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GUITAR

A One-Act Play

by

Colette Mazunik

# Guitar

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by Colette Mazunik

KATE: a young woman

GARY: a young man

(A bare stage—except for perhaps two chairs. All locations should be identified by a minimum of hand props—perhaps a can of spaghetti sauce for the grocery store, perhaps two cordless phones for the telephone scenes. Scene changes must take place very quickly, almost instantaneously. There are no blackouts or dimming of lights between scenes, except for a possible blackout after the first and last scenes.)

i.

|   |      |
|---|------|
| I love you.                                   | GARY |
| Look, Gary, I . . .                           | KATE |
| I love you.                                   | GARY |
| Yeah, okay.                                   | KATE |
| I love you.                                   | GARY |
| Yeah! Okay!                                   | KATE |
| No. I love you. It's not okay. I love you.    | GARY |
| You said that.                                | KATE |
| I know. But you weren't listening.<br>(pause) | GARY |
| I love you.                                   |      |

That's not fair. KATE

I love you. GARY

I was listening, that's not . . . KATE

No. No. Listen. GARY  
(slowly)  
I love you.

I said, I was listening. KATE

No. You're not. You're not. You're not *hearing*. GARY  
(pause)  
I . . .

. . . Okay. Let's just drop it. KATE  
(pause)

I love you. GARY

Gary! KATE

Well, I wanted to tell you. I wanted to say . . . I wanted to let you know. GARY

What is this? Huh? What . . . What do you want from me. KATE

I want you to listen. GARY

I've listened. KATE

GARY  
I want you to hear.

KATE  
It doesn't matter.

GARY  
What?!

KATE  
It doesn't matter.

GARY  
It doesn't matter!? It doesn't matter that I . . .

KATE  
. . . Look, Gary, look, have you ever said a word over and over until it loses its meaning and all you can think of is how silly it sounds—and then you're not even sure what it sounds like anymore? A word you've said forever and you're not even sure what it sounds like?

GARY  
I want you to hear me.

KATE  
I want to hear you! I . . . I wanna hear. But . . . look . . . it's like, I've been hearing it so much I can't make it out. I can't remember what it sounds like, what it's supposed to mean. I don't know what it means anymore and, it's like in movies . . . they say, "This is what it is," and it's not. I mean, you can do all the "right things" and it's not, it's still not right. And so I can't hear and I need to listen awhile first. And . . . I'm sorry, I'm . . . this . . . I'm not making any sense.

GARY  
Guitar.

KATE  
What?

GARY  
Guitar. Two days ago I was saying "guitar" over and over.

KATE  
Guitar.

GARY  
Yeah. Over and over. Like you said.



GARY

Guitar, guitar.

(THEY both resume saying, “guitar.”)

## ii.

(In a grocery store)

GARY  
Kate. Kate. Hi, Kate.

KATE  
Hi.

GARY  
How are you doing?

KATE  
Uh. Good. How about you?

GARY  
All right. All right. I'm cooking . . .

KATE  
Uh-huh. Good. That's great.  
(SHE leaves.)

GARY  
I'm cooking spaghetti tonight and I ran out of sauce.

(SHE returns.)

GARY  
Hi again.

KATE  
Hi. I, uh, forgot to get the spaghetti sauce.

GARY  
That's what I'm getting too.

KATE  
Yeah. That's probably why you're here.

GARY  
Yeah.

(pause)

KATE

So which is the best deal?

GARY

I usually get the chunky vegetable-beef kind.

KATE

Yeah. I just get whatever's cheapest.

GARY

I'm fixing spaghetti with chunky vegetable-beef sauce tonight.

KATE

Yeah.

GARY

I mean if you want to come over. Then it's one less jar.

KATE

Oh. Well, I usually just get whatever's cheapest.

GARY

No. I'm serious. Why don't you come over for supper?

KATE

Oh. Well, I need to get back and fix supper.

GARY

No you don't. I just invited you to eat with me.

KATE

Yeah. Well, you know the shopping's going to take me a long time. But thanks, though. I appreciate it. I'd better, the shopping. I'll see you around.

