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Driver's Test

A comedy in one-act

By Don Zolidis

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One-act comedy
2F

No amount of parallel-parking practice can prepare sixteen-year-old Gail for this driver's test. Dangerously insane, fun-loving DMV tester Margie is feeling the need for speed, is hot to hit the road, is... well, a terrible instructor. Can Gail pass her test even with someone urging her to push the speedometer to its limit and evade the police? Comedy levels go into overdrive as Margie takes Gail on the wildest ride of her life.

Cast of Characters:

MARGIE, 30s, the instructor. Probably insane.

GAIL, 16, the driver. Agitated. With good cause.

Location: Inside a car.

At its simplest, the car can simply be four chairs lined up to suggest a vehicle. You could make the car more elaborate if you wish, but it's not necessary.

A note on mime: This play relies on mime. Actors need to act out opening the door, the seatbelt, and driving. Make sure to be consistent with it. A lot of the physical humor comes from consistency and detail in the miming of the car.

(Lights up on a car.)

(MARGIE enters with an Ipad. (If you don't have an Ipad or tablet computer, you can simply use a clipboard.)

(She walks around to the passenger side.)

MARGIE *(big smile)*

Okey-dokey, here we are.

(GAIL follows nervously.)

GAIL

That's it, huh?

MARGIE

Oh yeah. This is it. This is the guy. I call him George.

(she strokes the car.)

GAIL

Aren't cars normally female?

MARGIE

Not this one. He's all man. I don't have a lot of love in my life, so I'm compensating.

(gives the car a squeeze.)

All righty then. At this point I need to inform you that we will be recording the test to analyze your performance.

GAIL

You're recording this?

MARGIE

That is what I have just said to you. Do you consent to the recording?

GAIL

What if I said no?

MARGIE

Then the test is over and you don't get your driver's license. And also then you probably take the bus for the rest of your life, which will most likely be short because crazy people ride the bus.

GAIL

Okay then. I consent to the recording.

MARGIE

Fantastic. Please enter the vehicle.

(They open the doors and sit in the seats.)
By the way, I know we're doing this test thing here, but I want us to be friends, okay?

GAIL

Okay.

MARGIE

You can call me Margie.

GAIL

Okay Margie.

MARGIE

And I'll call you puddin'.
(GAIL is unnerved.)
I'M KIDDING!
(MARGIE laughs uproariously.)
I am too much. Okay – no I am friending you on facebook though.
(GAIL reaches for her phone.)

GAIL

Oh, uh –

MARGIE *(suddenly stern)*

If you check your phone you fail.

GAIL

The car hasn't started yet.

MARGIE

I don't joke about texting while driving. Serious issue.

GAIL

Okay, sorry. Is there um…

MARGIE

I'm kidding again! Did you see your face?! Woo!

GAIL

I wonder if there are other instructors available.
(Pause. MARGIE is hurt.)
I didn't mean that. I didn't mean that. It's fine.

MARGIE *(cold)*

Okay then. Clearly you are interested in having a very serious driver's test without humor. I can do that. That is how you wish us to proceed.

GAIL

I'm sorry I'm just a little nervous, that's all. I'm cool with joking. I'm a very, very funny person.

MARGIE

Please demonstrate what you do upon entering the vehicle.

GAIL

Okay um… first thing is I… check my mirrors.
(she checks her rearview mirror.)
(she checks her side mirrors.)
And I adjust them to fit me. And next I um… seatbelt – my seatbelt goes on.
(she puts on her seatbelt.)
And then… I am done with my pre-driving checklist.
(She looks over to MARGIE, nervously.)

MARGIE

You are?

GAIL

Yes?

MARGIE

That's all you're planning on doing?

GAIL

I believe so, yes.

MARGIE

Nothing else comes to mind?

GAIL

Um…

MARGIE

All right.
(GAIL pauses, freaked out.)

GAIL

Should I do something else?

MARGIE

Do you think you should do something else?

GAIL

I don't know.

MARGIE

I see.

(MARGIE checks off a little box on her clipboard/Ipad.)

GAIL

Did you just… did you just put something down?

MARGIE

Pay no attention to my clipboard.

GAIL *(losing it)*

I'm so sorry – I mean, you seem like a great person, really. I mean – we can hang out after this if you want, we can talk about your emotional issues – I mean – I'm fun-loving, let's just be buds. Okay?

MARGIE

Are you sure?

GAIL

Yes please!

(MARGIE changes back to bubbly Margie.)

MARGIE

YAY! All right let's party!

