

# YES MEANS NO

*Mary Orr*

## DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS

- Teddy Lawson:** A young man just out of college. Attractive personality and fairly good looking. Well dressed. Active, all over the place. Likeable person who quickly gains the sympathy of an audience.
- William Lawson:** Teddy's father. Modern businessman type. About 50 years old. Dominant personality. Rules family and office crew with an iron hand. Brusque. Unreasonable. A man of action. Every move and speech is decisive.
- Edith Merrill:** An attractive girl about 19 years of age. Engaged to Teddy. Her folks may have money. She acts and dresses that way. Nevertheless, she is earnest and appealing in her manner. Everybody likes her.
- T. J. Morgan:** A financier and business associate of Lawson's. Brusque. Somewhat intolerant of any one who interferes with him. During the present episode he is in a bad temper. A character part.<sup>1</sup>
- Miss Collins:** An old timer who has been with Mr. Lawson for years. Indefinite age. Humble, subservient, trembles when Lawson bullies her. Rather secretly enjoys Teddy's getting the best of the "old man." If a young woman plays the role she should be an eccentric type.

*At rise Lawson, Sr., enters from up R.,<sup>2</sup> with ledgers under his arm.*

- Lawson:** Miss Collins! Go tell my son I want to see him here immediately. (*Places ledgers on desk L.*<sup>3</sup>) And be quick about it.
- Miss Collins:** Yes, sir. (*Starts for door R. just as Teddy enters.*) Here he is now, sir. (*Miss Collins goes to desk R. of C.,<sup>4</sup> and sits.*)
- Teddy:** (*Coming to his father's desk L.*) Hello, Dad.
- Lawson:** (*Sits.*) I was just sending for you.
- Teddy:** That's funny, I was just coming in to see you. There's something I want to tell you.
- Lawson:** Oh, is that so! What is it?
- Teddy:** Well, Dad, I've just proposed to Edith Merrill and she's accepted me.
- Lawson:** Going to get married, eh? When do you intend doing this?
- Teddy:** Right away. That's why I wanted to see you. I'll need a raise in salary now, and of course I know you'll finance the honeymoon.
- Lawson:** Oh... I will, will I? (*Pounds desk, rises and comes to Teddy C.*) Well, you just get that idea out of your head. And the raise in salary, too. Now I'll tell you why I sent for you: to tell you that I'm ashamed of you. You haven't any backbone... you can't say NO! I left you in charge of my business last week just to see how you'd conduct it. And you did great. Ha!... If I'd stayed away another week, you'd have ruined me. (*Strolls up C.*)

**Teddy:** I did the best I could!

**Lawson:** Then you'd make a fine business man. (*Coming down C.*<sup>5</sup>) The most essential thing in a business man's life is to be able to say "no." At all times NO. Especially in a credit business like mine. But you said Yes to everyone who asked for extra time, and you gave Roberts a three months' extension on his note<sup>6</sup>... *and without interest, too. (Takes a few steps L.)*

**Teddy:** But, Dad, he was just burned out and he wasn't insured. Why he almost cried to me and I just couldn't say "no."

**Lawson:** Well, you'll learn to say "no" before I come through with any raise or finance any honeymoon. (*Lawson is below desk L. Phone rings, Lawson turns to his desk, grabs phone quickly and sits down.*) Lawson talking...! (*Listens a second.*) No!!! I... said... NO. (*Listens again.*) Then I'll foreclose. That's final... NO! (*Lawson hangs up receiver. Turns to Teddy.*) That's how I make my money... being able to say NO... No... No. (*Pounds desk with each "No!" Rises and comes to Teddy C.*) And that's the way I want my son to be before he shoulders the responsibility of marriage.

**Teddy:** Well, give me another chance, Dad... and I'll try to make good.

**Lawson:** You haven't got it in you. You find it too easy to say "Yes." (*He sneers the last word and takes a stroll up C.*)

**Teddy:** Just try me once more.

**Lawson:** Do you mean it?

**Teddy:** You bet I do.

**Lawson:** (*Coming down L. of Teddy.*) All right... I'll give you another chance. You want money for a honeymoon?... Very well! You take charge of this office while I go to lunch and I'll give you one hundred dollars for every time you say NO.

