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“Smart and absorbing.” —*The New York Times*

Luna Gale

**“A compelling and
compassionate
portrait of flawed
people making
impossible choices.”**

—*Chicago Reader*

by Rebecca Gilman

“One of this year’s most valuable additions to American drama.”

—*Los Angeles Times*

“Focuses an unsparing light on the dilapidated infrastructure of underfunded welfare programs ... connects the dwindling support for counseling and treatment with the fraying of the social fabric.”

—*The New York Times*



Luna Gale

by Rebecca Gilman

Cast: 3m., 4w. Caroline, a veteran social worker, thinks she has a typical case on her hands when she meets Peter and Karlie, two teenage drug addicts accused of neglecting their baby. But when she places their infant daughter in the care of Karlie’s mother, Caroline sparks a family conflict that exposes a shadowy, secretive past—and forces her to make a risky decision with potentially disastrous consequences. Powerful and arresting, *Luna Gale* is a heartbreaking and unforgettable tale of love and betrayal. *Multiple int. sets.*

Approximate running time: 1 hour, 50 minutes. Code: LK9.

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Luna Gale

By

REBECCA GILMAN



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“*Luna Gale* received its world premiere at Goodman Theatre, Chicago, Ill., on Jan. 27, 2014, Robert Falls, Artistic Director, Roche Schulfer, Executive Director.”

Luna Gale received its world premiere at Goodman Theatre in Chicago on Jan. 27, 2014. Directed by Robert Falls.

Starring:

Caroline Mary Beth Fisher
Cindy Jordan Baker
Karlie Reyna de Courcy
Lourdes Melissa R. Duprey
Cliff Erik Hellman
Peter Colin Sphar
Pastor Jay Richard Thieriot

Design team:

Sets Todd Rosenthal
Lights Robert Wierzel
Sound Richard Woodbury
Costumes Kaye Voyce
Production Stage Manager Joe Drummond
Stage Manager Briana Fahey

Luna Gale

CHARACTERS

Caroline, 50

Karlie, 19

Peter, 19

Cindy, 40

Lourdes, 18

Cliff, 35

Pastor Jay, late 30s, early 40s

TIME AND PLACE

Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The present.

Luna Gale

ACT I

SCENE 1

(A small waiting room at a hospital. Six or eight chairs; the type that are attached by a rod and bolted to the floor. Hospital colors. A fake plant. A framed, faded poster of a lighthouse.

A door leads into the examination rooms. It has a small window in it, but it is locked. There is a keypad on the wall next to the door.

KARLIE and PETER, both 19, sit in the chairs upstage. PETER is dressed in cargo shorts and a T-shirt. He is slumped forward in his chair, asleep or semi-conscious. All of his fingers have Band-Aids wrapped around the tips.

KARLIE—jeans, tank top, tattoos, pink or blue highlights in her hair and black nail polish—is very upright. On the floor next to her is her giant bag. It is open at the top. One move and everything will tumble out of it.

KARLIE is eating a piece of cheesecake from a clear, plastic take-out container. It has a cherry topping. There is a quick, steady rhythm to the way she stabs a piece of cheesecake with the plastic fork, puts it in her mouth, chews, then stabs another. She is not savoring her food, nor is she inhaling it. She is feeding the machine with fuel. While she eats, and throughout, her knee jerks up and down with an insane, nervous energy.

Suddenly, she is distracted. She sees a bag of Skittles in her open bag.)

KARLIE. Do you want some Skittles?

(She drops the cheesecake on the floor and picks up the Skittles. PETER does not move.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. Yo. Skittles?

(She pours out a handful and nudges him.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. Dude. Come on.

(She nudges him again. He groans.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. You should eat.

(She puts them under his nose.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. You'll feel better. Dude. Eat.

(Barely opening his eyes, he takes the handful of Skittles and shoves them in his mouth.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. Chew. Chew!

(He chews.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. Thank you.

(She pours out some more Skittles and jams them in her mouth. Then she jumps up and looks through the window on the door.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. Uggghh. What's the fucking deal? We've been here three hours. Emergency room.

(She bangs on the door twice with each syllable.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. E-mer-gen-cy room!

(Bangs.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. Hello!

(She sees the keypad.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. What if like—

(She starts punching keys and making electronic beeping noises.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. Beep beep beep beep beep boop.
Open up. Open up.

(Looks through the window again. Yells.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. Does anybody even work here?!

(From her pocket comes the ring of a cellphone. She looks at the number and answers it.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. What.

(Beat.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. No! I'm still in the fucking emergency room.

