



Sample Pages from The Butterfly Queen

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THE BUTTERFLY QUEEN

A DRAMA IN ONE ACT BY
Christian Kiley



The Butterfly Queen

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Cast of Characters

4W, 3M + 12 or more Either

See original cast listing for doubling suggestions

TEACHER (MISS VICTORIA)	SIDEKICK 1
GREG	SIDEKICK 2
MADISON	PERSON 1
DONNA	PERSON 2
STUDENTS 1-17	PERSON 3
WASP	TIMID
PEDESTRIAN	WORKER
DAD	CRITICALS 1-8
MOM	JUMPER
CHILD	ONLOOKERS
KID	

Setting

Miss Victoria's classroom. The Present.

Various locations. Years Later.

*The impact we may have on another person can be immense.
We have the power to save someone's life.*

Scenic Breakdown – The Butterfly Queen

Scene 1 – “Chrysalis”

Teacher
Greg
Madison
Donna
Wasp
Students 1-17

Scene 2 – “Attempted Robbery”

Pedestrian
Wasp (Robber)
Student 1

Scene 3 – “Parental Distress”

Dad
Mom
Child
Student 2

Scene 4 – “Bully Retaliation”

Wasp (Bully)
Kid
Student 3
Sidekick 1
Sidekick 2

Scene 5 – “Rescue”

Person 1
Person 2
Person 3
Student 4

Scene 6 – “Troubled Crossing”

Timid
Student 5

Scene 7 – “Worker’s Rights”

Worker
Criticals 1-8
Wasp (Boss)
Student 6

Scene 8 – “Meeting”

Student 7
Student 8

Scene 9 – “Jumpers”

Student 8
Jumper
Onlookers (Ensemble)

Scene 10 – “Maybe...Eagle”

Greg
Teacher

Scene 11 – “Butterfly”

Wasp
Teacher
Students 1-17
Greg

Production Notes

The Butterfly Queen is the story that Miss Victoria tells her students as she hides them from Wasp. Sweatshirts (with hoods and zippers) are used to represent the chrysalis that the children are hidden in during Wasp's attack. This is the extended metaphor that is used throughout the play. In the later scenes the sweatshirts are used to protect and help others in the same way they were used to protect the students in the first scene of the play. The idea that we make sacrifices for others and that those sacrifices can be passed forward is captured by the sweatshirts being passed on to others throughout the play.

The set can be very simple. A scaffolding or ladder can be used for the Jumper scene. You may elect to create butterfly cutouts to attach to the scaffolding (since the students are studying the lifecycle of the butterfly, you can have the actors make their own butterflies).

When the students enter at the top of the show they bring their sweatshirts on stage with them and set them nearby their starting positions.

Props can be mimed since the sweatshirts are a versatile way of articulating the physical action. For example, in Scene 2 the sweatshirt can be used as a shield by Student 1 to protect Pedestrian.

Miss Victoria's butterfly wings at the end of the play can be attached to a second sweatshirt that Greg brings in and helps her put on at the end of the play. Another thought is to have the ensemble build the wings for Miss Victoria as they enter with their sweatshirts.

The Butterfly Queen was produced at Etiwanda High School (Etiwanda, CA) Theatre Department and premiered on December 13, 2014. The play won first place in the Rancho Cucamonga High School One-Act Competition. Quin Ealy was awarded Best Actor. Bailey Freeman, Zachariah Jolin, and Jeremy Barnes won Outstanding Actor awards.

The playwright would like to thank the cast and design team for their input and dedication throughout the rehearsal process. Special thanks to Kelly Olivas and Bill and Ellen Kiley for their editing and proofreading assistance.

Teacher:	Bailey Freeman
Greg:	Quin Ealy
Wasp:	Zachariah Jolin
Madison/Student 8:	Maddie Spears
Donna/Student 2/Person 3/Critical 2:	Chloe Hopkins
Student 11/Pedestrian/Critical 5:	Melony Haddad
Student 1/Jumper:	Hayley Rametta
Student 13/Dad/Critical 7:	Josh Bowman
Student 14/Mom/Critical 8:	Taynara Ebeigbe
Student 9/Child/Person 2/Critical 3:	Brian Benitez
Student 15/Kid/Critical 1:	Nessa Russell
Student 3/Worker:	Jeremy Barnes
Student 10/Sidekick 1/Critical 4:	Greg Fyfe
Student 12/Sidekick 2/Critical 6:	Michael Balderrama
Student 6/Person 1:	Emily Starr
Student 4:	Giovanni Estrada
Student 16/Timid:	Jairus Pacelo
Student 5:	Ashley Morgan
Student 7:	Adan Chavez
Miss Victoria's Wings Designed/ Constructed by:	Damairis Lao
Set Design:	Alan Prokopij
Sound Design/Operation:	Juliana Hanson
Lighting Design/Operation:	Suhani Patel
Lighting Design/Operation:	Ruby Perez

When the lights come up, TEACHER is in front of the class (facing the audience) and the STUDENTS are sitting on the floor facing TEACHER. There are sweatshirts spread around the stage in individual piles.

