



Sample Pages from
Ms. Spitspotâ€™s Spick and Span Play Place

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TEN/TWO

TEN PLAYS FOR TWO ACTORS BY
Lindsay Price



..... Welcome!

Welcome to *Ten/Two*! 10 two-hander scenes, all of which are inspired by the numbers 10 and 2.

The plays can be performed together for a full evening of theatre. Appendix A (p.79) contains Intro/Intermission/Extro sections to add if you are doing all ten plays in an evening. Appendix B (p.81) has a set arrangement.

You don't have to perform all ten plays. You can do eight or two or six or any of the other wonderful numbers between one and ten. You're even welcome to change the order of the plays. Each individual play, however, must be performed as written.

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..... The Plays / Characters

Many of the plays are gender flexible. Below is the gender breakdown for each play. If the play calls for "2 Either" feel free to change the genders to suit your group.

1. Quippage (1M 1W)
2. The Big Lie (2 Either)
3. Pretty Girl Plain Girl (2W)
4. Santa Runs a Sweat Shop (2 Either)
5. Ms. Spitspot's Spick and Span Play Place (1W 1 Either)
6. My Father Went to Switzerland and All I Got Was This Lousy T-Shirt. (1W 1 Either)
7. Time, What Is It? (2 Either)
8. The Last Dance (1W)
9. Ten Minutes, Ten Minutes, Ten Minutes, Ten Minutes (2 Either)
10. The Itsy-Bitsy Spider Or Else (2M)

Ms. Spitspot's Spick and Span Play Place

ONE is a children's entertainer and TWO is her assistant. TWO can be either gender. ONE must be a girl.

ONE enters. She waves energetically to the audience. She's on a children's TV show.

ONE: Hello my little friends! Welcome to *Ms. Spitspot's Spick and Span Play Place*. I'm so glad you could join me here today. We're going to have a lot of fun and what's one thing we're going to do a lot of? *(she listens exaggeratedly and then claps her hands together)* That's right! We're going to PLAY. It wouldn't be called the Play Place if we weren't going to do any playing! But we're not going to play alone, are we? No. *(she puts her hand to her forehead as if she's searching for someone)* Where is Swab? Where is Swab? *(she points out)* Do you know? *(she points again)* Do you know? *(she puts her hands exaggeratedly on her hips)* I wonder where she could be? *(she calls out)* Swab! Swab! *(she scratches her head)* Hmmmmmm. That doesn't seem to be working. *(she claps her hands together)* I know! We should call for Swab, all together. I'll count to three and then you call out, "Swab!" Ready? In your loudest voice, OK? One, two, three – SWAB!!!! *(she looks offstage, clearly expecting TWO, who doesn't appear)* Gee. That usually works. *(She looks left and right. She puts her hands on her hips. She speaks just a little bit out of character.)* Usually Swab has very good hearing. *(she claps her hands together)* Let's try it again my little friends. Ready? One, two –

TWO comes running on, holding a mop. She looks a little frazzled and out of sorts, like it's hard work to keep up the cheery demeanour.

TWO: I'm here, I'm here. Swab is here. Here I am with mop and broom and... no, that's not it. *(she takes a breath and starts again)* Here I am with broom and mop, for the cleaning I just can't stop. There's only one way I'll drop my mop, and that's the call of Ms. Spitspot! Hello, Ms. Spitspot! *(she waves at the audience)* Hello, friends.

ONE: *(cheerful, but tense)* What kept you, Swab? Where were you when we called?

TWO: *(cheerful, but tense)* You know where I was, Ms. Spitspot.

ONE: (*she gives an exaggerated laugh*) I! I had no idea, Swab.

TWO: Oh no?

ONE: Of course not! I was out here, talking to our little friends.

TWO: Okay-dokey. That surprises me 'cause-

ONE: (*interrupting*) Please, Swab, tell all our little friends out there in the world what you were doing. I'm sure they'd love to know. (*to the audience*) Wouldn't you like to know? Me too! Where was Swab?

TWO: (*tense*) "Swab" was in the control room.

ONE: Control room? (*she shrugs her shoulders very dramatically*) I have no idea what that place is. It's certainly nowhere around here! You must have been very very far away from Ms. Spitspot's house in this place called (*she makes air quotation marks*) "control room."

TWO: Ms. Spitspot, I think we need to –

ONE: Come, Swab, where were you? Were you in the dale? On the hill? Behind the cherry tree? Tell our friends the truth.

