

Harmony Tree International Speech Festival (HTISF)
2024-2025 Set Pieces for Asia Division

FINAL

Dramatic Duologue
Born in 2006-2008

Choice A
Time Limit:
5 minutes

Through the Looking Glass

By Lewis Carroll

(Alice is walking in The Garden of Live Flowers. She has not been walking a minute before she finds herself face to face with the Red Queen, and full in sight of the hill she has been so long aiming at.)

RED QUEEN: Where do you come from? And where are you going?
Look up, speak nicely, and don't twiddle your fingers all the time.

ALICE: *(Alice attends to all these directions)* I had lost my way.

RED QUEEN: I don't know what you mean by your way. All the ways about here belong to me — but why did you come out here at all? Curtesy while you're thinking what to say, it saves time. *(Looking at her watch)* It's time for you to answer now. Open your mouth a little wider when you speak, and always say "your Majesty".

ALICE: I only wanted to see what the garden was like, your Majesty —

RED QUEEN: *That's right. (Patting Alice on the head)* Though, when you say 'garden', I've seen gardens, compare with which this would be a wilderness.

ALICE: And I thought I'd try and find my way to the top of that hill —

RED QUEEN: When you say 'hill', I could show you hills, in comparison with which you'd call that a valley.

ALICE: No I shouldn't. A hill can't be a valley, you know. That'd be nonsense —

RED QUEEN: You may call it 'nonsense' if you like, but I've heard nonsense, compared with which that would be as sensible as a dictionary!

(Alice curtsies again, as she is afraid from the Queen's tone that she is a little offended: and they walk on in silence till they get to the top of the little hill. Alice looks out in all directions over the country.)

ALICE: I declare it's marked out just like a large chess-board! There out to be some men moving about somewhere — and so there are!

(Her heart began to beat quick with excitement as she went on)

It's a great huge game of chess that's being played — all over the world — if this is the world at all, you know. Oh, what fun it is! How I wish I was one of them! I wouldn't mind being a Pawn, if only I might join — though of course I should like to be a Queen, best.

RED QUEEN: That's easily managed. You can be the White Queen's Pawn, if you like, as Lily's too young to play; and you're in the Second Square to begin with: when you get to the Eighth Square you'll be a Queen —

(Just at this moment, somehow or other, they begin to run. They were running hand in hand, and the Queen runs so fast that it is all she could do to keep up with her.)

RED QUEEN: Faster! Faster!

ALICE: I wonder if all the things move along with us?

RED QUEEN: Faster! Don't try to talk! Faster! Faster!

ALICE: Are we nearly there?

RED QUEEN: Nearly there! Now Now! Faster! Faster!

(Suddenly, just as Alice was getting quite exhausted, they stopped, and she found herself sitting on the ground, breathless and giddy. The Queen propped her up against a tree)

RED QUEEN: You may rest a little now.

ALICE: Why I do believe we've been under this tree the whole time! Everything's just as it was!

RED QUEEN: Of course it is, what would you have it?

ALICE: Well, in our country, you'd generally get to somewhere else — if you ran very fast for a long time, as we've been doing.

RED QUEEN: A slow sort of country! Now here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!

ALICE: I'd rather not try, please! I'm quite content to stay here — only I am so hot and thirsty!

RED QUEEN: I know what you'd like! *(Taking a little box out of her pocket)* Have a biscuit? *(Alice thought it would not be civil to say 'no' but it wasn't at all what she wanted. So she took it, and ate it as well as she could; and it was very dry; and she thought she had never been so nearly choked in all her life.)*

RED QUEEN: While you're refreshing yourself, I'll just take the measurements. *(She takes a ribbon out of her pocket, marked in inches, and begins measure the ground, and sticking little pegs in here and there.)*

RED QUEEN: At the end of two yards, I shall give you your directions. Another biscuit?

ALICE: No, thank you. One's quite enough!

RED QUEEN: Thirst quenched, I hope?

(Alice doesn't know how to answer, but luckily the Queen did not wait for an answer.)

RED QUEEN: At the end of three yards I shall repeat them - for fear of your forgetting them. At then end of four, I shall say good-bye. And at then end of five, I shall go! *(At the two-yard peg she faced round)* A pawn goes two squares in its first move, you know. So you'll go very quickly through the Third Square!

-The End-

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Choice B
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Charley's Aunt

By Brandon Thomas

(Jack Chesney and Charley Wykeham are both undergraduates at Oxford University. Set in Jack's ground floor expensive lounge rooms at Oxford in the late 1800s. Jack is sat at his writing desk trying to compose a letter and is unaware that his friend Charley has entered quietly through the main door.)

JACK: "My Dear Kitty —"

CHARLEY: I say!

JACK: If you don't clear out, Brassett, I'll — Oh, it's you, Charley!
What is it, old chap?

CHARLEY: Nothing, Jack. I don't want to interrupt you if you're busy.

JACK: It's all right, Charley, don't go, it's only that fool Brassett.

CHARLEY: What's he doing?

