

## Sample Pages from Chemo Girl

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Red Rover Waiting Room The Other Room Chemo Girl

BY Christian Kiley



### **Chemo Girl and Other Plays**

*Chemo Girl and Other Plays* can be performed as a full night of theatre, or as individual plays for performance or competition, or as a combination of more than one play. Please play each moment with full life and gusto. This is truly the best way to honor those who exhibit, and have exhibited, so much courage and heart in their battles against cancer.

The plays can be performed with simple blocks, chairs, or stools that can be reconfigured for each play (a hospital room for **Red Rover**, a waiting room for **Waiting Room**, the living room of a home in **The Other Room**, and the altered video game reality of **Chemo Girl**). Please feel free to be imaginative and/or use very little in the way of literal set pieces. This can also be the case with costumes, where suggestions made with a single signature costume piece for each character may be a very efficient way to visually convey the character and help the audience get a visual sense of who's who.

Red Rover (IM, 3W, 12E, doubling possible)......5

A young girl is pulled out of her history class to go to the hospital where she discovers she has cancer. She befriends Lucy (who is chemotherapy personified) and she and Lucy prepare to take on cancer.

Waiting Room (4M, 7W, 1E, doubling

Chemo Girl (3W, 13E, doubling possible, ensemble expandable to 26 or more) .......53 Camille is given a video game system from her Mom as a form of recovery therapy for cancer. She prefers reading books and finds that video game worlds lack realism and believes they will not help with her fight against cancer. However, Camille is pulled into the video game world that mirrors her fight with cancer. She meets the Gamemaster and takes on the screen name Chemo Girl. Through the levels of this video game Camille discovers many things and must confront a recurring nightmare.

## Special Thanks

The playwright would like to thank Bill and Ellen Kiley for their proofreading and editing assistance. Also, special thanks to Bradley Hayward, Rebecca Eckhoff, and Misha Tutt for their advice and support throughout the writing and development process.

*Chemo Girl* was produced by the Etiwanda High School (Eitwanda, CA) Theatre Arts Department and premiered on December 15, 2012 at the Rancho Cucamonga High School One-Act Festival where it was awarded First Place. The director of *Chemo Girl*, Jasmine Hamming was awarded a scholarship to California Youth In Theatre Day in Sacramento for her skillful direction. Amanda Lucido was awarded Best Actress for her portrayal of Chemo Girl. Madeline Barayang was awarded Outstanding Performer for her portrayal of Mom and Jack McDonald was awarded Outstanding Performer for his portrayal of Lagger/Ensemble. The playwright would like to thank the director, cast, and crew for their dedication, creativity, and heart in producing *Chemo Girl*.

Cial (Channa Cial)	A
Girl (Chemo Girl)	
Mom	
Gamemaster	
Witch	Lauren Dumapias
Ensemble	Jack McDonald
Ensemble	Candice Ervin
Ensemble	Jordan Ferman
Ensemble	Zoi Gray
Ensemble	Kaycee James
Ensemble	Amber Knudson
Ensemble	Kevin McCondichie
Ensemble	Morgan McInnis
Ensemble	Denia Moore
Ensemble	Andrew Nguyen
Ensemble	Adrien Ochoa
Ensemble	Tyler Reinhold
Ensemble	Tommy Russell
Ensemble	Daryl Santos
Ensemble	Arnulfo Sifuentes
Ensemble	Ashley Supall
Ensemble	Sarrah Twineham
Ensemble	Allante Walker
Ensemble	Brad West
Ensemble	Faith Williams

Director	Jasmine Hamming
Crew Manager/	
Light Design	Kristiana Perez
Costume Design	Lizbet Limon
Sound Design	Victoria Andriessen
Sound Operator	Zipporah Anderson

## **Chemo Girl**

3W, 13 E\*, doubling possible, ensemble expandable to 26 or more

GIRL, Camille. She is battling cancer. Screen name: Chemo Girl	LAGGER*, Flies behind the flyers and helps $\ensuremath{GIRL}$
MOM, Has come back to give her daughter the power to fight	ENSEMBLE 1-11*, Portrays various roles in the play: PARTS OF THE STORM I, TREES, MINES, STATUES, PATIENTS, FLYERS, PARTS OF THE STORM 2. * Gender-Neutral Roles
GAMEMASTER*, Is in charge of Save the Planet (the video game world)	
WITCH, Guards the forbidden forest of living trees	

This play is dedicated to Amanda Hayward in admiration for her strength and courage.

