



Sample Pages from
My Father Went to Switzerland and All I Got
Was This Lousy T-Shirt

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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)

My Father Went To Switzerland And All I Got Was This Lousy T-Shirt

ONE is a driving student. TWO is a driving teacher. TWO can be either gender. If male, change the name to Mr. Jackson.

There are two chairs seated side-by-side, to imitate the front seat of a car. TWO sits with a clipboard in the passenger seat, impatiently. ONE runs on. She throws herself into the driver's side chair. ONE is bubbly and talks extremely fast. TWO is snobby and formal.

ONE: Hi! I'm sorry I'm late, I'm not too late am I?

TWO: *(looking at watch)* Actually you're –

ONE: *(continuing overtop)* Mrs. Kushko is just a – oh she's so *(she waves her hands about)* about talking in class and I said I don't do it on purpose, and she said if I was going to waste her time by talking in class, then she was going to waste my time by talking after class. And I had to listen to her talk! Can you imagine? Do you think she's allowed to do that?

TWO: Perhaps we should –

ONE: *(continuing overtop)* I explained to her it wasn't on purpose and I explained about my driving lesson, but she wouldn't listen. *(imitating)* “Every time you open your mouth I add another five minutes.” That's what she said. I really tried to explain but “Every time you open your mouth I add another five minutes.” That's what happened. That's why I'm late.

There is a pause.

TWO: Are you finished?

ONE: Um, I think so.

TWO: Fine. Hands in the ten and two position, please.

ONE: *(as if thinking about something else to say)* Switzerland!

TWO: What?

ONE: Switzerland. That's what she talked about.

TWO: Who?

ONE: Mrs. Kusko! Can you believe it?

TWO: When?

ONE: In my detention. She goes to Switzerland every summer. I go to the mall, she goes to Switzerland. And she has so much fun in Switzerland. And they make the best chocolate in Switzerland. I think I know everything there is to know about Switzerland.

TWO: (*impatient*) Eugenie.

ONE: Go ahead. Ask me something. I'm positive I know it.

TWO: I would prefer to SEE you driving rather than HEAR you talk about Switzerland. Hands in the ten and two position, please.

ONE: And you know what else?

TWO: (*with a sigh*) I'm sure you'll tell me.

ONE: She's been going to Switzerland ever since she was ten years old. Can you imagine? Her father wanted her to see the world. And he took her. To Switzerland!

TWO: (*almost muttering*) Well, bully for her.

ONE: Huh?

TWO: Will we be driving at any point today, Eugenie?

ONE: Oh. Right. (*she sighs*) Sorry. (*she looks out the window*)

TWO: Hands in the ten and two position. (*ONE doesn't move*) Eugenie. You're not doing it.

ONE: Huh?

TWO: Driving? Hands? Ten and two?

ONE: Oh. Right. Ms. Jackson?

TWO: Yes?

ONE: Did your father ever take you anywhere?

TWO: What?

ONE: I don't mean Switzerland. Who's dad does that? I guess Mrs. Kushko's does but that's not normal. That's psycho.

TWO: This is a driving lesson. This is not therapy.

ONE: I just wondered. I mean, we've been sitting here, side-by-side for weeks now and –

TWO: Eugenie. We're not friends. I am the teacher and you are the student.

ONE: I know but –

TWO: I'm not going to discuss this further with you. We are here to drive. Driving is the only appropriate topic of discussion. That is the only thing I want to hear come out of your mouth for the remainder of this lesson and for any future lessons. Is that understood?

ONE: *(very small)* Yes.

TWO: Now, for the last time, hands in the ten and two position. Perhaps we can leave the parking lot before sundown.

ONE does not move. She turns her head away and gives a little sniff.

TWO: Eugenie.

ONE: I'm fine.

TWO: Are you upset?

ONE: No.

TWO: There's nothing to be upset about.

ONE: I know.

TWO: *(she sighs)* I'm sorry. I snapped. I shouldn't have. Forget I said anything.

ONE: *(with a bigger sniff)* Oh-k.

TWO: *(can't believe it)* Are you crying?

ONE: *(trying not to cry)* Uh uh.

TWO: You are!

ONE: *(crying out)* No I'm not!

*ONE puts her face in her hands and gives a big wail.
NOTE: Even though this is serious for ONE, the actor should strive to make this a comedic wail. Make the audience laugh.*

TWO: Really, Eugenie. Don't cry. I'm begging you. I'm not good with crying. I've never been good with crying.

ONE gives a big wail.

TWO: OK. OK. It was the Switzerland thing. That really bugged me. Not you telling me, but that someone had a father who would...

ONE amps up her crying.

TWO: I'll tell you anything you want, just don't cry! Take a breath, take a big breath and suck those tears back into your head. Suck them right back into your head. Suck 'em back. (*ONE is still crying*) OK, don't suck. Let them all out. Get it all out of your system. Sure. Ah, ah, Eugenie! You were wondering, you wanted to know if my father ever took me anywhere. I'll tell you. OK? Will that help?

ONE makes some noises, that might be words, but can't be understood because of her crying.

TWO: Did my father ever take me anywhere? No, he never did. He's a lawyer. A big shot lawyer. Big cases. Always working and he was always busy. I was supposed to understand. But a kid doesn't understand squat. How's this? Is this working?

ONE gives a whimper, clearly listening. As this monologue goes on TWO loses her snobby demeanour and REALLY gets into the story.