JACK: Only bagging all my clothes because I'm going down, and worrying me like Old Harry while I'm trying to write a-most-important-letter. Don't mind me today; I'm nervous and laggy and nonplussed.

CHARLEY: And so am I, Jack.

JACK: Why?

CHARLEY: I've been trying to write a letter, too.

JACK: A letter! To whom?

CHARLEY: To— to Miss Spettigue.

JACK: How far have you got?

CHARLEY: Oh! I began awfully well, but—I didn't want to be too distant, and I didn't like to be too— too—

JACK: Familiar. Well?

CHARLEY: So I just said, "My Dear Amy" and then words failed me, and I've come to you for advice. You always know what to say and do.

JACK: *(Looking at his own letter.)* Oh! Do I?

CHARLEY: You know my idiotic complaint; I'm shy, you're not.

JACK: Aren't I?

CHARLEY: So prescribe for me, old chap. What am I to say?

JACK: A good idea! I'll prescribe for him and take the medicine myself.
Now then, let's see. You're in love with Amy Spettigue, and you want to know if there's any hope for you and if so —

CHARLEY: You see, they're off to Scotland tomorrow.

JACK: Yes, I know, and you want to see her at once. When and where?
Do I diagnose the case accurately?

CHARLEY: To a "Tee", old chap!

JACK: Very well then; you'll want to say something to this effect:
"My Dear Kitty"

CHARLEY: No, not Kitty. Amy.

JACK: Oh, of course, what am I thinking of? (*Tears up paper, takes fresh sheet.*)
"My Dearest Amy. Forgive me, darling, for thus addressing you, but I love you so deeply" Underlined.

CHARLEY: Rather strong, Jack.

JACK: Shut up! "So earnestly." Also underlined.

CHARLEY: Oh, I say!

JACK: "That I must write and tell you so. All I ask is —"

CHARLEY: But there's one obstacle to my putting it quite as straight as that, much as I'd like to.

JACK: What's that?

CHARLEY: Well—er—I've an aunt.

JACK: My dear Charley, most of us have; what about her?

CHARLEY: I feel I ought to tell her first.

JACK: Oh! If you're going to drag an aunt into the business, we may as well wait till they come back from Scotland.

CHARLEY: Why?

JACK: You know what "auntie" is when she steps in.

CHARLEY: No I don't. That's just it. I don't know her. I've never even seen her.

JACK: Well, we won't be too hard on that aunt; she hasn't interfered much in your affairs up to now.

CHARLEY: Except to find out that I was an orphan and have me sent to Eton, and to Oxford; and now my guardian writes to me that she's coming here this morning by an early train, and will take luncheon with me at one o'clock.

JACK: And you've never seen her?

CHARLEY: No. She went to Brazil before I was born, and became a sort of secretary to a very rich old Brazilian chap out there, called Dom Pedro d'Alvadorez. And now, by the merest accident in the world, I've seen this.

(*He takes a newspaper clipping from his pocket and hands it to Jack.*)

JACK: "Madam, or rather Donna Lucia d'Alvadorez, the Brazilian Millionaire, who has taken Lord Topplesby's magnificent mansion in Belgravia, is an

English woman of genial disposition, and a financial genius. Indeed it was her capacity in this direction that earned the gratitude of her late husband, and led to a romantic deathbed marriage.” Well I don’t see much in that!

CHARLIE:

Go on, Jack, read the next.

JACK:

“Her only relation is a nephew at Oxford.” Lucky nephew!

CHARLEY:

That’s me.

JACK:

By George, Charley, this is a startler! And she may be here any minute?

CHARLEY:

I’ve met all the trains up to now. I wish she’d have come some other day.

JACK:

She’ll arrive by the next, just in time for lunch.

CHARLEY:

Yes, it’s a bore. I wanted to write that letter to Amy.

JACK:

I don’t know so much about that!

CHARLEY:

But it’s an awfully difficult letter to write. Fearfully complicated.

JACK:

Why?

CHARLEY:

Well, you see, I’ve no people or anything.

JACK:

“No people”, with an aunt like that!

CHARLEY:

But I’ve no reason to expect anything from her, more than she’s already one for me, for which, of course, I’m very grateful and all that. But I want Amy and put it to her that if —

JACK:

Charley! I’ve got a clinking good idea!

CHARLEY:

(pushing Jack towards writing-table) Jack, you are a good chap! Write it down and I’ll copy it out.

JACK:

No, not for you. For me. For us both. You’re gone on Amy; I’m in love with Kitty.

CHARLEY:

Really, Jack?

JACK:

Madly. Worse than anything I ever took up. Even cricket! I was writing to tell her so when you came in. There’s the letter.

CHARLEY:

I’m so glad! And what’s your “idea”?

JACK:

Hang letter-writing! We’ll give a luncheon party for your aunt, tea afterwards in the garden. And ask the girls to meet your aunt.

CHARLEY:

In the garden?

JACK:

Yes I’ll get leave.

CHARLEY:

But my rooms are so small.

JACK:

Never mind, lend you mine. Brassett shall see to it. *(Calling)* Brassett!

- The End-