

Etude Monologues

An Etude is a musical term for a short composition, typically one instrument, designed to improve the technique or demonstrate the skill of a musician. This is the guiding principal behind these 21 monologues. Each offers up classic acting challenges and situations for the young performer. They are written for the ES/MS Actor but a few could be done by the HS performer. Also, both male and female with just slight dialogue changes could do each of these monologues.

1. Window Watcher

Man did I luck out! Jasmine (Michael) McAllister moved in right next door to me! She's known for her glitter rainbow scrunches and matching outfits. (He's known for his long blonde hair and muscle T-shirts.) After three long, long weeks of seeing her (him) bring friends over, or riding her (his) bike or sun bathing (playing basketball). I decided to make my move. So I sat by the only window in my house where you can catch a glimpse of her (him). Then when I realized it was the right time and even worse, I realized she (he) knew that I liked her (him), I stomped out my front door and asked Jasmine (Michael) McAllister out. Her (His) cheeks turned red and she (he) looked down at her (his) feet, muttering something about a boy (girl) named Bobby (Betsy). So I shuffled back into my spot by the window and watched Bobby (Betsy) come over and flirt with her (him). I would never get Jasmine (Michael) to go out with me. But I got her (his) best friend, Stephanie (Zach) Jones to go out with me instead. So now at least I get to be closer to Jasmine (Michael) McAllister. Yeah! Go me!

2. Jump off the bridge

If your friends jumped off a bridge, would you? Would you? Well it wasn't like I was actually jumping off a bridge or anything, just a stupid ole swing! Stupid Billy with his big fat pimply nose! He'd said he call me a girly girl if I didn't. Ya know, jump off the swing. Idiot! I mean, I won like three events at field day last year and he just sits around with his annoying voice saying- "I dare ya! I dare ya! I double dare you girly girl! (Repeat once.)" Call me a girly girl! So I thought this would be a piece of pie. I was known as the biggest baddest and bravest swinger in Mrs. Monroe's class. And when I went to jump off that swing, I did! I flew. I soared. I shot through the air. I glided. I floated and then everything went bang! When I woke up, I had a broken arm. But first thing I saw was Billy's red pizza face, greasy hair and his stupid nose in my face laughing. I didn't care he was laughing. I didn't care- not one bit! It wasn't a bridge!

3. See Saw Paradise

First day of fourth grade...first day of school ever for me...the "home schooled kid." I sat behind her all morning. She had three beautiful brown pigtails, and the most amazing blue bow I'd ever seen...Tanya! Tanya! At recess, I sat on the biggest, most brightly colored seesaw I'd ever seen: just eating my cream cheese and sour cream sandwich. So I sat there...and who should walk up? Tanya! Her green polka dot parachute pants whipping back & forth, she asked me the "home school kid", to be the "see" to her "saw"! Tanya! Tanya! Up and down we went, faster and faster, and I knew then...I loved her! But, unhappy day! At the peak of my flight, I lost grip of my sandwich! It tumbled, in slow motion, down... down... down, hitting her right in her beautiful face! Oh, the horror! I apologize... too late... too late. She started screaming. Others laughed. So now... I seesaw alone.

4. Tuba

When I grow up I want to be a tuba. Cause it's big and loud and gold and shiny. And I like things to be like that. And don't try to tell me that I can't, that I can't be a tuba cause my parents tell me that every day and my guidance counselor says that parents should be supportive and my parents tell me I can't be a tuba and they're not supportive. And one time I um ate a worm. But tubas are really, really neat. And they're really lucky too. Cause they don't have to do ABC's or adding vegetables or I mean eating vegetables or um wear cloths. And they're lucky too. Cause all grownups always complain about work and stuff and I think you should be happy always cause it's more fun to be happy than mad or sad so I want to be a tuba cause it makes me happy. And I think if I don't be a tuba when I'm older then I'll just be sad and cry all the time like those depressing commercials on the TV.

5. Pokemon Pal

Oh my gosh, Timmy! What do you think you are doing? You mosey on in here like you own the world. Like you're Harry Potter. But you're not Harry Potter. And you don't own the world. And what gives you the right to come into my room? Mess with my Pokemon cards? Shuffle them. Fold them. Replace them out of order. I've had enough Timmy! I've categorized them, and cross-reference them, and categorize my cross-reference only to have you ruin it. That was like weeks of work. Categorizing 788 cards along with cross referencing and then categorizing the cross referencing is like... like ...like a life time goal. Just go. Now. Now, Timmy! Go! I mean it! Out! Get out of here! Thank You. Now it's just me. Alone with my Pokémon cards. My Pokémon cards. My cards. Alone. All ... alone. I need no one and have ... no one. No one. Timmy wait! Timmy come back!