GIRL stands alone center stage. She looks straight out, holding her breath. After a few seconds, GIRL exhales.

GIRL: It's harder than it looks, holding your breath. It's a lot easier when you're under water. Mostly because you have to hold your breath under water. There is no choice. I think that's when we human beings do our best. When we are forced to do something and there is a time limit or a deadline. This is why a lot of people suddenly lose the ability to cope when they graduate from high school or college. They need the deadlines. They thrive on the urgency, the countdown. The increased importance of what they're doing. "This has to be done right now." I often have these dreams where I need to defuse a bomb that is deep, deep under water. I hold my breath and go, I'm assuming, hundreds of feet under the water, and I only have one chance to do it. And I get down there past the sea life, tiger sharks, sea turtles, schools of brightly-colored fish, and into the fields of casually swaying seaweed, like groupies at a concert during a slow song, just softly swaying, swaying, swaying back and forth. And then at the sandcarpeted bottom of the sea floor under a heavy rock, is a package. And when I open the package, it has a huge digital readout on it and there are always eight seconds left on it. And there are wires pouring out everywhere, rainbow-colored wires, and I don't have scissors or a knife or any tool to cut the right wire, even if I knew what the right wire was, which I never do, so I start to chew on

the red wire and right when I am about to cut through it with my incisors...I wake up.

GIRL holds her breath again. MOM enters with a wrapped item, the one described in GIRL's dream.

MOM: Camille, I got you something.

GIRL exhales quickly.

GIRL: Is it an attack bunny?

MOM: No.

GIRL: Is it a spider-monkey magician?

MOM: No.

GIRL: Is it a cure for-

MOM: (preventing her from saying the word) Open it!

GIRL rips off the wrapping paper revealing a video game system.

- MOM: You don't need a remote control or anything. It reads and interprets your body movement or something crazy like that.
- GIRL: This is a lot different than playing tic-tac-toe on stone tablets like you did as a kid.

MOM: Very funny.

GIRL: Lookie there, I had a sense of humor for a moment.

- MOM: You may never hear me say this again. I want you to play this video game!
- GIRL: Really, because I prefer reading books about my condition and wallowing in self-pity like an emotional pig. Thanks, Mom.

MOM hugs GIRL and exits.

GIRL: It's a nice thought. But video games, a fake world. How is that going to help me solve my problems here?

GAMEMASTER enters standing upstage of GIRL. GAMEMASTER can be dressed like a game show host.

GAMEMASTER: Are you ready to play?

- GIRL: I haven't even set up the game system yet.
- GAMEMASTER: You live in the future. No installation necessary.
- GIRL: I am not really into video games. My mom is just trying to distract me from my disease.
- GAMEMASTER: That sounds very serious, little lady. But do you know what else is very serious?
- GIRL: Splitting an atom.
- GAMEMASTER: True. But what is really, really, very serious is Save the Planet.
- GIRL: Sounds serious. I'm not the girl for the job.
- GAMEMASTER: You're the only person here.
- GIRL: My skills are weak. I'm sure someone else can make a better attempt at saving the earth.
- GAMEMASTER: Please select a screen name.
- GIRL: Well, my name is Camille.
- GAMEMASTER: Please select a screen name.
- GIRL: My name is Camille!
- GAMEMASTER: Screen names should wield a certain amount of power.
- GIRL: Camille is raw power.
- GAMEMASTER: It sounds like a type of tea or a place where old people play shuffleboard.
- GIRL: It is a bad, bad, kick-butt name.
- GAMEMASTER: Please select a screen name.
- GIRL: Angry Girl.
- GAMEMASTER: Name already used. Please select a screen name.
- GIRL: Shrieking Battle Babe 21.
- GAMEMASTER: Tacky. Please select a screen name.
- GIRL: Number One Gangsta.

