



Sample Pages from Red Rover

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CHEMO GIRL

AND OTHER PLAYS

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 (1M, 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 possible with parents)..... 21

A group of teenagers who all have various types of cancer are waiting to be called into the doctor's office to receive updates on their progress. At first everyone wants to be by themselves, to stay in their personal bubbles. But as they discover their similarities and appreciate each other for their quirky eccentricities, a bond is created. Their common desire to find out who the mysterious Mr. Fitzpatrick is, after he is called time and time again to go into the office with no response, allows them to express their own feelings about their illnesses.

The Other Room (4M, 3W) 39

Dad is recovering from cancer and heavy chemotherapy treatments in the other room. It has become a dark corner of the house, especially for Mary, who rarely goes in there. Tommy goes in to watch Cubs games and wonders how the team's over a century-long World Series drought is helping his Dad. Mom is trying to hold the family together, but it is not an easy challenge for a family dealing with cancer in The Other Room.

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 (Etiwanda, 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 Lager/Ensemble. The playwright would like to thank the director, cast, and crew for their dedication, creativity, and heart in producing ***Chemo Girl***.

Girl (Chemo Girl)Amanda Lucido
 Mom.....Madeline Barayang
 GamemasterDustin Darr
 WitchLauren Dumapias
 Ensemble.....Jack McDonald
 Ensemble.....Candice Ervin
 Ensemble.....Jordan Ferman
 Ensemble.....Zoi Gray
 Ensemble.....Kaycee James
 Ensemble.....Amber Knudson
 Ensemble.....Kevin McCondie
 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

DirectorJasmine Hamming
 Crew Manager/
 Light DesignKristiana Perez
 Costume Design.....Lizbet Limon
 Sound Design.....Victoria Andriessen
 Sound OperatorZipporah Anderson

Red Rover

1M, 3W, 12E*, doubling possible

HOLLY, A girl who recently
discovered she has cancer
LUCY, Her friend, Chemotherapy

The Side Effects

NAUSEA*
VOMITING*
FATIGUE*
FEVER*
SWEATS*
CHILLS*
HAIR LOSS*

The Visitors

DOCTOR*
MOM
DAD
CAL*
PAL*
SAL*
SOCIAL WORKER*

* Gender-Neutral Roles

This play is dedicated to Kelly, Anita, Jaime, and all of the nurses and doctors who create a chain of strength in the fight against cancer.

Scene I

*In the darkness the ensemble is speaking in unison.
“Red Rover, Red Rover send Holly right over.” This can
be repeated a number of times until the lights come
up. HOLLY stands on stage in a simple hospital robe.
LUCY is similarly dressed and stands next to her.*

HOLLY: When are you getting out?

LUCY: Out? Never.

HOLLY: You will be, what do they call it? Released, discharged...

LUCY: You make it sound like we're criminals.

HOLLY: But we can't just walk out into the daylight.

LUCY: The sun? No. They don't like that.

HOLLY: My doctor told me to rest.

LUCY: It's a full-time job, resting.

HOLLY: I like the pudding.

LUCY: They had a pudding shortage a few weeks ago. It was a big deal.
Some of the patients were hoarding pudding cups and eating them
in the bathroom at 3 a.m.

HOLLY: That's some good pudding.

LUCY: It tastes better in here.

HOLLY: Really?

LUCY: In here you appreciate pudding cups. There are no ice cream
sundaes in oncology.

HOLLY: Guess not. But I can bring you one. When I get out.

LUCY: It would melt.

HOLLY: I think there is a place near here. I heard the nurses talking
about it. One of those places where they sing "Happy Birthday"
like it is the end of the world and they have to get the entire
song out quickly before the world pops open like one of those
cheap party favors. And then they bring you this obnoxious pile
of ice cream and toppings that you need a shovel to eat and it's
on fire with birthday candles. And your world is on fire. (*Singing
the annoying restaurant version of "Happy Birthday."*) Happy, happy
Birthday. We want you to be Happy. Happy, happy, happy...happy,
happy day. (*Building in fervency as she repeats it until she finally
breaks down*) Happy, happy, happy, happy, happy!

LUCY: You, okay?

HOLLY: Yeah. Just tired.

LUCY: Rest.

HOLLY: I have my first treatment today.

LUCY: You'll meet them.

HOLLY: Who?

LUCY: Your side effects.

HOLLY: Oh.

LUCY: They're tough but they remind you that you're alive.

HOLLY: I'm scared.

LUCY: I'm nauseous, I am alive. I'm fatigued, I am alive. I'm tingling, I am alive. I just threw-up, I am alive.

HOLLY: Does that help?

LUCY: Talking to them? Yes.

HOLLY: Can I talk to it?

