

NQS

NOT QUITE SHAKESPEARE

9 Short, Fun Plays In Globish-level English
For ESL Conversation Classes



By David Hon

Not Quite Shakespeare

9 one-act plays by David Hon

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Seattle

The Plays in *Not Quite Shakespeare*

(Serious fun for serious students -- add humor at your own risk!)

Auditions for God (4 players)	5
Director of Church Festival Play must pay actors by the relative value of their role. God is paid the most, so all of the actors come to try out for the role of God. Finally, God himself auditions for the role of God. (He's not very good.)	
War Surplus (5 players)	20
The soldier is already dead. We learn about him but also that, along his path to a final resting place, there are many people with many other things on their minds.	
Walter and Merriam (2 players)	31
Walter and Merriam have a purely business relationship, until they find that -- in a strange way -- they have met before, and possibly have even been in love before.	
Gunfight (6 players)	42
This is set in the old West, but it is a modern story of mixed up affections like you might even find on daytime television.	
Holding Patterns (1 player)	51
When the boss tells her he is not to be contacted for anything, his administrative assistant discovers that she may have the world's problems in her hands.	
Airplane (8 players)	66
Written before the current happenings in air travel, this play deals with a simple insane Madman who has no political cause. Were those the good old days?	
Glass Houses (1 player)	81
A woman finds that her happiness with having everything clean, turns into a house which is closing in on her...	
Murder Mystery (6 players)	88
One after another of the players falls victim to the mysterious killer whom the last players discover just before they, too, die.	
The Mannequin (4 players)	102
Two window-dressers discover that sometimes models come alive in the middle of the night -- perhaps.	

(You can create any of these plays with plain chairs in an empty room.)

Appendix 115

*The 1500 Globish-English Words -- and A Few Thoughts on
How Limited Language Can Create More and Better Usage*

History of the Plays 120

At This Stage of English....

Most language teachers have discovered that the language they are teaching to students is either a series of meaningless exercises or a living situation created through language. People communicate with each other during situations, not exercises. Questions and answers do not make situations, and therefore the learning they offer is sometimes meaningless. Real language depends on people who understand the situation and then offer more language that changes the situation.

More than one writer has talked about Life as a stage where people are playing roles. The most language can be learned, in the most depth, and the most quickly, when the student plays a part in short dramas. The student who is preparing to play a role is preparing to use the language. The student who has been in a play -- even in a careful reading -- will come to real-life language situations with much less fear. After using language meaningfully in short dramas, he or she will look at language situations in life and say: (1) "I have heard these words before." (2) "I know where I am." (3) "I know what is happening." (4) "I know what I am expected to say." (5) "I know what the other person will probably say." And, (6) "I will know what has changed when we say what we say."

Years ago, these plays were first performed with English conversation classes in South America. Then, in the U.S., Contemporary Drama Service published them as a book called *Rehearsals for Armageddon*. Teachers use them because they require only small cast and nothing else but chairs for a "set." They were used not only by drama classes in English-speaking schools, but even in small theaters like the famous Second City group in Chicago. So... we know they "work" as theater.

Of course the excellent teacher will use this "play practice" to stress how a word is said by a student/actor. This will mean not only pronunciation, but "sentence stress" that gives the word its real meanings. The excellent teacher will use these plays to discuss why characters in the play are saying things, and in what ways. Pointing or waving with hands, moving to stage positions, smiling or looking sad -- all of these add meaning, all are part of "language."

So, besides being a fun way to interact with language, these plays will hopefully offer students much more. Plays have -- in the past -- been ways that people prepare for real situations. Both early hunters and current astronauts played roles ahead of time that would keep them alive later. In the case of students, they may learn timing. They may learn new words. They may learn a little grammar. Or a little pronunciation. But in these plays they will certainly learn language. The ease of using Globish-English should be clear. Its word range is limited to 1500 Globish words (plus variations), *international* words, and *technical* words like "audience" that come with the situation (-- for more on this see Appendix). Students can learn to use language without always worrying about a new word coming in to surprise them. What we offer with each play will just be a few ideas, perhaps not even the best ideas. Those "best ideas" will probably come from you -- and your students. David Hon, 2010

Auditions for God

a one-act play by David Hon

Cast:

The Director

His Assistant (a teenage girl)

Paul Gross (an actor)

Windemere Fitch (an actress)

+ Voice offstage

Setting - Empty Theatre, Stage Area

Auditions For God is based on a real practice of the churches in Europe in the middle ages. The "good people" were paid more than the "bad people" - at least in the theater. But that's all the history and old ideas you will need to do this play. Whatever your culture, you can understand the problems between any organization and its artists.

