

# You Must be Joking Part Two

Five short language teaching plays

Hi, Taxi

You Can't Miss It.

War

The Breadboard

It's Raining

The plays are written in natural English - the English of everyday conversation and they are well within the level of a student who has been learning English for 2 years.

## Hi, Taxi

Characters:

Harry Morgan

Sheila Morgan, his wife

A taxi driver

SHEILA           It has been a wonderful week, Harry, this week in London, hasn't it?

HARRY            Oh yes. And expensive I may say. I'm glad we're going home today.

SHEILA           Did you pay the receptionist?

HARRY            Yes.

SHEILA           How much?

HARRY            Well, double room, room service, 998 pounds.

SHEILA           That much?

HARRY            Yes. We've only got eight pounds left.

SHEILA           Well, we have to catch our plane at the airport. There's a fast train from Victoria Station to Gatwick every twenty minutes. Hail a taxi and let's go to Victoria Station.

HARRY            A taxi?

SHEILA           We can't walk, can we? ... Hi, taxi!

*A taxi stops.*

SHEILA           Victoria Station, please.

DRIVER           Certainly, madam.

HARRY            Before we get in ... what's the fare from here to Victoria Station, do you think?

DRIVER           Ten pounds I think.

HARRY            Good grief! ... *to Sheila:* What are we going to do?

SHEILA           *To the driver:* What about our trunks and suitcases?

DRIVER            You can put them there. No problem.

SHEILA            I know, but what does it cost?

DRIVER            Luggage goes free.

*Sheila puts her suitcase in the taxi.*

HARRY             What are you doing?

SHEILA            Come on, Harry, put the trunks in the taxi.

HARRY             *whispering to her* We haven't got ten pounds.

SHEILA            Put them in.

*Harry puts the two trunks and the suitcase in the taxi.*

DRIVER            Jump in.

SHEILA            No, thank you.

DRIVER            I don't understand?

HARRY             Neither do I.

SHEILA            Please tak our luggage to ViictoriaStation, and please drive slowly.

DRIVER            But what about you?

SHEILA            We'll run beside you.

HARRY             What???

SHEILA            What else?

## You Can't Miss It

Characters:

The tourist

The lady at the bus stop

- TOURIST      Excuse me, can you please tell me how to get to the Central Station?
- LADY          Haven't you got map?
- TOURIST      Yes, that is to say, no. It's only a small map. It shows nothing but the center of the city. I'm afraid we're outside that area.
- LADY          Yes, you are. Well, easiest way is to walk on to the zebra crossing right there at the baker's. Cross the road and turn left. Take the first turning right – it's just opposite the department store – and continue to the traffic lights. Turn left. This is what we call a pedestrian street.
- TOURIST      Is this a pedestrian street?
- LADY          No, no. When you've crossed the road, turned left, turned right and turned left again at the traffic lights, then you're in the pedestrian street.
- TOURIST      I see. Zebra crossing, left, right, traffic lights, left.
- LADY          Right.
- TOURIST      Not left?
- LADY          Yes, left. At the top of the pedestrian street you enter St. Peter's Park. Follow the pathway, right?
- TOURIST      Not left?
- LADY          Right. Continue up to the fountain. Turn right, down the stairs, out of the park, across the street and into Park Lane.
- TOURIST      Just a moment. So that's Pedestrian Park, across St. Peter's fountain and into parking area?
- LADY          No. Park Lane. Okay? Take the third turning left. Remember, not the first, the third. You can't miss it. There's a cinema on the corner. Continue across the square past the Memorial.

TOURIST      Memorial?

LADY          Yes. The Memorial, erected in memory of the Second World War. Behind the Memorial you'll find Main Road and the Central Station. You can't miss it.

TOURIST      Thank you. Cinema Lane. First, second and third World War and the square in memory of the central corner.

LADY          Here comes my bus. Sorry I can't help you any longer. Goodbye. Have a nice day.

TOURIST      Thank you. Where are you going?

LADY          To the Central Station. It's much too far to walk.

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# War

Characters:

Donald, eight years old

Uncle Jack

Uncle Alec

ALEC                   What's your favourite subject, Donald?

DONALD               History, I think.

JACK                   That was my favourite subject too when I went to school. I had a very good teacher.

ALEC                   So had I. As a matter of fact I'm still interested in history.

DONALD               There's one thing I don't understand. How does a war begin?

ALEC                   A war? .. Eh ... Let us say that the English king falls out with the French king.

JACK                   France hasn't got a king.

ALEC                   It's just an example.

JACK                   It's a very poor example. France has a president and we have a queen.

ALEC                   I'm only trying to simplify so that Donald will understand.

JACK                   You can't explain the beginning of a war in that way. War is not the result of private disagreements between kings.

ALEC                   Who taught you that? Maybe your history teacher wasn't so good after all. Read your history book. There's a king on each page.

JACK                   That's right. The kings declare the wars, but they don't cause them.