LUCY: The disease? Oh, heck yes. Sometimes I yell expletives at it. They asked me to cut it out. Not good for patient morale. But it proves you're alive.

HOLLY: That's good. (*HOLLY just says or sings the word "happy" in the "Happy Birthday" restaurant song.*) Happy, happy, happy...

Blackout.

Scene 2

In the darkness LUCY positions herself behind HOLLY and places her body around HOLLY. LUCY's arms are placed over HOLLY's arms to suggest the infusion of the chemotherapy drugs. When the lights come up, HOLLY is looking straight out.

LUCY: How does it feel?

HOLLY: Okay, I guess.

LUCY: Imagine little soldiers marching to destroy an invading army, or a league of superheroes going to fight a gang of villains, or little versions of you-

HOLLY: Throwing chairs through hospital windows.

LUCY: That's the spirit. But don't really do that now.

HOLLY: Wow, I was that convincing. I don't normally talk like that.

LUCY: That might be the chemotherapy talking.

HOLLY: It can do that?

LUCY: Yes, I can.

HOLLY: Strong stuff.

LUCY: I have to be. To take down something like this.

HOLLY: Thank you.

LUCY: Don't thank me yet. We have a long way to go. Get some rest. You'll need it.

Blackout.

Scene 3

HOLLY stands center stage. LUCY is back in her original position. Standing around HOLLY are THE SIDE EFFECTS (except HAIR LOSS). They are spread around the stage like unwanted house guests that have made themselves a little too much at home.

HOLLY: That wasn't too bad.

LUCY: Wait. They're here already.

HOLLY: Side effects. Reminding me I'm alive.

LUCY: Just keep saying that.

HOLLY: I will.

NAUSEA moves close to HOLLY.

NAUSEA: How are you feeling, Holly?

HOLLY: A little queasy.

NAUSEA: Sea sick?

HOLLY: Yes.

LUCY: Say it! Thank them.

HOLLY: Thank them?

LUCY: Thank the side effects for reminding you that you are alive.

HOLLY: My stomach is whirling like possessed tea cups!

LUCY: Thank them for allowing your disease to be discovered.

NAUSEA: Back and forth, round and round, round and round, and round.

HOLLY: Thank you, Nausea, for reminding me that I am alive.

NAUSEA: My pleasure. Here's another wave for you.

HOLLY: Oh, wow! Thank you, thank you, thank you!

VOMITING moves toward HOLLY.

VOMITING: Are you ready for this?

HOLLY runs off stage and throws up. In between heaves she calls out “thank you.” VOMITING is conducting on stage like HOLLY’s heaves are a symphony orchestra.

VOMITING: And one and two and (*HOLLY heaves*)...

HOLLY: Thank you.

VOMITING: And one and two and (*HOLLY heaves*)...

LUCY: Hang in there, Holly!

HOLLY reenters and shakes VOMITING’s hand. VOMITING wipes it off.

VOMITING: Sorry, you were just...throwing up...germs.

FATIGUE moves toward HOLLY and puts a tender arm around her.

HOLLY: I’m so tired.

FATIGUE: Yes you are.

HOLLY: I just want to rest.

FATIGUE: You look so tired kid, you should rest.

HOLLY: Yes, thank you.

LUCY: Say thank you but fight! Like lion-hungry thank you.

FATIGUE: Feel your muscles deflating, feel your energy depleting.

LUCY: Holly, keep saying thank you. Keep fighting.

HOLLY: (*tiring*) Thank you, thank you, thank...

FEVER moves closer to HOLLY.

HOLLY: Is it getting warm?

FEVER: Yes, yes it is.

HOLLY: Hot, very, very hot.

SWEATS and CHILLS move closer to HOLLY.

SWEATS: A little perspiration.

CHILLS: Shiver, shiver, shiver.

SWEATS: Sweat, sweat, sweat.

CHILLS: Shiver.

SWEATS: Sweat.

CHILLS: Shiver.

SWEATS: Sweat.

SWEATS and CHILLS: Shiver, sweat, shiver, sweat, shiver...

HOLLY: Thank you so much.

HAIR LOSS enters frolicking and tossing tufts of hair in the air.

HAIR LOSS: Follicles flying in the air.

HOLLY: Don't you come later?

LUCY: No more expensive hair products!

HOLLY: Thank you!

HAIR LOSS: My pleasure.

LUCY: These are your friends! And they are reminders. You think medicine has beaten this? No. Medicine has not beaten it. It has created another monster to fight it. These two Godzillas fight in this grotesque and primitive combat, while the city beneath them is destroyed; they claw, scratch, and beat each other. And you just hope that there are enough survivors when it is over to rebuild the city, to rebuild yourself.

The SIDE EFFECTS exit as the DOCTOR enters.