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1
2
3 (As lights come up, the Director is sitting in a Director's Chair. His Assistant sits beside with a
4 writing board, on a somewhat smaller chair. She is quickly taking his notes.)
5

6 DIRECTOR: (Looking back at an actor who has just departed) Lord, I hope that's
7 nearly the end of them ...
8

9 ASSISTANT: (Carefully writing) ... nearly ...the ... end ... of ...
10

11 DIRECTOR: No... no ... Don't take that down.
12

13 ASSISTANT: (Looking up) Oh ... oh ... I'm sorry.
14

15 DIRECTOR: That's OK... It's beginning to get to both of us. (Tired)...
16 How many has that been?
17

18 ASSISTANT: (After quick count on board) One hundred and twenty-five.
19

20 DIRECTOR: I told them ... When I took this job ... I told them it was
21 a stupid way to pay actors ... And they said, with their
22 noses in the air, that that was what the Church
23 committee had decided ..Well, this ... (Large gesture
24 with arm) is what they get.
25

26 ASSISTANT: It's no wonder, if God gets paid twice as much as
27 any other part.
28

29 DIRECTOR: Yeah, and it's just a walk-on ... And the really bad thing
30 is their "sliding scale" ... I had enough people trying out for
31 Jesus to get a good one. And Mary still gets paid enough
32 so I had some selection there ... But I tell you ... You get down
33 to Pontius Pilate and it's rough going ... Twenty-five cents a
34 performance? That's terrible pay...
35

36 ASSISTANT: I guess the committee feels it's getting back at
37 the bad people in the Bible...
38

39 DIRECTOR: And the role of the Devil...
40

41 ASSISTANT: (Looking through script) What a great role ...
42

43 DIRECTOR: Yes... Yes, best role in the play ... And I'm going to have
44 to give it to my simple brother Harry ... who always
45 wants to be an actor... Because the Committee will
46 pay the Devil nothing ... No money at all ... I mean,
47 actors have to eat, too.

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ASSISTANT: *(Looking to wings at Stage Right)* Well, there's only one left ... I think ...

DIRECTOR: Poor actors... All trying to get the role of God... And it doesn't even say in the script what God should be like ... I mean ... What's his motivation?

ASSISTANT: Should I call the next one?

DIRECTOR: Yeah ... Let's get it over with.

ASSISTANT: Next!

(Enter Paul Gross, smiling to everyone like an television news broadcaster)

PAUL: *(Stepping forward)* Hello... *(sticks out hand to DIRECTOR)* I'm Paul Gross.

(Director and Assistant look down briefly at his outstretched hand, but neither takes it.)

ASSISTANT: Could you ... Stand over there a bit ... At center stage?

PAUL: *(Dropping hand)* Oh ... yeah ... sure. *(Steps back a bit to center stage)*

ASSISTANT: *(Writing)* Paul Gross ... How do you spell Gross?

PAUL: Like in 12 times 12...

ASSISTANT: *(Still looking at writing board)* I was never any good at numbers ... How do you spell it?

PAUL: Gross ... G-R-O-S-S ... *(Friendly)* You see, it's an English---

ASSISTANT: *(Cutting him off)* Age?

PAUL: Thirty-one.

DIRECTOR: Experience?

PAUL: Oh, yes ... *(Brings out a thick briefcase)*

DIRECTOR: That's enough experience ... OK Paul ... How do you feel about God?