6. Pants

Nothing is the same...absolutely freaking nothing. All sense of self dignity and pride... gone. I was something of a social butterfly considering I had just moved to this now horrid town from freaking Connecticut. Well that's out the window and over the hills now, which is probably somewhere real freaking far from here because there are no hills on the coast! Yeah, gone on laugh. But laughter, she is a stranger to me now. Man! Any "she" is a stranger to me now. All because of that one day where my life was stunted in my pants-ified tracks. And it all happened within a fraction of a second... I was pantsed... in front of the entire middle school student body. Yes. This is true. So now all shall gaze upon the

walking (not talking) prime example of the aftermath of being pants-ed. One day, I shall regain my former social stature. Mark my words, from now, I wear a belt!

7. Babysitter

Oh! Thank god you are here because I am about to be dead! D, E, A, D. Dead! I know you might not have the time for this, but- The boys. The house. The mess. I can't take this any longer! They will be home soon. Look! My mom made me agree to do this. Babysit the Wilson's three boys for two whole hours? And after the Wilsons left it began. They vanished. Gone. The three boys I mean. I turned the whole entire house upside down to find them, and finally after 30 minutes there they were... in the cabinet under the sink covered in Oreo crumbs. Then when they saw how mad I was...slipped right past me and into the backyard. When I got out there to find them? Vanished. Again. Poof! They're like little wizards or something. Then I had to dodge the mud balls and was just hosing down the patio and that's when you rang. So please Mr. Pizza man, will you please help me out?

8. There He Is

Oh my god! No Cara! Don't turn around. He is right behind you. Oh he is so cute. I need to get my phone out and take a picture! No don't turn around. He is so cute. I'm about to die here. OMG. No don't turn around. No, he's coming this way. How do I look? Is that pimple still showing? What? What? What? What is that look on your face about? What? No! The makeup I put on it this morning is gone. No! Quick give me some of that cover up foundation. Wait. What is he doing? Who's he talking to over there? Molly Tripper? Oh well that is no surprise. Come on let's go. I am over this. No put away the makeup I don't-wait! Is he coming over here! OMG I am going to die. Run!

9. Good Angel Bad Angel

And there it sits. My Boss' wallet! Fat with the rolls and rolls of money. Just like his fat butt that he sits on every day while I do all of the work. Don't you do it! What are you saying? You know what I am saying? No I don't. You're thinking of stealing it? Oh come on! I am not thinking about? Yes you are? Well it would be a great revenge but I am not. Yes you are! You just admitted it. Well I'm not going to do it. Yes you are. I am not. Yes you are! I am not. Yes you are! I am not. Yes you are! I am-how dare you slap me in the face. How dare you think such greedy thoughts? I am not talking to you anymore. Well, that is going to be hard thing to do let me tell-how dare you slap me. -Hey stop it. -You stop it. I'm leaving. So am I.

10. Kid's Table

This is totally stupid. Thanksgiving dinner at the children's table. Yeah here you go. Sitting next to a 3 year who can't keep-what? Oh yeah here you go, who can't keep her mouth shut while she is chewing. Ooo stop that! Shut your mouth. No it doesn't look like vomit! And then here on my other side, what? Is Aunt Ester with her hearing aid never on. What? Yes. Aunt Ester I am enjoying third grade a lot this year. Forgetful too. I'm going into 6th grade next year. You would think that would mean something. But no I get stuck here and all of the adults are over there-what? Yeah here you go. I am stuck with corndog eating 3, 4, 6 and 7 years olds at the kids' table. What Aunt Ester? Yes this is a nice time. Yes all of these children are very cute and precious. Close your mouth when you eat. Ridiculous.

11. Ant Farm

All right men. I know it's been discouraging. We've built seven tunnels so far and each has run into a pane of glass. Yes Franklin? Yes I know you think it is useless. That there is glass everywhere. Yes I know. I have heard you. Okay. Okay. Quiet! Thank you. Let's not forget who is the general here? I will continue. Now I've got a good feeling about this one. Number eight is the answer. We are going straight up. Straight up and out of this crazy desert. It may be futile but we must, we must, we must, we must! It has to be done. This is life. There is no denying it. We must keep our spirits up. The glass can't contain us forever. You've seen what is on the outside of this clear prison. Now who is with me? Franklin your objections have been noted. Yes, I did read the letter you sent me too. Now who is with me!!

12. The Answers

Psst. Psst. Psst. Hey what's your name? Melvin? So Melvin interested in the answers to Mrs. Malone's 3rd Grade's annual civil war test. It's not cheating! What? Look you better not report it or I'll see you on the playground during recess and you'll be sorry. You don't want a fourth grader after you. Get lost! Psst. Psst. Psst. Hey you! All right fine, go ahead ignore me. Honor student. Psst. Psst. Psst. Psst. Psssssssssssssssst! Yeah you fat boy! Interested in the answers to Mrs. Malone's 3rd Grade's annual civil war test. I know you're in her class. It's not cheating. You still have to memorize the stuff. Fine go ahead. I wouldn't sell them to you any way. What's the world coming to? Can't one make a living anymore. Hey You. Psst. Psst. Fine, ignore me.

