

THE RACING LIFE

by  
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## Characters

Guy: mid-teens

Roger: early forties

The play takes place in Guy's room.

Books, papers, clothes, music magazines, and sports equipment are scattered around the room and on the bed. Posters for a heavy metal band called Catfight adorn the walls.

Guy's bedroom. Late afternoon.

[Guy stand in the middle of his room. He holds an electric guitar.]

GUY

[Speaking in a British accent; addressing an imaginary audience.] Thank you. Thank you. This is "Blitzkrieg." ROCK ON!

[Guy bangs out a rock riff that is equal parts music and enthusiasm.]

Roger enters. He hesitates for a moment; then speaks, struggling to make himself heard over GUY'S playing.]

ROGER

Guy. Guy! GUY!

[Guy hears Roger; stops playing.]

GUY

[Speaking with his "normal" American accent.] What do you want?

ROGER

[Agitated.] It's true. What they were saying when everybody was talking and you and I were thinking what skanks they were to believe something that could never happen. But it's true. Absolutely, positively. You can see for yourself. I'll show you--

GUY

Slow down.

ROGER

You understand what I'm saying, right? I read it on their web page. I wasn't going to look, 'cause I figured Eric Swain was just making like he's smart. The way he does. But then they said, "No, Roger. You got to see this." And no one was laughing so I figured they're not pulling a yank and I looked. And it's true--

GUY

Roger.

ROGER

Yes, Guy?

[Guy takes a deep breath: In and Out. Roger breathes with him.]

A second breath: In and Out.

Then a third: In and Out.]

GUY

Okay?

ROGER

[Much calmer.] Thanks.

GUY

So?

ROGER

Mekong has left the band.

[Guy is skeptical.]

ROGER

I know. But it's on their web page. Ratty confirms it. Plus he makes a streaming statement in which he says, quote, "Good riddance. I and the other members of the band Catfight are happy to see him go."

GUY

Ratty says this?

[Roger nods his head.]

GUY

Oh, man.

ROGER

I wasn't going to tell you. I was going to make dinner and let you do your homework and then go to bed and maybe tell you in the morning when stuff is easier to deal with. But I heard you playing "Blitzkrieg." That's what you were playing, right? The opening to "Blitzkrieg?"

[Guy nods his head.]

ROGER

So I had to tell you. I couldn't let you go on living in the dark when I knew the truth.

GUY

What are they going to do?

ROGER

What do you mean?

GUY

Who's taking his place? They are going to replace him, aren't they?

ROGER

Yeah, duh. You cannot be a premier, cutting-edge band without a drummer.

GUY

So who do you think they'll pick?

ROGER

Beats me. You can't replace a drummer of Mekong's caliber overnight.

[Guy picks up his base; plays chords.

Roger, caught up in the music, slaps out a rhythm on his knees.

The music comes to an end.]

GUY

You have an okay day?

ROGER

Sure. You?

GUY

Big-Nose handed back our exams.

ROGER

How'd you do?

GUY

B+. I screwed up the essay. It was supposed to be about Manifest Destiny but I pretty much wrote about something else.

ROGER

Manifest Destiny. That's a hard one. We go over that when we reviewed?

GUY

Yeah.

ROGER

'Cause I checked the list. It seemed to me like we went over everything she put on the list.

GUY

We did. I just messed up, that's all.

ROGER

Still, B+ is good. Better than I ever got.

GUY

It could be better.

ROGER

That's true.

[Silence.]

ROGER

They replaced the steam valve on the latte machine. We were closed while they did that. I got to get some sun.

GUY

Okay, so here's what I'm thinking; Mekong has left the band.

ROGER

I know. After everything he's written: "Spike," "Bones." "Tar." His drum solo on "Wounded Thorns" alone is enough to make him a legend--

GUY

Roger.

[Guy breathes; Roger calms down.]

GUY

Mekong has left the band and you are going to be his replacement.

[Roger is stunned.]

ROGER

What do you mean?

GUY

You know all their songs. They won't have to waste extra time rehearsing.

ROGER

Guy!

GUY

You were listening to their music way before anyone else ever was. You practically discovered their genius. You're the perfect person.

ROGER

Listen--

GUY

You're a great drummer.

ROGER

Listen to me--

GUY

When you picked me up from Monica Wright's party and we were all goofing off; didn't everyone say it was like you were one of them?

ROGER

That was pretending.

GUY

You can talk like them. Say that thing.

ROGER

What thing?

GUY

You know. That thing. From their concert last year.

ROGER

No.

GUY

Talk like they do. Come on. Say it. Please?

ROGER

[British accent.] "Rock and Roll."

GUY

See. You're perfect.

