

SCHOOL DAYS –Vol. 3

A Collection Of Dialogues For Young Actors

by
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School Days

Twenty Dialogues for Young Actors

by
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The Washington Irving Test

CHARACTERS

ALEX, CHRIS, BOBBIE, JESSIE, and TERRY

SETTING: In a classroom, a living room, a library, etc.

JESSIE: Which story by Washington Irving did you guys like better? "Rip Van Winkle" or "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow?"

ALEX: I preferred "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." I thought the Headless Horseman was totally cool.

TERRY: Mrs. Wilson told us that "Rip Van Winkle" is considered to be the most popular thing Washington Irving ever wrote. So, I'll vote for 'ol Rip.

BOBBIE: What difference does it make which one we like best? Both of them are great stories.

CHRIS: I like the scary stuff, so "Sleepy Hollow" gets my vote.

JESSIE: That is pretty funny how Ichabod Crane was scared out of the village by the Headless Horseman and never seen again.

CHRIS: I doubt if Ichabod Crane thought it was funny. But then, if he hadn't been flirting with Brom Bones' girl, Katrina, he would never have been scared out of his wits.

ALEX: Obviously, Brom Bones was the Headless Horseman. That must have been one heck of a costume he came up with to appear like he had no head!

TERRY: Yeah. I wonder how Brom managed that. I'd like to borrow that costume for Halloween.

BOBBIE: Maybe it wasn't Brom Bones at all. Maybe there really is a "Headless Horseman" in New York State.

CHRIS: I don't think so. But if it gives you a thrill to believe there is, go ahead and believe it.

JESSIE: "Rip Van Winkle" took place in New York, too, near the Catskill Mountains, right?

The William Shakespeare Test

CHARACTERS

CHRIS, TERRY, JESSIE, ALEX, AND BOBBIE

SETTING: In a classroom, living room, library, etc.

JESSIE: Did you guys know that there are two movies coming out this month that are based on Shakespeare plays?

BOBBIE: I heard that. If William Shakespeare were alive today, he'd probably be the most popular writer in Hollywood.

CHRIS: Maybe we'd get extra credit in class if we go to those two movies. It would be worth a try!

ALEX: I'd rather make an "A" on the Shakespeare test. The facts we studied about his life were pretty interesting.

TERRY: I couldn't believe that Sam didn't know what country Shakespeare was from. I thought everybody knew he was born in England.

CHRIS: Stratford-on-Avon, to be exact. A little village about two hours outside of London. He was born in the year 1564.

JESSIE: The amazing thing is that Shakespeare had to drop out of school when he was fifteen. Unbelievable! The greatest playwright who ever lived never went to college or even finished high school.

TERRY: Yeah, I told my dad that fact and he said, "If you are thinking about dropping out of school. . . just remember this: You ain't no Shakespeare!"

ALEX: Your dad always has something funny to say!

BOBBIE: Well, it really is amazing that Shakespeare knew so much about law, medicine, travel, and the military when he stopped his formal education as a teenager.

TERRY: So many of his plays were set in other countries – like Italy, Scotland, and Denmark. And the chance that he traveled to those places is slim.

ALEX: I was surprised to learn that Shakespeare married when he was just eighteen years old. . . and the woman he married was seven or eight years older than he was.

CHRIS: What was her name? I remember that they had three children.

BOBBIE: Her name was Anne Hathaway. Once William started his career in the theatre, he moved to London and Anne and the kids lived in Stratford–on–Avon.

JESSIE: Anne and William had three children–Susanna, Judith, and Hamnet. I think Judith and Hamnet were twins.

The Edgar Allen Poe Test

CHARACTERS

CHRIS, TERRY, JESSIE, ALEX, and BOBBIE

SETTING: In a living room or classroom

(Students are sitting in desks, on stools, or on chairs and a couch.)

CHRIS: Okay, guys, we've got the test on Edgar Allen Poe coming up tomorrow. Is everybody ready for it?