**Teddy:** One hundred dollars?

**Lawson:** It will be worth it if I can get you to say it two or three times. Do you think you can do it?

**Teddy:** I'll try.

**Lawson:** (*Crosses R. to Miss Collins.*) Miss Collins, I want you to remain in this office with my son while I'm gone. You can sit at my desk. (*Miss Collins doesn't move immediately.*) **NOW!** (*She jumps and crosses stage.*)

**Miss Collins:** Yes, sir!

**Lawson:** (*Crosses L.*) And I don't want you to leave it for a second. Understand? (*Miss Collins nods.*) And I want you to keep strict account of every time my son says NO. But remember, if he answers YES *just once*... he forfeits every "NO." (*Turning to Teddy.*) Now, that's the proposition. Are you on?<sup>7</sup>

**Teddy:** Yes. (*He realizes what he has said and clasps hand over his mouth.*)

**Lawson:** (*Crossing R. to door, taking coat and hat from hall-tree.*) Very well. You'll be in charge here for one half hour<sup>8</sup>.... (*Looks at watch.*)

**Teddy:** Thank you, Dad!

**Lawson:** (*Turns indoor.*) What?

**Teddy:** I said "Thank you."

**Lawson:** (*Putting on derby and crossing to C.*) My boy, in business, never thank anyone for anything! Now remember... not one "Yes."... It must be "No" to everything. (*Lawson exits and slams door.*)  
*(Teddy stands for a second smiling. Phone rings, and he rushes across stage to phone on desk L., and picking it up shouts into it.)*

**Teddy:** NO... POSITIVELY NO! (*Hangs up. Strolls across stage, grinning at Miss Collins, who is amazed.*) That's two... put them down.

**Miss Collins:** (*Writing.*) Yes, sir. (*Phone rings. Teddy grabs it again, while Miss Collins warns him to be careful.*) You better hear who it is, sir. It may be important.

**Teddy:** Hello? (*Repeating what is said to him.*) Is Mr. Lawson in?... NO! Do I mind speaking for him? NO! What?... will he deny the charges in the papers against him of paying graft? NO!

**Miss Collins:** (*Rising and Pleading.*) Don't you think you'd better hang up, sir?

**Teddy:** (*To Miss Collins.*) No. Put them all down ... there were five of them, (*Into phone.*) No, no, no! (*Raising three fingers to Miss Collins.*) I wasn't talking to you... I was talking to Mr. Lawson's secretary. Will he make a statement for the papers? No! Do I care if you publish what I've said... I should worry, No! (*Hangs up. Laughing heartily at his results so far.*)

**Miss Collins:** (*Fearfully.*) Aren't you going a little too far, sir?

**Teddy:** No! There's another. Are you keeping strict account of them? (*Crosses to desk L.*) How many are there?

**Miss Collins:** (*Counting slowly.*) Just... just thirteen, sir.

**Teddy:** (*Taking C. and dancing a step.*) Thirteen, eh?

**Miss Collins:** But isn't that an unlucky number, sir?

**Teddy:** No!... That makes fourteen! (*Teddy crosses to desk R.*) Well, that's a trip to California, anyway, (*Phone rings. But this time Miss Collins gets it first.*)

**Miss Collins:** Hullo? Just a second, please. (*Now to Teddy do a whisper.*) It's T. J. Morgan to see your father. He says he's motored all the way from Boston. Shall I tell him to come in?

**Teddy:** No!

**Miss Collins:** Shall I tell him to come back?

**Teddy:** No!

**Miss Collins:** But he wants to know if he can see Mr. Lawson?

**Teddy:** Tell him NO! B-r-r-r-r.<sup>9</sup> (*Emphatically. Crosses R.*)

**Miss Collins:** (*Into phone.*) Tell him "No! B-r-r-r-r." (*Hangs up.*)

**Teddy:** (*Enjoying it all immensely.*) Add three more to the list. How many is that now? (*Teddy crosses to desk L.*) (*At this point T. J. Morgan rushes into room unceremoniously.*)

**Morgan:** What's the idea of telling me I can't see Lawson? Is he in? (*Comes C. as Teddy circles below him to R.*)

**Teddy:** (*Calmly.*) No!  
(*Miss Collins keeps marking every "no."*)

**Morgan:** (*Turning to Miss Collins L.*) Then who said Lawson wouldn't see me? Was it you?  
(*Miss Collins starts to answer but Teddy butts in.*)

**Teddy:** No! (*Hoists a finger for Miss Collins to get the additional "no" on the record.*)

**Morgan:** (*Turning back to Teddy R.*) Oh, then it was you?

**Teddy:** (*Gulping.*) No!

**Morgan:** (*Confused.*) Then who was it? Was there anybody else in the office?

**Teddy:** No!

**Morgan:** Can't you say anything but "NO-O-O!?"

**Teddy:** *(Imitating his dragged out “No.”) “No-o-o?!”*

**Morgan:** *(Waving his hand in disgust.) You’re a silly ass.... Will you deny that?*

**Teddy:** For a hundred dollars? ... NO! *(Signals Miss Collins to add it on the list.)*

**Morgan:** You’re impossible. I’m going to wash my hands of Lawson. You tell him that T. J. Morgan was here to see him about that lumber deal... and tell him he’ll have to come to see me now. I’m not in the habit of running after any man, especially when I’m doing him a favor by making money for him. He likes to make money the same as everybody, doesn’t he?