- GAMEMASTER: Trying desperately to be tough. Please select a screen name.
- GIRL: Chemo Girl! Okay. Chemo Girl. That's who I am. A girl who is going through chemotherapy. (*waiting for a response from GAMEMASTER*) Yes! That's what I thought.
- GAMEMASTER: Greetings, Chemo Girl. Prepare for hair, makeup, and wardrobe sequence.

The ensemble enters dressed in all black. They are going to give GIRL a complete and total makeover to prepare for the game. This can include alterations to GIRL's hairstyle and attire. If GIRL is wearing a hat, it can be removed. Music can play during this sequence as underscoring as the GAMEMASTER explains the game.

- GAMEMASTER: Welcome to Save the Planet. In this game you will have to run, fly, and swim, punch, kick, and destroy, in order to protect the earth from the fierce army of invaders. All the movements are intuitive, so just move as you normally would.
- GIRL: This is crazy. I don't even like video games.
- GAMEMASTER: If by crazy you mean stunningly realistic, yet amazingly fantastic, you're welcome.
- GIRL: I'll try it. But I can stop anytime I want, right?
- GAMEMASTER: Most people stop to use the bathroom, or eat, or take a quick nap. But soon you will do all your life activities here. You won't need anything else.
- GIRL: Yeah, I'm pretty sure I'm not going to pee in a bucket in order to not interrupt my video game playing.

GAMEMASTER: Standby for Save the Planet.

The ensemble moves around GIRL in a frantic way, circling her and making storm sounds.

- GAMEMASTER: You are in the primordial ooze, you are part of the storm of creation, and unless you help, you will witness the earth's destruction.
- GIRL: Did you write that yourself? Tacky.
- GAMEMASTER: I thought it captured the moment.

Beat. The ensemble freezes in a variety of physical positions, becoming trees.

GAMEMASTER: Welcome to the Forbidden Forest.

GAMEMASTER exits. WITCH enters.

WITCH: Welcome to the forbidden forest, Chemo Girl!

GIRL: Yes, he said that already. But I'll play along. Why on earth am I here?

WITCH: You'll soon find out. I know your weakness.

GIRL: Sure you do.

WITCH: You are sick. Very sick.

GIRL: So?

WITCH: How can a sick little girl save the world?

GIRL: Apparently you don't know me.

WITCH: Oh, but I do. You can't even save yourself.

GIRL: I'm doing just fine.

WITCH: You have cancer.

GIRL: What did you say to me?

WITCH: I said, you have mustard.

GIRL: No. You said something else. You said it. How could you possibly know that?

WITCH: Beware of the trees, Chemo Girl.

The WITCH exits with a flourish.

GIRL: What a psychotic video game. Cheesy game show host? Are you there?

The trees all take one step closer to GIRL. GIRL notices this change, looking around.

GIRL: Did the trees move?

The trees spring into action, moving like martial arts foliage. GIRL springs into action. Music can play during this sequence as GIRL fights the trees. The fight sequence is clearly stylized with no real contact between the combatants. The dialogue can continue throughout the fight. You may elect to use the fight dialogue selectively or remove it entirely if the fight choreography works better without it. GIRL can also make sounds of exertion throughout.

GIRL: Here you go.

GIRL brings down a tree with a punch.

GIRL: You should branch out.

GIRL takes out two trees at the same time, one with the right hand, one with the left.

GIRL: It's hard for me to root for you.

GIRL kicks another tree.

GIRL: Time to leave this forest.

GIRL knocks one tree into another, who falls into a third.

GIRL: Okay, enough with the tree puns.

GIRL continues to fight, knocking out trees with skill and ease.

GIRL: Here you go. Boom, crack, smack. I'm making sound effects. Really? You like that? That was a rhetorical question. Well, here's some more. Hiya! Supa! What is supa? Lemonade! I must be thirsty. Crushed ice. Crush you. Pew, pew, pew! I think that was supposed to be the sound of a laser gun. I'll have to work on that.

