

Module 2 ([Click Here to return to the Writing Forge](#))

Exercise 2.1

Josephs playing games. He doesn't need to be here, in this grotty flat above the kebab shop with the neon lights and sirens that punctuate the city night, the tumbleweed of empty fast food cartons bowling along the pavement beneath his window. Joseph isn't even Joseph anymore; Joseph is Joe and Joe is pretending.

"You couldn't survive ten minutes on a hundred quid," they'd jeered, "never mind 10 days!"

"Course I could!" He'd laughed, his tie loose about his neck, his hands stuffed into the trouser pockets of his £2,000 suit. "Not saying it'd be fun, but hell – it wouldn't be difficult."

"Okay," Jeremy had grinned nastily, "I'll bet you twenty thou you can't do it!"

There had been a sharp intake of breath from Simon. "Big mony, mate," he'd said, shaking his head and whistling softly.

Joseph, who had known perfectly well that Jeremy could afford to bet much larger sums, had smiled easily with the confidence of someone whose dentistry and bank balance are immaculate.

"Nah! That's peanuts. Why would I bother?" He had shrugged, turning to go.

"Alright," Jeremy had said, as Joseph knew he would, "let's make it interesting, fifty thousand."

They shook hands on it, there and then, with Simon and his current squeeze, Jasmine, as witnesses.

"D'you know what you're doing?" Jasmine had asked Joseph as they descended in the lift together. The elocution lessons had been good (so they should have been for the price) but there was still a faint twang of the East End about Jasmine's vowels.

"Course!" Joseph had said. "How hard can it be?"

And now, here he was. Not Joseph any longer, but Joe. Joe slumming it. Joe playing at being poor. Joe pretending that he really was going to have to survive on less than a tenner a day. Easy, he thought, just as the pizza delivery boy rang the doorbell, I'll start by not tipping!

James,

This is an interesting piece. You start well with questions that will keep the reader interested and reading. The dialogue is realistic and to the point and moves the plot along nicely.

How might some of the other characters figure in the story if you were to continue with it? For example, would Jasmine have a greater role to play? I think you could have continued writing here for a few paragraphs more just to see how things might have developed further.

Make sure that you always proof-read your work – using a spell-checker is a good start, but it won't find all the errors.

I look forward to reading your next piece.

Andy

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Comment [AE1]: Because this is a contraction of 'Joseph is', you need an apostrophe – Joseph's ...

Comment [AE2]: Nice image.

Comment [AE3]: An intriguing start to this piece. The reader will want to know why Joe is playing games and pretending – what sort of games? What kind of pretence. Questions like this, posed in the first paragraph, encourage the reader to keep reading.

Comment [AE4]: Because this is speech (and the first time that someone has spoken) you need to indent this line.

Comment [AE5]: You have used 'fifty' and then '10'. You need to be consistent when writing numbers; either use the numeral or the word, but don't mix the two in one piece of writing.

Comment [AE6]: As this is an abbreviation for 'thousand' you need an apostrophe to indicate the missing letters – 'twenty thou'...

Comment [AE7]: I'm sure this is a typo rather than a spelling mistake, but it does indicate the need to proof-read your work carefully.

Comment [AE8]: I know what you mean, but I'm not sure that a bank balance can be immaculate?

Comment [AE9]: If you use a full-stop here, rather than a comma, the following sentence – fifty thousand – has more dramatic impact.

Comment [AE10]: If you put Joseph's thoughts in speech marks (he is, after all, talking to himself) the sense here will be clearer.