TERRY: Not really. I think I must have been daydreaming when Mrs. Wilson gave us the notes on Poe.

JESSIE: I've got all the notes. I enjoyed studying about Poe more than any other author we've covered this year.

ALEX: Everybody likes Poe. His writing is pretty creepy, but between his poems and his short stories, he was an amazing writer.

BOBBIE: Well, I'm sorry, but I had a hard time getting to sleep at night the week we studied Poe. I didn't sleep a wink the night we read "The Tell–Tale Heart."

TERRY: That was a scary story. But remember that Mrs. Wilson warned us about Poe's writing . . . she said it was dark, mysterious, and weird.

ALEX: I loved "The Tell -Tale Heart." And I loved "The Black Cat," "The Pit and the Pendulum," and "The Fall of the House of Usher."

CHRIS: If I had to pick a favorite, I'd have to say Poe's poems are the best. How could you not love "The Raven" and "Annabel Lee?"

JESSIE: Can you guys believe that Poe was paid only fourteen dollars for "The Raven?" One of the most famous poems ever written only brought in fourteen dollars!

BOBBIE: That explains why Poe was poor most of his life. He could barely provide for his wife when she was dying.

CHRIS: That's right. Remember the facts we covered about Poe's wife? She died of tuberculosis when she was just twenty four years old.

TERRY: What about the most incredible fact of all about Poe's wife? She was his COUSIN! He married her when she was twelve years old!

ALEX: That was unbelievable! Of course, that would be against the law nowadays. But back in the 1830's, I guess there were no laws against marrying your first cousin.

The O. Henry Test

CHARACTERS

CHRIS, JESSIE, BOBBIE, TERRY, and ALEX

SETTING: In a classroom, living room, library, etc.

JESSIE: I think I like reading short stories better than the other types of literature. They're easy to read and you can finish them in a day instead of weeks.

BOBBIE: No way. Give me a good novel any day over a short story. You really get to know the characters and you get involved in their lives in a novel.

CHRIS: I have a hard time finishing a novel. I get distracted by other things.

ALEX: Did I tell you guys that I started writing a short story? It's not bad. Maybe I could get it published.

TERRY: Have you finished it yet?

ALEX: Well, no. I'm trying to come up with a really good ending.

CHRIS: I bet you're trying to come up with a "surprise ending" like O. Henry used to write.

ALEX: I am. And believe me, I have a lot more respect for O. Henry than I used to. Coming up with a surprise ending is harder than it sounds.

JESSIE: When you consider that O. Henry wrote more than three hundred short stories and all of them had surprise endings, you have to have a lot of respect for his imagination.

TERRY: My favorite O. Henry story is "The Gift of the Magi." That ending is the best. I was totally shocked at how that story ended up.

ALEX: What about "The Ransom of Red Chief?" That ending is hilarious, besides being a surprise.

BOBBIE: Well, I just about cried at the end of "The Last Leaf." The ending of that story tore me up.

TERRY: I could maybe come up with one surprise ending, but that might even be a strain.

ALEX: Believe me, I am struggling with my story, but I'm determined to finish it.

CHRIS: I know that we learned O. Henry's real name, but I can't remember it for the life of me.

BOBBIE: It was William Sydney Porter. He came up with that pen name while he was serving time in prison.

JESSIE: That is so bizarre that he spent three years in a penitentiary for a crime that he may not have committed.

ALEX: If he was innocent, why did he flee to Central America after being charged with the crime?

TERRY: Chill out a minute, guys. I forget what crime O. Henry supposedly committed. What was he accused of?

BOBBIE: Embezzling money from a bank in Texas. He was living in Texas and working as an editor and publisher of a magazine.

JESSIE: When he came back to the states from Central America, he spent three years in Ohio Prison. That's where he started writing his short stories.

The Mark Twain Test

CHARACTERS

CHRIS, TERRY, JESSIE, ALEX, and BOBBIE

SETTING: In a classroom, living room, library, etc.