(Beat.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. Because I have it written down on a piece of paper at home but I am in the emergency room at the hospital. Can you comprehend that?

(Beat.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. Three hours! They just left us sitting in this goddamn room that's supposedly the expediting room? Like this was the room where things would happen but we're just fucking— *(Yells.)* SITTING HERE— *(Normal.)* And nobody will tell us— *(Yells.)* WHAT'S HAPPENING.

(Beat.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. I don't have his number.

(Beat.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. Because.

I didn't program it into my phone because I never want to call him again because last time I saw him was at the Kum and Go and he was microwaving a burrito and I didn't even want anything, I just asked him what's up and he's like, "Don't even talk to me if you don't have the cash."

(Beat. Suddenly sober.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. Then go to his apartment because that's serious if that's what's happening that's serious.

(PETER, without lifting his head, puts his hand out, palm up. KARLIE sees and pours him some more Skittles.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. You have to take the Five A. Catch it at the hub, it only goes one direction from there.

(During this, CAROLINE, 50, enters. She is sensibly dressed for June in Iowa. She carries a patient file. KARLIE doesn't notice her.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. I can't remember the stop but it's the one right when you see the Hy-Vee—

CAROLINE. Karlie?

KARLIE *(on phone)*. I don't know. First floor at the far end—

CAROLINE *(louder)*. Karlie Quinn?

KARLIE *(suddenly alert to CAROLINE)*. What? What is it?

CAROLINE. Are you Luna's mother?

KARLIE *(hangs up the phone)*. Is she OK?

CAROLINE. You're Luna's mom?

KARLIE. What's going on?

CAROLINE. They're giving her intravenous fluids. She's severely dehydrated.

KARLIE. Is she going to be OK?

CAROLINE (*indicating PETER, who has dropped back to sleep*). Is this Luna's dad?

KARLIE. Yes.

(*Shoves PETER.*)

KARLIE (*cont'd*). Wake up.

(*PETER groans.*)

KARLIE (*cont'd*). Wake up!

(*PETER lifts his head.*)

CAROLINE. How long has Luna had diarrhea?

KARLIE. Like, two days.

CAROLINE (*looks at the chart*). You told admitting that it started this morning.

KARLIE. No, like two days ago it was loose, then she had a regular b.m. yesterday morning? Then I don't know what it was yesterday, but when I got home from work last night it was loose again— (*Her phone starts to ring.*) Stupid—shut up! (*She silences it.*)

CAROLINE. Loose or watery?

KARLIE. Yeah.

(*PETER's head drops again. KARLIE shoves him.*)

KARLIE (*cont'd*). Wake up, asshole!

CAROLINE. What's his name?

KARLIE. Peter.

CAROLINE. What's wrong with him?

KARLIE. Nothing.

(Shoves him.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. The nurse is here. Wake up.

(PETER wakes up. Sort of.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. So can we see her?

CAROLINE. Not right now.

KARLIE. Why not?

CAROLINE *(looks at the remains of the cheesecake)*. Was somebody eating cheesecake?

KARLIE. Me. I mean, no. It was all they had in the cafeteria.

CAROLINE. And Skittles. And ... *(Looks in KARLIE's open bag.)* Starburst. And Fruit Runtts. And SweetTarts.

KARLIE. What?

CAROLINE. That's a lot of sugar.

KARLIE. When can we see her?

CAROLINE. What happened to Peter's fingers?

(Beat.)

KARLIE. Nothing.

CAROLINE. Then why all the Band-Aids?

KARLIE. You're not a nurse, are you?

CAROLINE. I'm with the Department of Human Services—

KARLIE. You're a fucking social worker.

CAROLINE. Luna's been sick for a while, hasn't she?

KARLIE. Just since Monday.

CAROLINE. So four days.

KARLIE. One.

CAROLINE. Today's Thursday.

KARLIE. Today's Tuesday.

CAROLINE. Today's Thursday. How long have the two of you been smoking meth?

(No answer.)

CAROLINE *(cont'd)*. Karlie?

KARLIE. I want to see Luna.

CAROLINE. I'm afraid you can't right now.

KARLIE. I want to see her!

(CAROLINE crosses to the door and knocks on the window.)

CAROLINE *(to someone on the other side)*. Can I—? Thanks.

KARLIE. Let me in there.

CAROLINE. I can't.

(A buzzer sounds, and CAROLINE opens the door.)

