

Spinning Girl

By Tim Mogford

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Spinning Girl

- 2 -

DEDICATION

For all those who spin.

STORY OF THE PLAY

High school student Chloe seems to have everything together. She is a soccer player, a dancer, and a top student. But under the surface, the pressure is mounting. When her mom and brother need help at home, the school projects pile up, her friends pressure her to start dating, and her attention is pulled in several directions, she doesn't want to disappoint anybody. In her effort to please everyone, her world begins spinning out of control. As the various friends, family and other responsibilities build up around her on the stage, she creates and deploys multiple versions of herself – the Chorus – in an effort to be “everything to everybody,” with hilarious, and unsuccessful, results. Sometimes, we all wish there were “more of me,” but Chloe's real embodiment of this idea reveals that there are still not enough hours in the day, and the situation poses a very real threat to her mental and physical well-being, as the end of the first act makes all too clear. What the constantly-spinning Chloe desperately needs ... is some spin control. *Spinning Girl* resonates with both teens and adults, and created a positive, powerful and heartfelt reaction in both the cast and the audience. The play offers flexible casting, a range of lead and supporting roles, and it can be performed with minimal set requirements on the tightest of budgets. The show has pace and energy, but also powerful moments between actors, and proved to be both poignant and genuinely funny.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

The show was first performed at Schuylkill Valley High School in November 2018, under the direction of the playwright, with the following cast:

CHLOE: Bridgette Bennett

WENDY: Lily Crowell

MAYA: Meghan Cook

CARLY: Layomi Adejo

LIAM: Cort Borelli

MASON: Bailey Ammons

ALICIA: Ann Davila

KARA: Lexi Garber

MANDA: Whitney Tomes

MICHAEL: Max Troutman

YOUNG MICHAEL: Owen Brown

GAVIN: Willie Stevenson

ELI: Antonio Kucera

MOM 1: Abigail Sisco

DAD 1: Austin Witinski

DOCTOR: Nathan Raver

DANCE MOMS: Alexis Smeck and
Hadley Pontician

SOCCER MOMS: Riley Pontician and
Ashleigh DeAcosta

MICHAEL'S FRIENDS: Isaiah
Martinez, Evan Lash, and Evan
Duda

MR. DAVIS: Kaleb Cock

CHORUS: Anna Gwiazdowski, Katie
Eisenhofer, Kara Faulk, Briana
Silasavage, MacKenzie Bossler,
Izzy Romig, Erianne Fox, Liz Miller,
and Jessica Hummel

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Cast of 34. 11 m, 23 w, doubling possible.)

CHORUS: Characters who represent Chloe's thoughts and social personas. The chorus can be played by a minimum of 6 female actors. The script lists 9 overall, which offers creative possibilities, especially in the scenes where they speak together. The script could also accommodate more than this, depending on your casting pool. Our chorus all wore identical outfits to Chloe's, with the 6 featured roles each adding an accessory which emphasized one particular aspect of Chloe's character.

CHLOE: An overcommitted high school girl.

ALICIA: Chloe's popular friend.

KARA: Another.

MANDA: Another.

JORDAN: Another.

CARLY: Chloe's booksmart friend.

MAYA: Chloe's best friend.

LIAM: A new boy at the school.

MASON: A popular high school boy.

YOUNG MICHAEL: Chloe's brother. Can double as Michael.

MICHAEL: Chloe's brother. Can double as Young Michael.

MICHAEL'S FRIENDS: 1-3 actors. High school jocks.

GAVIN: Dorky boy in Chloe's grade.

ELI: Another.

***Adults:**

WENDY: Chloe's Mom.

MOM 1

DAD 1

DANCE MOM 1 & 2

MR. DAVIS: Chloe's Elementary school teacher.

SOCCER MOMS 1 & 2

DOCTOR

* This play is designed to offer as much casting flexibility as possible. The roles of the ADULT characters, with the exception of Wendy, can be played either by female or male actors, and doubling is also possible.

SETTING

Minimum set requirements: 6 blocks: 2 CS (this is Chloe's area), 2 DSR, 2 DSL. US, in a line from SR-SL, are chairs for the chorus. More chairs are added to acting areas SR and SL when necessary.

Feel free to make the set as elaborate as you wish. Interesting stage pictures and ideas can be created if your group has the resources.

A NOTE ON PRODUCTION DESIGN

The play is written so it could be performed with minimal set requirements on the tightest of budgets. In the original production, blocks and chairs offered different levels and helped to delineate acting areas, though at times the entire stage was filled with activity. We particularly emphasized the use of lighting to focus the audience's attention and drive the quick transitions between scenes, though this is certainly not necessary for a production to be successful. We explored the flow of scenes strongly in rehearsal, and the way in which it could evoke Chloe's thoughts. The chorus also offered a wealth of rehearsal choices in choral speaking, choreography, and stage images.