GARY

Yeah. See you around.

(SHE leaves. SHE comes back.)

KATE

Hi. I forgot to get the sauce.

GARY

Here, try this one.

KATE

Thanks. I usually just get whatever's cheapest.

GARY

This is good. You'll like it.

KATE

Okay. Thanks.

(SHE leaves.)

GARY

Bye, Kate.

iii.

(TELEPHONE RINGS)

Hello? KATE

Hi, Kate? GARY

Yeah. KATE

Guess who. GARY

Who. KATE

No, guess who I am. GARY

Who are you? KATE

No. You've gotta guess. GARY

I don't know. Who are you? KATE

You haven't guessed. GARY

I give up. KATE

Kate. You can't give up before you've guessed. GARY

You wanna bet? KATE

Come on. It's not that hard. GARY

Is it the King of France? KATE

No. GARY

Then I give up. KATE

Kate! GARY

Good-bye Gary. You know I hate these games.  
(SHE hangs up.) KATE

Kate! GARY

(TELEPHONE RINGS several times)

Hello? KATE

Kate? GARY

Yes. KATE

This is Gary. GARY

Oh, hi Gary. How was your spaghetti? KATE

Oh, sorry. I must have gotten the wrong number.  
(HE hangs up.) GARY

Hello . . . hello? KATE

(The TELEPHONE RINGS.)

KATE  
Hello?

GARY  
Kate?

KATE  
Hi, Gary?

GARY  
Yeah. You know, I just did the most embarrassing thing.

KATE  
Uh, huh.

GARY  
I was trying to call you and I accidentally called the wrong number.

KATE  
Why am I not surprised?

GARY  
And I got somebody else on the phone who was named Kate.

KATE  
Really. That's amazing. How did you ever figure out it was the wrong number.

GARY  
Well . . . her voice of course. I mean, it's not like I can't recognize your voice.

KATE  
How was your spaghetti?

GARY  
Good. Good. Except it needed more pepper. How about yours?

KATE  
Good. It was great. You have good taste.

GARY  
Of course.

KATE  
Except, I overcooked the spaghetti, so that was kind of blah.

Kate? GARY

Yeah. KATE

Is there something wrong? GARY

No. KATE  
(pause)  
What, am I not allowed to overcook spaghetti?

Are you sure? GARY

Yeah. KATE

Because if there is you can tell me you know. GARY

Nothing's wrong. KATE

Okay. GARY

Why? KATE

Nothing. GARY

No, why do you ask? KATE

Well, don't take this the wrong way, but I was wondering why you've been avoiding me. GARY

Who said I've been avoiding you? KATE

Haven't you been? GARY

No. KATE

No? GARY

Well, yeah. KATE

I mean, you don't have to tell me, if . . . GARY

No. It's not . . . It's just . . . It's not because of what you think. KATE

What do I think? GARY

I mean, it's not like I think you have a plague or something. KATE

That's what you think I think. GARY

I mean, there's nothing wrong with you. I mean, I'm not avoiding you because I think there's something wrong with you. I'm not avoiding you because I think you need to be avoided. KATE

But you are avoiding me. GARY

Yes! It's because, I mean it's not because I don't like you, it's because I . . . If I was someone else I could say this. But I . . . KATE

You don't have to tell me. It's okay. GARY

(pause)  
Thanks. KATE

It's okay. Don't worry about it. GARY

KATE

Thanks. Can I tell you something that's going to sound really strange.

GARY

Yeah.

KATE

Okay, well, I don't know if this has anything to do with anything, but you know how there's all those statues of people . . .

GARY

Yeah.

KATE

. . . I mean, like stone statues, marble and you know?

GARY

Yeah.

KATE

Well, I remember hearing that one of those artists, a sculptor, some famous sculptor, I can't think of his name, anyway he said something like, before you carve you have to see the figure in the stone and then you take away what's not supposed to be there.

GARY

Yeah.

KATE

Well, I was thinking, it's like, I meant the statues of people, it's like people can be trapped inside and you have to chip away all that stone.

GARY

Yeah.

KATE

I don't know if that made any sense.

