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Preface

In the many years I have been teaching high school theater, I have been privileged to know scores of theater educators from across the country and from other lands. While we all have different cultures, experiences and situations, we have one thing in common. Teens. From wherever they hail, the teen experience is one of commonality. Fitting in, acting out, boyfriends, girlfriends, tests, work, college. The list goes on in a variety of languages. I think you will find that the scripts within this book tap into these experiences and bring them to life on the stage.

For the theater educator who is looking for something new for their students that will challenge their skills without offending their parents, I believe you will enjoy the material in this new book. These scenes have been performed and tested on my own students and many theater students throughout Southern California. Let me take this moment to express my heartfelt thanks to my friends and colleagues in the Drama Teachers Association of Southern California and the California Educational Theater Association. These wonderful teachers have taken my scripts, tried them out on their own students and given me valuable feedback. Gai Jones, Janice Krell, Cindy Little, Kim O'Rourke, Joe Parrish, Ron Perry, Mark Scott and Amanda Swann are just a few in a long list who have been generous with their time and students in helping me craft this book.

A question has come up regarding my scripts for festivals. Some, such as the Fullerton College Festival, do not allow "scenes," but only "one-acts." For future reference, you can use these scripts in festivals. I do not consider them scenes, but instead they are complete one-acts with a beginning, middle and end. There is an arc to each story line, and when I write them I do not see them as a small part of a larger piece. They are, truly, one-acts. So, if questioned, please show them this preface.

As long as I teach I will continue to write for teens. They make me laugh, they make me tear up, they try my patience and they inspire me. As long as I work with young adults, the scenes will keep happening.

Mary Krell-Oishi
June 2005

Introduction

Mary Krell-Oishi is a true hero to hundreds of high school theater students across the country. Not only does she create scenarios and monologs to which young actors can relate readily, but she also writes in the language that teenagers hear all around them on a daily basis.

I have used Mary's scripts since the first collection appeared in print, and I am proud to say that we have a number of trophies on our shelves as a result of Mary's talents. The students in the Midwest relate to the scenes and monologs in Mary's books in the same way that my students do in Southern California.

An indication of a "classical playwright" is one whose works can be translated into any language and still "work." There is no question that "The Bully" and "Going to the Top," which are in this current volume, would be just as thought provoking and challenging in German, French, Spanish or Chinese as they are in English. People do not change from continent to continent, and the emotions, conflicts and wacky situations young people are embroiled in do not stop at national borders or state lines either. Mary has tapped into this universality with her keen eyes and open ears as she has traveled through teenage communities.

As a teacher herself, Mary Krell-Oishi knows how difficult it is to find suitable material for young actors for high school classrooms, stages, festivals and competitions. Often the language and situations in contemporary works are inappropriate and inaccessible for educational theater. These works are always appropriate, always accessible and always challenging for the actor; even more importantly is the fact that none of Mary's writing falls into the category of "cute!"

I am proud to be a colleague of Mary Krell-Oishi in my career as a theater educator. Having worked with her on numerous educational theater boards and committees, I know her to be a devoted teacher and an inspired playwright for youth in theater. I look forward to her work in the future as I continue to use her work from the past.

Kim O'Rourke

Representative for Trinity College, London-Guildhall Examinations

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