TWO: The truth? The truth. Ms Spitspot wants to know the truth, does she?

ONE: (*staring at TWO*) Yes she does, Swab.

TWO: Okey-dokey. If it's the truth you want... (*TWO chickens out*) I was cleaning. I'm always cleaning, aren't I! That's what Swab loves to do. Clean, clean, clean. Never stops. Yippee. (*she shakes the mop*)

ONE: (*clapping her hands together*) There you are! I'll bet the dust got in your ears. That's why you didn't hear us.

TWO: You always have the right answer, Ms. Spitspot.

ONE: Oh Swab, you're always cleaning! (*to audience*) And you know what, my little friends? Ms. Spitspot loves to clean, too! Swab loves to clean and Ms. Spitspot loves to clean. We love to make things spick-and-span! Cleaning is a very good thing. It's fun! Why, it's as much fun as playing! What do we do when we see a mess?

ONE moves forward to do her actions. TWO stares off, leaning on her mop, not paying attention.

ONE: You scrunch your face up tight! You shake your head! And then your hips and then your knees! And now all together, please. (*she shakes all over*) Then you say the mess rhyme: If there's a mess, Ms. Spitspot must stress: Clean it up, before you sup, Before you sip, from a cup! Isn't that right, Swab? (*TWO doesn't answer. ONE speaks a little sharper.*) Swab!

TWO: (*turning back*) Huh? Oh. Yup, yup. That's what I'm supposed to say. Yup, yup! Cause "yup" rhymes with "cup," doesn't it, Ms. Spitspot?

ONE puts her hands on her hips and stares at TWO.

ONE: You don't seem your cheery cleaning self today, Swab.

TWO: No?

ONE: We have friends over. Turn that frown upside-down!

TWO: I don't feel like it.

ONE: Swab. That's not like you. You're always so happy. Say how happy you are, Swab.

TWO: (*to audience*) Don't YOU want to know how I'm feeling?

ONE grabs TWO by the shoulders and turns TWO to her.

ONE: Say it. Say, "I'm tip top, Ms. Spitspot." Say it!

TWO: I'm tip top, Ms. Spitspot.

ONE: And what makes Swab so happy?

TWO: Cleaning.

ONE: Cleaning! (*she spins TWO away*) You know, what my little friends? Let's do some cleaning right now! It's time for the cleaning up song! We can all sing together and put our toys away. (*she claps her hands*) Yay! Yay!

TWO: I don't know why you bother.

ONE: (*not looking at TWO*) Because cleaning is fun!

TWO: There's no one out there.

ONE is now really getting frustrated with TWO's behaviour. She puts her hands on her hips. It takes everything she has to keep cheerful.

ONE: Swab, Swab, Swaby Swab, Swab. *(she wags her finger exaggeratedly)*
What has come over you today?

TWO: There's no one out there. That's what's come over me. You know it. I know it. And I'm done with it.

ONE: *(she speaks very firmly)* How can you say that, Swab? All our little friends are out there. *(she waves to the audience)* Hello there! I see you. I see you *(she points)* and you *(she points)* and you! *(back to TWO)* That's not no one, is it?

TWO: If anyone is watching they think it's a stupid show. Cleaning is as much fun as playing? It's ridiculous.

TWO slumps in a chair. ONE looks conflicted over going on or breaking character. She stays in character, barely.

ONE: You know cleaning is very important to Ms. Spitspot.

TWO: Children don't want to clean! They want to be dirty! They want to roll around in the dirt, get paint all over their hands, all over their clothes, all over everything. They want to throw food, jump in puddles, and scatter their toys everywhere. Kids want to be messy! More than anything else in the whole wide world they want to make a mess. And you're stopping them! That is wrong.

ONE: *(still holding on to the character)* Now Swab, I know you feel like a Grumpy Gus, but remember, the show must go on!

TWO: Gwen...

ONE: Ms. Spitspot...

TWO: No one is watching. There's no one out there, there's no one in here. It's just you and me. The cameras are locked down and I'm the one who pushed the buttons in the control room. We're totally alone.

ONE: Well, I...

TWO: We're at the bottom of the barrel and I can't take it one second longer.

ONE: I... I... Aw, nuts!

ONE plops herself down beside TWO. ONE now completely comes out of character.

