

Like a Virgin by Gordon Steel
(written in 1995 and published in 2000)

First performed by the Hull Truck Theatre Company in 1995, at the Edinburgh Festival. 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. Then ANGELA is diagnosed with Myeloid Leukaemia and is put on chemotherapy. She is warned she may lose her hair so buys herself a Madonna style wig. Maxine says it looks awful. In this scene the girls are in ANGELA'S bedroom. Maxine is ecstatic; James Power's the boy she's been crying her eyes out over, has phoned her and invited her back to his house while his mam and dad are out. She wants to go down the pub to celebrate, but ANGELA doesn't feel like it. Maxine tells her to stop feelings sorry for herself, it's difficult but she's got to make the most of it. She must get out and try to live a bit.

ANGELA:

No, you go. I don't feel up to it. Maybe tomorrow ... I'd love to but I ... No, I don't want to Maxine. Look just go. "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 an awful life. What have I done that's so bloody wrong? So you can sod off with your "let's be jolly" routine. With your "Let's pretend everything's alright and we'll have a laugh like we used to in the old days."

Yeah, you just thought. That's your bloody problem, you don't think. You put that mouth of yours into mega-drive and off you go. I'm dying and I wish I wasn't. I wish it wasn't me. Oh yeah, everybody's gonna die. But the difference is I'm gonna die a lot sooner. Why aren't I normal? Why does nothing normal ever happen to me? I've not got a dad. You are so lucky and you don't know it ... and you're so bloody insensitive, always going on about your dad. Mine can't even be bothered to come and see me. I'd give anything to have a normal dad who'd talk to me and give me a cuddle ... and comfort me. Is that too much to ask? A normal life. Why me? Why the 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 rubbish. "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 sod off. *(Pause)*

Sometimes I feel as though I should have dignity and write poems and raise money for charity and 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 sod off. Slap me. Go on. *(She pushes Maxine)*. Go on *(She pushes her again)* Do something!