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Gary Soto's short story, "The No-Guitar Blues," tells about a boy trying to collect enough money to buy a guitar. The response essay below analyzes the story's plot and character development to reveal the main theme.

Beginning
The beginning names the story and author and focuses on the theme (underlined).

Fausto's Guilt

In Gary Soto's short story, "The No-Guitar Blues," the main character, a teenage boy named Fausto, takes advantage of some rich folks. As a result, he is consumed by guilt. The story shows that deep down, people want to do the right thing.

The story begins with Fausto wanting to play guitar in his own band. He wonders how he can get a guitar. Soto uses idioms to illustrate that Fausto's family does not have a lot of money. For example, Fausto worries that if he asks for a guitar, his parents will say, "Money doesn't grow on trees," or "What do you think we're, bankers?" (56). When he does ask for a guitar, his mother replies, "Honey, a guitar costs a lot of money . . . but we'll see" (57).

But Fausto is determined. He hops on a bike and rides north, away from his home near the vacant lot on Olive Street. In the nicer section of Fresno, he goes door-to-door searching for work, hoping to be paid enough to buy a guitar. The author says that Fausto only earns a "grimy, dirt-caked quarter" (58) and eats juicy orange. Little does Fausto know that this orange will lead him straight into a lie.

As Fausto sits eating the orange, a sad-eyed dog comes along. Fausto begins feeding it orange slices. Fausto has an idea: "At that moment, a light came on inside Fausto's head" (59). He notices that the dog looks healthy and well fed. He spots a collar and tag, and he realizes that "Roger" probably belongs to rich people. The address is only six blocks away. This is when Fausto decides to tell a lie. He will say that he found Roger near the freeway, and maybe the owners will give him a reward big enough to buy a guitar.

Fausto feels guilty at the thought of lying. The guilt steadily builds. It increases as he stands on the porch knocking on the door. It gets worse as the man and woman

Middle
Each middle paragraph explains a different stage in the development of the theme.

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