(more flippantly)

You'd think an artist wouldn't go to all that trouble.

GARY

I don't know. They do it.

Yeah. KATE  
(pause)  
Well, listen, I'd better go, so . . .

Why? GARY

What? KATE

Why had you better go? GARY

Why do you want to know? KATE

Okay, okay. Good-bye. GARY

Bye. KATE

## iv.

(SHE is jogging. HE comes up, sees her, and runs along.)

Kate! Kate!  
GARY

Hi!  
KATE

I've been thinking.  
GARY

That's nice.  
KATE

No. It's just, how do you know what's not supposed to be there?  
GARY

What?  
KATE

About what you were saying. About the statues. How you said Michelangelo said to see the figure in the stone and then take away what's not there. You were talking about it the other day.  
GARY

I know.  
KATE

But how do you know what's not supposed to be there? He says chip away what's not supposed to be there. How do you know what's not supposed to be there?  
GARY

You see the figure in the stone.  
KATE

You see the figure in the stone?  
GARY

That's what he said--you see . . .  
KATE

I know that's what he said. You see the figure in the stone. But how do you know what's not supposed to be there?  
GARY

KATE

Well—you see it. If you see it and it's not there, it's not supposed to be there.

(HE stops running, SHE runs a little further and then stops and looks back at him.)

KATE

You take away what you don't see . . . in the figure.

GARY

I've got to get some glasses.

KATE

Gary?

GARY

I do. My doctor's been telling me. It's for reading.

KATE

Gary.

GARY

Well, it's just, how am I supposed to know if what I'm seeing is right? I mean, somebody else could see something entirely different. How am I supposed to know that what I see in the stone is really there?

KATE

(slowly)  
That's the discretion of the artist. To see their own figure.

GARY

Well, I'm not an artist.

KATE

Are you okay?

GARY

Wait, you said each artist has to see their own figure.

KATE

Uh-huh.

GARY

And that's all they can do. I mean, all they can carve is their own figure--they can't carve someone else's.

KATE  
No.

GARY  
That would be silly to try to carve someone else's statue. You can't do that.

KATE  
No.

GARY  
But, you can give another artist a chisel, right? You can teach another artist how to carve.

KATE  
Yeah.

GARY  
You just can't anticipate what they're going to see.

KATE  
Right. Are you okay Gary?

GARY  
Yeah. Yeah. Sorry I interrupted you. I was just thinking about what you said. But I won't intrude any more on your time.

KATE  
It's not a problem.

GARY  
Bye.

(HE leaves abruptly.)

V.

(THEY are eating spaghetti.)

KATE

You know, this spaghetti is really good.

(pause)

I mean, it tastes great.

(pause)

You really seem to have a flair for making spaghetti.

(pause)

You make it really well.

(pause)

Is this all you make?

GARY

What?

KATE

I said, is spaghetti all you make?

GARY

That's what you said? Oh. I thought you said something else. Didn't you?

KATE

No.

GARY

Oh.

(pause)

KATE

So is it?

GARY

What?

KATE

Is it all you make?

GARY

Oh, no.

(pause)

KATE  
The bread's good too.

GARY  
Kate, I think you're making a mistake.

KATE  
No, really, I like it.

GARY  
What?

KATE  
I think it's good--the bread.

GARY  
Oh, the bread. We're not talking about the bread. I just think you're making a mistake. I mean, maybe it's not my *position* . . .

KATE  
What are we talking about?

GARY  
Maybe it's not my *place* to *say* anything.

KATE  
About what?

GARY  
I mean, it might not be *appropriate* for me to *talk* about it . . .

KATE  
About what?

GARY  
. . . but, I don't think you should move out of town.

KATE  
Oh, is that what this is about?

GARY  
I just can't see that it's not a mistake. It is a mistake, it has to be a mistake.

KATE  
Well, it's not like I've made up my mind.

GARY  
You need to stay.

KATE  
I haven't decided to go.

GARY  
You need to stay. I need you to, I want you to . . . No, that sounds selfish. I want you to want to stay. Because . . .

KATE  
Why?

