

# Five Short Plays



What do you do if you have a boring job in a restaurant, serving fast food to people who have no time to eat? Smile, and do your best? Perhaps it's better to find a place where time doesn't matter so much.

What if you dream of travelling to other countries, but your friends just laugh? Do you stay at home with them? Or do you decide to be more adventurous?

Perhaps you hear that someone has bought the last bag of salt in town. Do you buy a bag from him at a high price? Or try to make him give you a bag?

Our world is full of these kinds of problems. They make life interesting, and sometimes very funny. These five short plays show people trying to decide what to do in unexpected or difficult situations.

*Cover illustration by Rob Davis*

## STAGE 1 PLAYSRIPTS

OXFORD BOOKWORMS PLAYSRIPTS are designed both for reading and performing. Each play offers the opportunity to learn and practise language in an imaginative and dynamic way.

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PLAYSCRIPTS



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# Five Short Plays

MARTYN FORD



FIVE SHORT PLAYS

Martyn Ford

OXFORD

## FIVE SHORT PLAYS

### *Stage 1*

It's not always easy to know the right thing to do. For the people in these five short plays, life can be difficult and sometimes very funny.

Harry and his friends are fed up because they haven't got any money. But Harry has a plan to change all this. It's a good plan, but even the best plans can go badly wrong . . .

'Listen,' says Ron, 'My friend over there has got a gun. Give me the money! Give it to me now!'

'What money?' the woman answers. 'I'm sorry, this is not a bank. This is a library.'

Sid and Ron must steal something, but it isn't easy to rob a library. The woman happily gives them library cards so they can borrow books, and not steal them. In fact, she's very pleased to help . . .


Things are often more difficult than they seem. But as in all these plays, people are often more interesting, and much funnier, when they're trying to do the right thing.

Martyn Ford, the author of these plays, is a writer, teacher, actor and illustrator, who lives and works in Brighton, on the south coast of England.



OXFORD BOOKWORMS PLAYSCRIPTS

Series Editor: Clare West



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MARTYN FORD

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## INTRODUCTION

This play is about a group of five friends. They are fed up because they haven't got any money. But this is all going to change soon. One of the group, Harry, has a plan – a very good plan.

## CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

Harry

Sid

Wilf

Gladys

Ron

Three people reading in a library

Woman working in a library

## PERFORMANCE NOTES

Scene 1: A room in the friends' home. There are chairs and a table. Everything looks very old and dirty. Wilf and Gladys are drinking tea. Ron is looking out of the window. Sid is watching the television, but it is not working.

Scene 2: Inside a library. There is a woman sitting at a table. She works in the library. Three other people are standing or sitting, holding books in their hands and reading.

You will need a table, chairs, an old television, two library cards and some books.

# The Robbery

## SCENE 1

### The plan

*Harry comes into the room. His friends look up at him.*

HARRY Hello, everyone. What are you doing?

SID Nothing, Harry, nothing! What can we do? We haven't got any money.

HARRY I know, I know. But it's OK. I have some work for us. We can make a lot of money.

WILF Work? But you don't like work, Harry.

HARRY Ah, but this work is different.

GLADYS How, Harry? What are we going to do?

HARRY We're going to rob a bank.

GLADYS Rob a bank? But how can we?

HARRY I have a plan, a very good plan.

WILF Which bank are we going to rob?

HARRY The Capital Bank.

WILF Which one is that?

HARRY The one next to the library in the High Street.

SID That's a very big bank!

HARRY Be quiet and listen. Now, I want Wilf to drive the car, and Gladys to stand outside the bank and watch the street.



*'I have a plan, a very good plan.'*

WILF AND GLADYS OK, Harry.

HARRY Sid—

SID *(Excitedly)* Yes, Harry? What do you want me to do?

HARRY You must go into the bank and speak to everyone there. Say to them, 'Stay there! Don't move! I've got a gun in my pocket.'

SID But Harry, we haven't got a gun.

HARRY I know that! You just put your hand in your pocket like this. Move your hand up and down in your pocket and say, 'This is a gun!'

SID I understand.

## *The Robbery*

HARRY Good. Now, Ron, I want you to go with Sid—

RON Yes, Harry, and then what?

HARRY Go to one of the bank workers and say, 'My friend has a gun. Give me the money!'

GLADYS What are *you* going to do, Harry?

HARRY I'm going to wait in the car with Wilf. Do you have any questions?

ALL No.

HARRY OK. So let's look at the plan again . . .

### SCENE 2

#### **The robbery**

*Sid and Ron run into the library. The people there look up from their books.*

SID Listen to me, all of you. This is a robbery. Don't move. I've got a gun in my pocket.

PEOPLE Oh, don't shoot! Please don't shoot! We don't want to die.

SID Nobody's going to die, but you must do what I say. *(To Ron)* Go on, Ron. What are you waiting for? Get the money! Quick!

*Ron goes over to the woman who works there.*

RON Listen, my friend over there has got a gun. Give me the money! Give it to me now!

WOMAN What money?

RON What do you mean, 'What money?' The money in this bank, of course!

WOMAN I'm sorry, this is not a bank. This is a library.

RON What did you say – a library?

WOMAN That's right. People come here to borrow books. We don't have any money here.

RON Er, you don't have any money . . . Oh dear! . . . Sid! Sid!

SID What? Have you got the money?

RON There isn't any money. It's not a bank, Sid. We're not in a bank. This is a library!

SID A library?

RON That's right. They've only got books – lots and lots of books!

SID Books? Well, get some of those, then. We must take something, or Harry's going to be angry.

RON *(To the woman)* Give me lots of books!

WOMAN Have you got a library card?

