

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

FINAL

Monologue
Born in 2006-2008

Choice B
Time Limit:
5 minutes

Stepping Out

By Richard Harris

(Set in a Church hall in London, where a group of women and one man attend a tap dancing class. Mavis is an ex-professional dancer who runs the class. In this scene, she is rehearsing them for a grand charity show.)

MAVIS: Okay everyone, let's get on, shall we? It's our first rehearsal, so lots of concentration, yes? Rose, Sylvia and Andy - we'll take you three at the back - no, Rose in the middle please - then we'll have Maxine, Vera, Lynne and Dorothy - spread yourselves out so you can be seen - but come forward a step, you're crowding - and Geoffrey, let's have you at the front, directly in front of Rose.

Okay. So you're standing with your backs to the audience ... feet apart, and perfectly still - nothing moving. The lights come up and you stay there, absolutely static still. For four counts you do nothing.

On given counts, back line, middle line and Geoffrey turn round and face the front... From there you bring the right arm up, leaving the left arm down, you lift the hat and you hold it high - yes?

On counts three and four, line of four does exactly the same thing but when you turn you leave the right arm down, holding the hat low... Right — we will have the first four bars and make sure the intro is spot on - it's got to be good. You smile, you stick your chest out, you look like you are enjoying it!

Okay let's have you in your opening positions. Quick as you can, please Rose, we've got a lot to get through... Sylvia, can we get rid of the gum? I want to see your teeth, not hear them... All right? And it's five six seven eight... Da da da dada da for nothing... Da da da dada da back line! Da da da dada da middle line! Sway sway Geoffrey! Okay I think the problem is that when you turn, some of you are a little off balance...

Right, back into position please and we'll do it again - other way round please and it's five six seven eight... Then... shuffle ball change, shuffle ball change, shuffle ball change, six tap springs and hold. Right — let's try it to the music!

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The Date

By Anne Odden, an adapted version.

(KARL is sitting in his bedroom. In this scene, He is speaking to his best friend, John, and trying to decide what he should do to unravel a mix-up he has created by trying to organise a date for his older sister, Melanie.)

KARL: *(Looking at his computer)* How on earth can I get out of this? I can't believe what I have done? Fixed my sister up for a date with Mr Lehman. Lehman — our English teacher, I meant that is so ... awful! He is quite young, I suppose, about thirty... and she's actually twenty-six — although her online profile said she was only twenty-two! But...just the thought of it makes me sick... and it's all my fault!

It started out as a joke. I was so fed up with her moaning night after night that she was so lonely... I said — well, why don't you make friends at work! That went down like a lead balloon! She works in a nursery! All the others are women and they're old enough to be her mother! Anyway — one of her old school friends mentioned this dating agency! That's when the fun began! You see, Mel created her profile. I read it. What do you mean how? I just worked it out. It was easy! She has this thing about a poet... and an actor called Benedict! She even called her dog Byron and the cat Benedict! I don't always understand girls, do you? Anyway, I put the two names together and... Bingo!

Look! This sounds so much more interesting than her original description. Yes, well each person has to really make themselves sound irresistible. You see, she had written that she was a short, slim woman of twenty-two with short brown hair, brown eyes and a love of English Literature. I mean — who is going to get excited about a very boring girl who likes Byron! I just altered it a little. I made her taller, bigger, and blonder...I left the bit about Byron. I didn't feel I could change everything!

The next night, at supper, she was just so excited! "I've a reply" she said, "Someone wants to take me out! I didn't even know that I had posted it!" I couldn't tell her that I had! She went on to describe the man... his age, his interests, and wait for it, his place of work! It was then that I knew exactly who he was! Mr Lehman! They've arranged to meet up for a meal! He'll think she tells lies! I mean... she doesn't look anything like the description I sent! What am I going to do?