

Monologues for a male actor

12 texts

A night driver talking to his rear-view mirror, a ruined man refusing to lower his voice, a guy negotiating with a house plant. The common thread is thin, and deliberately so: a male role comes with no compulsory temperament.

1. The Speech (4 min)
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The Speech

Comedy · Monologue · 4 min · Male role · Adult · Intermediate

(Someone, cue card in hand, rehearses in front of a mirror.)

MOI

Dear all. Dearest all. Dear... deaR. Right. Let me start over.

MOI

Good evening. I'm the best man. Well, "the" best man: there are four of us, but I'm the one talking. The others got scared.

MOI

I've known Thomas for fifteen years. No. Twelve. Fifteen means I'm forgetting three years of his life in front of his whole family.

MOI

Let's start again. I met Thomas at a certain point in our lives. There. That's true for everyone, it commits me to nothing.

MOI

I wanted to tell the story of the trip to Italy. But half the room was there. And the other half must absolutely never find out.

MOI

So: not Italy.

MOI

I'll talk about his qualities. Thomas is... punctual. No. Nobody gets married for punctuality. Though, at this stage, we'll take it.

MOI

Thomas is generous. That one's true. Exhibit A: he handed me this microphone.

MOI

Léa, if you're listening, and you are, you always are, you made my best friend better. That's mathematical and unfair: I was ranked very highly before you.

(He checks his card. The card is blank.)

MOI

I wrote it all down. On the wrong card. This one is my shopping list. "Butter. Batteries. Don't cry."

MOI

Right. Butter, done. Batteries, we'll manage.

(He breathes.)

MOI

Okay. No card, then. The true things, you don't read them, you know them.

MOI

I'll just raise my glass. Because a failed speech people remember beats a perfect speech nobody listens to.

MOI

To Thomas and Léa. And to the card, somewhere, holding magnificent things.

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 Queue

Absurdist · Monologue · 1 min · Male role · Adult · Intermediate

MOI

I received a letter this morning. From myself. Dated tomorrow. It said: "Don't worry, everything is going to be fine." And that is when I started worrying: if everything was going to be fine, why go to the trouble of reassuring me?

MOI

So I did the only reasonable thing: I joined the queue. Which queue? The queue. There is always a queue. In front of me a gentleman had been waiting so long he had taken root: literally, small leaves were coming out of his ears.

MOI

I asked him what we were queueing for. He said: "Nobody knows. But imagine finding out at the end that it mattered, and we were not there."

MOI

He has a point. It is terrifying. So I am staying. You never know.

Honour and Heart

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

MOI

What! Am I thought beaten because I hold my tongue? You take for a confession what is nothing but contempt. Know that if I yield the floor a moment, it is not out of weakness, and still less out of fear.

MOI

You have torn everything from me: my goods, my rank, my title. So be it. They were loans, and fortune takes them back. But the soul, that part no king ever gave me, no king, do you hear me, can take away.

MOI

You speak to me of mercy; spare me the word. Mercy that is begged for has the taste of the cell. I had rather face the storm with my head high than owe my safety to the man who bows it.

MOI

Strike, then, if fate invites you to it. You will hold my person, and not my pride. And when they look for the one who, alone against a whole people, stayed standing while every other back was bent, it is not your name history will speak: it is the name of a beaten man who never bowed.

The 8:12 Train

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

(Someone waits, seated facing the audience. A suitcase beside them.)

MOI

The 8:12 train is announced with a delay of one whole lifetime. It says so on the board. In very calm letters.

MOI

I asked the board if it was joking. It displayed "no." Then "please wait." I waited. I had a son. He's waiting too.

MOI

The conductor comes by, sometimes. He checks nothing. He just confirms we're still here. We're still here.

MOI

Someone offered me a coffee. I accepted. That was yesterday. The coffee arrives tomorrow.

(He checks a watch with no hands.)

MOI

Right. One more minute. Just one. It's been going since Thursday, but still.

The Name

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

MOI

You want me to disown my name. To kneel, to beg for mercy, and in exchange to be allowed to live. To live! As though it were a gift, when it is bought at the price of everything that makes it worth the having.

MOI

My father carried this name. His father before him. They fell, all of them, one after another, but not one of them fell to his knees. You can take the breath from me; you will not take that.

MOI

You think you hold me because you hold my body. Poor creatures. The body is only a door. What I am does not live there; what I am is beyond any chain, and no blade cuts it.

