeral robes.)

Sweet father, here unto thy murder'd ghost
I offer up this wicked traitor's head;
And let these tears, distilling from mine eyes,
Be witness of my grief and innocence.

The Letter
Trish Cooke

The Windrush generation is a term used to refer to people who arrived in the UK from Caribbean countries between 1948 and 1971. In this speech, it's May 15th, 1962, and nine-year-old Clare has been sent for to travel from the Caribbean, to join her mother and father in the UK.

CLARE: I am excited about the trip to Englan' but I thought me, and Grannie and Millie were all going to go together – but the letter I read from Mammy to Grannie says different...

(She reads.)

Dear Mama,

We are sending the money to pay for Clare's passage to England. Make all the arrangements. Cecil and myself look forward to seeing our eldest girl.

'But Grannie, I can't go by myself' I say, and Grannie says, 'Your Mammy sen' for you. You must go. Millie will soon follow.' 'But I don't want to go to Englan'!' I say. But she doesn't listen.

My Mammy and Daddy are strangers to me. They go to Englan' when I was small. They don't know me, and I don't know them, so why must I leave my Grannie and my sister, to go to them?

(Pleading.) 'Grannie, I want you and Millie to come too. Let's all go together!' I say. But she explains how Mammy and Daddy can't afford to send for all of us to travel together. She say they will send for Millie later.

I beg 'Please Grannie don't send me to Englan'! Let me stay home, in Dominica! I will die without you, Grannie!'

But Grannie tell me I have to go. She say I have to be with my Mammy and Daddy in a new place. A new home. I must go to an English school. She tell me I have to forget about Dominica. But I will never forget! Never!

(Pause.)

Millie looks at me different now. She say if it was her, she would never leave me. I tell her I don't have a choice. 'I hate you!' she say. I know she doesn't mean it, but it still hurts. My eyes are pricking me, the tears are burning but I keep my eyes open wide, so the tears don't fall. I want to be brave like Grannie tell me I should be.

'I will write to you every day' I say to Millie, and she calls me a liar. She tells me I will forget her as soon as I reach England and go to all the fancy places. She tells

me I will become an English girl. I want to let her know that I will never change, but I don't know how.

Androcles and the Lion

George Bernard Shaw, adapted by LAMDA

Androcles is walking down a jungle path and comes across a lion. Androcles is initially frightened, but then realises that the lion has a thorn stuck in its paw. Androcles decides to help and befriend the wounded lion.

ANDROCLES: Meggy: run. Run for your life. If I take my eye off him, it's all up.

(The lion holds up his wounded paw and flaps it piteously before Androcles.)

Oh, he's lame, poor old chap! He's got a thorn in his paw. A frightfully big thorn. *(Full of sympathy.)* Oh, poor old man! Did um get an awful thorn into um's tootsums wootsums?

(The lion responds by moans of self-pity.)

Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. Now, now *(Taking the paw in his hand.)* um is not to bite and not to scratch, not even if it hurts a very, very little. Now make velvet paws. That's right.

(He pulls gingerly at the thorn. The lion, with an angry yell of pain, jerks back his paw so abruptly that Androcles is thrown on his back.)

Steadeee! One more little pull and it will be all over. Just one little, little, leetle pull; and then um will live happily ever after.

(He gives the thorn another pull. The lion roars and snaps his jaws with a terrifying clash.)

Oh, mustn't frighten um's good kind doctor, um's affectionate nursey. That didn't hurt at all: not a bit. Just one more. Just to show how the brave big lion can bear pain, not like the little crybaby man. Oopsh!

(The thorn comes out. The lion yells with pain, and shakes his paw wildly.)

That's it! *(Holding up the thorn.)* Now it's out. Now lick um's paw to take away the nasty inflammation. See?

(He licks his own hand. The lion nods intelligently and licks his paw industriously.)

Clever little liony-piony! Understands um's dear old friend Andy Wandy.

(The lion licks his face.)

Yes, kissoos Andy Wandy.