ALEC                   What a stupid thing to say.

JACK                   War is caused by man's greed.

ALEC                   Isn't a king a man?

JACK                   That'll do. Thank you.

ALEC            You're a fool.

JACK            Same to you. You've never understood that war is not the result of two kings being on bad terms.

ALEC            Oh what a fat lot you know about that.

JACK            War is the result of the ruling class' greed for land and money and power.

ALEC            That's ridiculous.

JACK            You're ridiculous.

ALEC            You're completely ignorant.

JACK            Will you please remove that hand from my sleeve?

ALEC            No, I won't.

JACK            If you don't remove your hand immediately I'll punch you on your nose.

ALEC            Come on. If you punch my nose I'll kick you in the stomach.

JACK            Just you try!

DONALD        Stop it! Stop it!

ALEC            Come one, I'm ready.

DONALD        Stop it. Please, stop it.

JACK            Beg your pardon?

DONALD        Please stop it. I just wanted to know how a war begins.

ALEC            We haven't told you yet.

DONALD        Yes, you have. Now I know all about it. Thank you.

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# The Breadboard

Characters:

A radio announcer

Carol Jenkins, a housewife

Ralph, a youngman, five feet tall, brown eyes, long curly brown hair

Colin, a man with a broad smile

*Carol is dusting. The radio is on. She's listening to the news.*

ANNOUNCER After weeks of negotiation the Chancellor of the Exchequer declared that contributions to charity funds will still be tax deductible. Yesterday evening a small Danish aeroplane, carrying four passengers and a crew of two, made a forced landing at a private airport near the A 1. The plane was badly damaged, but nobody was injured. The aircraft accident board is still investigating the accident so nothing can be said about the cause. The police headquarters have asked us to issue a warning. This morning a prisoner escaped from Reading Jail. He was working in the joiner's workshop making breadboards when he suddenly disappeared. He's five feet tall, with brown eyes and long, brown curly hair. He's regarded as a very dangerous criminal. Any information about the escaped prisoner can be given to Reading Jail or the police. And now the weather forecast. Today's thundery showers will continue for some hours. After the thunder, heavy rain for the rest of the day. Tomorrow ...

*The doorbell rings. Carol turns off the radio and opens the door.*

RALPH Good morning, Mrs Jenkins. May I have a word with you?

CAROL Yes, of course.

RALPH I'm a member of the committee, you know.

CAROL Which committee?

RALPH           The fund-raising committee, you know. We're collecting money for the Youth Club.

CAROL           The youth club?

RALPH           Yes. You've heard about the Youth Club, haven't you?

CAROL           I don't think so.

RALPH           Oh come, Mrs Jenkins. You know the Youth Club in River Lane, don't you? We're collecting money so that we can buy new furniture and have the walls painted.

CAROL           No, I don't know of any youth club.

RALPH           Oh, drat it. Look. It's raining again. I never have any luck. Couldn't we go in and talk, Mrs Jenkins? I'm getting wet.

CAROL           I don't like to have strangers ...

RALPH           It's raining cats and dogs, Mrs Jenkins. Please?

CAROL           Well, you may come in until the shower is over.

RALPH           Thank you. I've got a surprise for you, Mrs Jenkins.

CAROL           A surprise?

RALPH           I've got it in this plastic bag. Look

CAROL           A breadboard?

RALPH           Yes. I've made it myself.

CAROL           You have? A breadboard? Really?

RALPH           You see, collecting money for our Youth Club isn't a simple business. Most people want something in return. So I can offer you this breadboard, Mrs Jenkins.

CAROL           How do you know my name?

RALPH            To be honest, it was on your door.

CAROL            And you want to sell me this breadboard?

RALPH            No. To tell the truth, I just want your money. We need new furniture, Mrs Jenkins.

CAROL            You need my money?

RALPH            Yes. I'll be plain with you, Mrs Jenkins. I'm not selling this breadboard. You may have it if you insist, but I'd rather keep it so that I can go on offering it to people and in that way use it for my real purpose.

CAROL            Your real purpose?

RALPH            You're beginning to understand, aren't you, Mrs Jenkins? I'm looking at you with my brown, beggine yes assking for all what you can spare.

CAROL            Oh no!!

RALPH            Your money is badly needed, Mrs Jenkins.

CAROL            Good Lord, you've got two brown eyes!

RALPH            Most people have two eyes, Mrs Jenkins.

CAROL            You've also got long, curly hair!

RALPH            I know I need a haircut, Mrs Jenkins, butI haven't had the time yet.

CAROL            The breadboard of yours ... you made it yourself?

RALPH            Yes, Mrs Jenkins.

CAROL            Oh my God. How tall are you?

RALPH            Five feet, Mrs Jenkins.

CAROL Help! Help! Don't kill me! Help, HELP!

*She runs out of the house. Colin is passing by.*

COLIN What's the matter?

CAROL The prisoner ... the prisoner from Reading Jail ...