All the trees are defeated and on the ground.

GIRL: Witch? Game show host? Mr. Game show host?

MOM: (offstage) Camille?

GIRL: Mom!

The ensemble stays in their positions on the ground. They have become verbal land mines that when triggered say phrases that are intended to unnerve and rattle GIRL. GIRL crosses to one of the downstage MINES. The MINES rise when they speak their lines and face the audience.

MINE #1: Needles that poke.

GIRL turns and another MINE triggers.

MINE #2: Colored liquids in IV bags.

GIRL moves abruptly, triggering another MINE.

MINE #3: Nausea and vomiting.

GIRL tries to run, triggering another MINE.

MINE #4: Fever, hot, hot, fever.

GIRL stays still but now the MINES are triggering themselves.

MINE #5: Chills, icy cold, icy, chills.

MINE #6: Sores. But it's dangerous if you bleed.

MINE #7: Low platelets, stay away from sharp things.

MINE #8: Sick, sick, sick.

MINE #9: Low white blood cells.

MINE #10: Thoughts of mortality.

MINE #11: Your life, hanging by a thread.

All the MINES repeat their lines as they close in on GIRL. They get very, very close.

MOM: (offstage) Fight, Camille. Fight.

GIRL makes a sound from deep within her and pushes her arms out. All of the MINES fall backwards and freeze like STATUES in a museum. GIRL is out of breath, trying to recover when MOM enters and hides behind one of the STATUES.

MOM: Camille.

GIRL: Mom?

GIRL moves in the direction of MOM's voice. MOM moves behind another STATUE.

MOM: Find the water.

GIRL: Where are you, Mom?

GIRL continues to search for MOM. MOM moves behind another statue.

MOM: Find the water and finish your dream.

GIRL: Mom, what are you talking about?

MOM: Finish your dream, Chemo Girl.

GIRL sees where MOM is hiding and runs for her but some of the STATUES come to life and block her.

- MOM: (while exiting) Save the planet, Chemo Girl! You can save the planet.
- GIRL: (to the STATUE) Get out of my way. I beat up a forest of ninja trees, defeated a field of disparaging land mines, so I don't think a stubborn statue is much of a challenge.

During this sequence, the STATUES can deliver their lines toward the audience.

STATUE #I: I am your postal worker.

STATUE #2: I am your peewee soccer coach.

STATUE #3: I am the lunch lady.

STATUE #4: I gave you a stuffed toy at the amusement park.

STATUE #5: I was the mall Santa Claus until...

STATUE #6: I am-

GIRL runs and hugs STATUE #6.

GIRL: Uncle Paul.

STATUE #7: I am your second grade teacher.

STATUE #8: I am that kid you always wanted to talk to but never did.

STATUE #9: You used to read books to me at the senior center.

STATUE #10: I starred in that TV show you watched as a kid.

STATUE #11: I was your roommate in the hospital.

STATUE #6: We all had cancer too.

GIRL: Uncle Paul, I love you.

STATUE #6: I love you too, Chemo Girl.

GIRL: Why are you calling me that?

STATUE #6: The water. Go to the water.

GIRL: Mom said that too.

STATUE #6: Finish your dream.

GIRL tries to grab STATUE #6 but he moves away quickly. The STATUES start to exit in all directions.

GIRL: I'm sorry! I am so sorry. I didn't know. I didn't realize what was going on, how it impacted so many people. Stay with me. We can fight this together.

GIRL tries to run and catch the STATUES but she cannot.

GIRL: Go to the water.

GAMEMASTER enters with the video game system that MOM gave GIRL at the start of the play.

GAMEMASTER: How's it going, Chemo Girl? Having a good time?

GIRL: This game is twisted. It's custom-designed for my life.

GAMEMASTER: I told you that we lived in the future. Maybe you would be happier playing with a ball of yarn or a sock puppet.

GIRL: No! I can play just fine.