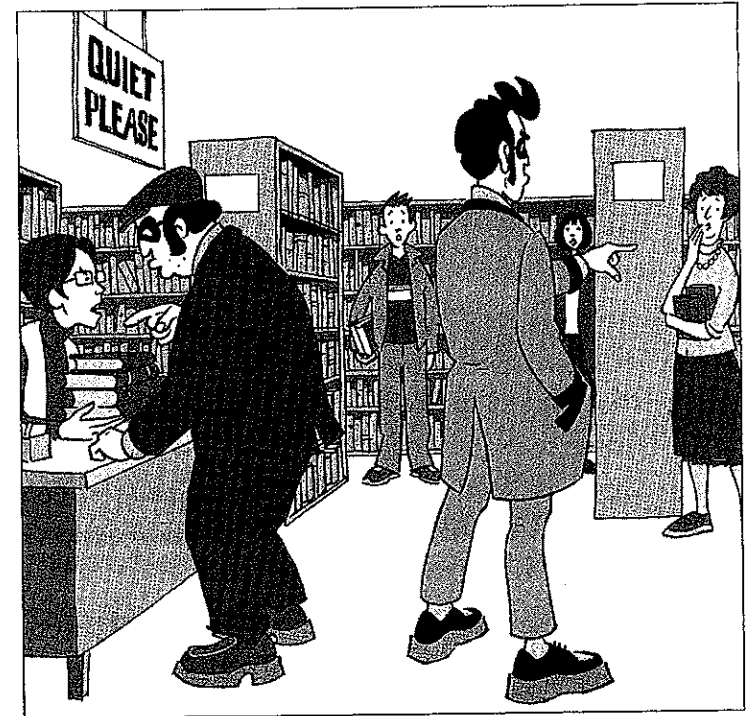
RON A card? No, I haven't.

WOMAN I'm sorry, you can't borrow books without a library card.

RON Look, you don't understand, we're not *borrowing* books, we're *stealing* them!

WOMAN I'm sorry, but you can't do that.

RON Sid, we can't steal books, she says.



'Have you got a library card?'

SID I've got a gun. Tell her that!

RON My friend's got a gun and he knows how to shoot!

WOMAN Look, it's not a problem. I can give you and your friend a library card. Then you can borrow the books and not steal them. What are your names?

RON Oh, all right. I'm Ronald Savage, and he's Sidney Dupree.

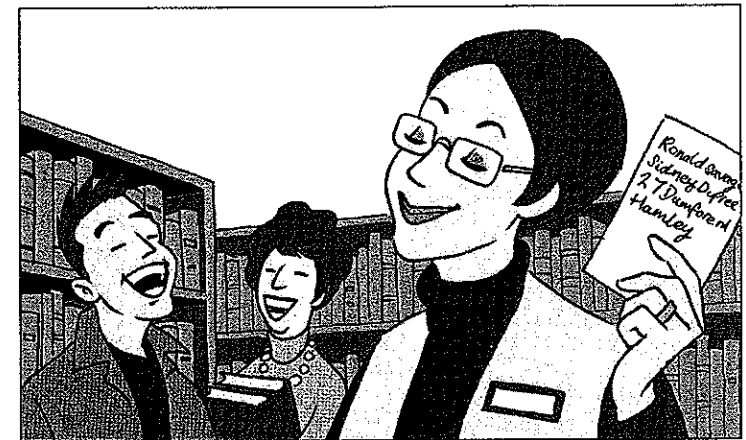
WOMAN *(Writing)* Ronald Savage . . . Sidney Dupree. And what's your address?

Five Short Plays

RON 27 Dunfore Road, Hamley.  
WOMAN (*Writing*) 27 Dunfore Road, Hamley. Good, here you are. (*She gives Ron two library cards.*) Now you can borrow some books.  
RON But I don't know anything about reading. You must help me. Which books are best?  
SID Quick, Ron! I can't stand here much longer.  
WOMAN Here are some good books for you. (*She takes three books from the shelves.*) *The Great Train Robbery*, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, and *The Adventures of Robin Hood*. They're all very famous books.  
RON Oh, that's nice. They look interesting. Thanks.  
SID Ron, come on! Quick!  
RON It's OK, Sid, I've got the books.  
SID All right. (*To the people in the library*) We're going now, but don't move. Don't move or talk for five minutes.  
PERSON 1 Can we read?  
SID Er, all right. But you must read *quietly*, OK?  
RON Come on, Sid! Let's go. Harry and the others are waiting.  
WOMAN Goodbye, and happy reading!  
RON Oh yes, thank you. All right, Sid. I'm coming.  
*They run out of the library.*  
PERSON 2 Oh dear! I was so afraid!

The Robbery

WOMAN Oh, they weren't so bad. The one called Sid – he didn't really have a gun, you know.  
PERSON 3 Perhaps. But they were robbers. They wanted to rob the bank!  
WOMAN (*Laughing*) Yes, but they came into the wrong building!  
PERSON 1 Why do you look so pleased?  
WOMAN Well, it's important for everybody to read books – not just you and me, but *everybody* . . . even bank robbers!  
PERSON 2 But you aren't going to get those books back, are you?  
WOMAN Oh yes, I am. Remember, I've got their names and their address!



'Remember, I've got their names and their address!'



## INTRODUCTION

In this play a man is lying in the street. Three different people stop and look. Perhaps the man needs help. But they don't know him, so it's not their problem, is it? Then a woman in blue arrives and suddenly things are different.

## CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

Patrick  
Rebecca  
David  
Woman in blue  
Michael Scott, a man lying in the street  
Doctor  
Nurse

## PERFORMANCE NOTES

For this play you will need a small bottle of pills, a glass of water, blue clothes for the woman, a white coat for the doctor, and perhaps special clothes for the nurse.

## The Right Thing to Do

*A man is lying in the street. Rebecca is walking past. She stops and looks at him, then she looks around her – there is nobody there. She starts to walk away, stops, and goes back to look at the man again. Patrick walks past and stops to look at the man.*

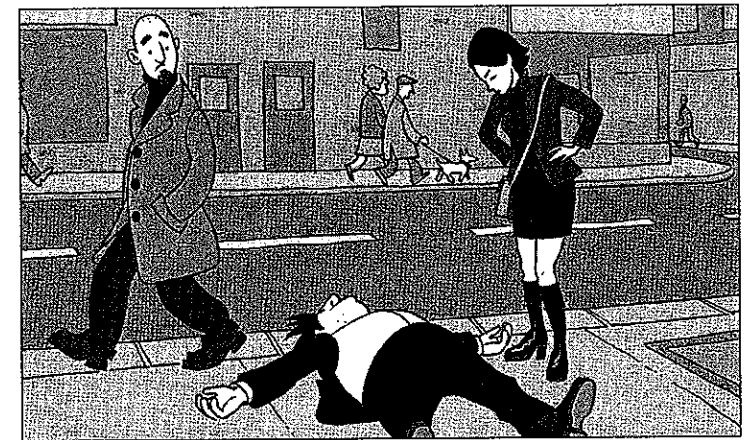
PATRICK What's the matter with him?