**Teddy:** Why... er... NO!

**Morgan:** What? *(He shakes his finger in Teddy’s face.)* Do you mean to tell me he’s not interested in that lumber deal any more? *(Miss Collins tries to speak. Morgan turns to her quickly.)* Were you going to say something?

**Teddy:** No... She — she wasn’t!

**Morgan:** Well, maybe you can answer me. Is Lawson going through with that lumber project, Yes or No?

**Teddy:** *(Almost swallowing his words and wiping his brow.)* No!

**Morgan:** What? He doesn’t want to make a hundred thousand dollars?

**Teddy:** *(Staggering a bit.)* N-n no.

**Miss Collins:** Mr. Lawson, don’t you think you’d better explain?

**Teddy:** *No! Keep writing!!! (Crosses L. to desk.)*

**Miss Collins:** *(Pleading.)* But, sir... you... you...

**Teddy:** *(Emphatically pounding desk on each “no.”) I said No. And when I say NO... I mean NO!!! Remember, that’s four more... put them down! (turns back to Morgan, smiling.)*

**Morgan:** Oh, I see, you’re Lawson’s son. He had you talk to me because he was afraid to face me himself. Well, there’s only one reason for a man passing up a chance to make a hundred thousand dollars, and that is because he hasn’t the money to invest. The fact is, he’s been fourflushing.<sup>10</sup> He isn’t a rich man at all, is he?

**Teddy:** Rich?... N’n’no!

**Morgan:** Then this check he gave me yesterday... is it good? *(Morgan draws check from his pocket and holds it before Teddy’s blinking eyes.)*

**Teddy:** *(Faltering now.)* Check?

**Morgan:** Yes... check!

**Teddy:** Well... er... er... I think...

**Morgan:** Never mind thinking... Is this check good? Yes or No? *(Miss Collins rises with outstretched arms as Teddy turns to look at her.)*

**Teddy:** *(Resolutely to Morgan.)* NO!

**Morgan:** OH! It isn’t, eh? *(Returns check to his pocket and starts for door.)* I’ll tend to him. He’ll find out when he fools with T. J. Morgan he’s fooling with fire. I’ll show him... I’ll show him... *(These last lines carry him off R.)*  
*(Teddy watches him as he goes and turns upstage, laughing convulsively. Leans on filing cabinet, back to audience.)*

**Miss Collins:** *(Rising and coming to him.)* Oh, Mr. Lawson, you’ll ruin your father. And after all *he is your father, isn’t he?*

**Teddy:** No! *(Still laughing.)*

**Miss Collins:** *(Staggering back on her heels.)* What! Not your father? Oh, sir, do you know what you are saying?

**Teddy:** (*Embraces Miss Collins, waltzing her down C.*) No! I'm only thinking of a honeymoon in some far-off romantic spot... and if he stays away long enough, I'm sure it will be Venice. (*Pushing Miss Collins L.*) Go over there and count "no's." How many have we got now?

**Miss Collins:** (*Counting on desk L.*) Thirty-eight, sir.

**Teddy:** (*To C.*) Thirty-eight hundred dollars... Good. That's great! (*Phone rings.*)

**Miss Collins:** Hello! Very well! (*Hangs up. To Teddy.*)  
Miss Merrill is here, sir.

**Teddy:** (*Startled.*) Oh, I can't see her now!

**Miss Collins:** I'm sorry, sir, but they told her in the outer office that you were here, and she's coming in! (*Miss Collins smiles with satisfaction.*)

**Teddy:** Oh, Lord! (*He is at R. of desk L.*)

**Miss Collins:** And remember, sir, not one YES... it must be No to everything.

(*Edith enters, excited.*)

**Edith:** Hello, darling!

**Teddy:** Hello, darling!  
(*They are C., Teddy, L., Edith, R.*)

**Edith:** (*Embracing him.*) Did you tell your father?

**Teddy:** Ye... (*Catches himself.*)... ye... **ABSOLUTELY!**  
(*He looks over his shoulder at Miss Collins in triumph.*)