DOCTOR: Hello, Holly.

HOLLY: Hello, Doctor.

DOCTOR: How are you feeling?

HOLLY: The side effects are tough.

LUCY: They're kicking her butt.

DOCTOR: Well, we can give you something for that.

HOLLY: When will I be able to go home?

DOCTOR: We have to see how your body reacts to treatment. Do you have any questions about your treatment?

HOLLY: My imagination seems to be creating someone. Her name is Lucy.

DOCTOR: You've made a friend? Another patient?

HOLLY: I don't think so.

DOCTOR: One of the nurses then?

HOLLY: They're nice, but she's not a nurse.

DOCTOR: Well, who is it then?

HOLLY: Her name is Lucy and she talks to me.

DOCTOR: Do you talk to her?

HOLLY: I'm not a wacko but yes, I do talk to her.

DOCTOR: Holly, you are under a lot of strain and the chemotherapy does things to your body, and can affect things like your sense of smell, your vision, a lot of things.

HOLLY: Can it conjure up an imaginary friend?

DOCTOR: I've not heard of that one yet. But if it helps you, makes you feel better, and more comfortable, then that's great. (beat) Hello Lucy, I'm Doctor Harper.

HOLLY: I don't think she talks to anyone but me.

DOCTOR: Well, let us know if you or Lucy need anything.

DOCTOR exits. HOLLY calls after DOCTOR.

HOLLY: Lucy would like some ice cream. Even a simple bowl of plain vanilla ice cream will do!

LUCY: That's nice, but I don't need ice cream. I wouldn't know what to do with it.

HOLLY: That can't be. Everyone loves ice cream. If you don't, you are one of those people who foregoes the pleasures of the world.

LUCY: My purpose is to help you, to be your Godzilla in this fight. There is no ice cream for Godzilla.

HOLLY: I want ice cream.

LUCY: If you're lucky, you can have a pudding cup. Probably vanilla. I heard even prisoners get chocolate sometimes.

HOLLY: We're not prisoners.

LUCY: We're not?

HOLLY: I could take a chair or something and throw it through that window (*referring to an imaginary downstage window*).

LUCY: Well, aren't you just the little troublemaker.

HOLLY: Not really. I don't get in trouble.

LUCY: They say that chemotherapy can change your personality.

HOLLY: Really?

LUCY: That's what they say.

HOLLY: Who?

LUCY: The experts. So you might be throwing chairs through all kinds of windows soon enough. Maybe it will become a new trend, movie stars and athletes throwing chairs through windows and being banned from furniture stores, all thanks to you.

HOLLY: We are going to recover and get out of here and do normal things again. Learn to drive, go to the prom, eat ice cream that is not in a vacuum sealed prepackaged cup, date a little, hang out with friends, use strange acronyms and coded phrases in text messages.

LUCY: That's a lot to look forward to.

HOLLY: Pretty superficial I guess.

LUCY: If it helps you get better then use it.

HOLLY's MOM and DAD enter.

MOM: How are you feeling today, Holly dear?

DAD: Hey, kid.

HOLLY: The side effects are a little rough.

MOM: Did you tell your doctor? Because they have medicines for that.

DAD: They have medicines for everything.

MOM: I brought you a cactus. It doesn't need much of anything to survive.

MOM awkwardly sets down the cactus.

LUCY: Ouch. What a depressing gift.

HOLLY: Thanks.

MOM: Because they are resilient. They survive. Cacti, cactuses, cactus...

DAD: I had a cactus as a kid that is still there in the front yard. Darn thing will outlive us all.

MOM: What did the doctor say?

HOLLY: They want to see how I respond to treatment.

HAIR LOSS enters sprinkling more hair.

HAIR LOSS: Sprinkling hair, sprinkling hair everywhere.

HOLLY: It's too soon!

HAIR LOSS: I am a side effect, I don't follow the rules! Sprinkle, sprinkle, sprinkle.

MOM touches HOLLY's hair.

MOM: Your father brought you something to help with your hair, you know, in case your hair...

DAD: I brought you something.

DAD hands HOLLY a Cubs baseball cap.

MOM: The Cubs. They haven't won a World Series since...

HOLLY and DAD: 1908.

HOLLY: Cursed lovable losers, like me.

DAD: Well, that wasn't...

HOLLY: I love it, Dad. Maybe the Cubs will win it all this year.

MOM: It's just a hat to cover your head.

HOLLY: Yes! I know. I'm losing my hair! I get sick to my stomach. My mouth tastes like metal, I sweat profusely, then I get the chills, I have to be careful not to cut myself, or get a cold, or bump into anything, or breathe in the wrong direction, or exert myself too much. My pee looks like watered-down fruit punch and the only thing I have to look forward to is a vanilla pudding cup and they may be out of those because people are hoarding them and eating them on the toilet at 3 a.m.

