

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



# Gamegirl

---

by Maryanne Lynch

---

EXTRACT

© 2004 Maryanne Lynch



This script is distributed by The Australian Script Centre  
77 Salamanca Place Hobart 7004 Tasmania Australia  
email [admin@ozscript.org](mailto:admin@ozscript.org)  
[www.ozscript.org](http://www.ozscript.org)  
ph +61 3 6223 4675  
fax +61 3 6223 4678

## CHARACTERS

Lila/gamegirl/the Stranger Within/Game-maker	10-year-old protagonist
Mum (Connie)/Weeping Sweeteater/Tour Guide 1	mother of Lila
Dad (Frank)/Mr Gone Away/Tour Guide 2	father of Lila
Colin/Explorer-Conqueror-Shark	boyfriend of mother
Dolores/Bambi Bombshell	girlfriend of father
Alex/Masked Assassin	13-year-old sister of Lila
Moogie/Humble Henchboy	7-year-old brother of Lila
Dylan/Duke Destiny	14-year-old son of Colin
Ian	game dog /real-world dog

### **A note on Lila**

Lila is gamegirl when playing the game. She is also the Game-maker (voiceover only) although she never realises this. She discovers that she is the Stranger Within only in the final game world.

### **Doubling of actors**

1. One actor plays Mum/Weeping Sweeteater and Tour Guide 1.
2. One actor plays Dad/Mr Gone Away, Colin/Explorer-Conqueror-Shark and Tour Guide 2.
3. One actor plays Moogie/Humble Henchboy and Dylan/Duke Destiny.
4. One actor plays Alex/Masked Assassin, Dolores/Bambi Bombshell and Ian (save for last scene).

### **A note on the game challenges**

A convention has been developed in production in order to indicate the successful conclusion of a challenge (level).

### **A note on the billboards**

The billboard texts are seen only in the scene in which they are positioned; their duration is at the director's discretion. Visual motifs from the domestic realm are seen at other times.

## **PROLOGUE**

*A giant-sized face: Lila.*

*Her mouth opens—a huge scream.*

*A tide of sound, colour and movement overwhelms everything.*

*Blackness.*

## **SCENE 1: HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

*Singing is heard as the lights rise on 10-year-old Lila, who is standing before a birthday cake with ten burning candles. Around her are gathered her family Mum (Connie), Dad (Frank), older sister Alexandra and younger brother Moogie. All the family are first sighted in poses archetypal of their game-world characters.*

### **BILLBOARD: HOME SWEET HOME**

*During this scene Mum and Dad maintain a careful distance from each other and avoid eye-contact whenever possible.*

#### **ALL (except LILA)**

*[Singing]*

Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you,  
*[Mum, Dad and Alex]* Happy Birthday dear  
Lila, Happy Birthday to you!  
*[Moogie at same time]* You look like a  
monkey, and you smell like one too!  
Hip hip hooray! Hip hip hooray! Hip hip  
hooray!

#### **MUM**

Make a wish!

#### **DAD**

Wish away!

#### **MOOGIE**

Gimme a go!

#### **ALEX**

I don't want any cake.

*Lila makes her wish. She leans over to blow out the candles but doesn't manage to extinguish them all.*

**DAD**

Oh well. Maybe next year you'll get lucky.

*Mum gives Dad a dirty look.*

**MUM**

Shut your eyes again, pumpkin.

*Lila closes her eyes.*

**MOOGIE**

I know! I know!

*Dad gags Moogie.*

**DAD**

And now- da da da dum!

*Mum gives Dad another dirty look. After a brief covert skirmish, both parents present Lila with her present: a large gift-wrapped box.*

**LILA**

Is it big? Does it move? Will it break if it drops? Do I make it, or ride it, or ...? Maybe it's a, or even, no, it couldn't be, could it? perhaps, do you think? oh, I hope, I wish, I really really wish ...

*Lila tears the parcel open and pulls out a virtual reality game branded with the glistening initials GG.*

**LILA**  
**gamegirl!**

*She is overjoyed.*

**MUM**

I got the right one then.

**DAD**

We're not scoring points here.

**MOOGIE**

Gimme a look.

**ALEX**

I thought you were over that sort of thing.

**LILA**

It's, it's, it's, wow! This is the best birthday ever!

**MUM**

[*Sotto voce*] No thanks to your father.

**DAD**

What did you say?

*They exchange dirty looks.*

*Dad pulls himself back into 'party' mode.*

**DAD**

Well Lila, this is the end of an era, the full stop of childhood. You'll never be in single figures again.

*Lila bursts into tears.*

**MUM**

See what you've done!

**DAD**

Stop spoiling things.

**MUM**

I'm not the one who's "spoilt" things.

**LILA**

What-?

**ALEX**

What's up with you two?

**DAD**

Shut up, Connie.

**MUM**

You started this. Now face it.

**LILA**

What-?

**ALEX**

Mum?

**MOOGIE**

Dad?