**Edith:** You told him we were going to be married?

**Teddy:** Ye... ye... *P-Pos-itive-ly!*

**Edith:** You're a darling... and you're my darling, **AREN'T YOU?**

**Teddy:** Oh, ye... ye... You said it! (*Wipes his brow.*)

**Edith:** Does she have to stay here? (*Indicating Miss Collins.*)

**Teddy:** Oh, ye... ye... you see, Dad gave her strict orders not to leave the office. But don't you think you'd better run along now, and I'll see you after work? (*He helps her toward the door... she pushes him back again.*)

**Edith:** No, don't you like to have me around?

**Teddy:** (*Distressed.*) Why... ye... ye... ye bet your life I do.

**Edith:** Then I'll stay. I want always to be near my Teddy Bear. Don't you always want to be near me?

**Teddy:** (*Almost forgetting himself under the spell of her upturned lips.*) I'll say ye... ye... years and years to come will find us together. (*Teddy crosses to C. In triumph.*)

**Edith:** Then you do love me better than anything else in the world... don't you? Say YES. (*Pleadingly.*)

**Teddy:** Why... ye... ye- (*Seeking escape.*) Did that phone ring? (*Crosses to phone R.*)

**Edith:** Why, the phone didn't ring, Teddy dear.

**Teddy:** Strange... I thought I heard it. (*Teddy is on R. of Edith.*)

**Edith:** What were we saying?

**Teddy:** I think you were saying something about having to run along now. (*He leads her toward door R. She draws him back into office again.*)

**Edith:** No, I wasn't. Oh, yes! We were talking about love. Then you are glad you proposed to me yesterday, aren't you, dear? Say YES! (*She puts her hand on Teddy's cheek lovingly, and draws his head around to her.*)

**Teddy:** (*Forgetting for a second.*) Why... YES... (*He sees Miss Collins rise from desk with pencil at lips*) TER-DAY was the happiest day of my life. (*To Miss Collins.*) That was yesterday.

**Edith:** (*Puzzled.*) And don't you feel the same today?

**Teddy:** Why... ye... ye... Indeed I do.

**Edith:** And you'll always be good to me, won't you, dear?

**Teddy:** Ye... ye... you know I will. (*Crosses L.*)

**Edith:** (*Looking around.*) Is your father out?

**Teddy:** Father out? (*Looks at Miss Collins' list of "Noes."*) Oh, about thirty-eight hundred.

**Edith:** What?

**Teddy:** I mean he went out a little while ago.

**Edith:** (*Pointing to Miss Collins.*) And is that woman your father's secretary?

**Teddy:** Ye... Young Miss Collins is father's secretary. Oh, Miss Collins, meet my fiancée, Miss Merrill.

**Miss Collins:** (*Behind desk L. Rises and bows.*) Charmed to meet you, Miss Merrill. Mr. Lawson has spoken of you very often, haven't you, Mr. Lawson?

**Teddy:** (*Crosses R. on above line and has started to seat himself at desk.*) Oh, ye – Huh? Have I?  
(*Rises.*)

**Edith:** (*Meeting him C.*) Well, don't you know whether you have or not?

**Teddy:** Why... ye... ye... you see, darling, (*Crosses to desk L.*) I've been so busy today my mind is rather dull.

**Edith:** (*Consoling him.*) Poor Teddy Bear. I've noticed you've acted sort of strangely today. I think I'll run along now and leave you to your work.  
(*Edith starts toward door R.*) Will you come as far as the door?

**Teddy:** Oh, ye... I mean... with pleasure. (*Crosses with her toward door.*)

**Edith:** (*Suddenly remembering, and returning C.*)  
Oh, my dear! I was leaving and forgetting the most important thing of all. I looked up the wording of the new marriage ceremony and I know just how it goes. The new way is short and sweet. We'll run through it.

**Teddy:** Some other time, not now. (*Crosses toward desk R.*)

**Edith:** No! RIGHT NOW! Isn't our marriage the most important thing in the world to us?

**Teddy:** Why... ye... ye... you know it is!

**Edith:** (*Taking his hand. Teddy R., Edith L.*) Then let's rehearse it. Here, take my hand! Now there is a lot of stuff comes before this, but this is the important part.... When the clergyman says to me, "Do you take this man for your lawful, wedded husband... answer 'Yes' or 'No.'" And of course I'll answer **YES!** Then he turns to you.

