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# Introduction

*Tight Spots* is a balanced collection of fifty character monologs (twenty-five female, twenty-five male), drawn from real-life experiences of contemporary teens, living in both urban/suburban areas and in small towns. Divorce, parents, school, getting in trouble, finding your own way, physical appearance, the opposite sex — all loom large in these monologs. In each one, the character is saying what is currently on his mind, sometimes speaking to another person, sometimes talking to himself, but almost always anticipating a difficult confrontation, experiencing something frightening or new, or weighing the options.

I didn't write these monologs with any particular agenda or topic in mind — I more or less took down what the individuals' stories were, just as I heard them. Sometimes they were told to me by the person speaking in the monolog, other times passed on to me by a parent or a friend. People sometimes claim that teenagers are so hard to understand because they don't like to say what's on their minds or tell you what's weighing them down. I haven't found that to be true. I have found, however, that adults tend to give advice rather than to just listen to a teen, and that teens don't mind expressing their feelings to adults as long as they don't have to listen to any follow-up advice.

Each piece takes five minutes or less to perform. Simple props are suggested in many of the monologs to help establish the setting. Most props are optional or can be pantomimed if not available. A program could be easily put together by combining however many monologs it takes to fill your allotted time. The age given is the actual age of the teen whose story was the germ of the monolog; many, I think, can be played by a range of ages.

— Diana Howie

**Publisher's Note:** We have divided the monologs into lighter material that could be considered humorous despite the crisis situation, and heavier, more serious material. However, we agree with the author that most of the monologs contain elements of both.