**LILA**

What's wrong?

*Mum and Dad speak simultaneously.*

**MUM**

Your father-!

**DAD**

Your mother-!

*Mum and Dad are now as far away from each other as they can get but joined by an angry stare. Lila is clutching her present.*

**DAD**

Have it your own way then.

**MUM**

Your father's got some news. Some bad news.

**ALEX**

Is this about our holiday?

**DAD**

No! Your mother- Connie- I, we, ... [*Looking at Mum*] Help me here.

**MUM**

[*Grimly*] It's like this.

*Mum begins to realise the delicacy of her task.*

**MUM**

Your father ...

**DAD**

Your mother ...

**ALEX**

Get to the point.

**DAD**

We're sorry but-

**MUM**

We're separating.

**LILA**

But- but- It's my birthday.

**MUM/DAD**

Sorry Lila, sometimes things just don't work out the way we want them to.

*Lila hugs her present to herself.*

**MOOGIE**

What do you mean?

**ALEX**

Boring.

**DAD**

We're having some time apart.

**MUM**

We're not getting on.

**DAD/MUM**

But things will be just the same.

**MUM**

As much as they can be.

*Lila begins mumbling a little tune to herself, eyes cast down on her present.*

**MOOGIE**

I don't understand.

**ALEX**

They're splitting up, dummy. Couldn't you go to counselling or something?

**MUM**

It's not that easy.

**MOOGIE**

I don't understand.

**ALEX**

Half the girls in my class have got divorced parents anyway.

**MUM**

Noone said anything about a divorce!

*She collects herself.*

**MUM**

Lila? You're very quiet.

*Lila stares at her parents.*

**DAD**

I can't do this.

**MUM**

What's done is done.

**MOOGIE**

Does this mean we're not going to have the cake?

**MUM/DAD**

No!

**DAD**

I just have to step out for a sec. Got to see a man about a dog. I-

*Dad departs. Everyone stares at where he exited.*

**MOOGIE**

Dad! Wait for me!

*Moogie runs after him.*

**MUM**

If you only knew ...

**ALEX**

I don't want to know.

*Alex flounces out.*

**MUM**

Lila? Are you ...? Shall I ...?

*Lila shakes her head as she hugs her present tighter, closing her eyes and resuming her little mumbled tune. Mum hesitates, reaches out to her and gets the brush-off.*

**MUM**

Pumpkin ...

*Lila continues her hugging, under-the-breath singing, and eyes-shut-fast attitude. Mum reluctantly departs.*

**BILLBOARD:** FOR SALE [*text stamped across original text*]

**LILA**

Happy Birthday to me, Happy Birthday to me.  
Happy Birthday dear Lila, Happy Birthday to  
me.

*She opens the game.*

## **SCENE 2: WELCOME TO gamegirl**

*The entrance to the game reveals itself: a closed door.*

**GAME-MAKER (V/O of LILA)**

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF gamegirl. A  
WORLD IN WHICH NOTHING IS CERTAIN  
EXCEPT BEDTIME.

*Lila brushes away tears.*

**GAME-MAKER (V/O)**

IN THIS GAME THERE ARE FOUR  
CHALLENGES, EACH ONE OF WHICH YOU  
MUST PLAY TO WIN,

*Lila defiantly shakes off thoughts of her parents.*

**LILA**

Cool!

*Lila takes a step forward.*

**GAME-MAKER (V/O)**

IN ORDER TO REACH YOUR FIFTH AND  
FINAL DESTINATION, THE RESCUE OF  
THE STRANGER WITHIN.

**LILA**

Oh ...

*She pauses in mid-reach for the door handle.*

**GAME-MAKER (V/O)**

LISTEN CAREFULLY ... TO PLAY THE GAME, YOU MUST BE GAME. THERE'S NO TURNING BACK. THE ONLY WAY OUT IS THROUGH.

**LILA**  
Okay.

**GAME-MAKER (V/O)**  
ARE YOU READY?

*Lila has a wobbly moment as she thinks of her parents' news.*

**GAME-MAKER (V/O)**  
ARE YOU READY?

**LILA**  
Hang on. Who is this Stranger Within?

**GAME-MAKER (V/O)**  
ARE YOU READY?

**LILA**  
Yes!

**GAME-MAKER (V/O)**  
COMMENCE PLAY NOW.

*Lila shakes off all bad thoughts and enters the game.*

### **SCENE 3: LEVEL ONE—THE AMAZING MAZE**

**GAME-MAKER (V/O)**  
LEVEL ONE. THE AMAZING MAZE.

*Lila finds herself in the first world. This is a maze. There is a lifeline in the form of little bricks that begins to stack one on top of another from the moment the world begins, its level going up or down depending on how well Lila is going. There is also a series of icons but these aren't illuminated.*

*The maze has many walls, from which a looped commentary, like something heard through a headset in a museum or gallery, is constantly heard. This commentary is at a volume too low for anything to be clearly audible save for the*