

Angela - Northern, 16

LIKE A VIRGIN GORDON STEEL

First performed by the Hull Truck Theatre Company at the Dovecot Arts Centre, Stockton-on-Tees, in 1995, at the Edinburgh Festival and then on a nationwide tour. It is set in Middlesbrough.

Angela and her friend, Maxine, are besotted with Madonna. They play truant from school, form a band, have numerous boyfriends and dream of becoming famous very soon. Then Angela becomes unwell. The doctor diagnoses Myeloid Leukemia and she is put on chemo-therapy. She is warned she may lose her hair and buys herself a Madonna-style wig. Maxine says it looks awful.

In this scene the girls are in Angela's bedroom. Maxine is ecstatic. Jamie Powers, the boy she's been crying her eyes out over, has phoned her and, what's more, invited her back to his house while his mam and dad are out. She wants to go down the pub and celebrate, but Angela doesn't feel like it. Maxine tells her to stop feeling sorry for herself – it's difficult but she has to make the most of it. She must get out and try to live a bit.

Published by Oberon Books, London

The full text is currently available from Oberon Books, ISBN: 1840021403.

Angela

No, you go. I don't feel up to it . . . I've got to live a bit. Maxine, I'm dying. I don't know why but I am. I don't know why I've been picked to have such a shit-awful life. What have I done that's so bloody wrong? So you can piss off with you, 'Let's be jolly', routine. With you, 'Let's pretend everything's alright and we'll have a laugh like we used to in the old days'. . . . Do you know something? *(Pause)* I've never had sex. I'm a virgin. Yeah I know what I said, what we said, but . . . well, they were just stories full of me, us trying to be grown-up. But I'm not gonna grow up. I'll never grow up and be a woman and have children. Why me? Why the fucking hell does it have to be me? It's not fair. How would you feel if someone told you that you were gonna die? Come on, it's not easy is it? YOU ARE GOING TO DIE. You have got four weeks to live. What are you going to do? *(Pause)* It's not easy, is it, and people are so full of understanding . . . so full of shit. 'I'd go on holiday, I'd travel.' What is the point in spending your time in strange lands with strange people? So you'll have lots of happy memories and photographs to look back on. When? I haven't got time, I'm dying. What's the point in laying on a beach getting a tan? So I'll look good in my coffin. So people will be able to gork into my coffin with . . . with . . . tear-stained eyes and say . . . 'She looks really good' . . . 'She's the best suntanned corpse I've ever seen' . . . Well, they can all fuck off. Sometimes I feel as though I should have dignity and write poems and raise money for charity an' all that . . . Be a symbol for other people to look up to. But why should I? What has anybody ever done for me? Look at you, you're pathetic stood there not wanting to say anything in case you hurt my feelings. Making excuses for me. 'It's her condition . . . It's understandable . . . She's just a bit down.' Well don't patronise me. Tell me to fuck off. Slap me. Go on. *(She pushes Maxine)* Go on. *(She pushes her again)* Go on, do something.