ONE: Do you think you could have brought this up before we started? Maybe give me a little heads-up off the air?

TWO: I tried! You were too busy getting “in character.”

ONE: You said you wanted to talk! You didn’t say anything about ruining everything we’ve worked for.

TWO: Please, it’s community television! We’re not even on cable. *(gesturing at the set)* We did not work for this.

ONE: *(with a sigh)* I know.

TWO: This is not what I wanted when I got into the business.

ONE: *(looking around)* You think it’s what I want?

TWO: I had dreams. Visions. Making a difference to kids everywhere.

ONE: You blame me, don’t you?

TWO: I don’t blame you.

ONE: You say you don’t blame me but you blame me.

TWO: I don’t blame you!

ONE: You blame me for getting kicked off the network.

TWO: It wasn’t your fault. Entirely.

ONE: See? Blame.

TWO: They didn’t want a kids’ cleaning show! We had a perfectly good show all ready to go with puppets, and brightly-coloured costumes, and I got to wear roller skates, and we were going to sing and play games and throw out kisses and hugs every day. Ten kisses! *(she blows out kisses)* Two hugs. *(she hugs herself)* Ten kisses, two hugs! Ten hugs, two kisses! *(waving out to the audience with a big smile on her face)* Bye bye, everybody! See you tomorrow! *(she drops her hand and her smile)* And you had to go and make a fuss. Forced those Brillo Pads right down their throats and funnily enough they didn’t want Brillo Pads forced down their throats.

ONE: It's the fingers. I hate sticky fingers! I can't stand being pawed with sticky fingers! Do you know how many germs sticky fingers carry? Ten kisses and two hugs? Ten hugs and two kisses? (*with defeat*) I couldn't do it. I just couldn't.

TWO: Now you don't have to. No one's coming near us with any fingers, sticky or otherwise.

They both sigh.

ONE: I had visions too, you know. A national show. Syndication. Specials. Books. Dolls.

TWO: Tours.

ONE: Huge Auditoriums.

TWO: *Ms. Spitspot's Play Place on Ice.*

ONE: Madison Square Garden filled day after day after day. We'd be bigger than big.

TWO: Screaming, adoring kids.

ONE: Singing along to every song. Knowing all the rhymes.

TWO: The Rolling Stones of the under-five set.

ONE: It wasn't meant to be, I guess. I guess... a cleaning kids' show isn't the greatest idea.

TWO: (*speaking upwards*) Finally! She admits it!

ONE: All right. No need to rub it in. (*she sighs*) It was when we went to those children's hospitals – when we were on Pickle Train Station? (*she shudders*) That was the beginning of the end.

TWO: The kids with cancer? The dying kids?

ONE: They kept touching me.

TWO: Did you think you were going to catch cancer?

ONE: I know, I know. I have no excuse. But they kept trying to grab my hand and tug on my shirt and hug me and ugh! Maybe I was never meant to work with kids. Are you going to look for another show?

TWO: I don't know. I'm not sure what else I'm good at. Maybe there's an opening at Molly Maid. I'm pretty good with the mop.

ONE: Maybe I'll write a book. A tell-all. I'm sure there are lots of people out there who'd want to know the ins and outs of a germophobic children's entertainer.

TWO: Maybe.

ONE: Maybe.

TWO: (*pause*) I guess we're done. I should go turn off the cameras.

ONE: I think we should finish the show.

TWO: Gwen...

ONE: Now, Swab, (*she takes a big breath*) I think we should finish the show. Obviously, it's our last show. We'll be turning the lights out on Ms. Spitspot's house. (*to the audience, right back in character*) Which is a good thing, my little friends. If you leave the house you want to be sure you turn off all the lights. Conserve energy! (*she gives a bit of a desperate look at TWO*) Well, Swab? What do you think?

They look at each other. TWO stands.

TWO: Where's my mop, Ms. Spitspot?

ONE: That's the spirit!

TWO: Oh Ms. Spitspot!

ONE: What is it, Swab?

TWO: Something's happening to me.

ONE: What is it? (*to the audience*) Do you know what it is?

TWO: I think I'm getting...

ONE: What? What?

TWO: I'm really getting...

ONE: What is it?

TWO: (*bouncing*) THE CLEANING BUG!!

ONE: (*bouncing*) THE CLEANING BUG!!

TWO: Chug, chug, chug!

ONE: It's the cleaning bug!



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