GARY  
Because I want you to want to stay. Because I want to see you. I want you to want to see me. I want you here. Because I love you . . . Kate. I love you.

KATE  
(pause)  
I know.

GARY  
I feel stupid. It's none of my business if you move or not--it's just, I couldn't just let . . .

KATE  
I know. It's okay.

GARY  
Do . . . you . . .?

KATE  
(quickly)  
I don't know.

GARY  
I'm sorry, I shouldn't . . .

KATE  
No. I'm sorry. I knew this was coming, I just. I'm sorry. I don't know. This kind of thing is hard for me.

GARY  
It's okay if . . .

KATE

No. It's not that. It's just . . . I've got this image of me in my mind--"This is who I am." I can see this image and that's all I know of myself, and sometimes I'm not even sure if I know that--and then--if I let someone else in my mind, they become part of my--identity, part of who I am, and that scares me because it's like I've been seeing this image and then it changes and I don't know who that is anymore. I can't recognize myself. So I pull away and I go back to who I saw before. It's not that I want that or I don't want the other, it's just that, it's really hard for me to not pull away.

GARY

Then . . .

KATE

Yes. I think, I think, I think I do.

GARY

I love you.

KATE

I don't understand that.

vi.

I love you. GARY

Look, Gary, I . . . KATE

I love you. GARY

Yeah, okay. KATE

I love you. GARY

Yeah! Okay! KATE

No. I love you. It's not okay. I love you. GARY

You said that. KATE

I know. But you weren't listening.  
(pause)  
I love you. GARY

That's not fair. KATE

I love you. GARY

I was listening, that's not . . . KATE

No. No. Listen.  
(slowly)  
I love you. GARY

KATE

I said, I was listening.

GARY

No. You're not. You're not. You're not *hearing*.  
(pause)

I . . .

KATE

. . . Okay. Let's just drop it.

(pause)

GARY

I love you.

KATE

Gary!

GARY

Well, I wanted to tell you. I wanted to say . . . I wanted to let you know.

KATE

What is this? Huh? What . . . What do you want from me.

GARY

I want you to listen.

KATE

I've listened.

GARY

I want you to hear.

KATE

It doesn't matter.

GARY

What?!

KATE

It doesn't matter.

GARY

It doesn't matter!?! It doesn't matter that I . . .

KATE

. . . Look, Gary, look, have you ever said a word over and over until it loses its meaning and all you can think of is how silly it sounds--and then you're not even sure what it sounds like anymore? A word you've said forever and you're not even sure what it sounds like?

GARY

I want you to hear me.

KATE

I want to hear you! I . . . I wanna hear. But . . . look . . . it's like, I've been hearing it so much I can't make it out. I can't remember what it sounds like, what it's supposed to mean. I don't know what it means anymore and, it's like in movies . . . they say, "This is what it is," and it's not. I mean, you can do all the "right things" and it's not, it's still not right. And so I can't hear and I need to listen awhile first. And . . . I'm sorry, I'm . . . this . . . I'm not making any sense.

GARY

Guitar.

KATE

What?

GARY

Guitar. Two days ago I was saying "guitar" over and over.

KATE

Guitar.

GARY

Yeah. Over and over. Like you said.

KATE

Guitar.

GARY

Try it.

KATE

Guitar, guitar, guitar, guitar, guitar, guitar, guitar, guitar . . .

GARY

Guitar, guitar.

KATE

Yeah. You're right.

GARY  
No. You haven't done it long enough.

KATE  
Gary.

GARY  
You haven't. You're just saying that. You've gotta say it till you can't say it anymore.

KATE  
I can hear it. I mean, I meant, I can see, about how it would be.

GARY  
Guitar, guitar . . . come on.  
(pause)  
Come on.  
(pause)  
Guitar, guitar, guitar, guitar, guitar, guitar, guitar, guitar, guitar, guitar, guitar  
(etc.)

KATE  
(while HE is saying, "guitar.")  
I love you.

(HE stops and stares at her. SHE says:)

KATE  
Guitar, guitar.

(THEY both resume saying, "guitar." BLACKOUT.)

END.