



**Sample Pages from
The Itsy-Bitsy Spider Or Else**

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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)

The Itsy Bitsy Spider Or Else

ONE is a businessman. TWO is a deliveryman.

ONE enters with TWO following behind. TWO has a clipboard.

ONE: Thank you for coming so quickly.

TWO: Our pleasure.

ONE: I was in a complete panic. You've really saved me.

TWO: Glad we could help.

ONE: I'm having a party tonight. I want everything to be perfect. This will really do the trick.

TWO: I just need you to sign on the dotted line.

ONE: *(takes clipboard)* Sure.

TWO: And I'll get your 10 dash 2 out of the truck.

ONE: *(stops with pen in mid air)* What?

TWO: I'll get your 10 dash 2 out of the truck.

ONE: You mean my 2 dash 10.

TWO: 10 dash 2.

ONE: 2 dash 10.

TWO: I got a 10 dash 2 in the truck.

ONE: But I didn't ask for a 10 dash 2. I asked for a 2 dash 10. I ordered a 2 dash 10.

TWO: *(he scratches his head)* Huh. I wonder what happened. I confirmed the order. 10 dash 2's are a bear to move. I wouldn't put a 10 dash 2 in the truck unless I was absolutely sure.

ONE: I didn't order a 10 dash 2. I would never order a 10 dash 2. What kind of person do you think I am?

TWO: I'm sure I don't know.

ONE: I'm the kind of person who orders 2 dash 10's. I have 2 dash 10 written all over me!

TWO: I see.

ONE: (*pacing*) This is terrible. I have people coming over. The legal department has been talking about this party for weeks. I have a lot of expectations to live up to.

TWO: Well, a 10 dash 2 would certainly be a conversation starter. You could have a ton of conversations about a 10 dash 2.

ONE: I don't want a conversation starter. I want my 2 dash 10! The whole night is planned around the 2 dash 10! The canapés have been colour-coordinated to the 2 dash 10. I had a string quartet compose a piece of music dedicated to the 2 dash 10.

TWO: This is some party.

ONE: Darn right it is. Without, it seems, a 2 dash 10!

TWO: Seems a little much, though. If you want my opinion.

ONE: If I what?

TWO: Sounds like you're putting a lot of pressure on yourself. What if the party doesn't go smoothly? What if someone spills a drink, or has an allergic reaction to the shrimp? You may feel relieved to have a 10 dash 2 around. The 10 dash 2 can really come in handy. Sure your 2 dash 10 is fine when things are going well. But when there's a problem, that's when a 10 dash 2 can really save the day.

ONE stares and TWO. He points accusingly at TWO.

ONE: This is a conspiracy.

TWO: Huh?

ONE: A plot. A plan. This is a company conspiracy.

TWO: Oh, come on now...

ONE: I know it. I can smell it. This has nothing to do with confirming orders. That 10 dash 2 is here on purpose! You want to get rid of your 10 dash 2's and you're foisting them on unsuspecting 2 dash 10ers! A conspiracy I tell you! A downright evil conspiracy. Conspiracy! Conspiracy! Conspiracy!

ONE turns away and crosses his arms. There's a pause. TWO scratches his head and finally answers.

TWO: Well...

ONE: (*turning back to TWO*) What?

TWO: I'm saying... There's might be...

ONE: (*totally surprised*) You mean I'm right?

TWO: There might be... something to your theory.

ONE: Are you kidding? (*whispering and leaning in*) This is a conspiracy? A honest to goodness conspiracy?

TWO: (*leaning in and whispering*) Why are you whispering?

ONE: (*whispering*) I don't know. You're not bugged, are you?

TWO: (*whispering*) No.

ONE stands up straight. So does TWO.

ONE: (*full voice*) What do you know?

TWO: I shouldn't say.

ONE: But there is something?

TWO: There is.

ONE: About my 2 dash 10?

TWO: I shouldn't say.

ONE: You have to.

TWO: I can't.

ONE: You've already started. You can't stop now.

TWO: I shouldn't say.

ONE: You can't leave me in the lurch.

TWO: Well...

ONE: I have to know. Please!

TWO: OK. I'll tell you. You may not like it.

ONE: I can take it.

TWO: It might make you mad.

ONE: I'm all ears.

ONE sits down and gestures TWO to join him. TWO also sits.

TWO: It's about your tone.

ONE: My tone? My dial tone? On my phone?

TWO: Your voice tone.

ONE: *(he holds his throat)* What about it?

TWO: When you talk, you give tone. You speak condescendingly to people you believe are beneath you. You give attitude.

ONE: And what's wrong with that?

TWO: Milly doesn't like it.

ONE: Who's Milly?

TWO: That's another thing. Milly has been taking your orders for three years now. 7 dash 38's, 14 dash 3's, and 9 dash 9 dash 5's. She says her name every time she answers the phone. And you don't know it.

ONE: Of course I know her name...

TWO: You call her Maude.

ONE: I do?

TWO: She doesn't like it.

ONE: Wait a second, wait a second. *(getting mad)* Am I hearing what I think I'm hearing?

TWO: I told you it might make you mad.

ONE: I've got a 10 dash 2 instead of a 2 dash 10 because I offended some... secretary? Some plebe who answers the phone? She thinks I give her tone? *(he stands and starts to pace)* Just wait, just wait, she hasn't begun to see tone. Who's your manager? Who's your president? I want the president of the company and I am going to tell him a thing or two about tone. I will show him an ocean and a seas worth of tone. I will give him mountains of tone. I will –

TWO: Milly's the president.

ONE: Milly?

TWO: Yep.

ONE: The girl who answers the phone?

TWO: She'll be real pleased to hear you call her a girl. And that you automatically assumed the president was a guy. She's always cracking up over people who do that.