13. Susie

Susie is the coolest girl I've ever known. My first crush. Second grade we'd eat lunch together in the school's cafeteria. Share food. One of my Oreos for one of her licorice sticks. She was into Xbox too. I go over to her house on weekends for a play date. I know. Sounds stupid. But it was heaven. She listened to my problems. I listened to hers. We could talk about anything for hours. And then I ruined it. My older brother said if I liked her so much why I didn't kiss her. So one day over at her house I did. She punched me. In the nose. Broke it. I cried. Her mother came into her room. Shouted at me. So my parents got involved. And then our school's principal got involved. So we had to sit on opposite sides of the cafeteria and weren't allowed to go near each other. She moved away soon after that. You know; at times my nose still hurts. I miss her.

14. Silent Game

Jake come over here. Man stop kicking sand in Sylvester's face we can take his lunch money tomorrow. Man gets over here. So you remember last week when we went on that Medieval Times Field Trip. Yeah, I know cool right? Those swords rocked. Anyway, remember on the bus ride back how Mrs. Trickle had us all play that new game. Yeah, I know, I thought it was cool too! Getting to play a game on the bus. But now that I'm thinking about it me not so sure it was that cool. I mean think about it. We played the silent game. It's not really a game. We didn't do anything. We just kind sat there. And nobody ever won. It was just a tie. I think she just made it up to keep us quiet. It's a fake game like all of those other ones she's taught us. Yeah, like the respect game, the politeness game and the clean up your lunch table game. Yeah, I know, right? This is blowing my mind. This has to be like the craziest day in my life.

15. Sickly

Ewe! Ashley, cover your mouth. Jeez you really need to be more cautious with swine flu going around. You seemed fine on the bus this morning. I know I was sitting a couple seats in front of you but when I turned around to talk to Laura you seemed fine. I guess you could have caught it between now and then. But it seems like you are always sick. Last week you had pink eye and the weekend before that you had a sinus infection and every single time you sneezed it was on me. Hey wait a second why is that? Why is it that every single time you're sick you never cover it up around me? Is this some sort of practical joke? You think this is funny. Yea well get swine flu I don't care. In fact I probably won't even notice. I'm never hanging out with you again

16. Sci-Fi Vacation

All right, that's it! I am sick and tired of you Nebulans messing around with me. I try SO hard every day to just ignore you but that was the final straw. (Pause) No don't laugh at me, you slapped me, I'm surprised I haven't blasted you with my fire shooter yet! We Dorkasins only come on Nebula once a year! I always look forward to the latest space suits that Hine Brothers have, testing out the military weapons, or seeing the 17th moon, and then riding the galaxy's floating coaster. Then at the end of the day, I can sit on the warm moon rocks and enjoy the third sun setting. But no! You decide to harass me! You think you're so (pause) wait did you just say you were sorry? I guess we could work things out. As long as you promise to never make fun of me ever again! Do we have a deal? All right then, um I guess we're friends! Do you wanna go moon walking? (Pause) Cool, let's go! (Pause) Vega Omega! You totally just tripped me! (Pause) Ugh! Just forget it; I would NEVER want to be your friend any way!

17. Vampire Blind Date

Match.com was the stupidest mistake you have ever made. You are beautiful though, but I will give you immortality! Oh please, you want to try and kill me with the silver bullet. Never in my six hundred years has someone pulled this one. I'm a vampire my dear lady, not a werewolf (takes bullet). What is that in your pocket? An onion! You really are a dumb blond. What you need is garlic. You have had two mistakes tonight, maybe you should right this down for the next time you run into a vampire, and you will know what to do. But that won't be the case after I kill you! By the way, I was wondering what your blood type was. Is it really B positive? Mmmmmm, my favorite! Well I was wondering if you could just come here for a second so I could... Hey what is that? Oh no, not holy water! (Gasp) You're not going to do what I think you're going to do, are you? Noooooooooooooo! (Die)

18. Sidekick Revenge

Ha Ha Ha ! I see you're finally awake Deviangelo. You took quite a hit to the head. I was kind of worried. Notice I said "kind of." Yes of course it's me Devickle. Don't even try to escape. Those knots are pretty tight Eh? Ah yes true! I super glued your butt to it. Ha ha ha now that I have the Bleezabubs right hand man to the Lord of the flies demon out of the way. So I'll be a shoe in for head servant. For the past 80 years live coveted it. But instead I've been a foot stool. Now you will be the one who knows what it feels like to be on your hands and knees for hours and hours with those monstrous puss oozing, slime dripping feet digging into your back. Once I get these resignation papers of yours down to processing I will be the NEW head servant. Ha Ha HAAAAA! And you can't even stop me!

19. Dream Buddy

Woah! Where am I? And who are you? My-my dream buddy? Oh so I'm dreaming I get it! Wow, look at this place it's like Alice in Wonderland! Is that Jacob (Whitney) from school? It is! You knew I liked him (her)? You must know everything! Gosh I can't stop staring at him (her). That shaggy brown hair and those deep blue eyes (that long brown hair and sparkling blue eyes) He's (she's) so hot. Go talk to him (her)? Are you crazy? You know what? You're right! This is my dream and I can do what I want with it. All right I'm going... What! Where'd she (he) come from?! It's his (her) girlfriend (boyfriend). Aww man! Wait a second! Yes, she's (he's) gone! Now to make my move. (Moves in and talks to him/her) Hey I was wondering if maybe you uh- wanted to like date or something? Yes? Yes!!! Let's go! Hey what are you doing? No don't push me into an abyss!!! AH 00 AHH! (He/she is now back to reality) That was a nightmare!