MOI

So do it. Do it quickly. The executioner is waiting, and I will not keep him standing with the pleading that would please you far too much.

MOI

But know this: in a hundred years your names, judges and kings, will be forgotten. Mine will still be spoken. Not because I won, I won nothing. But because I refused. And refusal, when everything commands you to yield, is the one victory death cannot take back.

The Driver

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

(A car, at night. The driver murmurs, eyes in the rear-view mirror.)

MOI

Fare at 11:40 p.m. He got in without a word. Destination: the forest, by the back road. Fine.

MOI

He hasn't moved for twenty minutes. Not a sigh. Even people who sleep breathe, they shift. Not him.

MOI

At the red light, I looked at him. He was staring straight ahead. Through me.

(The GPS announces: "You have arrived." There are only trees.)

MOI

Sir? We're here. ...Sir.

(A beat. In the mirror, the back seat is empty. It always has been.)

(He locks the doors.)

MOI

The booking says "two passengers." I only ever saw one. And he just got out.

The Chair

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

(A bare room. A single chair, turned to face the wall.)

MOI

I invited the chair to sit down. Out of politeness. It declined. A chair that refuses to sit puts you right back in your place.

MOI

We've lived together for three years. It doesn't judge me. It just stays more stable than I am, which is already an opinion.

MOI

Yesterday I told it about my plans. It didn't move. That was exactly the support I needed: present, and without illusions.

MOI

People ask if I feel lonely. I tell them: no, I have a chair. They leave. The chair stays. The proof makes itself.

(He sits on the floor, beside the chair.)

MOI

See. Between the two of us, we almost make a living room.

MOI

One day, someone will come. They'll want to sit. And then I'll have to choose between them and you.

MOI

Don't worry. I'll seat them on the floor. We have our habits.

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.

My Shadow

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

MOI

My shadow left last night. Without a word. It peeled itself off my feet while I was asleep and went out through the window.

MOI

At first I was offended. We have lived together since I was born, after all. Thirty years of loyal service: it followed me everywhere, it lay down when I lay down, it grew taller in the evening without ever complaining. And then one day, poof. Gone.

MOI

But thinking about it, I understand. It is no fun, being a shadow. Always on the floor. Always behind. Never allowed to shine, since by definition you are the place the light does not reach.

MOI

So this morning I left the window open. And on the sill I left a note: "Take your time. Go and see the sun up close, for once. But if you are cold one evening, you know where to find me. I am keeping your place. It will always be yours."

MOI

I have lived without a shadow ever since. People look at me strangely in the street. But I smile, because somewhere out there a little patch of night is, for the first time, on holiday. And honestly, that is worth a few stares.

The Plea

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

MOI

I come, no longer as a master; I come as a suppliant; I laid my pride down on the threshold of this door. Look at what is left, and see what is held by a hand that trembled at holding so strong a thing.

MOI

I believed I was enough for myself. One believes that at the age when the sap is strong and destiny is far away. But misfortune came, page after page, to teach me that no man, alone, is ever certain.

MOI

I do not ask for the offence to be erased; I ask for a hand, just one, in the dark. A word. One look that is not a sentence. Enough to keep hope alive until morning.

MOI

And if you refuse (for it is your right, I know it), I shall leave without a sound, as one leaves a church: head low, but standing; beaten, but at peace for having at least attempted what fear despises.

The Instructions

Satire · Monologue · 3 min · Male role · Adult · Beginner

(On the floor: boards, screws, an incomprehensible diagram.)

MOI

Step one: "Insert tenon A into mortise B." There is no tenon A. There's a bag labelled "A" containing a B.

MOI

Step two: "If step one succeeded, go to step three." And if it failed? Silence. The instructions abandon me in my hour of need.

MOI

The little man in the diagram is smiling. At every step, he smiles. He's finished his furniture. He's mocking me.

MOI

Step seven: "Ask a loved one for help." There it is. Seven steps to tell me I'm alone.

MOI

I have a loved one. He's depicted at step seven, with an Allen key. But he's a drawing too.

(He screws something in, at random. It holds.)

MOI

...It holds. I don't know what it is, but it holds. Maybe that's life: screwing things in at random, and having them hold anyway.

MOI

Step eight: "Congratulations." No. Not "congratulations." Survivors don't congratulate each other.

(He sits on the object. The object holds. He, a little less.)

MOI

Right. It's a stool. I wanted a bookcase. But it's a very good stool.

What you can do with it

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