GAIL

Do I need to do anything else before I put the car in drive?

MARGIE

Ha ha ha no. I was just messin' with ya. Woo! You shoulda seen your face though, you were like… what do I do what do I do?

(MARGIE laughs uproariously.)

I love my job. Seriously. Let's take George out for a spin. Put it in drive.

GAIL *(still pretty shaken)*

All right.

(GAIL puts the car in drive.)

MARGIE

Take a left on this street.

(GAIL takes a left.)

Accelerate to the speed limit.

(GAIL pushes the gas down. Then the brake. Then the gas. Then the brake.)

Smoothly please.

GAIL

Sorry.

(GAIL drives.)

MARGIE *(patting the dashboard)*

Nice going. Easy does it. George likes it.

GAIL

I'm trying.

MARGIE

Nothing like driving, you know? The open road!

GAIL

Should I keep going straight?

MARGIE

Whatever you want. Behind the wheel of a car like this… the world is your oyster. Turn right Right Right - RIGHT NOW!

(GAIL spins the wheel, freaking out.)

There you go. Yeah. Accelerate to the speed limit.

(GAIL does so.)

You seem tense.

GAIL

I'm a little tense, yeah.

MARGIE

You gotta relax into it. Look at your hands.

GAIL

They're at ten and two.

MARGIE

Ten and two?! Seriously? Ten and two is for losers who don't know how to drive!

GAIL

This is what the manual says, so I'm going to follow the rules.

MARGIE

No no no no no – slide them – slide those hands down. I want to see nine and three.

GAIL

I can't really control the car as well at –

MARGIE

Nine and three. Do it.

(GAIL slides her hands down a bit.)

That's a little better. Okay now – when I tell you – drop your right hand to the six position.

GAIL

The six position?

MARGIE

Did I stutter?

GAIL

That's the hardest spot to steer the car from!

MARGIE

Correction: That is the coolest place to steer the car from.

GAIL

I don't know about this –

MARGIE

Do it!

(GAIL drops one hand to the six position.)

Now let go of the other one.

GAIL

Oh no I –

MARGIE

NOW!

GAIL

Ahhh!

(GAIL drops her left hand.)

MARGIE

That's right. You control George with one hand. Just drive honey. Feel it. The road beneath you. The hum of the engine. You control the beast. You are driving. You are queen of the gods. Got it? Queen of the Gods.

GAIL

I am?

MARGIE

YES! You are behind the wheel! Let me see your driving face.

GAIL

Skipping Forward

I'm trying to keep to the speed limit, sweetheart.

MARGIE

Whoah whoah whoah time out. Too nice. These are children. They're barely above the level of animals, okay? If you treat them nicely they'll destroy you. Let's try that again.

LARRY

Momm! Mommmm!

GAIL

What?

LARRY

Why are you driving so slow?!

GAIL

You wanna drive? You wanna drive this car?

(MARGIE gives a thumbs up.)

PETUNIA

How much longer until we get there?

GAIL

We'll get there when we get there.

PETUNIA

I have to go to the bathroom. Mommm! I have to go to the bathroom! Stop the car!

LARRY

I have to go to the bathroom too!

PETUNIA

Mommm! I need to go! I'm going to burst!

GAIL

There will be no peeing! Hold it!

LARRY

I can't hold it!

GAIL

You will hold it and you will hold it now, mister! If you had to go to the bathroom, you should've done that before we left!

MARGIE

Nice one.

GAIL

Bathrooms are for the weak!

MARGIE

A little much.

(MAGIE flips back into her roles.)

PETUNIA

OW! OW! He hit me!

LARRY

No I didn't you hit yourself!

PETUNIA

He hit me again!

GAIL

Kids, Mommy's trying to drive right now –

PETUNIA

OH THAT"S GROSS!

LARRY

Stay on your side!

GAIL

Kids, please –

PETUNIA

He licked me! Ewww! EWWWWW!

GAIL

You licked your sister?!

MARGIE

Eyes on the road. Eyes forward.

PETUNIA

Stop trying to lick me!

LARRY

Oww! She hit me!

PETUNIA

If you try to lick me again I'll grab your tongue!

LARRY
She's making threatening comments! She needs to be grounded!

GAIL
Do you want me to stop this car? Do you want me to stop this car?

PETUNIA
Why do we have to have boys in the family?

LARRY
You're mean!

PETUNIA
You're mean!

GAIL
All right that's it!
(She pulls over.)
Out. Get out. Both of you. You can ride the bus.

LARRY
I'll be good.