GAMEMASTER: I am going to up the stakes. This is the key to the game (referring to the package). I am going to hide it somewhere on planet earth. Your job, Chemo Girl, is to find it before it destroys the planet.

GIRL: That is totally unreasonable.

- GAMEMASTER: The game is called Save the Planet. If you wanted to play Save the Jungle Gym you should have ordered that.
- GIRL: I didn't order this.
- GAMEMASTER: Well, it's a little late for that. You have it and that's that.
- GIRL: How much time do I have?
- GAMEMASTER: No, no, no...the game asks questions that you must answer.
- GIRL: Alright. I'm not afraid of you or this game or anything. Not anymore.
- GAMEMASTER: Oh, but the monsters from under your bed and inside the dark shadows of your closet are not blue-fluffy-big-eyed dopes, they are crimes, and disasters, and epidemics. I know your diagnosis, Camille.

GIRL: My name is Chemo Girl!

GAMEMASTER: Good luck then, Chemo Girl.

GAMEMASTER exits. There are sounds of moaning and agony offstage. When the ensemble enters, they are all patients who are very sick. GIRL tries to go to each one and help them, but nothing she does or says helps.

PATIENT #I: Help me, I don't feel very well.

GIRL moves to PATIENT #1.

PATIENT #2: Could you help me to my bed?

GIRL moves to PATIENT #2 and starts to help.

PATIENT #3: I need a nurse.

GIRL: Nurse, nurse. Is there a nurse?

PATIENT #4: I can't find my room.

GIRL: What number is it? What floor?

GIRL tries to move to each PATIENT but cannot. She stands flustered and motionless.

PATIENT #5: I need my medicine.

- PATIENT #6: Have you seen my teddy bear? He is brown and has one eye.
- PATIENT #7: I want to escape. Help me escape.
- PATIENT #8: I am burning up, I need ice.
- PATIENT #9: I am freezing. Please get me a blanket.
- PATIENT #10: Everything tastes like metal.
- PATIENT #11: The package is in the water. The cure is in the water.

GIRL crosses quickly to PATIENT #11.

GIRL: What did you say?

- PATIENT #11: I didn't say anything.
- GIRL: But you did. The cure is in the water? Where? Where in the water? The planet is mostly water and there are big red numbers counting down. We need to find it.

MOM enters and stands in the middle of the PATIENTS.

MOM: Go to the water, Camille.

GIRL moves urgently toward her MOM.

- GIRL: Why are you here with these sick people?
- MOM: You know why.
- GIRL: No. You're fine, you'll be okay.
- MOM: You can break the cycle. You can overcome the genetic predisposition.
- GIRL: You'll be fine, Mom! You're fine.

The PATIENTS start to exit, repeating their lines as they go.

MOM: I have to go.

MOM starts to exit with the others. GIRL chases after her.

GIRL: You gave me the game so I could save the planet, so that I could save you.

GIRL grabs MOM by the arm, turning her around.

GIRL: Right, Mom? So that I could save you.

MOM: So that you could save yourself.

MOM exits. The ensemble enters, and using their arms as wings, they fly around the stage.

FLYER #1: Blue Jay One, this is Blue Jay Leader. Assume attack formation.

FLYER #2: I read you loud and clear. Assuming attack formation.

The ensemble moves into a flight pattern of four FLYERS in the upstage row, three FLYERS in the row in front of that, two FLYERS in the row in front of that, and FLYER # 1 alone and furthest downstage.

FLYER #2: Target approaching.

FLYER #1: Thank you, Blue Jay One. Standby for full scale attack.

One ensemble member, not included in the formation, lags behind. GIRL talks to LAGGER.

GIRL: What is going on with these strange, militant birds?

LAGGER: Oh, another mission. This time they're going to attack Chemo Girl.

GIRL: What?

LAGGER: They are going to destroy Chemo Girl. (*noticing GIRL is not moving her arms*) You'll need to start flapping your wings if you want to keep flying.

GIRL starts to move her arms like a bird.

GIRL: I'm new at this. First-time flyer, actually.

LAGGER: Not bad, not bad at all.

GIRL: Thanks.