TEACHER: What is the first stage in the lifecycle of a butterfly?

STUDENTS raise their hands eagerly.

TEACHER: Madison.

MADISON: (*standing*) Happiness. They are very happy to have wings.

GREG: Wrong. They don't have wings right away.

TEACHER: You're right Greg but please wait your turn.

GREG: Sorry.

TEACHER: Thank you. Donna?

DONNA: (*standing*) They start off as an egg.

GREG: Like an eagle?

TEACHER: Greg.

GREG: Sorry everyone. I'm just very excited about the whole idea of hatching.

TEACHER: Me too Greg, me too. Not quite like an eagle. The mother butterfly attaches the egg to a leaf or stem.

GREG: What if she attached it to a spaceship? (*getting up and moving around the room*) The butterfly would hatch and dodge comets and stars and might even get sucked into a black hole.

TEACHER: Only it would be a caterpillar in outer space. Which is the next stage. During this stage something pretty amazing happens. The caterpillar builds its own temporary home called a chrysalis and it goes through an incredible metamorphosis or change.

A cacophony of loud noises comes from offstage. This can include gunshots or similar sounds. It is important to communicate the presence of an offstage commotion. TEACHER moves quickly to the side of the stage that the noises are coming from.

TEACHER: Can you all pretend you're caterpillars? Can you do that?

The offstage sounds continue. The STUDENTS respond by saying "yes" and other similar adlibs

and crawling and moving around pretending to be caterpillars.

TEACHER: Once upon a time there was a beautiful garden and in this lovely garden lived a family of caterpillars. They were hungry caterpillars and they ate everything in sight. Go ahead and eat everything you can.

The STUDENTS respond by making chewing sounds, etc. The offstage sounds continue.

TEACHER: After their feast they were feeling tired and decided to build a place to take a nap.

The students begin to put on their sweatshirts. TEACHER helps the students put on the sweatshirts that are in various locations around the stage. Some students are able to get into the sweatshirts on their own, others need help. The offstage noise gets closer.

TEACHER: It was very important that the caterpillars stayed very still and very quiet because there was a nasty wasp that liked to cause trouble in the garden. But they didn't need to worry because The Butterfly Queen was going to watch over them and protect them. And if they stayed very still and very quiet, after their naps they would wake up and be butterflies.

TEACHER moves around making sure all the STUDENTS are covered with their sweatshirt hoods pulled over their heads. The noise is very close now.

GREG: (*getting up and taking off his sweatshirt*) I want to help protect the other caterpillars with the Butterfly Queen.

TEACHER rushes over to GREG, helping him put his sweatshirt back on and concealing him.

TEACHER: Not until you grow into a big strong butterfly.

GREG: With eagle's wings with lightning bolts on them?

TEACHER: Of course.

GREG complies and returns to the chrysalis state with the others. STUDENT 7 gets up and moves toward TEACHER surprising her. TEACHER quickly conceals STUDENT 7 just as WASP enters.

WASP: Where is your class? Where are your students?

TEACHER: At an assembly.

WASP screams and moves aggressively toward TEACHER. WASP grabs teacher and exits abruptly, forcing TEACHER offstage. A single sound. Blackout.

As the lights come up the danger has passed and the STUDENTS slowly come out of their sweatshirts/ chrysalises and move in various directions offstage. During this transition there can be musical underscoring. They should all still be wearing their sweatshirts but they can wear them in a variety of ways. PEDESTRIAN enters and attempts to cross the stage. WASP enters and prevents PEDESTRIAN from exiting.

WASP: Give me your wallet.

PEDESTRIAN: Get away from me!

STUDENT #1 enters wearing her/his sweatshirt. As STUDENT #1 approaches he/she takes off the sweatshirt.

WASP: Don't make this difficult.

PEDESTRIAN: I'm not going to let you rob me.

WASP pulls out a prop weapon. WASP can also use his/her balled up fist.