**Teddy:** (*Writhing in apparent pain, free hand on stomach.*) Oh, darling... I'm sick.  
(*He tries to pull away. Edith holds him.*)

**Edith:** It's only the excitement of thinking about it... Where was I? Oh, Yes! Then he turns to you and says, "Do you take this woman for your lawful wedded wife?... answer 'Yes' or 'No.'" (*She closes her eyes.*) I'm just dying to hear you say "Yes." (*Teddy, with a look of anguish on his face, turns to see Miss Collins waiting with pencil in hand and does not reply. Edith opens her eyes, surprised at Teddy's silence.*) Well, you must say "Yes."

**Teddy:** (*Still watching Miss Collins.*) I... I can't... (*Turns his back to them, face in his hands.*)

**Edith:** What? Teddy Lawson, do you mean to say you don't want to say "Yes"?

**Teddy:** No! (*Indicates another "No" by raising a finger.*)

**Edith:** Then answer... YES or NO!

**Teddy:** Darling... I must say NO!

**Edith:** Oh!... NOW I see why you've been acting so strangely. I can see now why you said No.

**Teddy:** Darling, it was for your good that I said it.

**Edith:** *For my good!* Oh, it's the woman who must pay!

**Teddy:** You're wrong; it's Dad who must pay.

**Edith:** Oh, so it was your father who put you up to this, was it? He bought your love for money... it was his idea for you to jilt me, was it? Well, I'll see him about this. He'll find out that he and his son can't trifle with my affections. Oh, my heart is breaking, my heart is breaking.... *(She exits R., in tears.)*

**Miss Collins:** I'm afraid you've lost your sweetheart, sir.

**Teddy:** Oh, hush up! *(Coming to Miss Collins L.)* Did you help me out of my dilemma? NO! You could have said I was wanted outside... did you do it? NO! You could have had that phone ring. Did you do it? NO! Were you any help to me at all? NO! *(He changes mood quickly.)* That's four... put them all down. *(Laughs and looks at sheet.)* How many have we got there now?

**Miss Collins:** *(Counting.)* Five—ten—fifteen—

**Teddy:** Don't skip any.

**Miss Collins:** Twenty—twenty-five—thirty—thirty-five—forty—just forty-six, sir.

**Teddy:** *(Excitedly, taking stage.)* Forty-six? Why, it'll be a trip around the world.

**Miss Collins:** But won't Miss Merrill be angry, sir?

**Teddy:** No! There's another one. I'll explain to Miss Merrill. That's forty-seven now, isn't it? *(At desk L.)*

**Miss Collins:** Yes, sir... forty-seven.

**Teddy:** Good, I must make it an *even fifty.*  
*(Off stage R., Lawson's voice is heard in warm argument.)*

**Lawson:** You just come in here with me. We'll see what this is all about. *(He enters swiftly, followed by Edith and Mr. Morgan. They surround Teddy who has sneaked to C., half frightened.)* Now, Miss Merrill, ask him before me.

**Edith:** *(Half crying.)* Didn't you tell me your father paid you to break off our engagement?

**Teddy:** *No!*  
*(She staggers back amazed.)*

**Morgan:** *(Holding check.)* When I asked you about this check, what did you say?

**Teddy:** *NO!*

**Lawson:** *(Coming toward Teddy and shaking his fist.)*  
Don't you know any better than that?

**Teddy:** *NO!* *(Calling to Miss Collins on opposite side.)* That makes the fifty!!!

**Lawson:** *(Bewildered.)* What's the idea?

**Teddy:** The idea is that I've carried out your orders.... I haven't said one... *(Catches himself.)* What you said not to say.

**Miss Collins:** *(Rises at desk L.)* Yes, sir, I've kept strict account. Fifty "No's."

**Teddy:** Not bad for an amateur, is it?

**Lawson:** *(Shaking fist in Teddy's face.)* Do you think I'm a complete idiot?

**Teddy:** *No!* *(To Miss Collins.)* There's another one... put it down.

**Lawson:** *(To Miss Collins.)* Don't you DARE put that down. I've had enough of this.

**Teddy:** But you said I'd be in charge for one-half hour. I have fifteen minutes to go and I'm just full of "No's."

**Lawson:** Well, you've said all the "no's" you're going to say today.

**Morgan:** (*Approaching Lawson L., and brushing Teddy aside.*) I think I understand it all now. It was all a joke.

**Lawson:** Absolutely! (*Going to door R., with Morgan.*) We'll talk it over at the club tonight. My checks are as good as gold!  
(*Morgan exits R.*)

**Teddy:** (*Meeting his father C., and grasping his coat lapel.*) Make out one of those "good as gold" checks for me... for five thousand dollars. Fifty "No's," you know.