PETUNIA
I like it here.

GAIL
Okay then. One more word out of either of you and I'm turning this car around and going home!

MARGIE
Ding ding ding! Nicely done. And here we are at Applebee's.

GAIL
Wow.

MARGIE
Can I say something? I really enjoyed your rage. You're going to be a great Mom.

GAIL
I just kind of felt it inside.

MARGIE
For the record, you would've received bonus points if you managed to hit either of the children while driving.

GAIL

I think that would be dangerous.

MARGIE

Oh yeah. Totally dangerous. Completely necessary. Sometimes, in order to be a good driver, you have to take things to the edge. Really put yourself out there. Take risks.

GAIL

Take risks. Okay.

MARGIE

Can I just tell you something? I feel like we have a real connection.

GAIL

Really?

MARGIE

This might be my favorite driver's test ever.

GAIL

Seriously?

MARGIE

You wanna hug?

GAIL

I'm driving right now.

MARGIE

Can I just hug the side of you then?

GAIL

Um… okay –

MARGIE

Oh and turn right.

(GAIL turns right while MARGIE hugs the side of her.)

Oh that's nice. That's the stuff. You're very huggable.

GAIL

Oh.

MARGIE

Is it getting weird? Did I screw this up?

GAIL

No! I enjoy being hugged by strangers.

MARGIE

Awesome. You're like the daughter I never wanted.

(MARGIE's phone rings.)

Oh dang it. You keep driving. Take this road to the highway.

(MARGIE answers the phone, suddenly angry.)

What! Yeah I'm in a road test right now, what do you think I'm doing?

(pause for response.)

Oh that's nice. No she happens to be a very good driver.

(pause)

Frank! Would you shut up about that! I asked you to do one thing! Oh come on! You know the reason you think that? Because I don't respect you, Frank! I don't respect you! It's hard to respect a man who doesn't get out of his pajamas until The Price is Right is Over! You know what? My dreams are dying too okay! My dreams are dying too! Stop it. Stop crying.

(she hangs up.)

My gardener.

GAIL

Oh um…

MARGIE

All right! Time to Hit the Highway! This is my favorite part. This is awesome! Ready?

GAIL

I think so!

MARGIE

Okay! Living on the edge! We are women, right!!

GAIL

I'm pretty sure!

MARGIE

We don't need men, do we?!

GAIL

No!

MARGIE

Thelma and Louise! Woo! You ever see that movie?

GAIL

Is that the one where they drive off a cliff?

MARGIE

Yeah. Okay – well forget about Thelma and Louise then. Please take the on-ramp.
(GAIL takes the on-ramp.)
Accelerate. Accelerate. Accelerate to 65 miles per hour.

GAIL

Okay. Here we go.
(GAIL accelerates.)

MARGIE *(patting the car)*
Yeah, all right George – all right George. I want you to pull into the left lane and pass this semi-truck.

GAIL

Okay.
(GAIL shifts lanes.)

MARGIE

Give it some gas.

GAIL

I'm already going to the speed limit.

MARGIE

I know. Give it some gas.

GAIL

Should I – should I go over the speed limit?

MARGIE *(imitating her in a whiny voice)*
`Should I go over the speed limit?' Let me talk to you about life, all right? People are gonna put up signs – only go this fast, no right turn on red, school zone, wrong way – and you know what those signs are designed to do? They're designed to hold you back. And Life – is about blowing past those signs, you got it? Life is about saying – you tell me what the Speed Limit is, I don't care, I set my own Speed Limit – you say this is a deer crossing? No, this is a Life Crossing. So you take that wheel – you take that gas pedal – and you just go, girl. No limits.

GAIL

Okay. No limits.

MARGIE

That's right. YOLO. Let's take it to 70.

GAIL

Oh boy.
(GAIL accelerates a little more.)

MARGIE
That's right. That's right. You know what's even better than 70? 75.

GAIL
Ooh! Okay.
(GAIL accelerates a little more.)

MARGIE
You know what's better than 75?

GAIL
80?

MARGIE
You go girl!

GAIL
Wooo!
(GAIL accelerates to 80.)
Yeah see ya later Semi!

MARGIE
Boom! You know what I'm thinking?

GAIL
What?

MARGIE
Look at that speedometer. There's a whole bunch of numbers past 80, aren't there? Why would they put those numbers there if they didn't want the car to go that fast?

GAIL
I'm a little scared.

MARGIE
No no no – highway driving is not about fear. Highway driving is the absence of fear. I wanna see 85.

