

When I Was a Virgin, Dear Madonna....

by temi rose

Time: 1987

Place: An apartment in a large city.

Characters:

Cheryl: (18) Intelligent, free-spirit, lots of energy. Strong and happy.

Marina: (14) Shy, intense, thoughtful.

(both girls were raised with strong religious values)

Set: Nothing but a rocking chair, a table and an oval rag rug. The table may have a drawer or a cabinet and a lace doily. No pillows on the rocking chair.

Props: Ghetto Blaster, cigarettes, baby doll and blanket, ashtray and matches (no lighter), beer.

Lighting and Sound: Exaggerated lighting upstage indicating the time of day. The upstage areas can be filled with light as long as the light has shape (like in those old religious movies with spirit streaming through the windows as the prisoner is released). The rocking chair often has the focus and can be lit appropriately (dramatically) for such attention.

Style: The acting style is realistic, the set is symbolic.

A young woman of eighteen, attractive, with large eyes, sits in a rocking chair, shushing and rocking a little baby to sleep in her arms. The mood is innocent and bucolic. Cheryl hums and rocks the baby for several minutes then she gets up and places the baby in its bed offstage. When she returns to the stage the light brightens. Cheryl turns of the ghetto blaster on the table by the rocking chair, takes a cigarette from a pack previously invisible and a beer from its hidden place. The blaster is playing the Madonna song, "Like a Virgin." Cheryl rocks hard in her rocking chair, singing along, drinking her beer, smoking her cigarette, and generally acting her age. As the song is reaching the break or its close, there is a knock on the door and...

Cheryl: Come in! It's open!

Marina, a cute, bouncy fourteen year old enters.

Marina: Hey

Cheryl: Hey.

Cheryl turns down the blaster which continues to play Madonna songs quietly in the background for the remainder of the side. The tape has the following songs: Like a Virgin, Material Girl, Papa Don't Preach, and Live to Tell.

Cheryl: What's up?

Marina: Do you need me to babysit?

Cheryl: Not today, thanks. I'm not doing anything. George is trying to decide whether he can handle it.

Marina: Oh.

Cheryl: Oh, it's ok. I'm used to it by now. he does this every month. It's like he gets his period or something.

Marina: I think he's in love with you.

Cheryl: Yeah, probably.

Marina: You're not in love with him?

Cheryl: Oh, Marina, I don't know. I told myself I'd never fall in love again, you know? George is ok. You want a cigarette?

Marina: No thanks.

Cheryl: It's just that he's so serious.

Marina: But he'd take care of you, wouldn't he?

Cheryl: Men don't take care of women. Women take care of each other. No matter what anybody says, men always gonna take care of themselves first. That's the way it always is so that's the way it's gotta be.

Marina: Oh.

Cheryl: Hey, sweetie, what's the matter? You're so quiet today. What's up?

Marina: How do you know if you're pregnant?

Cheryl: Shit.

Silence. Cheryl looks at Marina.

Cheryl: You telling me you're?

Marina (*tentative*): No...

Cheryl: Then what are you telling me?

Marina: Cheryl, promise me, you won't laugh at me?

Cheryl: No. But I'll try.

Marina: Promise you won't tell?

Cheryl: Man, if somebody's hurt you --

Marina (*interrupting*): No, it's not like that.

Cheryl: Then I won't tell. Tell.

Marina: It's a question.

Cheryl: Ask. Wait. I need another cigarette. (*she lights a cigarette*) Ok. Now.

Marina: How do you know when you've had sex?

Cheryl: Are you serious?

Marina nods her head, yes.

Cheryl: How old are you?

Marina: Fourteen.

Cheryl: Didn't your mama tell you anything?

Marina: No, Did yours?

Cheryl: No. Silver's dad told me.

Marina: How old were you?

Cheryl: Thirteen.

Marina: Will you tell me?

Cheryl: Yeah. I guess so. Only I'm not sure how. Nobody ever asked me this before. And I can't exactly show you cause I don't have any -- equipment. Do you know how babies are made?

Marina: Sort of.

Cheryl: Wow.

Marina: Maybe I better go.

Cheryl: No, no. Don't be weird. It's just that I feel kinda stupid but Silver's gonna want to know too some day and I'm gonna have to tell her something so I might as well practice on you, you know? But it's scary. It's a lot of responsibility.

Marina: What's scary about it?

Cheryl: Not sex, silly, talking about it. Talking about sex is a lot harder than doing it.

Marina: Yeah?