(The lion, wagging his tail violently, rises on his hind legs and approaches to embrace Androcles, who makes a wry face.)

Velvet paws! Velvet paws!

(The lion draws in his claws.) That's right.

(Androcles approaches the lion with his arms wide.)

Prologue

Off the Grid
David Lane

Kelly has an older brother called Connor. In this speech, five-year-old Kelly is at school at the 'making table', doing crafts. As Kelly completes her activities, she tells her new friend a story about her family dynamic.

KELLY: I'm Kelly

(Phonetically.) K – E – L – L – Y

You're new so you can sit here

And you can use the makin' table

But not the things I'm usin' til I've stopped usin' them

I'm makin' this

It's a cake

(KELLY beams.)

I'm actually a superhero

And also I was born in a golden egg like for real in an *actual* golden egg

Because –

It's a secret story don't tell and then we can be bestests

– Um

Once upon a time

Once upon a time

This is a story ready

There was a Mummy eagle and a Daddy eagle who had golden eggs

Who knew that if a Mummy went to hunt for food

The Daddy should stay in the nest

And if a Daddy went to hunt for food

The Mummy should stay in the nest

They should never leave golden eggs on their own

'Cos two bad things would happen if they did

First the Mummy and Daddy would vanish

Into two piles of fluffy feathers

And second

The chicks in the golden eggs

They'd be born as people

Tiny human-people-eaglet-thingies in a nest

Who wouldn't be able to fly or catch mice or see tiny things from far away

Because they had no-one to teach them

But the *big* problem in the story

Was that *all* the food in birdland was bein' eaten by bigger birds like...

Condors

And even though the Mummy and Daddy knew about the two bad things

They knew their eaglets would be really really hungry when they hatched

So they left the nest together to get food

And *poof* they disappeared

Don't use that felt tip I need a yellow one.

Chapter 2, 'Why Eagles Never Leave Their Eggs'

Little Violet and the Angel
Philip Osment

Gabriel is a young angel who has just arrived in heaven. Gabriel's first task is to look after an orphaned girl as she grows up with her adoptive parents. In this speech, Gabriel tries to figure out who she is.

GABRIEL: Gabriel's the name.
I'm an angel you know.
Like my wings?
Bit small, aren't they?
They're not proper ones.
I haven't earned my proper ones yet.
I've just arrived you see.
Apparently I used to live down there.

(Gabriel looks down.)

Whoa!
I hate heights.

(Gabriel looks down again.)

Whoooahoooah.
Long way down isn't it?
Funny thing is
I don't remember a thing about being down there.
No-one ever does.
I just woke up surrounded by all these clouds and celestial beings.

His name's Gabriel too.
My boss.
But he's the big cheese.
He's what you call an archangel.
You should see the wings on him.
They're massive!
I'm just a common angel.
In the scheme of things
I'm not much higher than a cherub.
In fact he was quite upset,
The other Gabriel, I mean,
I suppose he didn't want to be sharing his name with somebody as low down the pecking order as me.

Anyway
I haven't got time to dawdle talking to you.
Got work to do,

Places to go,
People to see.
I'm looking for a little girl.
I'm supposed to be her guardian angel.
I have to watch over her.
It's my first job.v He said,
If I do it well,
Then I might get wings like his.
Perhaps you've seen her. Have you?
He gave me a description
My boss,
The other Gabriel.
Hang on.

(Gabriel gets out a piece of paper and reads.)

Two eyes...

(Gabriel looks at the audience.)

Hmmm.

(Gabriel reads the paper again.)

A nose...

(Gabriel looks at the audience.)

Mmmm.

(Reads the paper.)

A mouth...

(Gabriel looks at the audience.)

Mmmmm. Giggles when she's tickled.

You!

Scene 2, 'Heaven'

It Makes You Wonder

Nick Teed

Ashley tells a friend about the events of a Christmas Day that they will never forget.