FLYER #2: Prepare for attack!

GIRL: Stop!

FLYER #2: Blue Jay Leader we have a problem.

FLYER #1: Blue Jay One, this had better be good.

FLYER #2: Pardon me, Miss, who are you?

GIRL: I'm Chemo Girl.

FLYER #2: Blue Jay Leader, she says-

FLYER #1: Dispense with the formality, I'm right here.

GIRL: I think you are looking for me.

FLYER #I: Affirmative. We were told you were a ground target.

GIRL: Surprise.

FLYER #1 grabs GIRL's arm and spins her around. GIRL starts to lose control.

FLYER #1: Surprise. Have a safe landing, Princess.

GIRL regains control and curves around so that she is now facing the formation.

GIRL: Nobody, and I mean nobody calls me...

GIRL hits the FLYERS' formation like a bowling ball hitting pins.

GIRL: PRINCESS!

FLYERS scatter in every direction. Cries of "mayday", "I'm going down", and other phrases indicating that the FLYERS will no longer be airborne soon are heard for several seconds. The FLYERS all exit, crash-landing offstage, leaving GIRL and LAGGER alone.

LAGGER: You're good.

GIRL: I'm determined.

LAGGER: We're coming up on the ocean.

GIRL: The ocean?

LAGGER: That's what you're looking for, right? The water.

GIRL: Yes, but just look at it. It's massive.

LAGGER: It's a tough game to win.

GIRL: You said it.

LAGGER: But you've made it this far. I think you can do it.

GAMEMASTER enters, not flapping his arms. He moves next to LAGGER.

GAMEMASTER: (to LAGGER) You talk too much.

LAGGER: Oh.

GAMEMASTER: So you know what happens next?

LAGGER: Please, no.

GAMEMASTER: Loose lips sink ships. What once was a flyer is now a fish.

LAGGER turns into a fish-person and stops moving his arms and begins to veer offstage. GIRL moves to save LAGGER but is held back by GAMEMASTER.

- GAMEMASTER: He'll be happier down there. And now the only question left is can you save the planet?
- GIRL: But that's not the real question. It never has been.
- GAMEMASTER: What is the real question then?
- GIRL: Do I have the courage and determination to overcome my disease?
- GAMEMASTER: You can't even say it.
- GIRL: Cancer, alright. I have to save myself. Not planet earth. This has always been about cancer.

GAMEMASTER: You're so right. But will you find it in time?

GAMEMASTER exits. GIRL moves her arms less and less until she is standing on the ground. MOM enters.

MOM: Go to the water.

GIRL: Mom, you're alive.

MOM: I am a part of this, which is made up of memories and fantasies and your reactions to the treatment. GIRL: That would explain the flying.

MOM: You can do this. Go to the water.

GIRL: But there is so much of it.

MOM: You know where to go. This is your dream. "Hundreds of feet under the water, down there past the sea life, tiger sharks, sea turtles, schools of brightly-colored fish, and into the fields of casually swaying seaweed, like groupies at a concert during a slow song, just softly swaying, swaying, swaying back and forth. And then at the sand-carpeted bottom of the sea floor under a heavy rock...there it is."

GIRL: How did you know?

MOM: I love you, Camille.

GIRL: I love you too, Mom. Don't go.

MOM: I have been gone for a long while. This just shows how strong you really are. You brought me here. Thank you, Camille, thank you for letting me help you.

GIRL stands looking at the water.

GIRL: Here it is. The water.

The members of the ensemble enter as a storm. Each actor takes on a different element of the storm. The rain, wind, thunder, lightning, hail, cold, etc. can be repeated by the actors and they can alternate the words with storm sound effects. GIRL and MOM are trapped in the middle of the storm. It continues around them as the dialogue continues.

MOM: Camille, you have to go in now.

GIRL: Come with me. I need you.

MOM: This is not my fight. I had my fight.

GIRL: You can fight again.

MOM: No.

The storm surrounds MOM and takes her offstage. GIRL tries to pull her away from the storm but it is too strong. A member of the storm leaves the video game



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