

Dramatic monologues

12 texts

A dramatic monologue does not ask for tears, it asks for a decision. The person speaking wants something precise, right now, and the text is their last attempt at it. Play that and the emotion arrives on its own; play the emotion and there is nothing left to play.

1. What Remains (2 min)
2. The Letter (1 min)
3. The Queen (3 min)
4. Farewell to a Son (3 min)
5. To Be, or Not to Be (2 min)
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7. The Empty Chair (2 min)
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9. On My Feet (3 min)
10. The Last Train (2 min)
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12. Wonderful (1 min)

What Remains

Drama · Monologue · 2 min · Female role · Adult · Intermediate

(She packs her things into a bag, in no hurry.)

MOI

Don't say anything. Please. Not now, not in that voice.

MOI

I spent years translating your silences. I'm tired of always being right too late.

MOI

You think I'm leaving in anger. No. Anger wanted to stay.

MOI

What's leaving tonight is hope. And hope never slams the door; it just goes out.

(She stops on the threshold.)

MOI

Take care of yourself. It's the last tender thing I owe you.

The Letter

Drama · Monologue · 1 min · Male role · Adult · Beginner

(Someone holds a folded sheet, without opening it.)

MOI

You always wrote in pencil. "That way you can go back," you'd say.

MOI

I kept the last one. I never opened it. As long as it's folded, you haven't finished your sentence.

MOI

People tell me to turn the page. But this one, I haven't even read the first line.

(He runs his thumb along the fold, without opening it.)

MOI

Today, maybe. Or tomorrow. You taught me that in pencil, nothing is ever quite final.

MOI

So I'll read it. And if it hurts too much, I'll erase the grief, not you.

The Queen

Drama · Monologue · 3 min · Female role · Adult · Advanced

(A throne room, empty. A woman remains standing, alone.)

MOI

They left the way you leave a room where the lamp has just died. Without a sound. Without a glance for the lamp.

MOI

I reigned for twenty years. Twenty years deciding who ate, who waited, who lived.

MOI

And this morning, a boy I had appointed called me "Madam" instead of "Majesty." One word. A whole reign fits inside a word they take back.

MOI

People think power is the crown. No. It's the silence of others when you enter. That silence, I no longer hear.

MOI

My counsellors are already weighing my name the way you weigh meat that's turning.

MOI

I signed pardons. I signed deaths. Both in the same ink, by the same hand that did not tremble.

MOI

Let no one speak to me of regret. Regret is the luxury of those who never had to choose.

(She lays a hand on the throne, without sitting.)

MOI

I will not sit. To sit now would be to beg for the place one last time.

MOI

I'll walk out through the great door. Upright. So they remember I was not toppled. I stepped down.

MOI

And if History wants to forget me, let it try. I wrote too many pages in their blood for it to turn easily.

(She leaves the hall without looking back.)

Farewell to a Son

Drama · Monologue · 3 min · Female role · Senior · Advanced

(A threshold, at dawn. A mother speaks to a son about to leave.)

MOI

Don't turn around too quickly. Give me time to keep your back in my memory. It's what will stay with me the longest.

MOI

I won't tell you to be careful. You won't be, and I'd have lied to you at the very end.

MOI

I'll tell you something else: come back whole. Not just alive. Whole. With your stupid laugh and the way you slam doors.

MOI

War makes people frugal. They come back keeping everything to themselves. You, spend. Stay spendthrift with yourself.

(She tightens the collar of the son's coat.)

MOI

I sewed something into the lining. No, don't look. It's not a lucky charm. It's just so you know my hands left with you.

MOI

When you're afraid, and you will be, touch the seam. You won't be brave. You'll be accompanied. It's not the same, and it's better.

MOI

I won't cry now. I'm saving that for when the door is closed. To each their own privacy.

MOI

Go. The day is waiting for you, and it has a head start.

(The son moves away. She raises her hand, without waving.)

MOI

...Come back whole. It's the only order I'll ever have given you.

To Be, or Not to Be

Drama · Monologue · 2 min · Male role · Young adult · Advanced

HAMLET

To be, or not to be: that is the question.

HAMLET

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,

HAMLET

or to take arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing end them.

HAMLET

To die: to sleep; no more; and by a sleep to say we end the heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to.

HAMLET

To die, to sleep; to sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub.

0 Rage, 0 Despair

Drama · Monologue · 2 min · Male role · Senior · Advanced

DON DIÈGUE

0 rage! 0 despair! 0 hateful old age!

DON DIÈGUE

Have I then lived so long only for this disgrace?

DON DIÈGUE

And have I grown grey in the labours of war

DON DIÈGUE

only to see, in a single day, so many laurels wither?

DON DIÈGUE

My arm, which all Spain admires with respect,

DON DIÈGUE

my arm, which so many times has saved this empire,

DON DIÈGUE

now betrays my cause, and does nothing for me?

The Empty Chair

Drama · Monologue · 2 min · Male role · Adult · Intermediate

MOI

You see that chair? Nobody sits there any more. And every evening I lay the table. Two plates. The way we always did.