ROGER AND GUY

[Together.] "Rock and Roll."

[They laugh. Then

Roger falls silent.]

GUY

Think how much fun it would be.

ROGER

I can't.

[Guy takes a ticket from his wallet.]

GUY

Remember this?

ROGER

That's from when I took you go-cart racing. After you made the basketball team.

GUY

Racing in the go-cart. Leaning into the curves. Inch and a-half off the ground. I must have hit 75 on the straight-a-way. That's what it'll be like twenty-four-seven once you're the drummer for Catfight.

ROGER

It won't happen.

GUY

Not if you don't try. They don't have much time. They wait too long they'll lose their edge. We've got to figure out where the band is, and get them to see you. Especially Ratty. I get the feeling he pretty much calls the shots.

[Roger sits, impassive.]

GUY

Don't you want to be in Catfight?

ROGER

I'm your father.

GUY

So? Look at Snoop Dog. He's a father.

ROGER

Wouldn't you miss me?

GUY

I'll come with you. It'll be perfect.

ROGER

We can't just pick up and go. You have school. I have a job.

GUY

At the Espresso Hut. Which anyone can do. Benny Conklin from my science class works at the Espresso Hut.

ROGER

Maybe it's not a difficult job. And maybe I'm not the owner. Maybe I'm not even a shift leader. But that's what I do. I'm not a rock star. This is the father you're stuck with. I'm sorry. I'm 43.

GUY

[Mumbles] Which doesn't mean you have to be a stupid loser.

ROGER

What?

[Guy chooses not to respond.]

ROGER

What did you say?

GUY

Nothing.

ROGER

[Sincere questions.] About me being what? You said something about me. What did you say?

GUY

I said just 'cause you're getting old doesn't mean you have to be a stupid loser.

[Roger is stunned.]

Guy tears up the ticket.]

ROGER

Why did you do that? That was our souvenir.

GUY

Well, it's not anymore.

ROGER

Guy.

GUY

Remember when we got to the track and I was scared and you asked me if I really wanted to go racing and I said, "It was my dream ever since I was a little kid." And you said "Great. Go and race." And you promised you'd make sure I didn't get hurt. So even though I was scared at first I raced and you looked out for me and it was our best time ever?

ROGER

Yeah.

GUY

I was gonna do the same for you. I can, you know. I'm old enough now to do that. Watch out for you. Make sure no one takes advantage. Then maybe you wouldn't have to be so afraid. But if you're set on being a chicken . . .

ROGER

I can't do more than this. You're not being fair. I told you. Remember? I told you as soon as you were old enough to understand. "You've got a father who is simple." That's what I said to you. Everyone knows. This is not a secret. "You've got a father who is simple."

GUY

You love to play the drums, right?

ROGER

Yeah.

GUY

And you are great in front of people, right?

ROGER

Yeah.

GUY

And you're not afraid to have people think you're just a little bit weird. Right?

ROGER

[The beginnings of a smile.] I guess.

GUY

And it's your dream?

[Roger is silent.]

GUY

So it's a billion to one. You have to try. That's what you would expect from me, right?

[Roger is on the verge of agreeing.]

GUY

And if it doesn't work out, then you can come back. And if it does, you'll be a rock star. And I'll be your manager. And we'll eat room service and travel with the band and meet babes. And it'll be great.

ROGER

At the audition, what do you think I'll have to play? Because I don't think it would be right to play something Mekong is famous for. Like "Wretched" or "Tar."

GUY

Right.

ROGER

Because that would be in poor taste. It would be like I'm saying, "I am as good as Mekong." Which is not what I am saying.

GUY

Right.

ROGER

I'm saying, "Here I am and this is how good I am and you should hire me. Not someone who you think is going to be like Mekong."

GUY

As your manager, I'll see what I can do.

[Silence,

Roger picks up the pieces of torn ticket from the ground.]

ROGER

Will you do me a favor? Will you scotch tape the ticket back together again?

[Guy takes the pieces; looks at them; shakes his head "No."]

ROGER

Guy.

GUY

I was wrong to hog it all. It belongs to both of us.

[Guy hands one of the pieces to Roger. Each puts a piece of the ticket in their shirt pocket.]

Guy picks up his guitar; "fiddles around" with a bit of melody.]

ROGER

So?

GUY

First we write a letter. Then we make plane reservations.

[Roger catches the flaw in Guy's thinking.]

ROGER

No. First we figure out where they are. Then we write them a letter. Then we make plane reservations.

GUY

[Smiling.] Right. First we figure out where they are.

[Convinced they have a workable plan, Guy lets the guitar rip; Roger plays air drums.]

END OF PLAY