GAIL
…okay.
(She goes to 85.)

MARGIE
I wanna see 90.

GAIL

Ohmygosh.
(GAIL accelerates to 90.)

MARGIE
You know what I want to see next?

GAIL
No no no I can't go any faster.

MARGIE
There are more numbers on the speedometer, Gail! There's more to life than the Speed Limit! Yeah! Hit it! I want triple digits!

GAIL
Ohmygosh Ohmygosh Ohmygosh!
(GAIL accelerates to 100.)

MARGIE
Woo! Wooo!

GAIL
Woo!

MARGIE
Let's see what George can do!

GAIL
Oh!

MARGIE
Come on Georgie! Let's see how fast we can go! Let's see it!

GAIL *(joy)*
Aaaaaaaaaaah!

MARGIE *(joy)*
Aaaaaaaaaaah!
(Sirens. Red and Blue flashing lights.)

GAIL *(terror)*
Aaaaaaaaaah!

MARGIE *(terror)*
Aaaaaaaaaah! TAKE THIS EXIT NOW!

GAIL

YOU DON'T WANT ME TO PULL OVER!??

MARGIE

TAKE THE EXIT!

(GAIL spins the wheel. Sirens begin to fade out. GAIL screams during this entire sequence.)

TURN! HIT THE BRAKES!

(GAIL hits the brakes)

GO LEFT!

(GAIL goes left.)

GO RIGHT! WATCH OUT FOR THE CURB!

(They jump the curb.)

WATCH OUT FOR THAT SQUIRREL!

(GAIL swerves. They bump over something small.)

HIT THE BRAKES!

(GAIL hits the brakes. The car comes to a stop.)

DUCK!

(They both duck. The sirens fade out.)

(GAIL starts to look up, but MARGIE puts a hand on her back and forces her back into a hiding position.)

(After a moment, MARGIE pops up. Looks around. Explodes in happiness.)

MARGIE

THAT WAS SO AWESOME!!! OH MY GOSH THAT WAS THE BEST EXPERIENCE OF MY LIFE! WOOO! High five! High five!

(MARGIE grabs GAIL's limp wrist and forces her into a high five.)

Up high!

(Pulls her hand up.)

Down low!

(Down low)

Do the swim thing!

(She makes her up her own "swim thing")

Explode it!

(She explodes it. MARGIE sits back in the chair, chortling with joy.)

Oh man oh man oh man! And you were like aaaaah! And I was like oohhhh! And then we like annihilated that squirrel?! Oh my gosh!

GAIL *(weakly)*

I killed a squirrel?

MARGIE

Oh yeah! Ten points! Oh man. And you know what's the best thing ever – we've got it all on tape!

GAIL

Tape?

MARGIE

Yeah, like twenty years from now we can get together and be like – put in the tape put in the tape! Aaaaaaaaah! Splat! Woo.

(MARGIE shakes out her arms. Takes spray deodorant out of her purse and sprays herself down.)

You want some?

GAIL

…no.

MARGIE

You sure? Cause the stench of fear is pretty strong in here.

GAIL

Did I just escape from the police?

MARGIE

Livin' the dream.

GAIL

I don't even have a license yet and I'm a wanted fugitive?!

MARGIE

Don't sweat it –

(offers the deodorant again)

(GAIL ignores her, going on a nervous, nearly hyperventilating tirade)

GAIL

I just turned sixteen I can't be a wanted fugitive! They're going to hunt me down! They're going to find me just like my cousin Eddie and I'll be in the big house with murderers and father stabbers and white collar criminals!

MARGIE *(underneath)*

Hey. Hey that's not gonna happen. White collar criminals never go to prison.

GAIL *(continuous)*

And I won't even get hair care products and I'll wear that orange jumpsuit! Have you seen those things! I'm not going to look good in that! And I won't go to prom and I won't have my first boyfriend and I won't see my puppy grow up and my Mom is going to cry like a million times a night and my Dad is going to say that he was right about me all along and they're going to make me wear ugly slippers and I won't be able to chew gum and they're going to make me watch public television – and I and I and I and I –

Skipping Forward

The final test is… PARALLEL PARKING!

(MARGIE laughs like a supervillain.)

Moo ah ha ha ha! Moo ah ha ha ha!

(She stops.)

GAIL

Okay I can do that.

MARGIE

Oh really?

GAIL

Yes, I practiced a lot.

MARGIE

Oh you did? All right then. Pull out into the street.

(GAIL puts it in drive and pulls out into the street.)

Turn right at this intersection.