REBECCA I don't know.

PATRICK Is he dead?

REBECCA No, he's alive, I think.

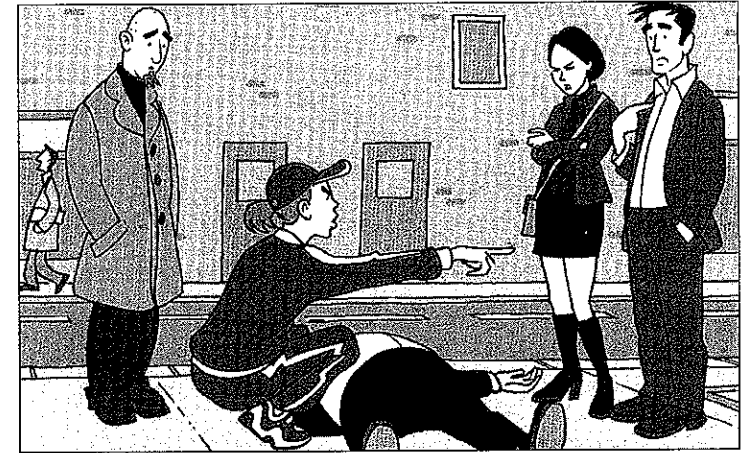
PATRICK Are you going to help him?



*'Is he dead?'*

Five Short Plays

REBECCA Me? Why me?  
PATRICK You were here first.  
REBECCA Yes, I was, but—  
*David comes in.*  
DAVID What's the matter with him?  
PATRICK We don't know.  
DAVID He looks ill.  
REBECCA His eyes are closed. Look!  
DAVID Perhaps he's asleep.  
REBECCA Asleep? In the street?  
PATRICK Wake him up then.  
DAVID Why me? You do it.  
PATRICK *(To Rebecca)* What about you?  
REBECCA Me?  
PATRICK Yes. You were here first.  
REBECCA Yes, but it's not my problem.  
DAVID And it's not my problem!  
*A woman in blue comes in. She kneels down at once to help the man.*  
REBECCA Hey, what are you doing?  
WOMAN I'm helping this man, of course!  
DAVID Are you a doctor?  
WOMAN No, I'm not, but he needs help.  
REBECCA Do you know him?  
WOMAN No, I don't.  
REBECCA Then he's not your problem.



*'Go and call an ambulance.'*

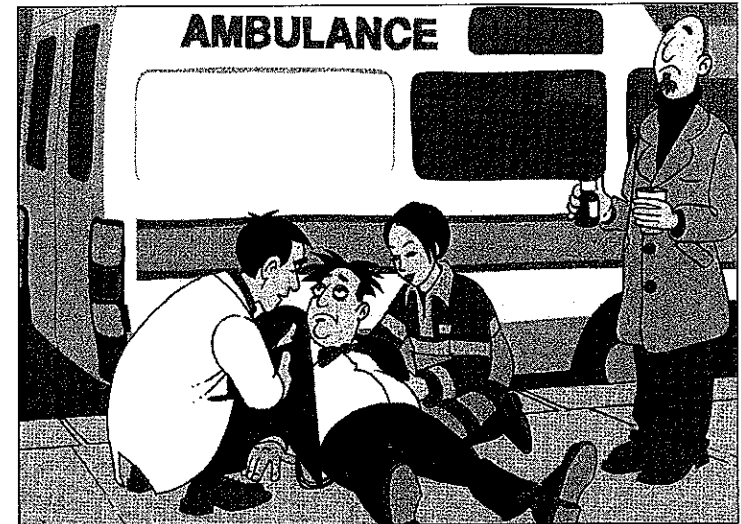
WOMAN Oh, be quiet!  
REBECCA *(To the others)* Did you hear that? She said, 'Be quiet!'  
WOMAN Be quiet and help.  
REBECCA She said it again!  
WOMAN *(To David)* Go and call an ambulance.  
DAVID Me?  
WOMAN Yes, you. And be quick.  
DAVID But—  
WOMAN Be quick! *(David goes away.)* Now you — *(turning to Rebecca)* go and get some water.  
REBECCA Where from?  
WOMAN From that house over there. Don't look at me like that. Go!  
REBECCA I'm going. *(Rebecca goes away.)*

*Five Short Plays*

WOMAN (To Patrick) Feel his pulse.  
PATRICK But I—  
WOMAN Go on! Feel his pulse.  
PATRICK (Kneeling down and taking the man's pulse) Well,  
he's still alive. He's saying something!  
WOMAN What is he saying?  
PATRICK He said, 'Pills,' I think.  
WOMAN (To Patrick) Pills? Look in his pocket.  
PATRICK I can't do that!  
WOMAN Look in his pocket!  
*Patrick looks in the man's coat pocket.*  
PATRICK There's a bottle with some writing on it.  
WOMAN What does it say? Read it!  
PATRICK It says, 'For the heart. If you feel ill, take one of  
these pills.'  
*Rebecca comes back with a glass of water.*  
REBECCA I've got the water.  
WOMAN Good. (To Patrick) Give him one of the pills with  
some water.  
*Patrick helps the man to sit up. He gives him a pill and  
some water.*  
MAN (Very quietly) Thank you, thank you!  
PATRICK How do you feel?  
MAN A little better now.  
*The woman in blue goes away. The others do not see  
this. David comes running back.*

*The Right Thing to Do*

DAVID The ambulance is coming.  
PATRICK Good.  
DAVID How is he?  
REBECCA He's feeling a little better.  
*A doctor and a nurse come in. Patrick stands up.*  
DOCTOR (Kneeling down by the man) What's the matter?  
MAN I was ill. It was my heart. That man gave me one  
of my pills. I'm all right now.  
*The doctor and the nurse help him to stand up.*  
NURSE What's your name?  
MAN Scott. Michael Scott.  
DOCTOR Michael Scott, the famous TV chef?