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2
3 PAUL: (*Waiting too long -- so he appears important*)... I feel that
4 God is the Highest of the High ... The Greatest of the
5 Great ... Maker of the sky (*moves his hand up*) and
6 the earth ...(*moves his hand down*)
7
8 ASSISTANT: (*To Director*) It's really getting late ...
9
10 DIRECTOR: Yes, of course ... OK Paul ... Let's hear you read a few
11 lines ... (*Hands him sheet of paper*)
12
13 PAUL: (*Studies sheet, loosens arms.. Begins*
14 *with as deep a voice he can*) And in the beginning I
15 said, "Let there be light!" and there was light. ..
16 (*Becoming louder*) ... And I said "Let there be Heaven
17 and Earth!" and there was Heaven and Earth ... (*Really*
18 *loud now*) ... AND I SAID ...
19
20 DIRECTOR: Uh ... Paul ... I would probably have you bring it down a bit?
21
22 PAUL: (*Apologizing*) Well I mean that's the way I think God
23 should be played ... I mean, God never turns off ...
24
25 DIRECTOR: (*Doubtful*) Uh ... yeah ... All right, could you read the
26 lines in the next section there?
27
28 PAUL: (*Loudly again*) Adam ... I have brought you ... woman.
29
30 DIRECTOR: OK ... Thank you ... That will be all.
31
32 PAUL: That's it?
33
34 DIRECTOR: Yes ... (*Trying to ease him out*) The others are in the
35 next room ... If you'd like to wait for my decision.
36
37 PAUL: But ... but I didn't get a chance to do my angry voice ...
38 my angry voice is very good, I've been told ... (*Pointing*
39 *at his sheet of paper*) Look here ... You've got an angry
40 voice line that was just made for me ... (*Begins*)
41 "Children of Earth, you have forgotten me ... "
42
43 DIRECTOR: OK, Paul, that's enough...
44
45 PAUL: ... "Children of the Earth, you have forgotten me and
46 you pray to stone images now" ...
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3 DIRECTOR: *(Raising voice)* All right! Fine! Thank you.
4

5 PAUL: *(Sadly)* But I really need this part ... I've got bills to pay ...
6 And a poor sick mother.
7

8 DIRECTOR: I'm sorry, but that comes with the job, if you're an
9 actor. Now, who's next?
10

11 ASSISTANT: Was there anyone behind you?
12

13 PAUL: *(Looking back off stage right)* Uh ... I think there's one
14 more ... *(Picking up papers)* ... Doesn't look too good for
15 me, right?
16

17 ASSISTANT: Could you have him come in?
18

19 PAUL: It's... a woman.
20

21 DIRECTOR: Hey, that's an interesting idea ... God being a
22 woman ... Uh ... Mr. Gross. you can go into the next
23 room now.
24

25 PAUL: *(To Director)* You're not thinking of giving this role to a
26 woman are you?
27

28 DIRECTOR: I hadn't really thought of anything yet... Now if you
29 could let us get on with it, please.
30

31 PAUL: *(Trying to keep their attention as he edges offstage)*
32 Well ... whatever you do ... don't give it to a woman ... I
33 mean, of course you can see that would destroy the
34 whole play. And besides ... My God ... I could never
35 look anyone in the face if I lost this role to a woman...
36 I mean to another man, OK... Fair is fair... But I just
37 couldn't stand it ... if the "better man" was a woman.
38

39 DIRECTOR: *(Trying not to listen)* NEXT!
40

41 *(Enter Windemere Fitch... Older... and a little heavy.)*
42

43 ASSISTANT: Name?
44

45 WINDEMERE: Windemere Fitch.
46

47 DIRECTOR: They call you Windy?

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WINDEMERE: That's fine, yes ...

DIRECTOR: Well, I hadn't thought of this ... I mean it is hard to think of God as a woman ...

ASSISTANT: It's not hard for me.

DIRECTOR: Or me either, really ... I wonder why I never thought of God as a woman before? Well ... Here ... *(Hands her the sheet with lines)* Say the top line please.

WINDY: *(With Mona Lisa smile and a soft voice)* And I said "Let there be light"...

DIRECTOR: That's such a ... pleasant ... God. Try the "stone image" line.

WINDY: *(Like a first-grade teacher to children)* "Children of the Earth, you have forgotten me and you pray to stone images now" ...

