

Short Plays
for English Learners

INTRODUCING ROB

Has Lola met Mr Right?



by Alice Savage

With a Foreword by Steve Hirschhorn

Alphabet
PUBLISHING 

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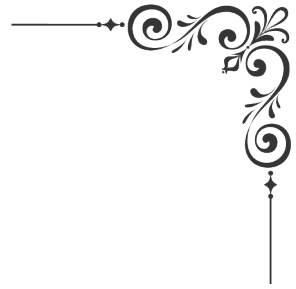
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1. <http://www.alphabetpublishingbooks.com>

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Foreword

There is probably little need for me to present and extrapolate on the manifold benefits of the use of drama in the English language teaching classroom but it is worth mentioning that there is a body of research which shows how much well-organised theatrical events can improve student-centred learning, encourage collaboration amongst peers and increase exposure to consistent real-world language. Of course the process isn't magical and all concerned must be engaged and challenged to work together for the ultimate aim of generating a work of art together and that's exactly what Alice Savage's handiwork aims at.

Alice Savage provides a much-needed response to the lack of dramatic material which is already prepared for classroom use, as opposed to adaptations of already existing plays or creating productions from other types of literature. The author has cleverly relieved busy teachers of the drudgery of changing a masterpiece into something English learners can access by creating her own mini masterpieces which are already accessible and graded or gradable.

Not only are her plays beautifully crafted in terms of the scripting but they also carry important messages which are perfectly aimed at the age group for which these works are intended. Significantly, these tenets are not presented in obvious or condescending ways but are a subtle by-product of the story line.

The stories themselves are engaging page-turners with the reader (and presumably the audience) waiting with bated breath to see how the situation might be resolved. Sometimes, in the style of the best myster-

ies, there is no obvious resolution, which naturally motivates players and indeed audiences to consider and discuss a possible solution.

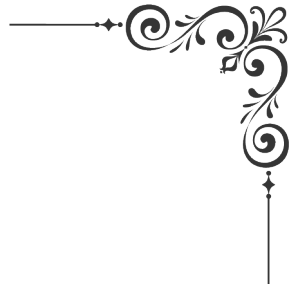
As well as the plays themselves, the Alphabet Publishing support website (<http://www.alphabetpublishingbooks.com/istd>) provides numerous aids for students and teachers to access before, during and after the production, once again supporting the teacher in what is a thoroughly worthwhile endeavour: drama in the English language teaching classroom.

There is invaluable advice on how to approach a production as well as extremely useful information on the use of language, pronunciation, pragmatics and more. There is a plethora of materials attached to the plays themselves which will guide teacher and students into some vital development.

It is worth noting that being involved in such drama activities, whether as actor, prompter, stage hand, director or whatever, the benefits to language development are clear but there is no doubt that there are considerable advantages in terms of personal growth too. Shy students can become more self-assured, bossy students more collaborative, disruptive students more focused and students with poor self-esteem can become more confident.

I imagine that teachers will welcome this innovative addition to their resource library and probably be waiting impatiently for the next play in the series!

*Steve Hirschhorn
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Budapest, Hungary
January 2019*



Preview

Technology and new inventions are changing our lives, but some things stay the same. One custom is meeting the parents of a future spouse.

What do you think that is going to be like for you? Or what was it like to meet the parents of your current partner or spouse?

Language

MATCH THE WORD OR EXPRESSIONS with its meaning.

1. ___ I'm self-conscious.
 2. ___ make a good impression
 3. ___ a spoiled child
 4. ___ devoted to her family
 5. ___ put pressure on someone
 6. ___ speaking of great
 7. ___ I take it you're not a fan.
 8. ___ Something about him gives me the creeps.
 9. ___ He'll grow on you.
 10. ___ I'll let it go.
-
- a) She will do anything for her relatives.
 - b) You'll like him more over time.
 - c) I won't argue about this anymore.
 - d) I feel uncomfortable around other people.

(Cassie reaches for a plate of cookies.)

MYRTLE: Not really. But those cookies are for later.

[Sound effect: car driving]

CASSIE: I hear someone coming. *(Cassie goes to a window stage left and looks out.)* They're here. They're getting out of the car, now. Looks like Lola was driving. Good girl.

(Myrtle walks over to the window.)