ALEX: I really liked studying the novels of Mark Twain in class. Don't you guys think he was a great writer?

TERRY: Everybody thinks Mark Twain was a great author. Some people say he's the greatest American writer who ever lived.

BOBBIE: I don't know if I would go that far. But *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is definitely considered to be an American classic.

JESSIE: Don't forget about *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. That's another great one.

CHRIS: Think about how many movies have been made of those two novels. Hollywood owes Mark Twain a round of applause.

ALEX: That's for sure. Hollywood just loves the characters of Tom, Huck, Aunt Polly, and Becky Thatcher.

JESSIE: Too bad that Mark Twain didn't live long enough to see his novels turned into movies. He would have been proud.

TERRY: AND very rich! Okay, let's get to the facts about his life that we need to review for the test. What year was Mark Twain born?

BOBBIE: I know that he was born in the state of Missouri, but I can't remember the year of his birth.

ALEX: I remember. He was born in 1835. That means that Twain was in his twenties during the Civil War.

JESSIE: He worked several jobs before he became a popular writer. He was a newspaper writer and a steamboat pilot.

CHRIS: Growing up on the Mississippi River gave him lots of material to write about. Some of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn's adventures may have been based on Twain's boyhood experiences.

BOBBIE: My favorite scene in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is when Tom and his girlfriend, Becky Thatcher, get lost in a cave during the school picnic. Remember how scary it was in Injun Joe, the bad guy, was trying to get Tom and Becky in a cave?

TERRY: I wonder if anything like that ever happened to Mark Twain?

JESSIE: What about when Tom and Huck were digging for buried treasure late at night? That was a great scene in the novel.

BOBBIE: And the chapter where Tom, Huck and Joe Harper run away from home and hide out on Jackson's Island?
Everybody in the town assumed that they had drowned in the Mississippi.
ALEX: When those three guys decide to come home and hide in the church balcony during their funeral service. . . man,
if I ever did something like that. . . my parents would flip out!

The Robert Louis Stevenson Test

CHARACTERS

CHRIS, TERRY, JESSIE, ALEX, and BOBBIE

SETTING: In a classroom, living room, library, etc.

TERRY: Hey, I finished reading *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* last night. Did you guys finish it?

ALEX: I finished it two days ago. I couldn't stop reading it.

CHRIS: What a change that novel was from *Treasure Island*! It's hard to believe that the same author wrote those two novels.

BOBBIE: Remember what we learned in class about Robert Louis Stevenson? He was known for writing children's poetry and pirate adventure stories when he wrote *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

JESSIE: I like his poetry, especially that poem called "The Swing." (**quoting**) "How do you like to go up in a swing,
Up in the air so blue?
Oh, I do think it is the pleasantest thing
Ever a child can do!"

TERRY: (**quoting**) "Up in the air and over the wall,
Till I can see so wide
Rivers and trees and cattle and all,
Over the country side –"

CHRIS: (**quoting**) "Till I look down on the garden green,
Down on the roof so brown –
Up in the air I go flying again,
Up in the air and down!"

BOBBIE: Now, how in the world did you guys memorize that poem? I have a terrible time memorizing poems!

ALEX: I remember my grandma reading that poem to me all the time when I was little. Granny loved that poem.

TERRY: When we have that test on Robert Louis Stevenson, I bet there will be a bunch of questions on Stevenson's life.
So, let's get to it. Where was he born?

JESSIE: A lot of people think he was born in England, but that's not the place. He was born in Scotland.

CHRIS: People think of England because that's the setting of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

ALEX: We learned that Robert Louis Stevenson was sick most of his life. He was an only child and he spent most of his childhood in his bedroom.

BOBBIE: That's right. He was frail and sickly and he was cared for by a nanny. Because he didn't get to go outside much and play with other kids, he developed a vivid imagination.

TERRY: Man, if I couldn't go outside and play, I would go crazy. . . especially when I was a little kid.

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