Cheryl: For sure. When you're doing it, it all kind of flows along and then there you are - done.
But talking about it... I guess maybe it's a sin or something.

Marina: Doing it's a sin.

Cheryl: Well, not if you want to be married and have a baby....

Marina: I thought you had to already be married....

Cheryl: In the old days, now it's ok if you're thinking about it, you know: if your thoughts are holy kinda, you know?

Marina: That seem kinda mixed up to me.

Cheryl: It will until you do it. You do you want to do it with?

Marina: Tom.

Cheryl: Oh, Tom's sweet. And he's cute too. Wow. Does he like you?

Marina: I think so.

Cheryl: Do you like him?

Marina: Yeah.

There is a pause while Cheryl thinks romantic thoughts and Marina looks at her expectantly. Cheryl finally realizes something is expected of her.

Cheryl: Oh. Right. Sex. Ok. Sex is what God gave us so we could make more people.

Marina: I know that.

Cheryl: Ok, and to make more people you have to get a man and a woman to do it together.

Cheryl drifts, trying to think but Marina is impatient.

Marina: Do what??

Cheryl: Have you ever seen a man naked?

Marina: Jamie.

Cheryl: Baby Jamie? (Marina nods) Oh my God. Didn't you ever see your Dad? (Marina shakes her head) Your brother? (Marina shakes her head) No one bigger than Jamie? (Marina shakes her head) Oh shit. Marina, maybe you better not.

Marina: Maybe I already did.

Cheryl: I don't think so. You'd know.

Marina: It was dark.

Cheryl: Oh.

Marina: It made me bleed.

Cheryl: Oh. (*pause*) Ok, Marina - a guy has a penis. Do you know that?

Marina: Sort of.

Cheryl: Ok, have you ever looked at yourself?

Marina: What do you mean?

Cheryl (*takes a deep breath*): Marina, do you know what a vagina is?

Marina: I think so.

Cheryl: Have you looked at yours?

Marina: Oh no.

Cheryl: Ok, I want you to do that.

Marina starts to cry.

Cheryl: Don't cry, Marina. (*Cheryl holds her*) Why are you crying?

Marina: I'm scared.

Cheryl: What are you scared of?

Marina: Sin.

Cheryl (*angry*): Look: The worst sin is ignorance. You got that? You got nothin' to be ashamed of: god made us our bodies so we could worship Him with all the love that we can make with them. Now look, you go into my room and get the pink hand mirror off the little table. Close the door. Take off your pants. Turn on the light. Open your legs and look at your vagina. It's a part of you and it's a holy part because the baby comes from there. Even baby Jesus came from there. Don't be scared, Marina. Wait - while you're lookin' I want you to see there's a kind of a dot at the top, it kinda sticks out, and I want you touch it, and when you do it, it'll give you tingles. Now, don't hang out there too long - just make sure you see that part, ok? (*Marina nods*) And the part the baby comes out of and where your bleeding comes from, ok?

Marina, sniffing exits. Cheryl stands, surprised at herself, finishes her beer, listens to the music, rocks the chair absentmindedly from behind. After awhile the baby cries and Cheryl also leaves the stage. Nothing is left onstage but the rocking chair which rocks by itself, slowing down, the music is playing. The baby stops crying, the chair stops rocking and Marina enters in a daze. She sits in the rocking chair and is rocking herself when Cheryl enters. Pause.

Marina: It's kind of ugly.

Cheryl: Yeah, I think so too. So we're not gay. (*Marina laughs*) Guys like it.

Marina: What do guys look like?

Cheryl: Well, that part that tingles on you? Theirs is big and long and fat and that's their penis and then they have their balls - you've seen them on Jamie, they're sacks full of tadpole things that shoot out of the penis. It's kinda like a cannon or something. *(Marina looks horrified. Cheryl keeps going, trying to be light and funny)* They have this tube and when they get excited it gets hard and turns into a pump or something and shoots millions of tadpoles into your vagina. But see, they're going so fast, they go past there and *(illustrating outside her clothes on her belly)* we have our egg baskets, two of them and our egg is waiting and all these guys come rushing at her and she gets to pick one. Can you imagine? Choosing between a million guys? And then that makes the baby. *(Cheryl takes a deep breath)* Got it?

Marina: Yeah.

Cheryl: Did you do it?

Marina: I don't know. I didn't see. I think it was his finger.

Cheryl: Yeah, it could have been his finger.

Marina: How do you know if you're pregnant?

Cheryl: You get kind of sick.

Marina: What kind of sick?

Cheryl: Throwing up kind. Marina, I think you oughta tell somebody.