EATING DISORDERS

Eating disorders are serious, but treatable, mental and physical illnesses that can affect people of every age, sex, gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic group. National surveys estimate that 20 million women and 10 million men in America will have an eating disorder at some point in their lives. Visit www.nationaleatingdisorders.org for more information.

Spinning Girl

- 5 -

ACT I

(AT RISE: CHLOE enters and moves CS. CHORUS enters and forms a circle around her. They begin to spin as she speaks.)

CHLOE: I think I used to worry my mother. She'd read articles about kids that do a lot of spinning. And I did a lot of spinning. Just seemed fun to me. Did you ever sit on a swing and wind up the ropes? Tight as they would go? *(Laughs.)* I think everyone does. But most kids did other stuff too. Not me. I loved it.

(Enter WENDY DSR, with MOM 1 and DAD 1.)

CHLOE: *(Cont'd.)* Made playgrounds difficult for my poor mom. The other kids would be pushing each other and jumping off and rolling in the grass. Not me.

MOM 1: Kara, put that down please.

DAD 1: Mason! Mason? Do you remember we had a conversation about sand?

MOM 1: I know it's fun, Kara. But please put it down. *(Pause.)* Kara?

DAD 1: Mason, I don't think *you'd* like it, would you? Do you remember? We agreed you wouldn't?

MOM 1: Say you're sorry to Manda, please.

DAD 1: Oh, now Mason. Get up, please. That's a new shirt. Mason?

MOM 1: You don't have to pick her up, Kara. No, Kara. Manda knows you're sorry. Don't you, Manda?

DAD 1: Mason, I don't think we're going to come to the playground again if you're going to get dirty every time. Do you remember we talked about that?

MOM 1: That's right, Manda. Thank you. Now we're – Kara! Don't pick her up again!

CHLOE: I'd be in the middle, winding up the ropes and letting go. My mom, sitting with her paper cup coffee with the other mothers, would give me a pained look and force a smile.

Spinning Girl

- 6 -

DAD 1: *(To WENDY.)* He keeps rolling around and throwing things. Is that normal?

WENDY: Oh, you know. Boys.

DAD 1: Is that yours, on the swing?

WENDY: Yes.

DAD 1: What's she doing?

(THEY all look.)

WENDY: Well, she's – she's spinning.

MOM 1: She likes the swings, then.

WENDY: Yes.

DAD 1: She's been doing that for a while, hasn't she?

WENDY: Yes.

MOM 1: Yes.

(MOM 1 and DAD 1 look at each other.)

DAD 1: She really likes all that twirling around, doesn't she?

WENDY: Yes, she does.

(CHORUS stops spinning. Move US and sit.)

CHLOE: I was oblivious to it, I suppose. Winding up and spinning. I guess she told them moving around made me happy. And I guess the other moms would smile, and wonder if they should be sympathetic, and all the while think, "Thank God that's not my kid," the way parents do.

(Exit MOM 1 and DAD 1. Enter DANCE MOMS 1 and 2 DSL with coffee.)

CHLOE: *(Cont'd.)* When I got a little older, I learned that if you call it *dancing*, it makes mothers feel better. I spun through ballet, jazz, tap and freestyle hip hop. Not sure little girls like me were ready for hip hop, but I took full advantage of the "freestyle." Spun through that one too.

DANCE MOM 1: *(To WENDY.)* Which one is yours?

WENDY: *(Points.)* Chloe. There.

Spinning Girl

- 7 -

CHLOE: More paper cups. More coffee. More moms.

DANCE MOM 2: Oh, right. *(Pause.)* She likes doing her own thing, then?

WENDY: Yes, she does.

DANCE MOM 1: What's she doing?

DANCE MOM 2: It looks like she's – twirling.

DANCE MOM 1: Is that hip hop?

WENDY: I don't know what it is.

DANCE MOM 2: She seems happy.

WENDY: Yes, she does.

DANCE MOM 1: As long as they're happy, right?

WENDY: Yes, I think she's happy.

(THEY all look.)

DANCE MOM 2: She looks happy.

(Exit DANCE MOMS DSL. WENDY crosses DSR.)

CHLOE: I liked whirling around. It made me feel ... free, I think. Mix the world up, wind it around yourself and then ... let it go. I don't know why people were so interested. Other kids squash bugs, roll around, get lost in video games. I liked spinning. It all seemed harmless to me. I did my work in school, talked to other kids, played outside. I didn't break windows or hit people. My brother liked hitting things with his head. That didn't seem to freak anyone out.

(Enter MR. DAVIS DSR, with a coffee cup. He joins WENDY.)

CHLOE: *(Cont'd.)* In third grade I had Mr. Davis. More adults, more coffee. He called my mom and said ...

MR. DAVIS: Chloe's very ... active, isn't she?

WENDY: Yes. Yes, she is.

MR. DAVIS: Yes, she finds it difficult to ... sit down. Is this a new thing?

WENDY: Not really.

MR. DAVIS: Ah. Right. Well, I just wanted to let you know about it.

End of Freeview

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