DIRECTOR: *(Interested)* A woman God ...

WINDY: Yes ... I'd be the God of Nature, see ... All-giving ... reasonable... good ... without any badness... I can't think of God as angry in any way ... No ... I see God ... well ... more like the mother of the universe.

DIRECTOR: *(Thinking out loud)* So that would mean that all things come from God ... and so all things ... are good?

WINDY: Why ... yes ... of course.

DIRECTOR: No matter what?

WINDY: No matter what ... *(Smiles warmly)* It's all good.

DIRECTOR: But do you see what that would do?

WINDY: What?

DIRECTOR: Then there would be no evil ... *(On edge of seat, voice slightly raised)* and no fighting ... *(Rising, speaking down at Windy)* and no problems ... *(shouting)* ...So there is No ... PLAY! ... My God woman ... With the God you're suggesting, there would be no theater!

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WINDY: *(Aback, pointing to herself)* I ... I didn't mean that!

DIRECTOR: *(In total anger)* You meant exactly that ... OUT! NO PLAY? ... GET OUT!!!

WINDY: Someday men will realize ... *(As she leaves)*

DIRECTOR: Not a word more ... *(Pointing)* OUT! ... *(Settling back into his chair as she exits)* A woman God... NEXT!

ASSISTANT: *(Walking to Stage Right, looking into the side)* There is no "next."

DIRECTOR: No "next" ... Ah ... So, now my decision ... You know, every time there was a "next," I could put off my decision ... I hate this part ... You know, in truth, every director is looking for the actor who will make the decision for him ... Just walk in and "be" the part, understand? So that the director doesn't have to reason and guess and ... *(Very sad, he hangs his head down)*.

ASSISTANT: But they all made some kind of decision ... on how to say the lines ...

DIRECTOR: They made the wrong ones ... I'm looking for someone to make the right decision for me.

ASSISTANT: Could I make a suggestion? I think the woman ... Windy ... had something there.

DIRECTOR: What?

ASSISTANT: But ... You were exactly right... There was no drama ... Now I see God *(Rises as she speaks)* as a young girl... much like myself ...

DIRECTOR: Are you trying for the part?

ASSISTANT: Well ... yeah ... OK.

DIRECTOR: Thank you... Thank you... For a minute there I was so worried... With no "next" ... and all those one hundred and twenty-seven people out there waiting for my

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3 decision... *(A quick suspicion)* ... You're not doing this
4 for the money...

5
6 ASSISTANT: Of course not ... Now listen ... God is a young girl ... look
7 at the world with fresh young eyes ... Give me the
8 sheet...

9
10 DIRECTOR: *(Obediently)* Oh, yes ... *(Handing it)* Of course ...

11
12 ASSISTANT: *(Reads lovingly)* "Let there ... be light"...

13
14 DIRECTOR: *(Interested)* Yes?

15
16 ASSISTANT: *(Sweetly)* "Let there be ... Heaven ... and Earth"...

17
18 DIRECTOR: *(More interested)* Oh, yes ...

19
20 ASSISTANT: *(Now selling herself to him)* So do you see ... God is in
21 love with the world...

22
23 DIRECTOR: Then why ... *(Not responding to reason, as he did to*
24 *feeling)* ... does God send horrible storms down upon us?

25
26 ASSISTANT: That's an old question.

27
28 DIRECTOR: God could answer it.

29
30 ASSISTANT: *(With no ideas)* Ummm ... *(Guesses)* You always hurt the
31 one you love?

32
33 DIRECTOR: Good try You almost had me ... Almost got me to
34 hand the decision to you ... But ... no matter ... with the
35 wild and wonderful minds we true artists have ... I
36 came to a decision just now ... Let them in ...

37
38 ASSISTANT: *(Looking out at audience)* They're already here ...
39 *(Motioning for Director to look out at audience)* They
40 came back in ... *(Walks to edge of stage)* I told you
41 people to wait in there ...

42
43 DIRECTOR: *(Rising, looking out with kindness)* No matter ... They've all
44 struggled with this character ... So they will see the
45 reasons behind my decision.