MYRTLE: What does he look like?

CASSIE: *(Gasps)* Oh my gosh, he just fell down. Don't look.

(George gets up and goes to the window. Now they are all looking out the window.)

GEORGE: We shouldn't be watching. Oh, he's having a little trouble getting up. Maybe I should go help.

MYRTLE: No, that would embarrass him. Lola's managing.

(Cassie steps back and drops the curtain)

CASSIE: I hope they didn't see us. You guys go back to the table. Make it look like you're just sitting there. Here peel these potatoes. That's right.

(A doorbell rings)

[**Lights out**]

Scene 3: *The farmhouse kitchen. Myrtle and George are at the table, each with a cookie in their hand. Cassie is leaning against a counter. Lola and Rob enter stage left.*

LOLA: Hello everyone!

(Myrtle, George and Cassie all rise and come forward.)

MYRTLE, GEORGE, and CASSIE: Lola!

MYRTLE: We weren't expecting you until later.

CASSIE: What a surprise! I just happened to drop by. Why didn't you tell me you were coming? *(Lola looks at Rob who looks nervous.)*

LOLA: Well, I wasn't sure until the last minute. It's good to see you, Cass. *(Lola turns to Rob.)* Rob, this is my family, My dad, George. My mother, Myrtle. Cassie my sister. Everyone, this is my friend Rob.

ROB: At last! It's a pleasure to meet you all! I've heard so much about you!

GEORGE: All good, I hope.

ROB: Not all good.

LOLA: He's joking, aren't you Rob.

ROB: No, I'm not. It wasn't all good. (*pause*) Some of it was great!

(*George and Myrtle laugh nervously. Cassie looks at Rob. There is silence.*)

CASSIE: Well, speaking of great, Mom's made my favorite dinner.

MYRTLE: Chicken pot pie. I hope you like it Rob.

(*Rob looks at Lola.*)

LOLA: Oh, he'll love it.

ROB: Yes.

MYRTLE: Great. Well, why don't you take off your coats.

(*Myrtle approaches to take Rob's coat. She stands behind him to help him. She stops and sniffs, then frowns.*)

LOLA: We're starving.

(*Rob looks alarmed.*)

GEORGE: Well, dinner's going to be ready in a minute. Rob, do you want to come watch the game?

ROB: The Pistons are playing.

GEORGE: And they're going to lose.

ROB: I take it you're not a fan.

GEORGE: I was before the trade.

(*The men leave through the door stage right.*)

MYRTLE: He seems very nice.

LOLA: He is. He adores me.

CASSIE: Of course he does.

MYRTLE: I'm very happy for you dear.

LOLA: Thanks, Mom.

MYRTLE: Is it serious?

LOLA: I don't know yet. Um, we don't know yet. But I do like him. In fact, I'm going to go check on him now. See if he's okay.

(Lola exits stage right)

CASSIE: He's weird.

MYRTLE: Oh, Cassie. You're always so suspicious. No wonder Lola never brings anyone home. He's probably nervous about meeting us.

CASSIE: No, that's not it. There's something about him that gives me the creeps.

[Lights out]

Scene 4: *Everyone is sitting at the dining room table. They are staring at Rob.*

MYRTLE: Rob, you aren't eating anything.

ROB: I feel self-conscious. I'll have some more later.

MYRTLE: Don't you like it?

ROB: It's delicious. It's just....my stomach isn't working properly.

LOLA: Yes, Rob gets sick if he eats too much at one time.

CASSIE: So tell us about yourself Rob. Do you have family in town?

ROB: I would much rather hear about Lola. What was Lola like when she was a kid?

CASSIE: Lola?

ROB: Yes, Lola. She hasn't told me much.

MYRTLE: Lola was a little mermaid.

ROB: What?

GEORGE: Yep, couldn't get her out of the water.

ROB: So what did you do?

MYRTLE: We put her on the swim team. She was a natural.

LOLA: Dad, I wasn't that great.

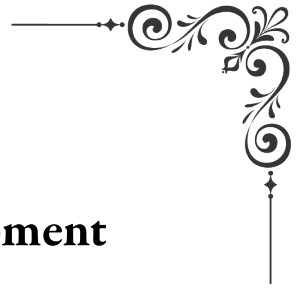
ROB: Mermaids are half-fish.