20. Cheerleader Envy

I am not jealous of her, Michael. They only follow her because she's a cheerleader and she's only a cheerleader because she's pretty, she has no flexibility. Just look at her she's definitely going to peak at fourteen and I don't want to think about she'll look like at thirty. Do you remember when she fell in the mud that day then strutted around with mud all over her and by the end of day all of her followers thought it was a new style so they covered themselves in mud too? That was so stupid. And that time she "accidentally" wore the tag on her new jacket that showed how expensive it was. Her gang taped fake prices to their cloths for the next two weeks. Let's go, that's the bell.

21. Gift

It's about to happen! This is the best part of Christmas. I love this part...! Finally get a gift. Hey Aunt Nelly! Aren't you glad we drew each other's names this year? I know I am! You know when you gave the trunk full of candy to my brother? Yeah? Remember when you gave my sister that cool trampoline? Yeah? I heard last year you gave Michael a five hundred dollar to Best Buy so he could pick anything. Man.... That's awesome! Oh! Her e is your gift; I hope you needed some slippers. Oh wow, thanks Aunt Nelly, you shouldn't have. ... a flowery ceramic piggy bank...just what I always wanted. I will go put it away for safe keeping. This is crap! (Throws it) Now it's in a million pieces. Hey, what is this; I just found a one hundred dollar bill inside the piggy bank. Aunt Nelly rocks.

26 Monologues from Actual Plays from here On-----

1. The Remembered by Steven Dietz

Darin Longfeather: Do you want to know what I did? Do you? (Pause, softer now.) I said my Mother's name. At night, in my sleep, I said my Mother's name. And they heard me. "No Indian names" they said, "No Indian names." So, the next night, they made me sleep on the wood floor, without a blanket. And they watched me. And, I closed my eyes and I tried with all my heart to forget my Mother's name. But, in my sleep, I said it again. So, the next night they took me to the barn. And they stuffed cloth in my mouth. And, they all stood around me while I slept. I tried to stay awake. I tried not to think about her, or her face, or her voice. I tried to pretend my Mother was dead. But, in the middle of the night, they woke me up and tied my hands to a post. They told me I'd said her name again in my sleep. And I swore I'd never do it again -- but they said it was too late. That I would have to be taught a lesson. (Pause.) They took off my shirt. (Pause.) One of the men took off his belt. (Pause.) And he started hitting me. (Pause. Very distant sound of leather striking flesh.) And I didn't cry. Because I could hear my Mother's voice, saying: You'll be home soon, my beautiful boy. (Pause, softly.) You'll be home soon.

2. The Arkansaw Bear by Aurand Harris

Bear: Ah, tears can be beautiful. But there is no need to cry. I am content. I was a part of what went before, and I will be a part of what is yet to come. That is the answer to the riddle of life. How many more minutes? Two. Bring me my traveling hat. I will wear it on my last journey. I must look my best when I enter the Great Center Ring. Does it look stylish? ... Is it becoming? ... Then I am ready. (Gently pushes Tish and Mime away.) No. This journey I must go alone. Goodbye, good friend. Thank you for everything. And sometimes when the band plays... think of an old bear. ... Yes, I remember when once we said, "Life is like a bright balloon." Hold it tight. Hold it tight. Because... once you let it go... it floats away forever. (Breathless.) How many more minutes? ... I have one last request. When the end comes... when I enter the Great Center Ring... I want music. I want you to whistle the tune your Grandfather taught you. ... You will find that when you whistle you cannot cry at the same time.

3. The Pinballs by Aurand Harris

Harvey: My mom won't come. She didn't come when I had the measles, when I had the operation. Dad is right. Forget her. She's forgot me. I heard them-- dad and mom quarreling the night she left. She kept saying, "I have to find myself-- to find who I am." Dad shouted, "You are my wife. You're Harvey's mother. That's who you are." And he said, "It was your idea. You wanted a kid. I didn't want him." She never knew I won a prize with my essay, "Why I Am Proud to Be An American." She never knew what I wrote. It began (Emotionally recites from memory.) "America is like a family. It has a father, the President, a mother, Congress, and fifty children, the states. When the band plays "Yankee Doodle" that means you and me are all part of our great Yankee Doodle family."

4. There's a Boy in the Girl's Bathroom by Louis Sachar

Jeff: I don't need help anymore. I have lots of friends now. We play basketball and I'm the best. Everyone says so. ... And I'm not friends with Bradley anymore. ... Why? I'm not. I hate him. In fact... (Looks around the room)... I beat him up. ... Oh, he wouldn't stop bothering me. I never liked him. No one does. So then he tried to hit me (Jeff pantomimes his fight with Bradley.) but I ducked and then smashed him right in the face. He came at me again, but I blocked with my left, a right to the gut, and then pow! (Shrugs.) I didn't want to have to do it, but I had no choice. (Pause.) So, I don't think I need to see a counselor anymore, since I have normal friends. ... They might think I'm weird or something. None of them see a counselor. ... Does that mean I can go?