46
47 *(Paul and Windy have crept onto the edges of the stage)*

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3 DIRECTOR: *(To audience)* Uh ... humph ... Uh ... I thank you all for
4 coming to these try out... And let me say that I didn't
5 see anyone who wouldn't qualify as God... *(Eyes roll*
6 *upward)* ... in some situation... You all did very well
7 today... But I'm sorry to have to tell you that after much
8 thought, I've decided ... that none of you has won the role.
9

10 *(Paul and Windy and Assistant react together: Hmmm? What? etc.)*

11 ASSISTANT: How can we have a play without God?

12 DIRECTOR: We shall have a God.

13 WINDY: How can we have a God... and not have a God?

14 DIRECTOR: Quite simple ... It came to me in a second... Like from
15 above *(Looking upward)*... you might say.

16 ASSISTANT: What?

17 DIRECTOR: I ... will be God.

18 *(Actors all look at each other, not believing)*

19 ASSISTANT: After all this ... you? *(Looks at him hard, for an answer)*

20 DIRECTOR: Now wait ... It's simple ... Don't you see? If I select God I
21 truly become God ... So really, there's no way out of
22 it for me ... I mean, who can select God but God himself?

23 WINDY: The people could decide...

24 PAUL: Yes, the actors ...

25 DIRECTOR: Not really ... You'd all kill each other... with everyone
26 choosing himself ... or herself...

27 WINDY: What about a democratic God?

28 DIRECTOR: *(Wisely)* Even a democratic God would only be a bit
29 more than half a God... and half a God is worse than
30 no God at all.

31 ASSISTANT: Well, I must say... You've thought about all this..
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3 PAUL: He certainly has... But we don't agree...
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5 DIRECTOR: Well, it's not an easy decision... but I can't avoid it...
6 I am the one who must choose God, so I am God.
7

8 *(General low voices from the actors-- who don't like it. The Director stands watching as Windy
9 and Paul begin to leave. Then a new voice comes from offstage. The Voice is not like that of the
10 Director.)*

11
12 VOICE FROM OFFSTAGE: Uh ... Hey ... Excuse me, but ... Where am I?
13

14 DIRECTOR: *(Looking around, trying to see where the voice is
15 coming from)* You are in the Sunday School room.
16

17 VOICE: Of a church?
18

19 DIRECTOR: That's right... Hey, where are you?
20

21 VOICE: You just said ... in the Sunday School room.
22

23 DIRECTOR: No, I mean ...
24

25 VOICE: And, who are you?
26

27 DIRECTOR: Uh ... the director ... I'm the director.
28

29 VOICE: Oh, well ... that's good ... Could you please direct me to
30 Hell?
31

32 DIRECTOR: *(Not hearing well)* Pardon me?
33

34 VOICE: Can you please direct me to Hell? .. They're standing in
35 formation down there waiting for me.
36

37 ASSISTANT: Then ... Then you're the Devil
38

39 VOICE: *(Apoligizing)* Well no, if I was the Devil, I'd know where
40 to go. No really... you see ... I'm God.
41

42 DIRECTOR: *(To Assistant)* Do you see where that voice is coming
43 from? Don't just stand there, look around ... I'll keep him
44 talking ... *(looking upward)* Do you get down to Hell very often?
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VOICE: You don't have to look up to talk to me ... Why does everyone have the idea I'm up somewhere? And that Hell is down? If Hell were just down, it would be easy to find ...

DIRECTOR: *(Quietly to Assistant)* Did you see anyone?

(Assistant shakes her head slowly, rather terrified)

DIRECTOR: *(Still quietly)* Well, keep looking ... won't have some joker is trying to ruin my play. *(In full voice, upward)* Uh ... what do you do when you go to Hell?

VOICE: I really don't like being called a joker ... I'm trying to do this job as best I can ... But I know my limitations, you see ... That's why we're having a Change of Command ceremony ... Every few million years -- .. I change places with Satan and he runs the universe ... It's sort of an exchange program we have. He's pretty good at running things and I make such a bad job of it... You know... Stars get in the wrong places and all that. So, anyway, he sets things right ... Balances the books, sort of ... and then we change back again.

