Luisa begins our dialog by saying to Max “Are you still here?”. This is one of those question you ask when you surprise about something obviously Luisa can see that Max still wherever they are. She says “I thought you **got off** at 3:00”. To get off of work means to finish your work schedule, to be able to leave the place where you work. If someone says “What time do you get off”, they mean what time do you get off of work, when do you stop working, what time do you stop working. Max says “I **picked up** a second **shift**”. A shift s-h-i-f-t refers to a period of time when people work, usually this term is used for job when people work at that particular location more than 8 hours, or that there are people working at that location for more than 8 hours. It might be, for example, a place where there are someone working 24 hours a day. Well, one person is not going to work 24 hours straight, so they break up the day into shifts. So if you work the day shift you’re working probably from 8 in the morning to around 4 or 5 in the afternoon. If you’re working in the night shift you’re working perhaps from 4 or 5 in the afternoon to midnight. If you’re working what we call the graveyard shift you’re working probably from 11 o’clock at night or midnight to 7 or 8 in the morning. Those are shifts then. Division of the work day in the place that usually open for more than 8 hours. Max says he **picked up** a second **shift.** To pick up here means to get, to attend. He was working one shift and now he’s picked up the second shift, which it means of course he’s working more than 8 hours a day. Why has Max done this? Well, he says **“**I **could use** the money”. When someone says “I **could use** the money”, he means that he would be able to benefit from getting more money, he has some needs of extra money. Luisa say “But I thought you had another **part-time** job in the evenings”. A part-time job is a job usually that is less than 40 hours per week. In USA, 40 hours per week is consider full time, if it’s less than 40 hours we might call it part-time. Luisa has thought that Max had another **part-time** job. Max says “I normally do, but the restaurant where I work has been **cutting back my hours**”. When we talk about someone cutting back on something we means that he’s using less of it or he is reducing the number of something. The two-word phrasal verb to cut back then, means to reduce the number of something. In this case we’re talking about the restaurant where Max works cutting back his hours. His hours refers to the number of hours that he can work. Max says he’s trying to pick up as many extra shifts here as I can. Luisa then asks “And don’t you work at the **amusement park** on the weekend?”. An amusement a-m-u-s-e-m-e-n-t park is a large park usually that have lots of what we would call rides, places where people, especially children, can play games and get into the machines that go really fast, for example. Disney land is an example of the amusement park here and such in California. Luisa asks if Max is still working at the **amusement park** on the weekend. He says “I do half the year (meaning I do work there part of the year), but it’s winter and the park only keeps a **skeleton crew** on during these months”. Max is saying that the amusement park where he normally works in the summer time only has a **skeleton crew** during the winter time. The phrase skeleton s-k-e-l-e-t-o-n crew c-r-e-w refers to a very small number of workers, the minimum number of workers you can have at a place. If a business doesn’t have many customers, it might have very few employees, and we might call that a skeleton crew. If during busy times, the company has more employees. This is the case with the amusement park can have a skeleton crew. The word crew just refers to a group of people. The word skeleton is normally used to describe the bones of your body or the bones of an animal. Max says “In the meantime (meaning during this winter season), I’m working for a **temp agency**, which gives me **short-term** assignments”. A temp t-e-m-p agency is a company that finds people temporary jobs, the word temp is short for temporary, meaning short-term, not permanent, not for a long time. There are of course many company that find people to work for the companies that just need worker for a short period of time. Max says the temporary agency gives him **short-term** assignments. Short-term refers to a short amount of time, perhaps a week, perhaps even a day. I used to work for 10 agencies when I was in college, I would call up every morning and see if they had any work for me, and they would send me to jobs that would last maybe one day, maybe two or three days, sometimes as long as a month. Temp agencies are very popular now, especially when the economy is not doing so well, company don’t want to hire employees full time. Luisa says “I don’t know how you **juggle** all these jobs”. The verb to juggle j-u-g-g-l-e usually refers to throwing objects up in the air and keeping them up in the air. It refers to someone does it as juggle. But here, the verb means to handle many different things at the same time, to be able to do many different things at the same time. Max says “I have no choice (I have no other option). I have **to piece together** an **income** if I want to pay rent. **To piece p-i-e-c-e together** something means to put together, to assemble. An income i-n-c-o-m-e refers to money you get for working. Max’s saying that he has to work a little bit at this job and a little bit at that job in order to get enough money to pay for his rent. Luisa says “Have you ever thought about going back to school **to qualify for** other work, something **full-time**?”. To qualify q-u-a-l-i-f-y for something means to have the skill and/or education in order to be able to do something. So for example if you want to be a doctor, so you have to study for many years in order to qualify

for that kind of job, at least I hope you study many years if you’re a doctor, if not please don’t be my doctor. Luisa is asking if Max has thought about going back to school to qualify for some kind of job that would be full time, that would be 40 hours a week. Max says “Sure, all the time”, meaning I have thought of it a lot. He says “I’d like a better job, one with **benefits** and a reliable **salary**”. Benefits b-e-n-e-f-i-t-s refers to things such as health insurance, and vacation time, and sick pay – money you get when you can’t work because you’re sick. These are common benefits that you get when you have a full time job. Salary s-a-l-a-r-y refers to money that you get when you work at certain place usually by the month or by the year. When we talk about salary, we’re talking about money you get regardless of how many hours you work. There’re two kinds of way of getting pay. One is by the hours when you get pay a certain amount of money for every hour you work. Another way of getting pay is by salary. When you’re getting pay on the salary, we would say, you are getting a certain amount of money and are expected to do your job even though if it takes more than the normal 40 hours a week. Luisa says “What’s stopping you, what’s preventing you from going back to school. Max says “I have to pay for something called food”. Max is making a joke here, he’s saying that he can’t afford to go back to school, he doesn’t have enough money to go back to school because in addition to paying his rent, he also has to eat, and to eat he has to buy food. Finished by saying “I haven’t met my **fairy godmother** yet!”. A fairy f-a-i-r-y godmother g-o-d-m-o-t-h-e-r is a character from children’s stories, stories that we tell children usually involve in a women who has some sort of magical power. The fairy godmother is a common character in certain fairy tales that are told to children, these are made of stories about are magical events. Here, Max is using the expression to mean that he hasn’t found someone who’s just going to give him money to pay for his expenses and to go to school. Now let’s listen to the dialogue this time at a normal speed.