KARLIE. Let me in there! I'm her mother—

(KARLIE makes a grab for the door. CAROLINE steps in front of her. KARLIE tries to push past her, but CAROLINE won't have it. She quickly jerks the clipboard up in front of KARLIE's face, and KARLIE steps back, more surprised than anything.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. What the—?

CAROLINE. You sit down, and you wait, and I will tell you when you can see your daughter. *(She goes, closing the door behind her.)*

KARLIE. You can't do that. *(Yells.)* You can't do that! You—!
Oh my God!

(She turns back into the room. PETER is still asleep. She rushes over and hits him with every word.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. You are so fucking useless!

(He turns over to avoid her, never opening his eyes.)

PETER. Stop it ...

KARLIE. Peter?! Fuck! FUCK!

(Stumped. Helpless. Then she picks up the phone and hits speed dial. Someone answers.)

KARLIE *(cont'd)*. Mom?

SCENE 2

(The kitchen of a modest ranch house, four days later. The kitchen is dated but very clean. There is a table, covered with a floral table cloth and surrounded by four chairs. This is the hub of the house. There is a pile of mail and a large collection of vitamin and herbal medicine bottles. There is also a Glade candle, which is lit. CINDY, 40, and CAROLINE are in the kitchen. CINDY wears nursing scrubs with some sort of purple design on them and white leather nursing shoes. CAROLINE is inspecting CINDY's kitchen. She has a clipboard with a form, which she makes notes on. On the table are her travel mug of coffee and her shoulder bag filled with files. CAROLINE is looking in the cabinet under the sink.)

CINDY. I'll get child-proof latches for that one. And I'll move— *(She goes to the cabinet and pulls out bottles of cleaning products, and puts them on the counter top.)* I'll move all this to where she can't reach it—

CAROLINE. She's not even crawling yet.

CINDY. But I want you to know that I know what to do. If I fail, you put Luna in foster care, right?

CAROLINE. Right. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. OK?

You can leave the Windex under the sink for now. *(Looks at the form.)* So what are your hours? At St. Luke's?

CINDY. Seven to four. Or six to five, really, with traffic—

CAROLINE. Have you thought about who would take care of Luna while you're at work?

CINDY. My friend Allyssa runs a day care out of her house—

CAROLINE. Is she licensed?

CINDY. Yes ma'am. And she said she can definitely take her.

(CAROLINE hands her the form.)

CAROLINE. Would you write her name and address here for me?

CINDY. Yes ma'am. *(Writes.)*

CAROLINE. You don't have to call me ma'am.

CINDY. I'm sorry. I'm so nervous.

(Holds the form out to CAROLINE, who looks at it.)

CAROLINE. I'll need a phone number, too.

CINDY. Yes ma'am.

CAROLINE *(smiles)*. You really are nervous, aren't you?

CINDY. I know I shouldn't be but I keep—

I keep thinking what you must think of me. At St. Luke's, we have the Child Protection Center, where they bring in children who've been abused, for exams—

CAROLINE. I'm familiar with the CPC—

CINDY. Of course you are. I'm sorry—

CAROLINE. No—

CINDY. But that's it. I've seen them bring those kids in and I've seen the families. Sometimes the police will come in and arrest somebody right in the lobby. And I always judge them. I do. I think they're ... failures. And now here I am, just like them—

CAROLINE. You didn't do anything to Luna.

CINDY. But if I'd seen Karlie and I didn't know who she was? Sitting there? I would have judged. I would have thought she was some dirty drug addict and that her mother didn't care. This is terrible of me, but when she called, for a second, I was so relieved she'd taken Luna to Mercy instead of St. Luke's so nobody I worked with would know.

CAROLINE. You know, there are two schools of thought on this. The first is that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. The second is that—even the best of parents have kids who screw up. On their own.

CINDY. I hope you went to the second school.

CAROLINE. Well. We'll see. (*Looks at her form.*) So I have a couple more things ... Karlie and Peter's apartment? When was the last time you were there?

CINDY. Two or three months ago?

CAROLINE. What did you think of it?

CINDY. It's not a nice apartment. They never bought any real furniture ...

CAROLINE. But it was clean?

CINDY. Enough. I guess. Why? Was it—

CAROLINE. It was bad.

CINDY. It was?

CAROLINE. Had you been busy? Is that why you hadn't been over?

CINDY. She doesn't like me coming there.

CAROLINE. Why not?

CINDY. She thinks I judge her.

Which I guess I do. I just did, didn't I? The way she looked ... But what am I supposed to do? Just stand by while she does something stupid?

CAROLINE. It's all right if you think smoking meth is stupid—