

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

Dramatic Duologue
Born in 2011-2012

Choice A
Time Limit:
4 minutes

You Can't Do That!

By Kenneth Pickering

(CORRY and ANDY are taking their first trip on a Metro train. They have managed to board the train as the doors close and are both out of breath. CORRY and ANDY sit side by side facing the audience.)

CORRY: We only just squeezed in before the doors closed.

ANDY: You'd think they'd wait! It could be dangerous.

CORRY: It was bad enough coming down the escalators. All those people with luggage! Why don't they stand on one side?

ANDY: The trouble is, this train goes to the airport, so everyone has loads of luggage.

CORRY: Not everyone. Not quite, not us.

ANDY: Maybe not, but look around. You can hardly move in here.

CORRY: At least we got a seat.

ANDY: You wouldn't in the rush hour! *(Pause)* What are you looking at?

CORRY: I'm trying to read that man's newspaper.

ANDY: Oh! I see. Anything interesting?

CORRY: I don't know... he won't keep still.

ANDY: Everyone looks very miserable!

CORRY: Well! Wouldn't you if you had to be down here every day? No daylight!

ANDY: I'd hate it! Rattling around in a dark tunnel. I'd feel trapped.

CORRY: I suppose it's quick. Do you know, I've never been on one of these trains before?

ANDY: *(Amazed)* I thought you had. I could have sworn you said you'd done this before. You must have done! I was relying on you.

CORRY: No, honestly, this is the first time. Anyway, what do you mean, 'relying on me'?

ANDY: You know. I haven't been on one before.

CORRY: *(Puzzled)* But I thought... I was relying on you.

ANDY: For what?

CORRY: No wonder you didn't know what to do with your ticket.

ANDY: It's stopping. Not long between stops, is it?

CORRY: It's four stops before we need to get off.

(There is a pause as the train stops at the station and then moves off. ANDY gradually becomes aware that CORRY is staring up at a fixed point above head height over the seat opposite.)

ANDY: What's so interesting up there?

CORRY: I'm looking at a map of the line. Did you notice the name of that last station?

ANDY: Yes.

CORRY: Well, look up there. See the name of the station where we got on? There.
Now look at where we've just stopped.

ANDY: *(Straining to follow)* Yes.

CORRY: Now, look for the station where we are going.

ANDY: *(With alarm)* Oh, no! We're going the wrong way!

CORRY: What do we do?

ANDY: Stop the train!

CORRY: You can't do that!

ANDY: But *you* said this was the right train.

CORRY: Don't blame me. All we have to do is get off at the next stop and then go back the other way.

ANDY: You can't do that!

CORRY: Yes you can.

ANDY: *(Standing and looking around hopefully)* We'll have to ask someone.

CORRY: *(Standing)* There's no one left to ask. We're the last two on the train.

(They strap-hang and sway about)

ANDY: I knew this would happen. It would have been so much easier by bus.

CORRY: What! Stuck in all that traffic! If we leap out at the next station we'll just about make it. Quickly, we need to be ready to get out. *(Pause)* Now!

(They stand ready facing the door)

ANDY: It's stopping. We must look for notice.

CORRY: Right. Go!

(The both leap forward)

- The End-

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There's Nothing To It

By Phil Jamieson

(A CUSTOMER, impatient with the WAITER at a restaurant, suggests that they try switching places.)

WAITER: Are you ready to order?

CUSTOMER: What's the soup of the day?

WAITER: It's a water chestnut. It's the chef's speciality.

CUSTOMER: Water chestnut soup? What are the ingredients?

WAITER: I'm not sure really. Shall I ask?

CUSTOMER: No, never mind. Do you have any veal?

WAITER: Have you looked in the vegetarian section of the menu?

CUSTOMER: Veal is a kind of meat. Anyway, I haven't got a menu.

You didn't bring me one.

WAITER: I'm sorry. You see I'm new to the job.

CUSTOMER: I never would have guessed.

WAITER: Yes, I only started this afternoon.

CUSTOMER: Well, you bring me the menu and I'll point to the things I want to order for my lunch.

WAITER: Great! Thanks. I'll just go and get one. *(exits and returns with a menu)*.
Here you are. Enjoy your meal!

CUSTOMER: Thank you but you're meant to say that when you've brought the food.

WAITER: But you haven't ordered any.

CUSTOMER: That's because you've only just brought me the menu.

WAITER: I haven't really got the hang of it yet. Sorry.

CUSTOMER: Look. You sit here and I'll be the waiter. You order something and I'll demonstrate what you are meant to do. There's nothing to it.

(They swap places)

WAITER: *(Looking at menu)* Waiter! Can you bring me a menu please?

CUSTOMER: You are holding a menu in your hands.

WAITER: This (*waving it in the air*) is a wine list.
I cannot order food from a wine list can I?

(*CUSTOMER exits then returns with a menu.*)

CUSTOMER: Here we are. May I recommend the chef's Special Mixed Grill.

WAITER: No you may not. (*Gives the menu straight back*) I want egg and chips.

CUSTOMER: What?

WAITER: I said I want egg and chips. Are you deaf or stupid?

CUSTOMER: You can't speak to me like that I'm a customer.

WAITER: No! I'm the customer and the customer is always right.

CUSTOMER: Look, we're only pretending. You're meant to look at the menu and choose something to eat. Then I take your order.

WAITER: (*Angry*) Do you want me to get the manager in here?

CUSTOMER: No, of course not.

WAITER: Then just get me the food I ordered.

CUSTOMER: But...

WAITER: GET ME MY MEAL NOW!

CUSTOMER: Sorry... yes, I'm going.

(*CUSTOMER exits*)

WAITER: She's right you know. There's nothing to it.

- The End-