LOLA: Oh Rob. It's a joke, dear.

ROB: *(ROB laughs)* Ha ha ha

CASSIE: Do you believe everything people tell you?

ROB: *(Rob looks at Lola.)* I adore this woman. Did I tell you that?

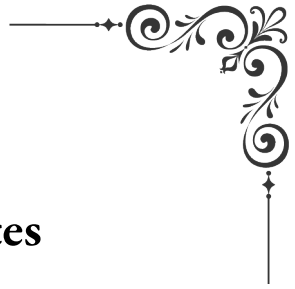


Character Development for Actors

Answer the questions as your character. Then discuss your answers with your scene partners.

1. What do I want at the beginning of the play?
2. What is stopping me? (Do I have a fear, an enemy, a hardship, or some other obstacle?)
3. What strategy or strategies do I use to try and achieve my goals? (They can be positive or negative.)
4. How do the events in the play change me?
5. What do I learn by the end of the play?

Other Notes



Production Notes

The following advice and suggestions come from professional theatre and pronunciation experts.

Tablework

READ THE WHOLE PLAY and talk to your classmates about the story. What does it make you think about? What is your opinion about the ending? Would you handle the situation differently?

Talk about the characters and take notes. How do the different people in the play change? What do they realize as they experience the events in the story? Do some people change more than others? Also, think about which character is most like you or people you know. Or, who is different from you? In what way?

Get comfortable performing in front of your classmates. Work in pairs and groups to play drama games. Say your lines with different emotions or try to show where you are simply by the way you move. Then get other students to guess the situation. Have fun, and don't be afraid to be silly.

Preparation

THINK ABOUT HOW YOU will produce the play. Depending on the number of students in the class, you can have two or even three casts. You can also create new characters who can perform a monologue at the beginning. Or you can write in new scenes.

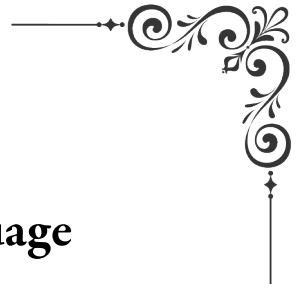


Pronunciation Tips for Actors

As an actor, your job is to connect with the audience. When this goes well, your viewers feel what you feel and experience what you experience. Achieving this connection is difficult for any performer, but it is especially hard when you are speaking in a new language. There is always the possibility that the audience will not understand. However, you can work with your script to make sure your English is comprehensible and that you are expressing the emotions and intentions of the character with your voice and body. The benefits of this pronunciation work can transfer to English in other areas of your life.

Here are some tips for making your pronunciation clear and believable. You can do these activities in any order, and often you may revisit one or another of them during rehearsal.

1. Decide how you will express the emotions that your character feels. Read your part and think about your character. What is their backstory? What do you notice about your character's outlook on life? What is your objective in the play as a whole and in each scene? What is your obstacle? How do you feel? Angry? Powerful? Confident? Secretive? Scared? Frustrated? Or some other emotion? Write your emotions and other notes in the margin of your script next to your lines.



Drama for Language learners

Drama for English Learners: Activities, Lesson Plans and Scripts for
the Classroom
(COMING SOON)

This teacher's guide is designed for teachers who want to try drama in their English classrooms but don't know where to start. It contains monologues, sketches, and scripts, as well as activities and teacher support—everything you need to go from drama games and pronunciation activities to a full production!

Short Plays¹

THESE 15-MINUTE PLAYS provide a script with vocabulary and pragmatics support and are suitable for a drama class or a short theater module.

Just Desserts: A foodie drama about a chef gone bad

Introducing Rob: Lola's family loves her new boyfriend. Until they actually meet him.

Colorado Ghost Story: Two exchange students get into trouble in the old West. **April 2019**

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Death Wish: Lari's frequent accidents may not be so accidental **June 2019**

1. <http://www.alphabetspublishingbooks.com/spel>

ISTD Coursebooks²

THESE COURSEBOOKS CONTAIN a complete curriculum with background readings, vocabulary and pragmatics exercises, writing, pronunciation activities, and more to support the production of a 20-30 minute one-act play as an elective or module in an oral skill class.

Her Own Worst Enemy A serious comedy about choosing a major.

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