'What's the matter?'

Five Short Plays

MAN Yes, that's right.

NURSE Come with us, Mr Scott. We'd like to take you to hospital.

MAN But I feel better now.

NURSE Perhaps, but you must go to hospital.

MAN All right. (*Turning to the others*) Well, thank you very much, everybody.

DAVID That's all right.

REBECCA We're happy to help.

PATRICK Get well soon.

MAN Thank you again. Goodbye!

*The doctor and the nurse help Scott to walk away.*

REBECCA He's alive, and he's going to be OK.

PATRICK He's alive because we were here.

DAVID Michael Scott—

REBECCA The famous TV chef!

PATRICK We can all feel very pleased, I think.

REBECCA Oh yes, we can.

DAVID What about the woman?

REBECCA Which woman?

DAVID The woman who helped. Where is she?

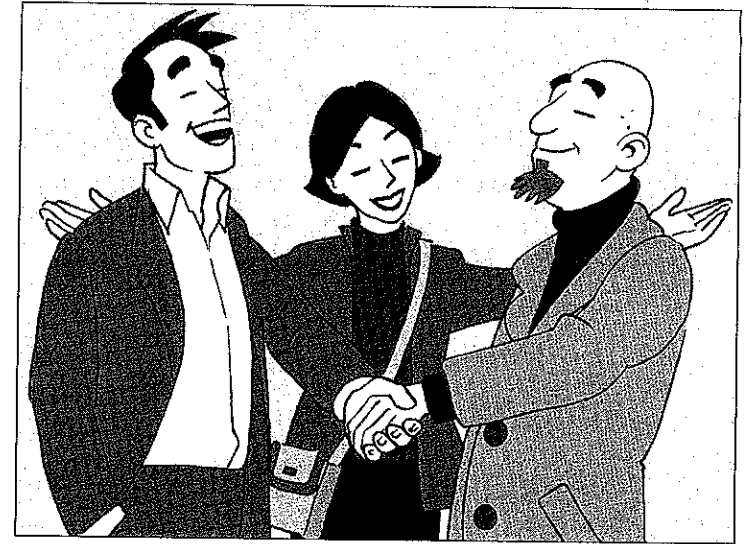
PATRICK Oh, *her!* I remember. She didn't help *us*.

DAVID 'Do this, do that,' she said. 'Be quick!'

REBECCA She said, 'Be quiet,' to me.

PATRICK That's right. I didn't like her. Did you?

REBECCA No, I didn't. Where is she now?



*'Well done, everybody!'*

PATRICK She walked away.

DAVID That's right — she just walked away. She didn't want to help.

REBECCA We did everything.

DAVID Yeah. Everything.

PATRICK Today was an important day for us.

DAVID It was. We helped someone famous.

REBECCA Because of us he didn't die.

DAVID We were there for him.

PATRICK It was the right thing to *do*.

REBECCA Yes, it was. Well done, everybody!

DAVID (*To Rebecca*) And well done to *you*—

PATRICK Well done to all of us!

## INTRODUCTION

This play is about a young person who wants to change his life. Chris would like to see new places and learn new things, but the older people in his life don't like his plan. They can only see problems. Chris finds that he, too, is a little afraid of change.

## CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

Chris, a young person who wants to travel  
Cox  
Mills  
Harris  
Dean  
Wright

} five of Chris's friends, all older than him

## PERFORMANCE NOTES

At the beginning of the play Chris's friends are in a room. Cox is reading a book, Mills and Harris are talking quietly to each other, and Wright and Dean are looking out of a window.

You will need six chairs, a book, a bag and a map.

## Canada Can Wait

*Cox, Mills and Harris are sitting in a room. Dean and Wright are standing by a window. Chris comes in.*

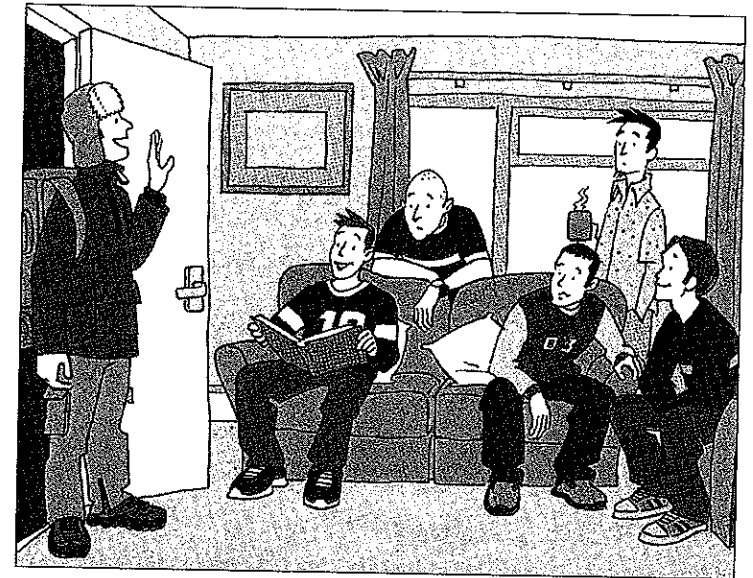
CHRIS *(Smiling)* Well, goodbye, everyone.

COX *(Putting down his book)* Are you going?

CHRIS Yes, I must.

MILLS When are you going?

CHRIS Now.