ONE: What's the president doing answering the phone? How am I supposed to know it's the president on the phone?

TWO: You're not supposed to know.

ONE: That is downright sneaky.

TWO: Depends on how you look at it.

ONE: I'm looking at it as sneaky.

TWO: That's your prerogative.

ONE: Darn right it is. So what do we do now? Am I getting my 2 dash 10 or not?

TWO: I only got a 10 dash 2 in the truck.

ONE: Does she want me to apologize?

TWO: Nope.

ONE: Does she want me to write a letter?

TWO: Nope.

ONE: Give to charity? Throw a cream pie in my face? What?

TWO: She wants you to sing to her cat.

There is a pause. ONE is sure he's heard wrong.

ONE: I beg your pardon?

TWO: Milly wants you to sing to her cat. She's very connected to her. If you call Milly up and sing to her cat, she'll forget the whole tone thing and she'll OK the delivery of a 2 dash 10.

ONE: Is Milly serious?

TWO: Milly is dead serious.

ONE: Milly is a lunatic.

TWO: (*with a shrug*) Milly's the boss.

ONE: I don't have to apologize, which would be the sane move in this situation, but if I sing to a cat everything's hunky dory?

TWO: The cat likes nursery rhymes. Makes her happy. Cat's happy, Milly's happy.

ONE: I refuse. I absolutely refuse. It's ridiculous, and no, no. I won't do it. Take your 10 dash 2 and get out.

TWO: OK. (*turns to go*) But the 10 dash 2 stays.

TWO starts to cross the stage to exit and ONE tries to do everything to stop him, without actually physically stopping him.

ONE: What?

TWO: I gotta fulfil the order.

ONE: You can't.

TWO: My paperwork says I gotta deliver a 10 dash 2 to this address, and that's what I'm going to do.

ONE: I didn't sign the paperwork. I don't want it. I refuse the delivery!

TWO: I'll just put it out on the lawn then?

ONE: You can't do that! I'm giving a party tonight. How will it look with a 10 dash 2 on the lawn? What will the neighbours say?

TWO: I'm sure you'll be able to move it to the side. You just need one of those mini forklifts.

ONE: I'm going to call the papers on you. All the news stations. Radio, TV, the works!

TWO: Yeah they love Milly. She's always winning awards, she's even got a key to the city. I'm sure they'd love to talk to you about her.

ONE: This is blackmail! Extortion!

TWO: (*exiting*) Have a nice day!

ONE: (*calling out*) I won't back down! I won't! I really won't! You think I will but I won't!

ONE pauses, trying not to give in. Finally he gives a big sigh and calls out.

ONE: Wait! Come back!

TWO comes sauntering back in.

ONE: If I sing, I get my 2 dash 10.

TWO: Yep.

ONE: And you won't leave that thing on my lawn?

TWO: If the order changes, I will fulfil it completely.

ONE: And it has to be singing?

TWO: Nursery rhymes.

ONE: And it has to be nursery rhymes?

TWO: The Itsy Bitsy Spider or else.

ONE: All right. *(he pulls out a cell phone and presses a number)*

TWO: You have our company on speed dial! That's cool.

ONE: *(he grimaces at TWO and speaks into the phone)* Good afternoon.
May I speak to Milly, please? Milly! Milly it's so good to talk to you.
I have one of your deliverymen here...

TWO: Hank.

ONE: I have Hank here, Milly, and – *(to TWO)* She wants to know if your niece is feeling better.

TWO: Oh, she is.

ONE: *(on phone)* She is.

TWO: All the kids in her class signed her cast.

ONE: *(on phone)* All the kids in her class signed her cast.

TWO: But she says it itches like crazy!

ONE: *(on phone)* But she says – *(to HANK)* Do you want to talk to her?

TWO: There's that tone...

ONE: (*takes a deep breath in and then talks on the phone*) But, he says, her cast is itching like crazy. Yes, isn't that always the way. Anyway, Milly, I am calling because it has been brought to my attention there's been a misunderstanding which has led to a 10 dash 2 in a truck in my driveway instead of the 2 dash 10, which I clearly remember ordering this morning.

TWO: (*wagging his finger at ONE*) Ah, ah ah...

ONE: (*he clears his throat*) I understand that my – that the manner in which I spoke with you was unacceptable. And I'd like to remedy that right now. By singing to your cat. Oh, I insist. It would be my utmost honour if you would allow me to sing The Itsy Bitsy Spider to your cat, Princess Pattycakes? Yes, Princess Pattycakes! Please let me sing to Princess Pattycakes. (*to HANK*) She's very touched.

TWO: That's our Milly!

ONE: (*to TWO*) She's holding up the cat to the phone. (*to phone*) Ready Princess Pattycakes? OK... (*starts to sing*) The Itsy Bitsy Spider went up the – (*he is suddenly stopped*) No, I'm not doing the gestures. Because I'm holding the phone.

TWO: I'll hold the phone for you.

ONE: But the cat won't see the gestures.

TWO: She'll know if you don't.

ONE: But it's – (*he controls himself*) Fine, fine.

ONE gives the phone to TWO who holds it to ONE's mouth so he can sing and do the gestures.

ONE: (*singing*) The Itsy Bitsy Spider went up the water spout.

TWO: And be happy, too. She'll know if you're not happy.

ONE: (*singing, now with a smile on his face*) Down came the rain and washed the spider out! Out came the sun and dried up all the rain, so the Itsy Bitsy spider went up the spout again.

ONE ends in a pose. TWO takes the phone and talks to Milly.

TWO: Yep, he did it. Hand gestures and all. Did she like it? Awwwwww. (*looking at ONE*) He was relatively happy. Happy enough. (*he laughs at something Milly says*) Too true. OK, you got it, Boss.



help@theatrefolk.com www.theatrefolk.com

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