WASP: I think you are. It's not personal. Wrong place, wrong time.

STUDENT #1 uses the sweatshirt to shield PEDESTRIAN from WASP.

STUDENT #1: No!

WASP is blocked from harming PEDESTRIAN and runs off.

PEDESTRIAN: Thank you so much.

STUDENT #1 leaves the sweatshirt with PEDESTRIAN and exits quickly. PEDESTRIAN looks out for a beat and then exits. CHILD hurries in followed by MOM and DAD who are arguing. STUDENT #2 stands in the background behind CHILD.

DAD: Why won't you listen to me?

MOM: Because all you do is yell and scream.

DAD: You always think you're right.

MOM: How can you say that?

DAD: What else can I say?

MOM: Something sympathetic.

DAD: You mean something you want to hear.

MOM: Maybe. I don't know.

DAD: I can't read your mind.

MOM: Could you listen?

DAD: I do listen.

MOM: Sure you do.

DAD: I can't live like this.

MOM: Neither can I.

STUDENT #2 covers CHILD's ears with the sweatshirt. STUDENT #2 comforts CHILD. DAD and MOM cross to opposite sides of the stage urging CHILD to cross to them. Some adlibs can be added here. "Mommy loves you, come here." "Daddy loves you." CHILD is torn but makes a decision to exit with either MOM or DAD. STUDENT #2 follows CHILD offstage, draping the sweatshirt over CHILD's shoulders. KID enters running and is met by WASP and SIDEKICKS downstage center.

WASP: Hey kid, what are you running from?

KID: Leave me alone.

WASP: Sticks and stones, right?

KID: I don't want trouble.

WASP: You don't get to decide that. Trouble decides.

STUDENT #3 enters and puts her/his sweatshirt on KID and whispers something into KID's ear. KID is now speaking with more confidence and power.

KID: No, I decide. Now get out of here.

WASP: Your voice is different. Did you go through puberty just now?

KID: Well at least one of us went through puberty.

WASP: What? Did you just stand up to me by turning my own cruel joke against me?

KID: Yes! Now take your two idiot sidekicks and get out of here.

WASP: They're not idiots. They're slightly less intelligent and they speak in brief refrains to allow my words to have more emphasis.

SIDEKICK #1: Brief refrains.

SIDEKICK #2: Brief.

KID steps up to WASP in a face-off.

WASP: I can see you're not in the mood to be the victim right now.

WASP and SIDEKICK #1 exit. SIDEKICK #2 moves close to KID. KID makes a move toward SIDEKICK #2 and SIDEKICK #2 shrieks in fear and exits. KID enjoys the newfound power for a moment and then exits.

Shouting is heard from offstage. "Help!" "Someone's trapped in there." "Please help!" STUDENT #4 enters and runs off stage toward the screaming. STUDENT #4 reenters carrying PERSON #1 in a sweatshirt. STUDENT #4 sets PERSON #1 down.

PERSON #1: Thank you. You saved my life.

STUDENT #4 starts to exit.

PERSON #1: I couldn't see anything. How were you able to see me?

STUDENT #4: I think we see things when we need to. You deserve to be saved.

STUDENT #4 exits. PERSON #2 and PERSON #3 enter. They are friends of PERSON #1.

PERSON #2: Are you alright?

PERSON #3: What happened?

PERSON #1: Someone saved me. This is going to sound crazy and maybe it was the smoke but I thought the person who saved me had wings.

PERSON #2: Wings?

PERSON #3: Like flying wings?

PERSON #1: I know crazy, right?

PERSON #2: Come on. We've got to get you to a hospital.

PERSON #2 and PERSON #3 start to help PERSON #1 off stage.

PERSON #1: I'm fine.

PERSON #3: You saw a winged creature. Unless this is Narnia, you're not fine.

PERSON #2: Probably smoke inhalation.

PERSON #3: It also could just be your personality.

PERSON #1: Very funny.

PERSON #3: They say laughter is the best medicine.

PERSON #1: Can it save you from a burning building?

As they exit, TIMID enters and begins to pace upstage to downstage, counting steps. After a moment STUDENT #5 enters and stands upstage of TIMID.

TIMID: One, two, three...

TIMID moves forward and then lurches back.

TIMID: One, two, three...

TIMID moves forward and then lurches back.

TIMID: One, two...

TIMID makes a frustrated sound, turns and notices STUDENT #5.

TIMID: This is not a spectator sport.

STUDENT #5: Sorry.

TIMID: A person should be able to have some privacy with his neuroses.