*'Well, goodbye, everyone.'*

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COX Now? So soon?  
MILLS Don't go!  
CHRIS But I must. I need a change.  
HARRIS What are you going to do?  
CHRIS I'd like to travel for a time.  
HARRIS Travel? How wonderful!  
DEAN Yeah, think of us when you're travelling.  
COX Yes, think of us – we have to stay here.  
MILLS It's the same old thing, day after day—  
HARRIS The same old faces.  
WRIGHT The same old problems.  
MILLS Nothing different for us!  
DEAN But someone has to do it.  
COX Yes, that's right. We can't *all* go!  
CHRIS Why not? You can travel too.  
COX Us? *(He laughs.)*  
MILLS How can we travel?  
HARRIS We have things to do here.  
CHRIS What things?  
WRIGHT He says, 'What things?'  
DEAN What a question!  
COX *(To the others)* He's tired of us.  
CHRIS No, I'm not. I'm not tired of you. I'm happy here.  
MILLS Are you?  
CHRIS Well, I *was* happy here. It's a good place, and I—  
HARRIS Yes?



'Spain, perhaps, or Greece . . .'

CHRIS Well, I like you. I'm one of you – one of the group.  
WRIGHT That's nice.  
DEAN So where would you like to go?  
CHRIS I don't know. Spain, perhaps, or Greece . . .  
maybe even Canada—  
COX Canada?  
CHRIS Yes. I'm very interested in Canada.  
MILLS Canada, well!  
HARRIS That's interesting.  
WRIGHT You're very adventurous, Chris.  
COX We're not adventurous at all, I'm afraid.  
DEAN But then you're young—



*'The lakes and the forests . . .'*

COX You have your life in front of you.  
 MILLS You want to see exciting places—  
 HARRIS Like Canada!  
 WRIGHT The lakes and the forests . . .  
 COX The great St. Lawrence River . . .  
 DEAN How wonderful!  
 COX Lucky Chris!  
 MILLS It's different for us. We have to stay here. We  
 can't go to Canada.  
 HARRIS 'I'm one of you,' you said, 'one of the group.' But  
 you're not!

DEAN No, Chris, you're different from us—  
 CHRIS No, I'm not! Stop talking like this. I'm not different  
 from you. Sometimes I'm happy, sometimes I'm  
 not. I work and eat and sleep, like you.  
 MILLS Ah, but *you* are going away—  
 HARRIS And *we* are staying here.  
 WRIGHT And that makes you different.  
 CHRIS I'm *not* different!  
 COX But what about Canada?  
 CHRIS Stop talking about Canada! I'm not going to  
 Canada – I'd *like* to go there, that's all!  
 COX So you *aren't* going there now?  
 CHRIS I don't know. Perhaps. I need some time to think  
 about my life.  
 WRIGHT Oh, yes.  
 DEAN Everyone does.  
 MILLS It's usual for people to do that.  
 HARRIS And there's lots of time. You're young.  
 CHRIS That's right. I have my life in front of me.  
 HARRIS So, take your time.  
 CHRIS Right.  
 WRIGHT You can stay here as long as you like—  
 DEAN And think about it.  
 CHRIS Yeah. (*He sits down.*)  
 ALL Mmm . . .  
*Everyone is quiet for a moment.*

COX So what are you going to do?  
CHRIS Sorry?  
MILLS Are you leaving today?  
CHRIS Leaving? Er, not today. I want to think about it first.  
MILLS Of course.  
HARRIS When are you going, then?  
CHRIS Well, not now. Later, perhaps. I can stay here a bit longer. There's lots of time. *(Laughing)* Canada can wait, can't it?  
WRIGHT Yes, it can. It certainly can!  
DEAN You're one of us really, aren't you, one of the group?  
CHRIS Yes, I am, I think.  
COX *(Laughing)* But, you know, you say—  
CHRIS Yes? Say what?  
COX Well, you say some funny things sometimes!  
CHRIS Like what?  
COX Well, *Canada!*  
*Cox, Mills, Harris, Dean and Wright all laugh.*  
CHRIS *(Looking at them)* What's so funny about that?  
MILLS *(Laughing quietly)* It doesn't matter.  
HARRIS Forget it.  
COX Look at the time – I must go!  
MILLS Me too. I have a lot to do.  
HARRIS And me.

WRIGHT Let's all go.  
DEAN Yes, let's leave Chris with his dreams—  
COX About *Canada!*  
*They all laugh at Chris.*  
COX See you later, Chris.  
ALL Bye-bye.  
COX *(To Chris)* Bye-bye, traveller!  
*Chris's friends laugh, and then go out. Chris stands and watches them go. He doesn't look happy. He opens his bag and takes out a large map. He opens the map on the floor and looks at it carefully.*  
CHRIS Thailand . . . Malaysia . . . Indonesia . . . Australia . . . *(He looks up, smiling.)* Mmm, Australia!



'Mmm, Australia!'



## INTRODUCTION

A man goes into a grocery store and buys a lot of salt. At first the other people in the store can't understand why. Then they hear his story, and they all want to buy salt too.

## CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

Shopkeeper, a person who owns a small grocery store

Groot }  
Nello } four people in the grocery store  
Durg }  
Spratly }

Manra, a truck driver

## PERFORMANCE NOTES

Scene 1: In a small grocery store.

Scene 2: In a street, some hours later.

You will need ten bags of salt, and a small cart on wheels. You will need the noise of a truck stopping suddenly, but we do not see the truck.

# Salt

## SCENE 1

### No more salt

*In a small grocery store, Groot is asking the shopkeeper for something. The others are waiting behind him.*

GROOT I'd like ten bags of salt, please.

SHOPKEEPER Ten? Of course. That's ten dollars, please.

GROOT Here you are.

SHOPKEEPER Can I help you with all that?

GROOT No, thanks. I have this cart.

SHOPKEEPER Ten bags. That's a lot of salt.

GROOT Yes. Salt is very important, you know.

SHOPKEEPER It is. But why do you need *ten* bags?

GROOT Soon there isn't going to be enough salt in the world. I saw it on television.

SHOPKEEPER Not enough salt? Really?

GROOT It's true. So I'm buying some now. Goodbye!  
*He goes out with his cart.*

NELLO Did you hear that?

DURG Yeah, there isn't enough salt in the world.

SPRATLY Not enough salt? That isn't true.

NELLO But he saw it on television. Soon there isn't going to be any in the stores.