5. Still Life with Iris by Steven Dietz

Mozart: Guten tag! Bon jour! Good day! (A quick look up at the stars, speaks urgently.) Or night. Why is it night? How long has it been night? And how close are we to morning? It's crucial that I find out. Can you tell me?! ... Oh. Yes. Where are my manners? I must have left them in Vienna where manners seem to be all that matters. (Steps toward them, bows.) I am Mozart. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. ... But you can call me Motes. I prefer that. ... I've been searching for something. Something that's just out of reach. It's a song I work on at night. Only at night. (With one finger, he plays the first few phrases of the Serenade in G... He stops--abruptly--one note prior to completing the second phrase. He looks back at them.) But, that's it. I can't seem to finish it, because when the sun rises... the melody vanishes. If only I could stop time-- if only I could find a way to make the sun wait just a few seconds more before rising-- I think the song would come to me.

6. The Mischief Makers by Lowell Swortzell

Reynard: (To self.) They've gone. I won't have it. But how can I get them back? I've got it. (Jumps from the pole, lands, then jumps up and rolls over.) Oh, I've broken my neck. Yes, it's definitely broken. They say that can be fatal. Certainly sounds fatal to me. (Groans in pain.) What a way to end my days, dying out here, alone, forsaken. Without a friend. Let me try to move one last time. No use. Every bone's broken. (Calling off.) Farewell, friends. I'm glad I spent my final hours with you. You both brought joy into my life. I thank you, Anansi, for spreading knowledge, and you, Raven, for giving us light. That was really good of you. All I ever did was show how despite nature and man, the fox survives. Well, that is, up to now. There goes the last bone. This is it. (Gets up, spins around several times.) Good-bye, ole buddies. (Throws himself down with an enormous thud.) I'm dead.

7. Many Moons by Charlotte B. Chorpenning

King: She'll be ill again. (He bumps himself.) What kind of a father am I? (He bumps himself again.) ... Everything always gets in my way! (He is at the window.) Even the moon in the sky. I can see it move! It will look over the garden wall. ... My child will be ill when she sees the moon, and all I can do is bump into things. Kings should not go "bump." I remember once, how I-- (He leaps up, frantic.) I will not remember those things! (He bumps his way to the window and looks out, in terror.) It will soon be shining over the garden wall and right into the Princess' eyes! ... Even my Wisemen think up foolish things. I can't even choose men wise enough to tell me what to do. What the Princess wanted was such a simple thing to get that even my Jester could find it out, but my Wisemen were no help at all. Why did I dream they could tell me how to hide a thing that is so many different sizes and is so many different distances away? I am not fit to be King. I am not fit to be the father of Lenore. I am always doing the wrong thing for her.

8. The Portrait the Wind the Chair by Y York

Chairman: Oh, no, don't go. I was only playing. I never get to go. Stuck in the same place year in and year out. How would you like it?! Little kids kicking and sticking and wiping, dripping and leaking on you. Chair abuse is rampant in the land. And is there a lobby, a coalition, a reform movement? Is chair relief the order of the day? Not on your life. I have to hear about reupholstering! Tear off my covers! Stretch new fabric! Stick me with pins! Sew on a new skin! Toss away my tired but trusty old cushion and implant a firm new foam appliance. Just so human behinds can be happy! Or, worse, redecorate entirely and just toss the old chair out. Boy, the stories I could tell about people if I could only talk. (Pause.) Wait a minute. I can talk. I am talking. I just have to... move. I have to walk. I will walk. Let me just -- (Pulls self free.) I can walk. I can talk. Where is that little chair kicker? I'm going to have a discussion with her about the rights of chairs.

9. There's a Boy in the Girl's Bathroom by Louis Sachar

Colleen: I just came to tell you I can't talk to you. [My parents didn't sign the form] and they won't either! You know what they said? They said it was a waste of money for the school to hire you! They heard you were (Making a face.) strange. They said you should get married and have your own children before you start telling other parents how they should raise theirs. And they said if I have a problem, I should talk to them... But when I try to talk to them, they don't even listen. Anyway it doesn't matter. At least I don't have to invite Bradley Chalkers to my birthday party. Jeff has other friends now. Anyway I couldn't invite Bradley even if I wanted to, because Melinda is my best friend, except for Lori, and she beat up Bradley. (Colleen quickly covers her mouth with her hand, then slowly takes it away. Sheepishly.) That was supposed to be a secret. Melinda doesn't want anybody to know. [Don't tell.] Melinda would kill me... [I haven't asked Jeff to my party yet.] But I will! I know he likes me because he says hello to me whenever I say hello to him. But then I always get so scared. I never know what to say next. I wish you could help me. Why did my parents say such bad things about you? They don't even know you.