MOI

I know. You would tell me to stop. That it serves no purpose. That the dead are not hungry and the living have to eat. You were always right, it was unbearable.

MOI

The worst of it is not that you are gone. It is everything I keep finding out about you now that you are not here to defend yourself. People talk. They think they are comforting me. They are turning the man I lived with for twenty years into a stranger.

MOI

I kept your jacket. It still smells of you. Less and less. One day it will smell of nothing at all, and that is the day I think I will really lose you.

MOI

So I hold that day off. I do not wash the jacket. I lay two plates. I talk to you. And if that is what being mad looks like, then fine: I would rather be mad with you than sensible without you.

MOI

But tonight... tonight I am going to put the second plate away. Just once. To see. To see if I stay standing. Just to see.

What I Never Said

Drama · Monologue · 1 min · No gender marker · Adult · Intermediate

MOI

No. Stay where you are. For once, I am the one talking.

MOI

You spent years cutting me off. Finishing my sentences. Deciding that whatever I thought did not matter. And the astonishing part is that in the end I believed you.

MOI

I am not shouting. You would like me to shout, it would suit you: you could say I was on edge, and walk out. So I am not shouting.

MOI

I am simply telling you, calmly, looking you in the eye: it is over. No scene. No drama. Just over. Like a lamp you switch off on your way out of a room where nobody lives any more.

MOI

There. That is everything I had to say. And do you know what? I spent ten years getting ready for it, and it took one minute.

On My Feet

Drama · Monologue · 3 min · Male role · Adult · Advanced

MOI

They told me I would not get up from this. They told me kindly, in those soft voices people keep for announcing disasters. "Rest. Accept it. Grieve." Grieve for what? For me?

MOI

I spent six months lying down. Six months watching the ceiling decide my life for me. In the morning somebody opened the curtains; in the evening somebody closed them; and in between nothing happened, because nothing was all anyone expected of me.

MOI

And then one day, an ordinary day, a Tuesday I think, I wanted a glass of water. Not to be brought one. To go and get it. Myself. To cross the room on two legs that no longer obeyed me.

MOI

It took me twenty minutes to cover three metres. I fell twice. The second time I stayed on the floor a long while, and there, against the cold tiles, I understood something: nobody was coming to lift me up for good. People can hold out a hand a thousand times; the last inch, the one that decides, that one is mine.

MOI

So I got up. For a glass of water. Ridiculous, isn't it? A grown man crying with joy over a glass of water.

MOI

I still fall. Often. But I have learned the only thing that matters: it is not about never falling. It is about making the floor a place you leave from, and not a place you settle into.

MOI

You can pity me. You can doubt me. Go ahead. In the meantime, I am walking. One step. Then the next. And every step is an answer to everyone who wrote my ending before I did.

The Last Train

Drama · Monologue · 2 min · No gender marker · Adult · Intermediate

MOI

You have four minutes left. Don't say anything. I already know everything you are about to say, and I would rather have the silence: your voice will travel with me more easily than your words.

MOI

You are going, and that is right. That is how it should be. I will not hold you back; holding someone back is where losing them begins.

MOI

I only wanted to show you, not tell you, show you, that in all these years you have been the one gentle thing in a life that was not gentle very often. Perhaps you never knew. Nor did I, come to that, until this platform.

MOI

Go on. Get on. Take the seat by the window, you like watching things go past. And when the train pulls out, do not turn round. If you turn round, I smile; if you do not, I smile too. Either way you will have left me enough to live on for a long time.

MOI

Go. Three minutes. Off with you. And be happy, do you hear me? Be outrageously, shamelessly happy. That is the only favour I am asking, and I have never asked you for anything.

What You Took From Me

Drama · Monologue · 2 min · Male role · Adult · Advanced

MOI

You think you have ruined me. Look at me properly. The suit is the same, the shoes have a hole in them, and I am smiling. Nobody smiles like this when they are ruined.

MOI

You took the company. Take it. You took the house, the car, even the friends who, would you believe it, discovered they were terribly busy the day my account ran dry. Take all of that too. None of it was me.

MOI

What you cannot take is the one thing you ever really wanted: the respect people had for me and never had for you. It cannot be bought, it cannot be seized, it does not transfer by deed.

MOI

You made money. I kept my name. In ten years we will see which of the two was worth more.

MOI

Now get out. This is still my dignity, here, and you are not coming in.

Wonderful

Drama · Monologue · 1 min · No gender marker · Adult · Beginner

MOI

Wonderful. Truly. You pick tonight. The one night I had actually prepared something. Your timing is an art form.

MOI

No, no, go on. Explain it to me. I love this part. The part where you explain, in that reasonable little voice, why what is happening to me is in fact for my own good.

MOI

It is extraordinary how everything is always for my own good. My patience too, no doubt, was for my own good. And my silence. And these years. All of it, for my own good.

MOI

So thank you. Sincerely. Thanks to you I have learned something precious: I can now recognise a goodbye dressed up as a gift. That is a rare talent. I owe it to you. See you soon. Or not.

What you can do with it

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