*'Did you hear that?'*

SPRATLY Really? That's bad – I need salt.  
DURG Me too. I can't live without it!  
NELLO *(To the shopkeeper)* Give me some salt, please, ten bags – no, make that twenty bags.  
SPRATLY And me. I'd like thirty bags.  
DURG Me first! I've got a big family. We need salt.  
SHOPKEEPER Be quiet, all of you! You must wait.  
NELLO But we want our salt.  
DURG And we want it now.  
SHOPKEEPER But that man bought my last ten bags.  
SPRATLY Then it's true! He was right – there isn't enough salt in the world. What are we going to do?

*Salt*

SHOPKEEPER That's *your* problem. It's six o'clock – time to close the store. I'm going home.  
NELLO But what about our salt?  
SHOPKEEPER Look, there's a lot of salt in the world – enough for everybody. Goodbye!  
*They all go out.*

SCENE 2

**We want salt!**

*Spratly finds Groot standing in a street with his cart.*

SPRATLY Excuse me, I want to buy some salt.  
GROOT Sorry? What did you say?  
SPRATLY I know about the problem.  
GROOT What problem? What are you talking about?  
SPRATLY Soon there isn't going to be enough salt.  
GROOT Oh, you heard about that?  
SPRATLY Yes, and I want some salt.  
GROOT Then go to a grocery store and buy some.  
SPRATLY I can't find any. Every time I ask, the shopkeeper says, 'Sorry, no more salt.'  
GROOT Oh dear!  
SPRATLY But *you* have some. You bought ten large bags – I saw you.  
GROOT I'm sorry, but I'm not selling my salt.



*'But you have some.'*

SPRATLY But I'll give you ten dollars a bag.  
 GROOT (*Laughing*) No, I want fifty dollars a bag! It's more expensive every day. Soon there isn't going to be enough.  
 SPRATLY All right, all right, fifty dollars a bag! Give me five bags. Here's the money.  
 GROOT Good man! You're doing the right thing.  
*Spratly goes out. Durg comes in.*  
 DURG Excuse me, I saw you buy some salt.  
 GROOT Ah!  
 DURG What's happening? I can't find any. The shopkeepers all say, 'Sorry. No more salt!'

GROOT There's a problem.  
 DURG I know. It was on television. Everybody is talking about it. Listen, I must have some salt.  
 GROOT Sorry, I can't help you.  
 DURG But I need it for my family. Please!  
 GROOT All right, all right, but it's . . . er . . . a hundred dollars a bag.  
 DURG Oh no!  
 GROOT I told you – everybody wants salt. Well?  
 DURG Oh, all right, then. Give me four bags.  
 GROOT Four? Good! You understand the world, my friend. I see it in your face.  
 DURG Here's the money.  
 GROOT And here's your salt! Goodbye.  
*Durg goes out. Nello comes in.*  
 NELLO Hey, you, stop!  
 GROOT Are you talking to me?  
 NELLO Yes, you were in the grocery store—  
 GROOT Was I? Perhaps. I go into a lot of grocery stores.  
 NELLO You bought all the salt in the store!  
 GROOT Well, there's a problem, you know.  
 NELLO Yes, there is – and it's all because of you!  
 GROOT That's not true!  
 NELLO I met Spratly just now. He tried to sell me a bag of salt for five hundred dollars!  
 GROOT That's too much.

*Five Short Plays*

NELLO Of course it is – I know your plan! You go from store to store. You buy all the salt, and sell it for a lot more money!

GROOT OK, it's true – I buy and sell salt – that's not wrong.

NELLO Then sell some to me.

GROOT No, I don't want to.

NELLO *(Holding him, angrily)* Listen, I'm going to buy, and you're going to sell. *(Shouting)* Do you understand?

GROOT But I've only got one bag left.

NELLO *(Angrily)* Give it to me, then!

GROOT It's two hundred dollars. Well, OK, you can have it for a hundred and fifty. But let me go!

NELLO *(Shouting)* Give it to me!

GROOT No, give me the money first. Now let me go! Oh, help! Help!

*Groot runs out. We hear a truck stop suddenly, and Groot cries out. The driver, Manra, comes in, helping Groot to walk.*

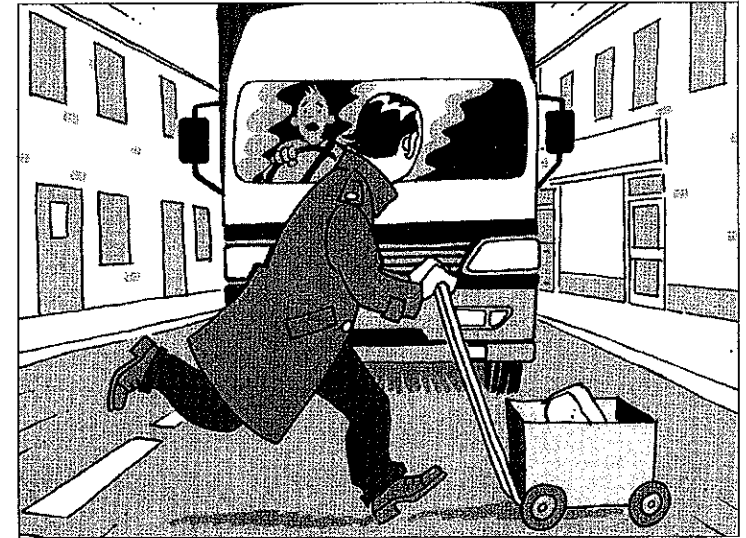
MANRA He ran in front of my truck. I didn't see—

NELLO You didn't do anything wrong. It was an accident.

MANRA But why did he run across the street without looking?

NELLO I was angry with him. So he ran away.

MANRA *(To Groot)* How do you feel?



*'He ran in front of my truck.'*

GROOT *(Holding his leg)* Oh, my leg! My leg hurts. I think it's—

NELLO He's OK, I think.

MANRA Wait a minute, what's this in the street?

NELLO It's salt. He had a bag of salt and I wanted it.

MANRA Salt? Well, that's interesting! I'm carrying salt on my truck – bags and bags of it!

NELLO Salt? Oh no! *(He laughs.)*

MANRA Why are you laughing?

