

Short monologues, under two minutes

12 texts

Two minutes is often all you get. It is not unkindness: an audition day is forty actors, and the person across the table makes up their mind fast. A short text is not a lesser text, it is a text cut for that amount of time.

1. The Opening (1 min)
2. The Letter (1 min)
3. The Queue (1 min)
4. The Password (1 min)
5. The Confession (1 min)
6. The Little Notes (1 min)
7. The Door (1 min)
8. One Step Too Many (1 min)
9. The Prophecy (1 min)
10. The Diet (1 min)
11. What I Never Said (1 min)
12. Give Me Back Tuesday (1 min)

The Opening

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

(An art gallery. Someone contemplates a white square.)

MOI

Magnificent. Absolutely magnificent. I understand nothing, but with rare intensity.

MOI

What moves me, you see, is the emptiness. No, the fullness. Well, the full emptiness. Very Japanese. Or very overdue for delivery, I can't tell yet.

MOI

I'm told it's a critique of capitalism. At twelve thousand euros, I'd call it: brilliantly argued.

MOI

Between us? I think it's the wall. I think we're admiring the wall and the painting fell off.

MOI

But say nothing. In art, being right too soon is the worst kind of snobbery.

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.

The Password

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

(Facing a screen. He types, rereads, sighs.)

MOI

"Your password must contain an uppercase letter." There. Done.

MOI

"A lowercase letter." Of course. "A number." Fine. "A special character." I'll put an exclamation mark, because that's what I feel.

MOI

"This password is too common." Too common? Nobody on earth has my dog, my birthday, and this level of despair.

MOI

"This password resembles your old password." Obviously. I made it. I only have one brain.

MOI

I invent a string of symbols no human will ever remember. "Strong password!"

(A beat.)

MOI

Perfect. Now nobody can get in. Least of all me. Security is total.

The Confession

Classical · Monologue · 1 min · No gender marker · Young adult · Advanced

MOI

Must I confess it to you? My heart can no longer hide the turmoil your first glance plunged me into. I fought, believe me; I made a rampart of reason every day, and broke it every night.

MOI

I told myself: "Be sensible; such tenderness is only a young man's fire, and tomorrow will be ash." But tomorrow came, and a hundred other tomorrows, and the fire, far from dying, has taken all of me.

MOI

I ask for nothing. A confession is not a chain. Keep your freedom; it is the very thing I cherish. But grant me this one right, the only one I claim: to have loved without ever saying it, and to say it at last, tonight, with a trembling voice, so that just once my silence may have spoken.

The Little Notes

Romantic comedy · Monologue · 1 min · Female role · Young adult · Beginner

(On the fridge, a column of little notes. She reads them, one by one.)

MOI

"The milk is yours, not mine, I'm just being polite." ...He signs his sticky notes. Who signs a sticky note about milk?

MOI

This one: "I fixed the handle. It squeaked. It made me sad for you." Sad. For me. Over a handle.

MOI

And yesterday: "I left the hall light on. In case you come home late. Don't thank me, thank the bulb."

(She peels off the last one. It's smaller than the others.)

MOI

"I think I'm finding reasons to write notes. There's nothing left to fix in this flat. There's only you left to talk to."

(She smiles, picks up a pen.)

MOI

...My turn to stick up the next one.

The Door

Supernatural · Monologue · 1 min · Female role · Adult · Beginner

(A flat's hallway. She stares at a wall, no, a door, she doesn't recognise.)

MOI

This door wasn't here yesterday. I've lived here six years. I know my walls. This hallway has two doors: the bedroom, the bathroom. Since this morning, it has three.

MOI

The handle is warm. A handle has no reason to be warm. Unless, on the other side, someone has just let go of it.

(She puts her ear to the wood.)

MOI

...There's breathing. On the other side, someone is breathing in time with me. I inhale, it inhales. I hold my breath. So does it.

MOI

I'm going to do the only sensible thing. I'm going to open it. Because a door you don't open, you carry at your back your whole life.

(She puts her hand on the handle. Blackout.)

One Step Too Many

Thriller · Monologue · 1 min · Female role · Adult · Beginner

(A corridor, at night. She moves slowly, ears straining.)

MOI

For three nights I've heard footsteps. When I walk, they walk. When I stop... they stop a fraction of a second too late.

MOI

At first I told myself: the echo. An old house breathes. But an echo doesn't drag its leg. These footsteps do.

(She stops dead. One more step echoes, then silence.)

MOI

...See? One too many. Always one too many.

(She looks at her own feet.)

MOI

The worst part is, tonight I counted. My steps and theirs. And one is missing. Mine.

The Prophecy

Tragedy · Monologue · 1 min · Male role · Adult · Advanced

MOI

It was all foretold to me. Every detail. And I laughed. One always laughs, at the beginning.

MOI

I thought I was cleverer than fate. I fled the city where the oracle said I would strike; I took the other road, the one nobody took. And it was on that road, precisely, that the thing was done.

MOI

Do you understand? In running from my destiny I ran straight into it. Every step I believed was free was carrying me back to the exact place I wanted to avoid.

MOI

So tell me: what is the use of being careful, what is the use of being good, what is the use of anything at all, if it is written in advance and our efforts only turn the page faster?

MOI

I have no tears left. I have wept them all. All I have is this question, and nobody, not even the gods, deigns to answer it.

The Diet

Comedy · Monologue · 1 min · Female role · Adult · Beginner

(Facing the audience, a slice of cake, no, the whole cake, in front of her.)

MOI

The diet starts tomorrow. "Tomorrow" is important. Tomorrow is a day scientifically stronger than me.

MOI

So tonight, this cake, it's a farewell. You don't throw away a farewell. That would be rude.

MOI

Besides, a cut cake goes off. So I might as well finish it all: it's ecology.

(She takes a second slice. Then a third.)

MOI

Right now, technically, I'm making room in the fridge. I'm tidying. I'm an organised person.

MOI

Tomorrow. Tomorrow I'll be a new person. And that person deserves to start with no leftover cake lying around.

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.

Give Me Back Tuesday

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

MOI

I would like to speak to whoever is in charge. Of Time. Yes, of Time. There has to be somebody in charge; there is somebody in charge of everything, except the important things, funnily enough.

MOI

A Tuesday has been stolen from me. I am quite certain. I had a Tuesday scheduled, a good Tuesday, and I woke up: Wednesday. No transition. No apology. As if nothing had happened.

MOI

And when I mention it, people look at me with that polite pity reserved for those who notice things. Because here is the scandal: nobody cares. Whole Tuesdays are taken from you and you say "thank you, have a nice day".

MOI

Well, not me. I am making a claim. Calmly, but firmly: give me back my Tuesday. I am not leaving here without my Tuesday. I have the whole of my Wednesday ahead of me, I'll have you know. Nobody has taken my Wednesday. Not yet.

What you can do with it

Original text written for Acto. Read it, print it, work on it in class, perform it at an audition or on a self-tape: that is what it is for, and you need no permission. For a public performance or any commercial use, write to us at contact@acto.re.