10. Anne of Green Gables by R. N. Sandberg

Anne: Excuse me, are you Mr. Matthew Cuthbert of Green Gables? ... I'm very glad to see you. I was beginning to be afraid you weren't coming for me and I was imagining all the things that might have happened to prevent you. It's so wonderful that I'm going to live with you. I've never belonged to anybody -- not really. I feel pretty nearly perfectly happy. I can't feel exactly perfectly happy because -- well, (She sets down her bag and pulls off her hat.) what color would you call this? (She holds out one of her braids to him.) ... Yes, it's red. Now, you see why I can't be perfectly happy. I cannot imagine that red hair away. I do my best. I think to myself, "Now my hair is a glorious black, black as the raven's wing." But all the time, I know it's just plain red, and it breaks my heart. It will be my lifelong sorrow. (She picks up her bag. Matthew does not move.) Shouldn't we be going?

11. Anne of Green Gables by R. N. Sandberg

Anne: I can't. I'm in the depths of despair. Can you eat when you're in the depths of despair? ... Well, did you ever try to imagine you were in the depths of despair? ... Then I don't think you can understand what it's like. It's a very uncomfortable feeling. When you try to eat, a lump comes right up in your throat and you can't swallow anything, not even if it was a chocolate caramel. I had one chocolate caramel two years ago and it was simply delicious. I've often dreamed that I had a lot of chocolate caramels, but I always wake up just when I'm about to eat them. I hope you're not offended because I can't eat. Everything is extremely nice, but I can't.

12. Anne of Green Gables by R. N. Sandberg

Anne: Oh, Mrs. Lynde, I am so extremely sorry. I could never express all my sorrow, no, not if I used up a whole dictionary. I behaved terribly to you -- and I've disgraced my dear friends, Matthew and Marilla, who are letting me stay at Green Gables although I'm not a boy. I'm a dreadfully wicked and ungrateful girl, and I should not have flown into a temper because you told the truth about me. What I said about you was true, too, but I should not have said it. Oh, Mrs. Lynde, please, please, forgive me. If you refuse, it will be a lifelong sorrow for me. You wouldn't like to inflict a lifelong sorrow on a poor little orphan girl, would you, even if she had a dreadful temper? Oh, I am sure you wouldn't. Please, say you forgive me, Mrs. Lynde. ... Oh, Mrs. Lynde! You have given me hope. I shall always feel that you are a benefactress. Oh, I could endure anything if I only thought my hair would be a handsome auburn when I grew up. Thank you, Mrs. Lynde.

13. Afternoon of the Elves by Y York

Hillary: There's a ghost in Sara Kate Connolly's yard. We were playing with the elves, I mean their village. I didn't think it would be real. Why would elves build in Sara Kate's yard? She is a human mess. She's bony and dirty and dresses bad. There's nothing magical about her. Elves should live in a yard of someone...beautiful or...soft. I don't know why they chose Sara Kate's brain to leave messages in or Sara Kate's yard to live in. Unless they like haunted houses. Jane said Mrs. Connolly is dead and maybe she is because I just saw a ghost in the window -- It looked more like a ghost than a person. A skinny, creepy, sickly -- Oh!! (Hillary gasps and jumps away in fright, dropping her diary to the ground. Mr. Lenox enters.) ... (Relieved.) I thought you were a ghost.

14. Afternoon of the Elves by Y York

Sara Kate: (Ultra sweet.) Hello, I need to cash my mother's check, ma'am. See? she signed it right on the back. Her signature is on file here and you can look it up. I cash the checks because she works and can't come here, and it's real convenient for me to do it because the bank is right near our house. (Worried.) I always do it, ask anybody... (Relieved.) twenties will be fine. ...

In the grocery store, you only buy plain boxes of stuff, no brands because they cost more money. If you buy the stuff in the plain boxes it costs a lot less. Cream of Wheat in the plain box lasts a long time and it really fills you up when you're hungry. That way you have enough to send some money to the electric company and the phone bill, you don't want them turned off because to get them turned back on you gotta give them more money, for a deposit. ... It's a whole bunch of money that you don't get anything for. Only poor people have to pay one.

15. Afternoon of the Elves by Y York

Hillary: (Whispering.) You elves are very untidy. Oh! Don't whisper. Whispering is unnatural. (Beat.) Maybe you aren't untidy, maybe it's earth forces messing up your village each time. (Hillary gasps and turns to see an elf, but it's gone.) Someday you'll let me see you. I won't have to work at it at all; one day I'll see an elf. (Beat.) How'd I know that? (Realizes.) The elves are sneaking information in to my brain! Hey, elves! Sneak information into Sara Kate's brain -- a message from me. (Hillary remembers playing with Sara Kate. She speaks to her as if she were really there.) Sara Kate? The elves are going to live in the mess behind my garage. There's plenty of places for them to hide back there. I'll take extra rocks to separate their little lots. They're starting to trust me a little. I almost saw one. You don't have to worry at all; I remember everything you said. I will be one kindly giant sister, making sure no evil forces harm the elves or their village. I will climb the tallest hill and scan the horizon, waiting for your return.

