

AT THE SHRINK

(inversions)

Characters:

Srink

Patient

SHRINK: (*Calling.*) Next, please.

PATIENT: (*Opening the door.*) Hi, doctor. Never in your wildest dreams would you guess I was going to open the door so fast.

SHRINK: (*Laughs.*) Yes, I guess you're right. Please come in and sit down.

PATIENT: (*Sits and looks around.*) Wow! Never before have I seen such a beautiful office.

SHRINK: Thanks. I'm Dr. Grey.

PATIENT: Nice to meet you. I'm Chris Hartley.

SHRINK: Nice to meet you, too. (*They shake hands.*)

PATIENT: (*Looks at his hands.*) Wow. Rarely has someone shaken my hand in such a firm way.

SHRINK: Really?

PATIENT: Yes. Not only is your handshake firm, but your hand is also very warm.

SHRINK: (*Looks at her hands.*) Really? (*Trying to change the subject.*) So, what can I do for you?

PATIENT: Oh, doctor, I'm sure never before have you had a patient like me.

SHRINK: Why? What's the matter?

PATIENT: Look at the way I'm speaking!

SHRINK: What do you mean?

PATIENT: Not only am I using inversions in all my sentences, but I can't stop that!

SHRINK: Why?

PATIENT: In no way are you going to believe this!

SHRINK: Try me. I've had all kinds of patients.

PATIENT: Well... No sooner had I finished my high intermediate English course, when I started an advanced course.

SHRINK: Well, your English is very good.

PATIENT: Thanks. But never in my life had I studied something as hard as inversions. Not only are they a little formal, but they're also used for emphasis and dramatic purpose.

SHRINK: *(Ironic.)* Well, you do sound a little dramatic. *(Realizing it was inappropriate.)* I'm sorry. Go on.

PATIENT: Rarely had I had so much trouble understanding something in English. Only occasionally do I have trouble understanding things. I'm always a good student. Never do I get bad grades.

SHRINK: I see. But then what happened?

PATIENT: My friend suggested I listened to English while I was sleeping. Not only did she say I was going to learn everything, but she also said I was going to save time.

SHRINK: I understand. Some people say it's possible to learn in your sleep, but I have never tried that.

PATIENT: Not once did I imagine this was going to happen.

SHRINK: *(Curious.)* But what happened?

PATIENT: You see... Not only did I record all the lessons from my English course on my cell phone, but I also recorded some scenes from TV shows and movies that had inversions.

SHRINK: That sounds interesting.

PATIENT: Well, hardly had I gotten into bed when I turned on the recording. Then I fell asleep.

SHRINK: Well, and what happened after that?

PATIENT: I woke up early in the morning. Not for a moment did I think that it had worked. But then I started talking and only then did I understand the problem.

SHRINK: You're using inversions in all your sentences. Do you think it's because of the recording?

PATIENT: Not only am I sure it's because of the recording I'm also worried that I can't turn this off. I've been brainwashed. I'm tired of speaking like this.

SHRINK: Well, but at least you solved your problem. You learned inversions, right?

From "Grammar on Stage" by CARLOS GONTOW

- PATIENT:** I did, but I don't want to speak like this all my life. Not only is it difficult to understand, but it's also ridiculous. Not once have I seen people that use inversions all the time. Can you help me?
- SHRINK:** *(Thinks for a while.)* I think we should try hypnosis. I can hypnotize you and program your brain to forget inversions.
- PATIENT:** You mean that not only will I stop speaking like this, but I'll also forget inversions?
- SHRINK:** Probably. That's a risk.
- PATIENT:** So can I come back tomorrow?
- SHRINK:** Tomorrow? Why?
- PATIENT:** I have an English test today. On no account am I going to forget inversions before my test. I'll take the test, come back here tomorrow, and only then can you hypnotize me.
- SHRINK:** That's a deal, Chris.
- PATIENT:** *(Stands up and moves to the door.)* Thanks, doctor. See you tomorrow.
(Exits.)
- SHRINK:** *(To herself.)* Never have I seen such a strange case. *(Stops and realizes what she has said. Scared.)* Oh, my, I think this is contagious! *(Gets a pencil and starts swinging it in front of her eyes, trying to hypnotize herself.)* One... two... three... four..