MOM: Do you really have to talk like that?

LUCY: Yes! And it was wonderful.

HOLLY: Not really. Sorry, Mom.

LUCY: Press the call button and get the nurse! Two pudding cups and we will eat them with plastic knives because that is how we do it, here, on the edge!

HOLLY presses the call button.

VOICE: (offstage) May I help you?

HOLLY: Two pudding cups and two plastic knives. Please.

LUCY: No please! And make it snappy.

HOLLY and LUCY: I can't eat my pudding at room temperature.

MOM: Holly, you need to get control of yourself.

DAD: Control.

HOLLY: Control? I got a call slip in the middle of History class. In the middle of a lecture on The Cold War. Mr. Bronson was talking about the emergency drills where the kids would hide under their desks in case an atomic bomb hit the school. Don't you see how utterly ridiculous the whole thing is? Hiding under desks from an atomic bomb!

MOM: I don't see what that has to do with...

DAD: With...

HOLLY: When I should have been in P.E. I was being diagnosed as stage three. I didn't even know what that meant before I got here. And here we are, hiding under desks.

MOM: This is not The Cold War!

DAD: The Cold War is over.

HOLLY: Not for me.

LUCY: You tell 'em sister.

MOM: We'll be back later.

HOLLY: Could you bring me some ice cream?

LUCY: There. Ask and ye shall receive!

HOLLY: Just have them dump the candy store on it. Just make a mess out of it. A big, sloppy mess of a sundae in a bucket that I have to eat with a shovel.

MOM: I will check with the doctor and see if this is allowed.

DAD: Better check first.

HOLLY: Just sneak it in! It'll be fun. The only danger is the melting. They won't throw you in dairy jail with Bessie the Cow as your cellmate.

MOM and DAD start to exit.

MOM: Try to get some rest. We'll see you later.

DAD: See you later, kid.

HOLLY: *(calling after them)* It's just a little ice cream.

HOLLY sings "Happy, happy, happy" as the lights fade to black.

Scene 4

In the darkness LUCY is whispering "Red Rover, Red Rover send Holly right over" until the lights come up and the dialogue starts.

LUCY: Red Rover, Red Rover, send Holly right over.

HOLLY: I loved that game as a kid.

LUCY: As a kid? It's the game you're playing now.

HOLLY: Red Rover. Really?

LUCY: Of course it is. Our team: the side effects, your support network, me.

HOLLY: You're on my team?

LUCY: Of course. We are the bond that will not be broken until the game is complete.

HOLLY: Oh.

LUCY: We are connected there through your IV, through your veins, and arteries.

HOLLY: We are?

LUCY: We are.

HOLLY: Really?

LUCY: In time, you'll come to embrace the idea.

Three of HOLLY's friends, CAL, PAL, and SAL enter.

CAL: How's it going Holly?

PAL: You look pale.

SAL: Everyone says "hi."

CAL: Is the food any good?

PAL: You've lost weight.

SAL: Mal says "hi."

CAL: Have you had a lot of visitors?

PAL: You seem depressed.

SAL: That one guy in Calculus says "hi."

CAL: What is the name of the guy in Calculus class?

PAL: You're frowning.

SAL: The lunch ladies say "hi."

CAL: Does it hurt?

PAL: Your face looks like it hurts.

SAL: The crossing guard says “hi.”

LUCY: Does the crosswalk say “hi”?

PAL, SAL, CAL: Holly!

HOLLY: Yes.

CAL: What’s wrong?

HOLLY: Lucy.

CAL: Who’s Lucy?

HOLLY: A friend.

PAL: No one else is here.

SAL: They have you in a private room because you know, you have...

HOLLY: I have what? What do I have? Please tell me what I have in a regular tone of voice like normal people talking to each other in a normal conversation. Not people who bring their child a cactus and talk to her like she’s a stranger. Not people who whisper dangerous words like they are going to blow up in their mouths if they talk too loudly.

SAL: There’s no one else in the room.

HOLLY: What do I have, Sal? Say it, Pal. Go ahead Cal! Tell me what I’ve got. The thing I’ve got inside of me. Say it. Call it by name.

CAL: We better get going.

CAL, PAL, and SAL exit. HOLLY calls after them.

HOLLY: Be sure to take a pudding cup on the way out! You never know when they’ll run out. Maybe that’s the key to the whole thing, the cure for this and everything that hurts us is the pudding cup! Anything that hurts, just rub pudding on it!

SOCIAL WORKER enters with caution.

SOCIAL WORKER: Pudding. Is that the source of your anger?

LUCY: Yes, down with airtight vanilla pudding cups.

HOLLY: Not really.



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