16. Mother Hicks by Suzan L. Zeder

Girl: Wouldn't it be something if you could remember that far back, when you was as young as they is? ... Sometimes I can remember back that far, I really can. I can just barely see hair colored hair and eye colored eyes... (Girl turns directly to Tuc.) You remember your people, Tuc? Your Paw and your Momma? (Tuc signs "yes.") They're dead ain't they? (Tuc signs "yes.") You're lucky... Not on account of them being dead, that part's sad, but lucky you know where they are. You can close your eyes and see 'em live inside your mind. When you don't know about 'em... when you don't know, there's always something inside you that's hungry.

17. The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds by Paul Zindel

Ruth: They're going to laugh you off the stage again like when you cranked that atom in assembly... I didn't mean that... The one they're going to laugh at is Mama. ... Oh, I heard them talking in the Science Office yesterday. ... Miss Hanley said her nickname used to be Betty the Loon. ... She was just like you and everybody thought she was a big weirdo. ... Do you know what they're all waiting to see? Mama's feathers! That's what Miss Hanley said. She said Mama blabs as though she was the Queen of England and just as proper as can be, and that her idea of getting dressed up is to put on all the feathers in the world and go as a bird. Always trying to get somewhere, like a great big bird. ... I was up there watching her getting dressed and sure enough, she's got the feathers out. ... Are you kidding me? I just told her I didn't like the feathers and I didn't think she should wear any. But I'll bet she doesn't listen to me. ... It doesn't matter? Do you think I want to be laughed right out of the school tonight, with Chris Burns there, and all? Laughed right out of the school, with your electric hair and her feathers on that stage, and Miss Hanley splitting her sides?

18. Many Moons by Charlotte B. Chorpenning

Princess: Isn't it funny, Nurse? I was crying for the moon and the Wisemen thought it was only tarts I wanted. The Jester knew. He shoed me this shining path I'm walking on. What? (She pauses, as if listening to someone.) Can't you see it? I'm walking on a path of light, on the water. I'm going to get my moon. (She pauses, shaking her head, in disagreement with her imagined speaker.) What make you say the moon isn't mine? Of course, it's mine! I like it. What I like is mine. The Jester said so. He said what you like is part of you forever. (She laughs -- a laugh of wonder.) The moon is part of me. Everything it shines on is part of me. Temples, and animals, and hot lands covered with sand, and cold lands covered with snow and islands, and all the faraway folk. (She laughs.) I don't believe the Royal Mathematician could count up all the million, billion, zillion things that are part of me. I'm making up a song about it. It begins: "I like whatever the moon can see, And everything under the moon likes me----"

19. The Taste of Sunrise: Tuc's Story by Suzan L. Zeder

Maizie: I ain't always gonna be here running errands for my parents, and taking orders from old pickle face. My boyfriend and me, we're gonna get married and he's gonna take me to Chicago and I'm gonna work in a palace, a movie palace. You ever seen a movie palace? ... My boyfriend took me for my birthday, to the Fox right here in St. Louis. Outside, it's got about a million lights, so you feel like a movie star just goin' in. It's got these big doors made of solid gold and a huge staircase, like the kind queens come down. Inside the theater there's this painting on the ceiling. I swear that's what heaven looks like. Your whole stupid little life disappears when you sit there, it just blows away like fuzz off a dandelion; and there you are, your shiny self, clean and new. When they turn out the lights, you look up and see a heaven full of stars twinkling like they was alive. They made me sad, them stars, I don't know why.

20. Our Hearts Were Young and Gay by Jean Kerr

Emily: Cornelia! Get your life preserver! ... We're posting to starboard! ... I don't know [what it means.] But we were up on deck and I heard someone shout it to the first mate. And from the way he said it, you could tell it meant something serious! ... But we're in a fog! It came up suddenly. You can't see your hand in front of the prow! And they're blowing horns! ... But the boat keeps bounding up and down, up and down! ... But don't you see? That would be the most tragic part of all! To be drowned in sight of dry land! ... Very well, Cornelia Skinner. You can be

nonchalant in the face of danger if you want to. I'm going up and see if our lifeboat is still there. ... Of course, I can find it! There's a sign in the hall that says our lifeboat is number six on the portside. ... Nobody has to come with me. I can work alone. But, Cornelia Skinner-- when the warning comes to take to the boats and everybody's shouting and screaming about women and children first-- you'll be very glad that somebody knows where our lifeboat is!

21. Our Hearts Were Young and Gay by Jean Kerr

Cornelia: I almost forgot! Oh, how terrible! ... I've been here a whole hour already--and I haven't called him. ... Monsieur de la Croix! Of the Comedie Francaise! ... (Grabbing her purse.) I've got the telephone number here somewhere. (She takes out the slip of paper.) Yes! (She smooths it out in front of her, going to the telephone.) ... Now, wait-- don't rush me. I've got to get myself composed. You just don't call up the greatest living French actor without thinking of what you're going to say! ... Oh, all right. (She turns to the telephone and puts out her hand to lift the receiver, but then jumps up.) But wait! I comb my hair. ... No-- I know [he can't see me]-- but I'll feel better. I won't be so nervous if my hair is combed. ... No! Emily, wait! You might make the wrong impression! ... Now, let's see. The number is-- No. First, I've got to take my breathing exercises. (She hurries back to the center of the room and lies down on the floor... extending her arms and taking deep, noisy breaths.) If I don't-- my voice will sound breathy-- and terrible-- and he'll think I'm hopeless-- and he won't take me. ... Emily, you simply are incapable of realizing the importance of good chest tones. He could tell in a minute if I wasn't using my diaphragm. (She sits up.) There, now, I feel a little better. See? (She rises and goes to the telephone.) Emily, I'll tell you what. You can call the number. I'll let you.