COLIN Prisoner?

CAROL He's in my house. Help me.

COLIN Take it easy, madam, I'll see to it. Just follow me. Don't be scared.

*He runs into the house. Carol follows him.*

COLIN *To Ralph:* Get out of here. Hurry up. Quickly. Get out.

RALPH Get out? But it's still raining, sir.

CAROL If you don't get out immediately I'll call the police.

RALPH I haven't done anything! I'm on the committee, I'm just collecting ...

COLIN If you don't get out now I'll floor you.

RALPH Okay, okay, I'm leaving.

He runs out.

CAROL Oh, thank you, I'm so grateful. You've saved my life. I never thought I'd meet a dangerous criminal. Didn't you recognize him? Brown eyes, long curly hair? The escaped prisoner from Reading Jail.

COLIN Oh yes, sure I did. He was after your money, wasn't he?

CAROL Yes.

COLIN I guess you have a lot of money in the house, haven't you?

CAROL Yes, I have.

COLIN I hope you keep it in a safe place.

CAROL Oh yes, it's in a box under my bed.

*Colin goes to the window and takes out a knife.*

CAROL What are you doing? Why are you cutting off the curtain cord?

COLIN Because I'm going to tie you up. No shouting now.

CAROL But ...

COLIN Keep quiet. I'm going to tie you to the water pipe.

CAROL Oh no! Who are you?

COLIN Look at my brown eyes and my long, curly hair. Well? I'll just tie this table cloth around your mouth. You'll have to sit here until somebody finds you. Goodbye. And thanks for the money. I need it badly. Have a nice day.

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## It's Raining

Characters:  
Ashop assistant  
A customer

CUSTOMER Good afternoon.

ASSISTANT Good afternoon, sir.

CUSTOMER Awful weather, isn't it?

ASSISTANT Certainly, sir. It's raining cats and dogs. Can I help you?

CUSTOMER I want a raincoat, please.

ASSISTANT They're over here, sir.

CUSTOMER Thank you.

ASSISTANT What size?

CUSTOMER My size. It's a raincoat for myself.

ASSISTANT I see. I think you're size 36. I can recommend these raincoats.

CUSTOMER They're grey?

ASSISTANT I'd say beige, sir.

CUSTOMER Haven't you got a brown one?

ASSISTANT Certainly, sir. Here you are.

CUSTOMER Sorry, I don't like that brown. I think it's too dark. Haven't you got a yellow one?

ASSISTANT Yellow? Just a moment. Well, what do you think of this

one? It's a very nice colour, isn't it?

CUSTOMER Oh yes, indeed. You're right. But ... er ... come to think of it, I'm not sure that I can wear a yellow raincoat. No. Not at my age. What other colours have you got?

ASSISTANT I think that we've got a green one somewhere.

CUSTOMER I'd like to have a look at that.

ASSISTANT Here it is, sir.

CUSTOMER Is it my size?

ASSISTANT I think so. Yes, size 36.

CUSTOMER May I try it on?

ASSISTANT Certainly, sir. The fitting room is over there.

CUSTOMER I'll put it on right here. Is it cotton?

ASSISTANT Cotton and polyester, sir.

CUSTOMER 50 % cotton and 50 % polyester?

ASSISTANT No, sir. 35 % cotton and 65 % polyester.

CUSTOMER Is it waterproof?

ASSISTANT Yes, sir, it is.

CUSTOMER Are you sure?

ASSISTANT Yes, I am.

CUSTOMER I think I've changed my mind. I don't want it.

ASSISTANT You don't want it?

CUSTOMER No. I think it's a bit out of fashion. May I have a look at

the brown one again?

ASSISTANT Here you are.

CUSTOMER Is this the price label? 75,35?

ASSISTANT Yes, sir.

CUSTOMER It's rather expensive, isn't it?

ASSISTANT Well ...

CUSTOMER I haven't got 75 pounds, could it possibly be paid by the week?

ASSISTANT You can pay by the week, sir, of course.

CUSTOMER But if I pay by the week I'll have to pay interest, won't I?

ASSISTANT Yes. And a deposit.

CUSTOMER How much?

ASSISTANT Interest about 8 £. Deposit about the same.

CUSTOMER And how much is the weekly payment?

ASSISTANT 98 pence, sir.

CUSTOMER For how many weeks?

ASSISTANT 77 weeks, sir.

CUSTOMER I see.

ASSISTANT Do you want the brown raincoat, sir?

CUSTOMER Doesn't answer.

ASSISTANT Do you want the brown raincoat, sir?

CUSTOMER Beg your pardon?

ASSISTANT DO YOU WANT THE BROWN RAINCOAT??? ...SIR?

CUSTOMER Sorry, I didn't hear what you were saying. I was looking out of the window. Can you see?

ASSISTANT It has stopped raining.

CUSTOMER Yes. I don't need a raincoat now. Goodbye.

ASSISTANT Mrgrgryfflph.

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