TWO: OK. The only time my dad ever paid attention to me is when I worked, too. When I had homework, or when I was working on a project, we were peas in a pod. I would make up homework, just so he would spend time with me. Then I started doing spelling bees. He would quiz me for hours. And one year, I went all the way to nationals. I got to the finals of nationals. My dad was beaming, I saw him in the audience. I was so happy. I was making my dad happy. I got to the finals and I was centre stage, looking right at my dad and I missed. On my last word. Suffrutescent (*pronounced suf-froo-TESS-ent*). Suffrutescent. Shrub-like. Somewhat Shrubby. Language of origin? Can you use it in a sentence? Are there any other pronunciations? Suffrutescent. Suffrutescent. (*really taking time with this*) S-U-F-R-U-T-E-S-C-E-

N-T. I thought I had it. I was all set to sit down and “ping.” The bell that tells you the word is spelled wrong. The bell of doom. For whom the spelling bell tolls. “Ping!” S-U-F-F-R-U-T-E-S-C-E-N-T. I knew it had two “F’s.” I knew it. I’d spelled it right before. I was... just... and my dad, he didn’t congratulate me for how far I’d gone. He didn’t say, “Good show. Better luck next time. You did great. I love you.” He said, “You didn’t try hard enough.” If I had tried I would have won. I would have got the word and then, and only then, would he have been proud of me.

By now ONE is completely wrapped in the story and has stopped crying.

ONE: That’s terrible!

TWO: That’s when I knew my dad was an ass. That’s when I concocted my plan for... (*savour this word*) revenge.

ONE: (*with wide eyes*) What did you do?

TWO: Ha ha! I went to high school. Top marks every year. The highest marks in my class. Scholarships to wherever I wanted to go and whatever I wanted to do. I was a star. Star quality. Something really to be proud of. University, same thing. The highest marks in my class. I’m really going to be somebody. But then, oh then, right in the last year, right in the last second. BOOM!

ONE: What?

TWO: I dropped the ball. Dropped it from space. Dropped out of everything. Failed it all. Ignored all protests and pleas. Topped my tower and laid it to ruin. And with the rubble scattered at my feet, I looked my dad in the eye and said, (*triumphantly*) “That’s for the spelling bee, Dad!” And he... kicked me out of the house. And now... I live in a rat hole. And I teach brain-dead teenagers. No offence.

ONE: None taken.

TWO: And I teach them how to drive. I teach driving. (*all of a sudden puzzled, realizing this isn’t really a triumph*) Boy. I sure showed him.

ONE: How come we got stuck with the mean dads? How come we didn’t get the dads who take us to Switzerland?

TWO: (*really grumpy*) Oh, what could be so wrong with your dad? I’m sure my story is a thousand times worse than yours.

ONE: It's not revenge worthy, I guess... It's still mean though.

TWO: What happened?

ONE: I asked my dad to go driving with me. To practice? And he laughed. He said no. He said he'd never get in a car with me. I'm too silly. I'm just a silly girl and I'll probably be silly for the rest of my life. And it wasn't a nice, "You're so silly." It was mean. Silly is a bad thing to be.

TWO: Yeah, that would suck.

ONE: I know I'm not... I'll never be a brain surgeon. But I thought that was OK. He wrote me off. For the rest of my life. I don't like that. He's supposed to be there for me, isn't he? That's what I thought.

TWO: (*very revengeful*) You should show him. Show him he's wrong.

ONE: You really hold a grudge, don't you? (*she sighs*) Forget it. (*she wipes her eyes*) OK. Let's drive.

TWO: Ah, Eugenie, I don't think you're in the best frame of mind –

ONE: I want to drive. I want to do something right today.

TWO: I think the best thing to do would be for me to drive, and we go get a coffee somewhere.

ONE: You said it yourself. We're not friends. You don't have to baby me.

TWO: Eugenie –

ONE: Am I silly? Do you think I'm silly?

TWO: I –

ONE: Come on, what do you think?

TWO: You do... talk... a lot.

ONE: About silly things.

TWO: I didn't say that.

ONE: But you're thinking it, aren't you? Aren't you?!

TWO: You don't have to get mad at me. I'm not your dad.

ONE: Am I a good driver?

TWO: Please don't make me answer that.

ONE: Am I a good driver? Tell me!

TWO: You... talk... a lot.

ONE: That makes me a bad driver?

TWO: It doesn't exactly help.

ONE: We should be on the same side here. Our dads suck. Help me!
Tell me I'm a bad driver. Tell it to my face! Tell me!

TWO: (*really letting loose*) Yes, you're a bad driver! A terrible driver. You hardly look at the road, you're always searching for your friends, you want to play loud music, you never brake properly and you never, never, never hold your hands in the ten and two position. It drives me crazy! I hate the days when I have lessons with you because I'm never entirely sure the car is going to make it out alive! I'm waiting for the day you smash into a telephone poll because you want to drive with your feet!

There is a pause. ONE looks happy. TWO looks spent.

ONE: Thank you.

TWO: I shouldn't have said that. I never should have said that.

ONE: I asked you to.

TWO: It's not professional. I have officially thrown every shred of professionalism out the window. My dad was right. I do deserve to live in a rat hole and teach brain-dead teenagers. I'm a failure.

ONE: Don't say that.

TWO: Why not? It's true.

TWO groans and smushes her face into the clipboard.

ONE: Ms. Jackson?

TWO: (*still with her face in the clipboard*) What?

ONE: Can I become a better driver?

TWO: What?

ONE: Can I get better? Can I improve?



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