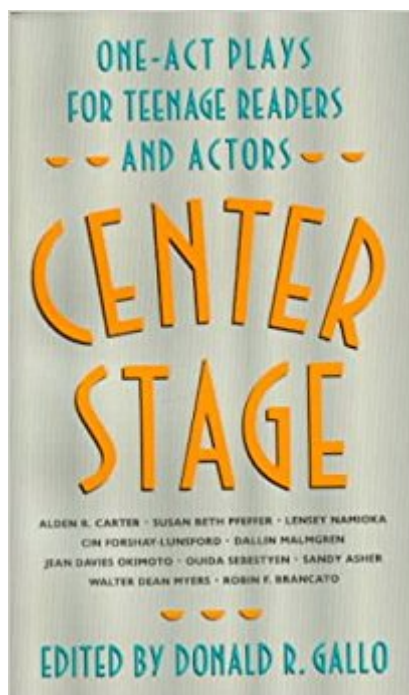


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# Center Stage



## Synopsis

The house lights dim. The curtain begins to rise... ..on ten original one-act plays by some of today's best writers of young adult fiction; Some of the plays are funny, some serious; all offer special insights into the problems and triumphs of teenagers; In Alden R. Carter's Driver's Test, a boy sets a new record by flunking his driver's test even before leaving the lot; In Walter Dean Myers's Cages, a group of teenagers is suddenly given the chance to decide their own destinies. In Robin F. Brancato's War of the Words, two gangs slug it out, one group with lofty poetry, the other with slang--and the reader, actors, and audience get to supply the ending; So settle back in your seat, and let the words of Quida Sebestyen, Lensey Namioka, Susan Beth Pfeffer, and others move and entertain you, as the lights come up on Center Stage"A fine idea generates exceptional results in this collection of ten plays . . . [that] focus on teens' courage, convictions, resourcefulness, and compassion. Among the contributors are Alden Carter, Ouida Sebestyen, Walter Dean Myers and Robin Brancato. The plays will appeal to students [and] teachers can use them in numerous ways." â "SLJ. 1991 Books for the Teen Age (NY Public Library)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A fine idea generates exceptional results in this collection of ten one-act plays. Among the contributors are Alden Carter, Susan Beth Pfeffer, Ouida Sebestyen, Walter Dean Myers, and Robin Brancato. The plays will appeal to students whether they're in drama, in English or social studies class, or in the library at lunch time. Teachers can use them in numerous ways, and certainly drama

coaches can generate some excitement with them. For humor, try Carter's "Driver's Test," in which Ben bumbles his second attempt to become licensed before getting out of the parking lot. There is pathos in Forshay-Lunsford's "Riding Out the Storm," as siblings and friends coming to terms with a boy's attempted suicide, and in Pfeffer's "World Affairs" that takes Terry through the discovery of her mother's affair. Myers' "Cages" is a powerful allegory in which the characters' fear of life's uncertainties prompts them to build imaginary cages in which they hide from life. All of the plays focus on teens' courage, conviction, resourcefulness, and compassion. This collection will nicely complement Wendy Lamb's *Meeting the Winter Bike Rider* (1986) and *Sparks in the Park* (1989, both Dell), both of which are collections of plays written by young adults. --Ellen Ramsay, Amphitheater High School, Tucson, AZ Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Although he almost always had a lead role in elementary school plays as well as church pageants, Don Gallo's dramatic interests ended abruptly one Easter Sunday when he was unable to recall a single word from a memorized passage he was attempting to recite at the morning church service. Any theatrical talents he may possess have since been utilized only in English classroom and lecture halls. Dr. Gallo, who has been a junior high school English teacher and reading specialist, is a professor of English at Central Connecticut State University, where he supervises student teachers and teaches courses in writing and in literature for young adults. He lives in West Hartford, Connecticut. He has edited three collections of short stories written by Famous writers of books for young adults; *Sixteen*, *Visions*, and *Connections*; and he has written a critical biography of author Richard Peck. His most recent book is a collection of autobiographies of notable young adult authors called *Speaking for Ourselves*.

So far, of the YA play anthologies I've bought (and I've purchased a number) this is one of my favorites. This is well-written YA lit. The other reviewer who hazards a comparison to Shakespeare is a bit daft. I couldn't teach Shakespeare to my freshmen - that requires a level of literacy they don't yet have. Also, these plays are expressly written for teens so I don't think it's fair to denigrate them because they don't stand up to Shakespeare's lofty standard. The plays are pretty good YA stuff. Several of them even received ALA awards. I teach low literacy students. Getting them to read anything often involves huge amounts of assistance and prayer for any chance of success. Yet they were begging to read some of these stories and even asking if they could borrow the plays. In general, I find those kids respond very well to plays. These plays are littered with teachable

moments from the Scholastic Books crowd of writers. "The Driver's Test" is a particularly funny play about a teen who fails the road test .... again. Funny, relevant stuff. It practically teaches itself. There are some clunkers, too (the Walter Dean Meyers piece plays out like a poor man's Sartre), but there's enough good stuff to overlook them. Also, most of the plays are just about the right length (20-30 pages) for my purposes and stay relatively consistent at that length. Honestly, I think "The Driver's Test" alone is worth the price of the book. Recommended for teens and teachers.

The plays in this collection attempt to tackle issues important to teens and end up sounding like badly written tv screenplays where everything is "deep" but resolved way too quickly. The dialogue is unrealistic and the characters shallow. I can't see handing any of these scripts out to high school students, expecting them to take the plays seriously.

The moral behind most of these plays is really a great attempt to teach a valuable lesson. However, these short plays offer no true insight into the world of on stage plays. Many readers will find the plays short and direct. These plays offer very little suspense and are a bore to read. Save time and money; buy Shakespeare.

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