

## Drama Scholarship Set Piece

### About the extract:

**Frederick (or Fredericka) aged 12-14** has a difficult task – to persuade all of us in the world and in the audience, to jump into the air at a given moment, or the world will crash to pieces. (S)he has received this startling information from a mole – who points out that the surface of this overcrowded globe is only held firm by the noble effort of the moles. But this is no longer enough – we must act now before it is too late.

In this opening scene set in a crowded Drill Hall, **Frederick(a)** is pushed onto the stage. (S)he is very nervous – in fact (s)he would be speechless, if the situation of the world were not even more desperate than his/her shyness. Gradually (s)he gathers confidence despite continued heckling from a disbelieving audience.

### Frederick(a)

*[Into the wings]* All right! No need to shove. *[Takes four steps across the stage and stops when (s)he sees the size of the audience. (Momentarily at a loss for words but falls back on usual greeting)]* Hello! How do? *[Pause]* By gumbo, hundreds of 'em! *[Pause]* Can you hear me all right? I'm a bit scared. I didn't expect so many of you. *[Scans the audience from side to side to side, up and down]* Hundreds of 'em! Hundreds of people who don't believe in moles. Boys and girls, most of you. Some grown-ups o' course. I'm not surprised they don't believe. But boys and girls. I thought they could work things out – like – more clear. They've sent me here to change your minds for you. The Professor and Mr Harridge and Old Gumbolt. There's a load of people down at the Drill Hall who don't believe in the moles and won't jump at jumping time. That's what they said. Well, it's true. You can bet your life on that. It's true about the moles... It is! And if you don't all jump in the air two hours from now the whole world's going to be splintered to bits and we'll all be goners... You've got to believe. You've got to jump. Or we'll all go up in smoke. *[Pause]* Listen – you children. *[Pointing to the Hecklers]* Never mind what they say – Laurel and Hardy. At five o'clock tonight we've all got to jump in the air. All at the same time. You and me and everybody in every country and every island and every nation. Everybody. Chinese, Russians, English, Eskimoes – cannibals! All the folk in the world have got to be off the ground at the same split second. So there's not one foot touching the earth anywhere on this planet. Listen, all the grandmas and grandads are going to jump... I've got a letter here. *[Takes letter from pocket and holds it up]* Mrs Olga Shipoochin, aged ninety-seven, of Moscow. In Russia, that is. You should see all the letters I get. Tons! Now listen to this. *[Reads from the letter]* 'Dear Frederick(a) Kitchener Spudkins,' – that's me – 'We will be thinking of you and jumping with you when the time comes. And my husband Nikolai, who only has one left leg... will be jumping as well. All best love, dear comrade jumper.'... And there's loads more

I could tell you about but there's not time. There's only two hours left. *[Glances at watch]* One hour and forty-eight minutes... O.K. Tell me this, then. Even if you're right. Even if the moles can't save the world. Even if nothing horrible is going to happen and it's all a – a fantastic fib. What have you got to lose by standing up and giving a little jump, eh? Like this. *[Jumps]* Look. How's it going to spoil your day just to give a little jump? *[Jumps]* Like that.