

# **THE GIRL WHO SWALLOWED A CACTUS**

An On-line Play

by

Eric Coble

Leah Hamos  
GERSH  
41 Madison Avenue, 29th Fl.  
New York, NY 10010  
[lhamos@gersh.com](mailto:lhamos@gersh.com)  
212.634.8153

**THE GIRL WHO SWALLOWED A CACTUS**  
**(Scene for May 21 Online Program)**

**CHARACTER:**

DUST CLOUD: A Woman Experienced in Building, 20's-40's.

**PLACE:**

A table-top waiting for magic.

**TIME:**

Now.

**PRODUCTION NOTES:** *Dust Cloud can be played by an actor of any ethnicity or gender (with minor dialogue changes).*

*THIS VERSION OF THE SCRIPT IS DESIGNED TO BE PERFORMED ONLINE, via Zoom/Facetime/Skype/ whatever form the theatre wishes it to be presented in - either streamed live or recorded.*

*It is meant to be performed by ONE ACTOR, ALONE ON SCREEN, broadcasting from their home, using a table-top/desk/counter-top as a stage on which to present all the small household items that will be used for props/characters to tell the story. It is designed to feel like a child creating whole worlds with the small discarded stuff of a home - fun, off-the-cuff, to stir the imagination and wonder in the viewers' minds; to urge them to tell their own stories using found objects around the house.*

*Make some magic.*

*SETTING: The surface of a table-top or desk. Perhaps there is a pile of small household items to one side - spools, pencils, popsicle sticks, a mug, a comb, a fork, candy, ANYTHING to personify the characters and world as it is created - all action will be acted out using these items. This pile is to one side of the countertop, or perhaps the actor will pull out the items from off-camera only as needed.*

*AT RISE: We just see the bare surface, clearly in someone's house. Then a face enters the screen (from below the table? From the side of the frame?)*

*This is DUST CLOUD.*

DUST CLOUD

*(Looking out at us)*

Ah! Excellent! You're here! I didn't think you'd come - I didn't think anyone would be crazy enough to-  
We don't have much time -

*(Points to us)*

Get anyone there with you ready- we've all got to be ready before the moon is-  
*(Measures from horizon to sky with her arm...)*

Right there. But you've gotta understand what you're getting into before you can help, you've gotta understand about the Council of Howls, and the Sting Brigade, and the Challenge of The Death Cactus, and... Sheila!

See, Sheila came from the desert. She grew up like a little cactus plant in the sand and rock and boiling sun of New Mexico. Except she wasn't a cactus. She was an eight-year-old girl.

And what an eight-year-old!

If you could reach up and grab the sun - and not burn your hands off - and pull it down and wrap it up in a little body with constantly tangled hair, some missing teeth, a laugh that shook windows to almost breaking, and eyes that let that inside-sunshine BLAST out so that you could just about get a sun tan just standing in front of her....

THAT was Sheila.

*She has now built a little figure from whatever household objects come to hand*

And like the hot sun, not everyone wanted to be her friend. She gave off too much heat for a lot of the kids at school. But now it was summer. See, her house was way out in the rolling hills of New Mexico. The nearest real town was 27 miles away.

*(Setting up the environment on the countertop)*

And only a few kids actually lived near Sheila. So those kids - well, they had no choice but to be friends.

And truth be told, those kids, they loved Sheila. They got mad at her, they got afraid of her sometimes, but life with Sheila - was never, ever boring.

So it's important to know that Sheila did not have this adventure by herself. This is the tale of FIVE adventurers - each with their own special role to play. Sheila was just the captain.

*Pulls household items out to represent each child, placing them on the "stage" (countertop) in front of the camera*

Dennis.

Dennis was the oldest. He was in 4th grade. And he was bigger and heavier than any of them, and strong. Dennis was as strong as three third-graders put together. He also always needed a haircut. No one was sure what color his eyes were because you couldn't see them under his hair. But because he was so much older and stronger, Dennis felt like he should be the leader of the pack. But that would be like saying that you ordered ketchup and it happens to come with a hamburger. It's just not so. Sheila was going to be the hamburger and Dennis was the ketchup - really strong ketchup. And that was that.

*Another household item*

Leon.

Leon was the exact same age as Sheila, and Leon had the cleverest hands and fingers you ever met. Leon, when he was five, he took apart his dad's entire motorcycle engine! And he almost got it all back together before his dad got home! Leon was skinny and embarrassed about his teeth so he didn't laugh as much as he should. But when he said something, it was usually very Wise and Helpful.

*Two small pieces of identical debris.*

And the Twins.

The Twins must have had names, but nobody knew what they were. One was Shy, the other was Eager...

*(Rearranges the Twins)*

-or one was Eager and the other one Shy. They were both only six. And they giggled. A lot.

*(Jiggles the "dolls")*

"Hee hee hee hee hee".

That's how you always knew they were coming before you saw them. And they just wanted to be part of anything, no matter how crazy. They were always fun. And they usually brought candy.

*Brings the "Sheila" figure into the line-up.*

And that was them. Sheila, Dennis, Leon, and the Twins. Our five adventurers who were left.

Alone.

All Summer Long.  
With nothing but Time.  
And Imagination.

And as we all know, that is more than enough to change the world.

And it all started because next to the dirt road that ran behind Sheila's house...  
was... a Pile Of Junk.  
Someone had left it there.  
Just left it there.  
But it wasn't just any junk. It was magic.