**Lawson:** (*Crossing to desk L.*) How could anyone say fifty "No's" in fifteen minutes?

**Teddy:** Imagine what I could do in an hour. My middle name is Speed.

**Lawson:** All right, I'm the goat.<sup>11</sup> I'll give you the check. Then use some of the speed in getting out of here. (*He turns to desk L., and sees Miss Collins seated at it.*) Well, what are you doing at my desk?

**Miss Collins:** (*Rising, frightened*) Why, you told me to sit here, sir. Shall I go to my own desk, sir?

**Lawson:** (*Shouting.*) Yes!  
(*Miss Collins crosses R., to her own desk.*)

**Teddy:** (*Crossing to his father's desk.*) Did I hear you say **YES?**

**Lawson:** No! (*Writes in checkbook.*)

**Edith:** (*Coming to Teddy C.*) Oh, Teddy, I think I understand now why you said "No."

**Teddy:** Darling, if I had said one "Yes," it would have meant "no" for our honeymoon.

**Edith:** I see it all now. "No" meant "Yes"... when you said "no."

**Teddy:** "No"... "Yes"... wait... When you said "No." ... when I said... I...  
(*Confused.*) Oh, I only know we're going on a honeymoon. (*They kiss and embrace.*)

**Lawson:** (*Rises with check in hand and comes C.*) Here's your check. I made it out for ten thousand instead of five, because ten will take you farther away and keep you away longer.

**Teddy:** (*Taking check and, looking at it.*) Why, Dad! I thought you were joking, but you meant it. Because it's a real check all right, and for ten thousand dollars. Why, I'm bewildered... you're wonderful... you're marvelous... you're...  
(*Changing tone.*) ... IS IT GOOD? (*Father swells with satisfaction on praise, but turns furiously on last line.*) Well, come on, darling. Good-bye, Dad... (*They both start for door R.*)

**Lawson:** Well...? (*Teddy stops at door.*) Aren't you going to thank me for that check?

**Teddy:** (*Crosses to C., again striking the fathers exact pose as the latter had read this line earlier in act.*) Thank you?... "My boy, in business, never thank anyone for anything." (*Teddy catches hand of Edith who waits for him in door R., and they plunge off happily together.*)

(*Lawson and Miss Collins stare after them, Miss Collins chuckling with delight.*)

**CURTAIN**

## NOTES

**about the selection:** This is a light play, based on the witty use of two simple English words – “yes” and “no.” The hero of the story, Teddy Lawson, manages to say, within fifteen minutes, fifty “no’s,” and wins a large sum of money from his wealthy and yet dominant father who suggests the deal. The play, with five striking characters and a simple story, is amusing to read and to perform. Students are encouraged to act out the play. The stage directions can easily help the students act successfully. However, attention should be paid to the articulation of specific lines. Students need to know when to use the rising and the falling tones, when to stress, when to raise the pitch, when to drawl, and when to speed. The play is also a good resource for the informal and formal styles of speech. Students should be made aware of the fact that spoken English is marked by elliptical constructions (e.g., Going to get married, eh?), social dialects (e.g., Ye bet your life I do), rejoinders (e.g., Is that so! Huh), pause words (e.g., Well, Er), and interjections (e.g., What! B-r-r-r-r). In a word, this play shows how English works in real life situations.

**about the author:** Mary Orr (1920- ) is a contemporary American playwright specialized in short plays. Her many plays have been produced in various places of America. This play is taken from her collection *Eleven Short Plays*.

1. a character part: an odd person; a humorous role.
- 2.-5. The stage is divided into nine approximate areas:

UR	UC	UL
R	C	L
DR	DC	DL

Where UR stands for up right, UC for up center, UL for up left, R for right, C for center, L for left, DR for down right, DC for down center, and DL for down left. Thus “desk L” means “desk left,” i.e., the desk at the left of the stage, and “desk R. of C.” means the desk at the right near the center of the stage, and “coming down C.” means coming down to the center of the stage.

6. note: a written and signed paper to pay a stated amount of money to a particular person when demanded or at a particular time.
7. Are you on?: Will you take the proposal as a deal?
8. one-half hour: half an hour.
9. B-r-r-r-r: This interjection here shows the speaker’s impatience at a certain person or event.
10. fourflushing: bluffing.
11. the goat: the fool (figuratively).