

GETTING IT BACK

Lendall slowly exits into his house—even though he has no idea how to do what Gayle has asked him to do.

Long beat.

Gayle waits among all the love she has returned to Lendall.

She's fighting being upset.

Eventually, Lendall returns—empty-handed, it seems.

He approaches Gayle and faces her.

And then he presents her with a tiny little canvas or paper bag.

[Note: If possible, the audience shouldn't see the little bag until Lendall holds it out to Gayle.]

Gayle stares at the bag for a beat.

And finally says:

← START

GAYLE. What is that?

LENDALL. It's all the love you gave me.

This is both not quite true...and quite true.

GAYLE. That's [all the love I gave you]—...? That is *not* [all the love I gave you]—. There is no way [that is all the love I gave you]—... That is *not* [the love I gave you]—. (*Mortified.*) Is that all I gave you?

LENDALL. Yeah.

GAYLE. Oh.

Gayle looks at the little bag Lendall is offering...and then looks at all the big bags.

Okay.

LENDALL. Why don't you open it, and [see what's inside]—?

And Gayle is crying.

(*Going to comfort her.*) Hey, hey—what's goin' on?

GAYLE. (*Resisting and rejecting Lendall's comfort.*) I told you: We're done.

LENDALL. Why do you keep sayin' that?

GAYLE. Because—... (*This is hard to say, but it has to be said.*) Because when I asked you if you ever thought we were gonna get married—remember when I asked you that?

Lendall remembers.

But is quiet—as quiet as he was when Gayle asked him if he ever thought they were going to get married.

A couple weeks ago? I made pizza?

LENDALL. Yeah—

GAYLE. Yeah, well, when I asked you...*that*, you got so...quiet. And everybody said that *that* right there shoulda told me everything.

LENDALL. Everybody who?

GAYLE. Everybody!

LENDALL. *Who?*

GAYLE. ...Marvalyn // said—

LENDALL. *Marvalyn?!? >*

GAYLE. Yes, Marvalyn—

LENDALL. Marvalyn said that, // like she's an expert?

GAYLE. Yes, Marvalyn said that how quiet you got was all I needed to know!, And she's right: You don't love me.

LENDALL. What—? Gayle, no! [That's not true!!]

GAYLE. Shh! And I've been trying to fix that, I've tried to *make* you love me by giving you every bit of love I had, and now...I don't have any love for *me* left, and that's...that's not good for a person... and...that's why I want all the love I gave you back, because I wanna bring it with me.

LENDALL. Wait—where are you going?!?

GAYLE. I need to get away from things.

LENDALL. What—? What things?! There aren't any things in this town to get away from!

GAYLE. Yes there are: You!

LENDALL. Me?

GAYLE. Yes. *You* are the things in this town I need to get away from, because I have to think and start over, and so: All the love I gave to you? I want it back. In case I need it. Because I can't very well go around giving *your* love—'cause that's all I have right now, is the love *you* gave *me*—I can't very well go around giving *your* love to other guys, 'cause // that just doesn't seem right—

LENDALL. Other guys? There are other guys?!?

GAYLE. No, not yet, but I'm assuming there will be.

LENDALL. Gayle—

GAYLE. Shh!!! So I think—. I think that, since I know now that you're not ready to do what comes next for people who have been together for quite a long time [like, get married], I think we're gonna be done, >

LENDALL. Why? Gayle—!

GAYLE. and, so, I think the best thing we can do now is just return the love we gave to each other, and call it...

Gayle looks at the pathetic little bag that contains all the love she gave Lendall and then looks at the awesome several that contain all the love Lendall gave her.

...even.

It's not "even" at all.

Oh, Jeezum Crow, is that really all the love I gave you, Lendall? I mean, I thought [I gave you so much more than that]—. I mean, what kind of person am I if this is all the love I gave y—... No...n-n-no! (*Fiercely.*) I know I gave you more than that, Lendall, I know it!

Gayle has a revelation.

Did you lose it?

LENDALL. What?!? // No, Gayle! No!

GAYLE. Did you lose it, Lendall?!? 'Cause I know I gave you more than that, and I think you're pulling something on me, AND THIS IS NOT A GOOD TIME TO BE PULLING SOMETHING ON ME!!!

LENDALL. (*Raising his voice—and this guy doesn't raise his voice.*) I'M NOT! Pullin' somethin' on you! I wouldn't do that to you!

Lendall collects himself.

Jeez! I think—gosh, I hate the way you're talkin' to me!

He steams and stews a bit.

And finally says, with finality:

And I think—I think maybe you should just take what you came for. And I guess I'll see you later.

Lendall chucks the little bag at Gayle's feet and exits into his house, slamming the door behind him.

GAYLE. (Weakly.) Lendall—[wait]. Lendall...

Gayle is at a loss.

She came over to break up with Lendall.

And it seems that he just broke up with her.

But, ultimately, this is what she wants.

Gayle looks at the little bag at her feet, picks it up, and is about to leave.

But curiosity stops her.

And she opens the little bag and examines what's inside.

And then yells offstage.

Lendall—what is this?!? I don't [understand]—... This isn't [all the love I gave you]—... Lendall: What is this?!?

Little beat.

LENDALL. (From off.) It's a ring, Gayle.

GAYLE. What?

LENDALL. (Returning.) It's a ring.

GAYLE. What? Well—

Gayle takes what is in the bag out of the bag.

It's a small box.

This isn't [all the love I gave you]—. This is *not* [all the love I gave you]—...

Gayle realizes she's holding a box that an engagement ring might come in.

Oh, Lendall, this is a ring. Is this a...*ring*? A ring that you give to someone you've been with for quite a long time when you want to let them know that you're ready for what comes next for people who have been together for quite a long time?

LENDALL. Yup.

GAYLE. Oh.

Little beat.

But...all the love I gave to you? Where is it?

LENDALL. (*Referring to the small box.*) It's right there, Gayle.

GAYLE. But [that can't be all of it]—

LENDALL. It's right there.

GAYLE. But [there's no way that's all of it]—

LENDALL. It *is*! That's it! Right there! There was so much of it—
you've given me so much over the years—

GAYLE. (*Making sure he understands just how many years it's
been.*) Eleven.

LENDALL. —over the eleven // years—

GAYLE. *Eleven, yeah! // Eleven.*

LENDALL. —yeah, eleven, yeah—shh! You've just given me so
much that I don't know what I've even done with it all. I had to put
some in the garage, some in the shed. And after you asked me if I
ever thought we were gonna get married, there was more of it than
ever comin' in, and I asked my dad if he had any suggestions what
to do with it all, and he said, "You got a ring yet?" And I said, "No."
And he said, "Get her one. It's time. When there's that much of that
stuff comin' in, that's about the only place you can put it."

Little beat.

He said it'd all fit [in the ring].

Little beat.

And he was right.

They look at the small box.

That thing is a lot bigger than it looks.

Little beat.

So...there it is. All the love you gave me. Just not in the same...
form as when you gave it.

GAYLE. Yeah.

Beat.

LENDALL. You still want it back?

GAYLE. Yes. I do.

LENDALL. Well, then...take it.

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