DIRECTOR: Where are you? Up on the roof somewhere? Are you Frank, the building supervisor, playing tricks with the sound system?

VOICE: You wish ... Being God's not so easy, you know ... I think I got it because nobody else wanted it ... Well, in truth, there was nobody else there to take the job at the time, or I'd have given it to him, for sure.

WINDY: *(Angered)* Him? How about a woman? Would you have given the job to a woman?

VOICE: Sure ... Why not? But really, who would want it? It's not much fun.

ASSISTANT: *(Gesturing to audience)* All these people wanted it...

PAUL: And this director chose himself into it.

DIRECTOR: *(Looks to audience)* Look everybody . *(Looking up)* and you, too ... *(Back to audience)* I mean, it's just a play! *(Up again)* I didn't really want the job of God.

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3 VOICE: Well, there's nothing in the rules that says you can't take
4 my place ... I know that because I make the rules when
5 I have time ... And then Satan comes around and we
6 argue and he's usually right and so I make other rules to
7 to replace my first rules, but then I forget which ones
8 are the new rules ... That's why you had the last Ice Age
9 a while back ... Remember that?

10
11 DIRECTOR: I'm ... too young.

12
13 VOICE: So, your play has me in it?

14
15 DIRECTOR: Ah ... so this is a imaginative audition ... well, whoever you
16 are, though it's not my desire to offend anyone ... it's just
17 very clear to me that I should play the part.

18
19 VOICE: I really respect you reasonable humans ... Satan is
20 very good that way too ... Really knows his business ...
21 Has all the right moves, so to speak... So he's much
22 better at being God than I am... he tells me so all the
23 time... You know ... I hate to say this ... but being in the
24 spotlight all the time, I never get a chance to practice .
25 Maybe that's why I'm such not such a good God. I
26 really need a place to sort of ... practice.

27
28 ASSISTANT: You could practice by being God in the play ...

29
30 VOICE: I thought you'd never ask ... But I need a body to
31 change places with ...And, anyway, I should be in Hell
32 any minute ... Who would go there in my place?

33
34 (Slowly everyone on stage looks toward the Director)

35
36 DIRECTOR: Hey, wait a minute...

37
38 WINDY: Ah, yes ...

39
40 DIRECTOR: Now stop... If this is just some joke you actors thought up...

41
42 ASSISTANT: Uh...What if it's not?

43
44 DIRECTOR: All right... All right... then what do I do now? (*Not believing*)

45
46 VOICE: Stand still...

47

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3 DIRECTOR: *(Shakes his body)* Hoo boy... Who's doing that? *(He looks*
4 *around at the actors)* Nobody's doing it...*(Shakes again)*
5 Hoo boy... Feels good! But you don't mean... *(Begins to look*
6 *terrified)* That's not Frank the building supervisor up there?

7
8 *(Actors all shake their heads slowly as he looks for help from them)*

9
10 DIRECTOR: Then that is really...? *(Points upward)*

11
12 *(Actors move their heads up and down together slowly to answer "yes")*

13
14 DIRECTOR: And so I am really going to ...?

15
16 *(Actors move their heads up and down more quickly, smiling)*

17
18 DIRECTOR: Hoooooboy Hoooo Hooooo Hooooo ... *(jumping up*
19 *and down and shaking his body)* ... Hoooboyyyyyyy!

20
21 *(Director goes tight in his muscles, his eyes roll back in head, and he falls to the floor like his legs*
22 *are spaghetti... Then, shaking his head a little, he rises and begins brushing himself off ... He*
23 *smiles nicely at the Assistant)*

24
25 DIRECTOR: *(With speech sounding like the Voice)* Hi, gang ...
26 Ugh ... This guy was pretty hairy ... *(Shouts upward)*
27 Hey, when you find Satan, tell him I said to be nice to
28 humans this time up... He makes them afraid when he
29 hits the floor with his tail ... and well ... *(Sympathetically)*
30 Good luck with Hell.

31
32 *(Director turns to Paul and Windy and Assistant)*

33
34 DIRECTOR: OK ... we got any sets to paint?

35
36 ASSISTANT: You paint sets? When you paint... the sunsets?