ASHLEY: It was that time on a Christmas Day when the kitchen is just a mass of piled up dirty plates and dishes and pans. I'd been sending texts... all about presents and money and food. So, I'm stood at the kitchen window and mum's rushing around like she does, with her party hat on, searching for a tin of salmon to give to grandma to take home. I'd been allowed one small glass of sparkling wine and it was there on the worktop. I thought it might have gone flat so I held it up. I was looking for bubbles...

How can I explain it? A flickering orange glow on the side of the glass... does that make sense? I just moved my eyes a fraction past the glass... it only took a second to focus on Mrs Medlock's bungalow across the street. There were flames in her kitchen window!

When they burst the door down, they started coughing straight away but they ran in. We waited in the street. They got her out, over dad's shoulder. She was unconscious... pale. *You've* seen Molly, her cat out in the street haven't you? I thought, '*She might be in there somewhere*'. So, I looked in and she was there in the hallway. Dad was yelling at me to stay away but I grabbed her and ran for it...

I saved a scared cat. Big deal. Dad and uncle Jack saved Mrs Medlock, *that's* praise worthy. But people keep expecting me to be all happy and excited because '*we were all so brave*'...

I *can't* be happy about it because... well, as I grabbed Molly, I looked in the living room. There was a small table with a couple of cards on it and a tiny Christmas tree with fairy lights. The dining table was set near the window. Don't know what she was having for dinner... that was burning in the kitchen... but there was *one* dinner plate, *one* bowl, *one* Christmas cracker... What would *you* think if you saw that? How sweet? How sad? All those years, all those Christmas Days since her husband died she'd been on her own while we partied across the street. Makes you wonder, doesn't it? How many other Mrs Medlock's are out there; keeping going all on their own?

Wendy & Peter Pan

Ella Hickson, adapted from the novel by J. M. Barrie

Tootles, whose nickname is 'Little Tootles', is in Neverland. Prior to this speech, Tootles and the Lost Boys have been told that Pirates are hunting them. Unarmed, Tootles ran to fetch a bow and arrow, but this means that Tootles has been separated from the group. In this speech, Tootles is hunting a crocodile and a bird. Aiming his bow at the sky, Tootles accidentally shoots Wendy.

TOOTLES: *(With his eyes closed)* I can shoot the crocodile – I know I can if only I'm – *(Opens eyes and the Crocodile has gone. Gives up, downcast.)* brave. *(Stops suddenly and stares at the forest floor, where Skylights has been despatched.)* There's... *(Tests it.)* blood on the ground. Boys? Boys! What if they've been taken – what if it's my fault – what if –

(Tink appears – as a small, bright light.)

Tink! You're back! Have you seen the boys? Did you see what happened – there's blood? Look – there's – a bird? No – listen – Peter wants me to shoot a bird? Where? It's a very big white bird. No, but really I have to find the boys – 'brave'? Peter said I was brave? I have to shoot it because I'm the bravest? Me?

(Tootles looks up – then aims his bow and arrow up at the sky.)

You're right – you're right, Tink. If Peter wants it doing then I'm the man for the job.

(Tootles aims his arrow at the bird. Tootles shoots – the arrow soars high. Tink's light flies off.)

I hit it! I hit it, Tink! Go and tell Peter, Tink – tell Peter I hit the bird! I am the bravest! Tell Peter, tell Peter I hit the –

(Wendy comes tumbling to the ground and lands in a heap. Tootles looks at her.)

Tink? This doesn't look like a bird. Tink? Where have you gone?

(Tootles goes close to Wendy and inspects her.)

I think I might have made a mistake.

(Pause. Tootles steps back in horror. Tootles sees the Lost Boys approaching and covers the bird up as best he can.)

Boys! You're all right, I thought there'd been a skirmish – there was blood on the floor.

(Tootles steps in front of Wendy.)

What are you looking at?

(Tootles, again, tries to stand in front of Wendy.)

What – this? It's a white bird – it's a big white bird – that's all it is – Tink said that Peter said that I should shoot it and I did – I shot it and hit it because I'm brave, okay – so there. You should cheer like you do when Nibs hits a bird, go on – cheer.

Act 2, Scene 3