STUDENT #5: I agree. It was an accident.

TIMID: Oh I get it. Seeing someone in a moment of weakness and indecision is pleasing to you. Like entertainment.

STUDENT #5: No, not at all.

TIMID: I'm afraid. Of crossing the street.

STUDENT #5: Can I help?

TIMID: Probably not.

STUDENT #5 takes her/his sweatshirt and ties it around TIMID's waist. STUDENT #5 offers TIMID a hand and helps TIMID downstage across the street. They count together.

BOTH: One, two, three, four, five.

TIMID hugs STUDENT #5.

TIMID: Thank you.

STUDENT #5: No problem.

TIMID: It's kind of foolish to be afraid of the little things.

STUDENT #5: Not at all. Maybe a person who is afraid of the little things has courage when it comes to the big ones.

STUDENT #5 exits quickly. TIMID looks out smiling about the newfound courage.

TIMID: Yeah, maybe. I hope so.

TIMID exits. WORKER enters humming an upbeat and happy tune. CRITICALS enter and surround WORKER.

CRITICAL #1: What is wrong with you?

CRITICAL #2: The boss needs that report.

CRITICAL #3: You're always late.

CRITICAL #4: And sloppy.

CRITICAL #5: And you make way too many mistakes.

CRITICAL #6: I saw this show on the Discovery Channel last night about animals who make mistakes in the wild.

CRITICAL #7: How did it end?

CRITICAL #6: Bad for the antelope. Good for the lion.

CRITICAL #8: Hello, antelope.

WASP enters as the boss.

WASP: Where is that report? What's your name anyway?

CRITICAL #8: Her/his name is Antelope, sir.

WASP: Antelope, you look like you were Dorothy's stunt double from *The Wizard of Oz*.

CRITICAL #1: Good one sir.

WASP: Why do you still have a job? Remind me!

WORKER: I'm not sure.

WASP: Neither am I. You're a terrible worker. Maybe the worst I have ever seen.

STUDENT #6 steps forward and puts the sweatshirt on WORKER, comforting him/her.

WORKER: The report will be finished before I leave sir/ma'am and I appreciate your particularly cruel and malicious comments. They motivate me.

WASP: What did you say?

WORKER: I work as hard as anyone here. I am often the first to arrive and the last one to leave. I help my colleagues finish their reports without receiving as much as a mumbled thank you. I haven't had an error in thirty-two straight games at shortstop on the company softball team and I make what I imagine is the best crème brûlée any of you have ever tasted. When you tried it you looked to the heavens and said, "Take me now. It doesn't get any better than this." Now if that is not enough you can replace me with any number of the selfish, error-prone, prewrapped snack cake bringing employees that you want. Now if you don't mind I am going to get back to work.

WORKER exits quickly. Everyone is shocked and surprised at WORKER's reaction. The CRITICALS start to hum and/or sing the song WORKER was humming as they exit.

WASP: Back to work everyone. Back to work!

WASP and the others exit. STUDENT #7 and #8 enter from opposite sides of the stage. STUDENT #7 has a sweatshirt on, STUDENT #8 does not.

STUDENT #7: Thanks for meeting me.

STUDENT #8: No problem.

STUDENT #7: I've been trying to contact everyone.

STUDENT #8: Why?

STUDENT #7: I still feel a connection.

STUDENT #8: I just want to leave it where it belongs, in the past.

STUDENT #7: Is that where it belongs?

STUDENT #8: I'm not sure.

STUDENT #7: I think we should all get together. Once a year.

STUDENT #8: Why?

STUDENT #7: To remember the sacrifice that Miss Victoria has made for us.

STUDENT #8: What will that accomplish?

STUDENT #7: I'm not sure. I don't have an answer. I just have a feeling that it is the right thing to do. The other day I saw a chrysalis in my yard hanging underneath one of my garden chairs. It seemed like an incredibly unexpected place for it to be. Pieces of that day rushed back to me. It smelled like the pages of an old library book stashed in the cabinet where she hid me. She held my hand, not nearly long enough, but long enough for me to know I would be safe. That even in this incredibly unexpected place my chrysalis would be safe. I would be protected.

STUDENT #8: I'm sorry. We can't live our lives based on feelings and wisps of memory.

STUDENT #7: I just think—

STUDENT #8: I better go.

STUDENT #8 starts to exit.

STUDENT #7: Wait.

STUDENT #7 takes off her/his sweatshirt and gives it to STUDENT #8.

STUDENT #7: Here.

STUDENT #8: Please don't contact me again.



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