NELLO It doesn't matter. I can't tell you now.

MANRA Then you can tell that policeman. Look, he's coming across the street now. He saw the accident, I think!

## INTRODUCTION

Maggie works in a fast-food restaurant. People come here to buy food when they haven't got much time. The restaurant sells 'fast food' – things like pizza, burgers, chicken and sandwiches. Five angry people are waiting for their food.

## CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

Maggie, a young woman who works in a fast-food restaurant  
Two men } people who want to buy some food to eat  
Three women }

## PERFORMANCE NOTES

In the window there is a sign saying, 'Fast Food'. There are some tables and chairs, and a large high counter. Maggie is standing behind this counter. The people in the restaurant are standing in front of it. They are wearing outdoor clothes. Maggie is wearing work clothes. She also needs a bag.

## Slow Food

MAN 1 Excuse me, is my food ready?

MAGGIE What did you ask for?

MAN 1 I asked for chicken.

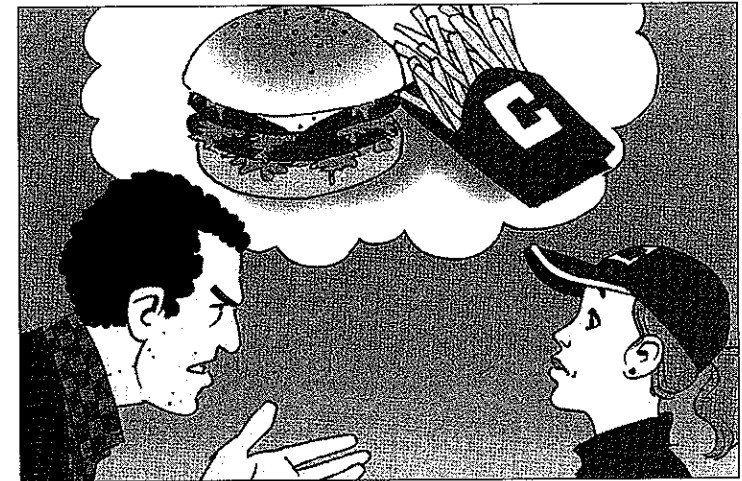
MAGGIE Er, let's see. Another five minutes.

MAN 1 Five minutes?

MAGGIE Sorry, ten minutes.

MAN 1 Ten? That's no good! I must go back to my office in ten minutes.

MAN 2 And what about *my* food? I asked for a burger and French fries fifteen minutes ago!



'I asked for a burger and French fries fifteen minutes ago!'

MAGGIE I'm sorry, but there are a lot of people eating here today.

MAN 2 But how long is it going to take? My train leaves in forty minutes.

MAGGIE Not long. I'm very sorry.

WOMAN 1 Excuse me, I was before these men. Where is my coffee?

WOMAN 2 And what about me? I asked for a sandwich and a coke half an hour ago.

WOMAN 3 Well, I'm before all of you. I asked for a pizza forty-five minutes ago.

MAN 1 Look here, in your window it says, 'Fast food'.

MAGGIE Yes, it does.

MAN 1 Then why is it so slow?

MAGGIE It isn't slow. But people today want everything faster and faster—

MAN 1 What are you talking about?

WOMAN 1 Look, I can't wait. I have to get back to work.

WOMAN 2 And I have a meeting. I'm late.

MAN 2 Time is money, you know!

WOMAN 3 Where's my pizza?

WOMAN 1 Where's my coffee?

MAN 1 What about my chicken?

PEOPLE We want our food!

MAGGIE Please, everybody! Please! Your food is coming. He's doing it now.



'We want our food!'

PEOPLE *He?*

MAGGIE Sorry, *they*. The chefs are doing it now.

MAN 2 How many chefs have you got?

MAGGIE Oh, lots.

WOMAN 2 How many?

MAGGIE Some.

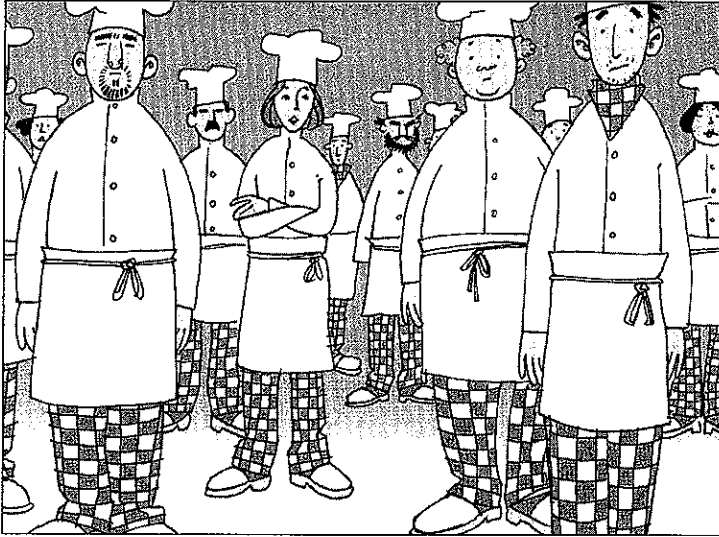
WOMAN 1 How many exactly? Tell us!

MAGGIE Er, twelve.

WOMAN 3 Your restaurant has twelve chefs?

MAGGIE Well, no, not now. We had one in January, one in February, one in March – one every month for the last year. That makes twelve.

WOMAN 3 Well, where are they now?



'Your restaurant has twelve chefs?'

MAGGIE They all stopped working here.  
 WOMAN 1 Why did they leave?  
 MAGGIE Because it was too fast for them.  
 MAN 2 And how many chefs have you got now?  
 MAGGIE Well, er . . . one.  
 PEOPLE One!  
 MAGGIE No, sorry. That's wrong—  
 MAN 1 I'm happy to hear it!  
 MAGGIE We haven't got *any*.  
 PEOPLE What?  
 MAGGIE That's right. There's only me here. Our last chef  
 left yesterday. He was fed up with fast food.  
 MAN 2 Fed up?

