**Luisa**: Are you still here? I thought you got off at 3:00.   
**Max**: I picked up a second shift. I could use the money.   
**Luisa**: But I thought you had another part-time job in the evenings.   
**Max**: I normally do, but the restaurant where I work has been cutting back my hours, so I’m trying to pick up as many extra shifts here as I can.   
**Luisa**: And don’t you work at the amusement park on the weekend?   
**Max**: I do half the year, but it’s winter and the park only keeps a skeleton crew on during these months. In the meantime, I’m working for a temp agency, which gives me short-term assignments.   
**Luisa**: I don’t know how you juggle all these jobs.   
**Max**: I have no choice. I have to piece together an income if I want to pay rent.   
**Luisa**: Have you ever thought about going back to school to qualify for other work, something full-time?   
**Max**: Sure, all the time. I’d like a better job, one with benefits and a reliable salary.   
**Luisa**: What’s stopping you?   
**Max**: I have to pay for something called “food”, and I haven’t met my fairy godmother yet!

Luisa begins the dialog by saying to Max, “Are you still here?” This is one of the questions you ask when you’re surprised about something, obviously Luisa considers that Max’s still wherever they are, she says, “I thought you got off at three o’clock”. 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 jobs when people work at that particular location more than eight hours or that there are people working at that location for more than eight hours, it might be for example a place where there is someone working twenty four hours a day, well one person is not going to work twenty four hours straight, so they break up the day into shifts, so if you work the day shift, you’re working probably from eight in the morning till around four five in the afternoon. If you’re working a night shift, you’ll be working perhaps from four five in the afternoon to midnight. If you’re working what we call the graveyard shift, you’re working probably from eleven o’clock at night or midnight to seven or eight in the morning. Those are shifts then, division of the work day in a place that usually is opened for more than eight hours. Max says that he picked up a second shift. To pick up here means to get, to obtain, he was working one shift and now he picked up, which means of course he’s working more than eight 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 need of actual money. Luisa says, “but I thought you had another part-time job in the evenings”. A part-time job is a job usually that is less than forty hours per week. In the United States forty hours per week is considered full-time, if it’s less than forty hours we might call it part-time, Luisa 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 mean that he is **using less of it**, or he is reducing the number of something. The two work phrase of 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 hour 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 has lots of what we would call rides in them, places where people especially children can play games and get into these machines that go really fast for example, Disneyland is an example of an amusement park here in South California. Luisa asks if Max is still working at an amusement park on the weekends, he says, “I do, haft 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’s 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 worker, the minimum number of work you can have at a place. If a business doesn’t have very many customers, it might have very few employees and we might call that a skeleton crew if during busy time the company has more employees. This is the case with the amusement park, it has a skeleton crew. The work crew just refers to a group of people. The work 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 fires people temporary jobs, the work temp is short for temporary, meaning short term, not permanent, not for a long time. There are of course many companies that fire workers, fire people to work for companies that just need workers for a short period of time. Max says the temp 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 temp agencies when I was in the college, I would call up every morning and see if they have any work for me, and they would send me to jobs that would last maybe one day, maybe two or three days, sometimes it longs as a month. Temp agencies are very popular now especially when the economy is not doing so well companies 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, we refer to someone who does it as a juggler, 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 a sample. An income i-n-c-o-m-e refers to the money you get for working. Max’s saying that he works a little bit at this job a little bit at that job in order to make 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 skills and all education in order to be able to do something, so for example if you want to be a doctor, 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 doctor, it’s not please don’t be my doctor. Luisa’s 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 forty 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 to work at a certain place, usually by the month or by the year, when we talk about the salary we’re talking about money you get **regardless** of how many hour you work. The two kinds of ways of getting pay, one is by the hour, 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 a salary we would say, you are getting a certain amount of money in the expect to do your job even if it takes more than the normal forty hours a week. Luisa says, “What’s stopping you?” what’s preventing you from going back to the school? Max says, “I have to pay for something called “food”, Max is making a joke here, he’s saying that he can’t effort to go back to the school, he doesn’t have enough money to go back to school because in addition of paying his rent, he also has to eat, and to eat is here to buy food. He finishes by saying, “and 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 story, story that we tell children, usually involving of women who has some sort of magical powers. The fairy godmother is a common character in certain fairy tales that are told to children, these are made of stories about 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 dialog this time at a normal speed!