37
38 DIRECTOR: Just give me orders ... Okay? Please ... I haven't had
39 anybody give me orders in a million years.

40
41 ASSISTANT: Well, I guess I'm the director now... so all right ... do your lines.

42
43 DIRECTOR: Which lines?

44
45 ASSISTANT: *(Handing sheet)* These ...
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DIRECTOR: *(Reading with difficulty)* And I said, "Let-there-be-light"
(Looks up at all the disappointed faces) "And-there-
was-light" ... *(Stops)* Not so good, huh?

WINDY : Well, listen ... let us help you ... perhaps you need to say
it with a little more gentleness...

(They all move around him)

PAUL: And a little more ... authority ...

ASSISTANT: And a little more

(Lights fade as they gather around, helping him with his lines)

END

Directing Student Actors to "Project" Each Word

After each play we will talk about a different way to use plays to help Conversation Classes. Of course, much of what we say with each one will apply in great measure to all of the plays.

The nicest thing about being directed in a play is that you are being helped by someone who knows what he or she wants "the Play" to sound like...a director rather than a teacher. Directors work with just the words and sentences in the play. The teacher tries to fix everything about your general English usage. In working toward a Play, you are not given correction on your bad English, but you are instead helped to say the lines in this Play in a way that will help the play for the audience. Even if the "audience" is only the other classmates, the help you get is to be part of the Cast, part of a team of players. No member of the team will be perfect. This helps students to learn to say a lot of things -- without being afraid to fail.

Another thing about working with a play is that you learn to project your words so that 1000 people in the audience can understand you. This means that the director will give you little extras, such as ways to pronounce consonants so they don't get lost in the air. The good director will tell you not to just say God...but to put an extra syllable on it so that the "D" carries out over the audience. You will start by saying God-duh. It's like "follow-through" when kicking or throwing or hitting a ball... that extra little bit that makes the ball fly straight. Almost any time you "lose" the sound of a consonant at the end of a word, you can add that extra syllable -- **add-duh that-tuh whole-luh** extra syllable for "follow-through"...and then pull it back a little. People will immediately think your pronunciation is wonderful. Holy men in English speaking churches want to be certain everyone hears them, and they will often say God-duh. Many times.

Another interesting point: The English language used to have that kind of ending on many words. That is one reason it has those silent "e"s now. If you listen to someone reading Middle English (a fun experience) you will hear those extra syllables on words where there are none now. And God-duh is always right there with them.

Floor Plan and Production Notes

Actors exit and return

X Director

Actors first enter

X Assistant

X

(Audience)

The Director is clearly important, because he must change from a mean person into a gentle leader.... No small job for any of us. A sound system is not necessary for the voice of God. Any strong voice offstage will do, because when God comes into the Director's body, he also has the Director's voice, etc., and so don't worry about recording the Director's second voice. It is his change, and final manner, which will make the ending successful. Also, a well-timed "freeze" of five seconds can serve as "lights up" and "lights down". This will be useful in classrooms or other stages where you cannot control the lights very well.

History of the Plays

These plays began in David Hon's English Conversation Classes in Manizales, Colombia, many long years ago. They were picked up by a U.S. play publisher shortly after Hon returned to the U.S. This book of plays, ***Not Quite Shakespeare***, is now drawn from two former books of plays, ***Rehearsals For Armageddon I*** and ***2*** published and managed by Contemporary Drama Service of Downers Grove, Chicago.

The plays were performed professionally several times over the years, most notably by *The Second City* group in Chicago and by *Dudley Riggs Theater* in Minneapolis. Later, they were rediscovered and became ideal for directors classes in drama schools where their basic design -- stressing small casts and blank stages -- made them useful for another several years.

Mr. Hon has an MA in English and is both TESOL and BE Certified. He received rights back to offer these plays this year. He now hopes to make them helpful again -- as they began -- with English Conversation Classes. This occurred at the same time that *Globish The World Over* -- a book written IN Globish by Hon and Nerrière -- was published in e-book form and in paperbound at Amazon.com (- also being translated into 10 languages). More on Globish at:

www.globish.com www.jpn-globish.com www.bizeng.mobi