22. The Ice Wolf by Joanna Halper Kraus

Anatou: Tarto, you came back! ... Thank you, Tarto. (Suddenly she takes off an amulet that she is wearing.) Tarto, you're the only friend I have now. I want you to keep this to remember me. The Shaman gave it to my mother before I was born. It's to bring good luck, but it was really always meant for a boy child, not a girl. Tarto, I wish I had something special to give you, but it's all I have. ... Tarto, why is [my hair so light?] I don't know. All I want is to be like the others, to play with you and sing with you, and I want to see my mother and father again. I love them. Do you believe me? I want to be friends with the villagers, but they won't let me. You're the only one who tries to understand. ... Tarto, you were brave to come back here. You know they'll be angry if they find you here. ... Tarto, listen. There's nothing I can do. I can't make a spell like a shaman, like the wise man. I'm hungry too, just like you. Even if I wanted to, there is nothing I can do. ... Don't you believe me either Tarto? Doesn't anyone? I'm not any different. I don't have any magic powers. I'm just like anyone else.

23. The Pinballs by Aurand Harris

Charlie: Oh, wow! Wow! Wow! If I made a list of what I wanted in a father, I'd say, "Good looking" --half of your looks do come from your father--I'd say "Rich, Loves me." But never once would I think of-- "A father who'll stick around." I mean, he didn't even wait to see if I was a boy or girl! He doesn't even know I'm ME. And YOU, I'll bet... never once would you think to say, "I want a father who will know the difference between forward and reverse in a stupid car!" And to make matters worse, here we are-- you and me-- totally unwanted-- I think we have to admit that-- and then there are people in the world who really WANT children and haven't got one. Life is really unfair.

24. The Secret Garden by Pamela Sterling

Mary: Could you keep a secret if I told you one? I don't know what I should do if anyone found out. (Fiercely.) I believe I should die! ... (Takes a deep breath and begins to speak in a rush.) I've stolen a garden. Nobody wants it, nobody cares for it, nobody goes into it. Perhaps everything is dead in it already. I don't know. (She begins to pace.) I don't care. I don't care! Nobody has any right to take it from me when I care about it, and they don't. They're letting it die, all shut in by itself! ... I found it myself, and I got into it myself. I was only just like the robin and they wouldn't take it from the robin. ... Come with me, and I'll show you. It's this. It's a secret garden, and I'm the only one in the world who wants it to be alive.

25. The Secret Garden by Pamela Sterling

Mary: What are you? Selfish people always say that. You're the most selfish boy I ever saw. ... You're not [going to die!] ... I don't believe it! You just say that to make people sorry. I believe you're proud of it. If you were a nice boy, it might be true-- but you're too nasty! ... I will! And I'm not coming back! (She starts out as Colin begins to scream and cry hysterically. Mary stops and turns back to Colin. Mary stamps her foot.) You stop it! (She stamps again.) I hate you! (She stamps back into the room on the next lines until she is face to face with Colin, topping his tantrum with her own.) Everybody hates you! I wish everybody would run out of the house and let you scream yourself to death. You will scream yourself to death in a minute, and I wish you would! If you scream another scream, I'll scream too-- and I can scream louder than you! (She opens her mouth to scream. ... Closes her mouth.) You can [stop.] Mrs. Medlock says that half that ails you is hysterics and temper-- just hysterics-- (She stamps her foot on each word.) hysterics-- (Stamp.) hysterics! (Stamp.) ... You didn't feel a lump! If you did, it was only a hysterical lump. There's nothing wrong with your horrid back.

26. A Thousand Cranes by Kathryn Schultz Miller

Sadako: (Cheerfully, counting cranes.) Four hundred and thirty-six, four hundred and thirty-seven, four hundred and thirty-eight! (She holds them up for Mother and Father who have just entered.) See. Kenji taught me! You shouldn't worry about me anymore. Kenji figured out a way for me to get well. Do you remember the story? If a sick person folds a thousand paper cranes, then the gods will make her well again. And look. I've already folded four hundred and thirty-eight! ... (Trying to hide her sudden sadness.) Oh, that. Oh, I don't think about that old race anymore. Silly old race. What good was it? Kenji said I was better than the girl who ran. He said I run like a bird. It's like I'm flying, he said. Folding cranes is much better than any old race. It's kind of like a race anyway, don't you think? If I fold them fast enough, I won't have to die. (She smiles radiantly at her parents.)