MAGGIE Yes. He said to me, 'That's it! Enough! No more  
 fast food for me! I'm going!' And he went.  
 WOMAN 2 But what about our—  
 MAGGIE And do you know? I'm fed up too. Yes, I'm really,  
 really fed up. Fast chicken, fast burgers, fast  
 French fries, fast coke, fast coffee, fast talking,  
 fast walking, fast eating, fast sleeping, fast living,  
 fast dying! I'm fed up with it all!  
 WOMAN 1 But who is going to—  
 MAGGIE What's the matter with everybody these days?  
 Why is everything so fast? Come here. (*Maggie  
 walks to the window.*) Come on! (*The people all  
 go to the window.*) Look outside. Go on, look! It's  
 a beautiful day. Life is beautiful. We can all be  
 happy. But first we must slow down. We must  
 take the time to *live*.  
 MAN 1 Live? But we have to work!  
 WOMAN 3 We have lots to do.  
 WOMAN 1 And we want food.  
 MAN 2 We want *fast* food—  
 WOMAN 1 Not *slow* food!  
 WOMAN 2 We haven't got time to—  
 MAGGIE Time! Time! Time! Don't talk to me about time.  
 You don't understand it. You – oh, it's no good,  
 you're not listening to me.  
*She takes off her work clothes and picks up a bag.*

WOMAN 3 Hey, where are you going?  
MAGGIE I'm going out. I'm going to sit in the sun. I'm going to look at the sky and listen to the sea. I'm going to do nothing . . . *slowly!*  
WOMAN 1 But what about our food?  
MAN 2 What about my burger?  
MAGGIE *You can do it!*  
MAN 2 *What did you say?*  
MAGGIE I said, you can do it. Behind me is the kitchen. In the kitchen there's a big bag of chicken and another bag of burgers. You can do your own food, and you can do it as fast as you like. Goodbye!  
PEOPLE But we don't—  
MAGGIE And have a nice day!  
*She goes out.*



*'We must take the time to live.'*

## EXERCISES

### A Checking your understanding

- 1 Choose the best question-word and answer these questions.  
What Who Why  
1 . . . thinks of the plan to rob the bank?  
2 . . . is the matter with Michael Scott?  
3 . . . does Chris want to travel?  
4 . . . buys four bags of salt at a hundred dollars a bag?  
5 . . . does Maggie leave the restaurant in the end?
- 2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?
  - 1 The woman working in the library is afraid of the robbers.
  - 2 The woman in blue wants to help the man lying in the street.
  - 3 The older people laugh at Chris and his dreams.
  - 4 In the end Chris wants to stay at home.
  - 5 Nello understands Groot's plan to buy all the salt.
  - 6 Maggie likes fast food.
- 3 Who said these words, in which play, and about what?
  - 1 'You're very adventurous.'
  - 2 'Oh, that's nice. They look interesting. Thanks.'
  - 3 'But how long is it going to take? My train leaves in forty minutes.'
  - 4 'Can I help you with all that?'
  - 5 'We helped someone famous.'
  - 6 'You just put your hand in your pocket like this.'
  - 7 'Well, you say some funny things sometimes!'
  - 8 'What does it say? Read it!'



**B Working with language**

1 *Put together these beginnings and endings of sentences from the five plays.*

- 1 you must go into the bank
- 2 I'm sorry, you can't borrow books
- 3 yeah, think of us
- 4 to think about my life.
- 5 if you feel ill,
- 6 without a library card.
- 7 I need some time
- 8 take one of these pills.
- 9 when you're travelling.
- 10 and you must speak to everyone there.

2 *Use these words to join the sentences together. and because but so when*

- 1 The robbers didn't steal any money. They went into the wrong building.
- 2 Patrick helped the man to sit up. He gave him some water.
- 3 The people in the restaurant wanted fast food. Maggie couldn't help them.
- 4 Chris began to feel happier. He looked at his map.
- 5 Groot bought all the salt. He could get rich quickly.

**C Activities**

- 1 Write Nello's conversation with the policeman about Groot's accident.
- 2 Write a newspaper report to go with this headline:  
TV CHEF FOUND ILL IN STREET

**D Project work**

You are a student with a 'free' year and you can travel anywhere you like. Where do you want to go, and why? What places do you want to see there? What are you going to do there? What must you take with you?

**GLOSSARY**

- adventurous** of someone who likes doing exciting and dangerous things
- asleep** of someone who is sleeping; not awake
- bank** a place that keeps money safe for people
- borrow** to take and use something that you are going to give back after a short time
- buy** (past tense **bought**) to give money to get something
- counter** a long high table in a shop or a restaurant that is between the people who work there and the people who want to buy things
- dream** a hope for something nice in the future
- fed up** of someone who is not happy or who is bored because they have or do too much of something
- funny** of something that makes you laugh; of something that is not usual or is different
- grocery store** a building where people buy food and other small things for the home
- group** a number of people together
- gun** a thing that shoots out bullets to hurt or kill people
- heart** the thing inside the body that makes the blood go round

## *Glossary*

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- kneel down** (past tense **knelt down**) to go down on your knees
- library** a place where you go to borrow or read books
- library card** a piece of plastic from a library with your name on it; you use it to borrow books
- nurse** a person who helps people who are sick or hurt
- pill** a small, round, hard medicine that you swallow
- pizza** a round, flat, Italian bread
- plan** something that you are going to do, and how you are going to do it
- problem** something that is difficult
- restaurant** a place where people buy food and eat it
- rob** to take things that are not yours from a bank, train (or other places) or people
- robbery** taking things that are not yours from a bank, train (or other places) or people
- salt** white stuff that comes from sea water; we put it on food to make it taste better
- sell** (past tense **sold**) to give something to somebody who pays you money for it
- shoot** (past tense **shot**) to send a bullet from a gun to hurt or kill someone
- steal** (past tense **stole**) to take something that is not yours
- take** (past tense **took**) **someone's pulse** to feel the beating of the heart in the wrist (or the neck)
- travel** to visit other countries
- TV chef** a person who cooks food on television
- wake up** to stop sleeping
- world** where we all live; people live in lots of different countries in the world