Marina: I did.

Cheryl: Who?

Marina: You.

Cheryl: I mean somebody who could help you.

Marina: You help me.

Cheryl: Yeah, but if you're pregnant....

Marina: You were pregnant.

Cheryl: Yeah, but I was older than you. I was in my senior year and you didn't even get out of high school yet. I mean you can't take care of a baby, you're a minor, I mean, it's even against the law to screw you, Marina.

Marina: He didn't screw me, he loves me.

Cheryl: You're right: I'm sorry. I'm just thinking that you should go to the doctor or something. You're little and babies are so big. It might hurt you or something.

Marina: He'd tell my mom.

Cheryl: Maybe that's not so bad. My mom was pretty good about it.

Marina: My mom isn't like your mom. My mom hates me.

Cheryl: Yeah. I know what you mean. (long pause) What about getting an abortion?

Marina: I'm a [*any Christian religion*].

Cheryl: Me too. (*pause*) But lots of [*the above religion*] get abortions.

Marina: I could love a baby.

Cheryl: I know. (*beat*) But who would love you? (*pause*) When did it happen?

Marina: Saturday night.

Cheryl: That's four days ago. Did he ask you out for next Saturday?

Marina: Yeah.

Cheryl: You could ask him.

Marina (*horrified*): To get married?

Cheryl: No. Ask him if he did it to you.

Marina: I can't do that.

Cheryl: Would you do it again? (*pause*) Did it feel good? (*Marina nods*) Can you keep your eyes open this time? Or reach down with your hand and find out what he's really doing? Maybe it's, you know, just his hand, then you'd just be holding hands, right?

Marina (*laughs*): I could try that I guess.

Cheryl: Look, cutie, find out what's going on and then we'll figure out what to do, ok?

Marina: Ok. (*beat*) Have you ever had an abortion?

Cheryl: No.

Marina: Would you ever?

Cheryl: Maybe.

Marina: Are you glad you had Silver?

Cheryl: Most of the time.

Marina: Are you going to marry George?

Cheryl: I don't know: he's so old!

Marina: How old is he?

Cheryl: 24.

Marina: Wow.

The baby starts crying.

Cheryl: You want to watch her tomorrow?

Marina: Sure.

Cheryl: I gotta go feed her and make dinner for my mom before she gets home from work. You take it easy, ok? (*Marina nods*) You want to borrow this tape?

Marina: Really?

Cheryl hands her the tape. The baby is still crying.

Cheryl: Here. Well, see you. Thanks for coming over.

Marina: Thanks for the tape and - for everything.

When they are at opposite sides of the stage, Marina suddenly rushes to Cheryl and hugs her then runs out. Cheryl exits. The stage is empty and sunset colors appear here and there. Cheryl enters with the baby who is crying. They sit in the rocking chair while Cheryl nurses the baby, her shirt covering her breast.

Cheryl: Oh, Silver, you're such a pretty girl. I wish your Daddy could see you now. You look like him. Did I tell you that? You have the same eyes, with crinkly edges. Oh, well. Dads are hard to find sometimes, they've got a way of moving around, you know what I mean? (*pause*) One day, Silver, we're going to go to Africa and see them dance. They nurse their babies there. Everybody does it. (*Cheryl puts the baby on her other breast*) We gotta get dinner ready for Grandma, Silver. She's been workin' real hard, hunh? She does that because she loves us so much. One day, when you're bigger, I'm going to get a job in a beauty parlor or in a store and

we'll have all the money we could ever want. Then you and me and Grandma, we'll go on a cruise around the world. We'll see France and Spain and when we're in Italy, a handsome man, who's wife has died but he loved her a lot and he wants to love someone again, he sees us and he has a son for you and a father for Grandma and he's really really rich. He has one of those houses made out of stone that looks out over the water, with gardens *inside* the house. I'll show you. There's pictures in magazines. They even do them modern inside. Ours will be the modern kind and he'll love to go dancing. We'll go dancing every night. No, every other night because the other night we'll stay home and play with our children. Yes, you - and the other ones we'll make at night in a big soft bed with lots of pillows and he'll love me so gentle, as if I were made of the softest thing in the world. (*the lights are fading*) And we'll go for long walks together and we'll listen to the birds. And you'll ride horses. You'd like that, wouldn't you? And you'll be the princess and wear Silver clothes and your hair will sparkle and one day we'll go to a party and meet Madonna and we'll tell her our story, Silver, we'll tell her, how once I was a virgin, and then I made you.

Blackout