(GAIL turns right.)

Hey you know what we should do while we look for a spot?

GAIL

No I'm –

MARGIE

Car dancing!

(MARGIE turns on the radio.)

(Funky hip hop music plays.)

MARGIE

Oh hello. Momma likee. Those are some fat beats. Turn left at this intersection.

(GAIL turns left. MARGIE starts getting down with her bad self.)

Uh huh. Uh huh. Yeah. Uh huh. Uh huh.

(MARGIE is dancing bigger and bigger while still seated.)

Dance, Gail. Dance. Come on. Let the rhythm take control. You gotta dance and drive at the same time.

GAIL

It's not really safe to dance and drive.

MARGIE *(mocking her in a high-pitched whiny voice)*

`It's not really safe to dance and drive.' You know what else isn't safe? Eating cheese nine months after the expiration date. But I do it. You know what's also not safe? Snorting two cans of bug spray, doing a headstand, and then jumping in a pool, but it's also super fun. Come on! Get down!

(GAIL starts dancing while driving.)
Yes! That's it!
(GAIL dances more.)
Woo! Show me what you got! Shake it!

GAIL

I can't really shake it while driving.

MARGIE

I don't care! Shake something!
(GAIL shakes something. MARGIE is singing along. GAIL starts singing along too.)
Wa ha! Yes!
(MARGIE spots the parallel parking spot.)
Okay here we are. I want you to park between those two cars.

GAIL

Okay. Can I –
(she turns off the music.)

MARGIE

Awww.

GAIL

All right then. I pull over here, put on my right turn signal. And…
(GAIL puts the car in reverse – she looks behind her shoulder.)
And I turn the wheel this way and – whoops. Nope.

MARGIE

Go ahead and try again, I won't count that against you.

GAIL

Sorry.
(GAIL switches back to drive, pulls forward and stops. She acts the next part out while talking her way through it)
Put it in reverse – turn the wheel – and… oops – no – not quite enough –

MARGIE

Third time's a charm. Not a problem.

GAIL *(pulling forward again)*

I'm actually pretty good at this.

MARGIE

Oh sure.

GAIL

No I am.

(GAIL puts it in reverse. She spins the wheel hard.)

I just gotta turn at the right time – and then – oh darn it – shoot. Sorry.

(She's starting to get frazzled.)

MARGIE

Honk! Honk honk!

(GAIL looks at her, while putting the car back in drive.)

Sorry I'm just making it more realistic. Simulating real-life situations.

GAIL *(trying again.)*

Okay. I can do this.

(GAIL puts the car in reverse, looks over her shoulder, and turns the wheel again.)

MARGIE

Honk! HONK HONK! HONK honk HONK!

GAIL

Aarrgh! Oh I'm sorry I'm sorry!

MARGIE

No worries. Take as much time as you like.

GAIL

Could you please not do the honking thing? It's really messing me up.

MARGIE

No problemo.

(GAIL puts it in reverse again, looks over her back shoulder, tries again. MARGIE assumes the persona of an angry driver behind her.)

`Where'd you learn how to drive?!' `Hey lady! I don't got all day!' `You stink' `You Stink at this! You stink! You STIIINK!' `Hey you know what's the difference between a woman driver and a raccoon?'

GAIL *(shouting over her shoulder)*

Shut up! I'm trying to do this!

MARGIE *(as fake trucker)*

`Oh she's mad now! You made her mad Bob!' `Hey! Hey lady! If you're mad do you drive better!?'

(GAIL pulls forward and tries again.)

Honk! HONK! `Hey you're cute! Tell you what? I'll park your car for you if you give me a kiss!' `Ha ha that's a good one Steve!'

GAIL

Shut up! Aaaaaaaaaaah!

(GAIL gets out of the car.)
I can't do it! And I especially can't do it if you're yelling at me!
(MARGIE gets out of the car.)

MARGIE
This is real life.

GAIL
No! No you're a crazy person! I'm not getting back in the car with you!
(MARGIE comes around the car, like she's tracking down a cat.)

MARGIE
Think about what you're saying, Gail. This is your chance at a driver's license. This is your big day.

GAIL
You're insane!

MARGIE
Maybe a little. But isn't it better to be like me than to be like you? Get back in the car.

GAIL
No!

MARGIE
Get back in the car!

GAIL
No!

MARGIE
GET BACK IN THE CAR!

GAIL
NEVER!!!!
(MARGIE charges. GAIL runs.)

End of Excerpt.
To purchase this play, visit www.concordtheatricals.com