

Life on the Line

A short play

by

Matthew Konkel

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CHARACTERS (2 Shirts)

TEE: A well-worn plain white T-shirt with a jaded attitude.

HAWAII: A colorful Hawaiian shirt. Despite appearance, has an inclination toward the anxious or negative.

TIME: Now.

PLACE: A clothesline in a rural neighborhood.

SYNOPSIS: The life of laundry is more than just hanging out to dry.

STAGING

A simple clothesline strung across the stage on which is pinned an XXL T-shirt and Hawaiian shirt. Actors wearing black can perform through face-holes cut into the shirts.

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(At rise HAWAII has just been hung on the clothesline next to TEE.)

TEE

Hey, man. Good to see you.

HAWAII

Yeah, yeah. Hey to you too.

TEE

It's been awhile. You all right? You look a little agitated.

HAWAII

I'm all right, yeah, I just got out of long tumble, y'know?

TEE

I hear ya. It's hard to get back in the game after a hiatus. But hey, we got some nice weather out here and, I mean *(heh heh)* nothing like what you're used to but, am I right?

HAWAII

Yeah, it's good. Actually...it looks like it might rain.

TEE

Huh? You think?

HAWAII

Look at those clouds.

TEE

No way, man. I think they're heading the other way.

HAWAII

If you say so.

TEE

Definitely. Anyway, it's nice right now. You gotta hang for the moment, right?

HAWAII

Sure, sure.

TEE

So, where you been, man? I haven't seen you in cycles. Where you been hanging?

HAWAII

Oh, jeans, they had me in the bottom of the dresser, waaaaay in the back. Stuffed between some wools and this smelly high school jockstrap. Didn't think I was ever getting out.

TEE

What? Unbelievable. How do they expect a shirt to breathe? So how'd you finally un-drawer?

HAWAII

Remember that luau last week? The guy couldn't hold his rum, he passed out on the patio and I was covered in pineapple and poi puke all night long.

TEE

Are you serious?

HAWAII

Serious as a spin cycle.

TEE

Out of the hamper into the chute.

HAWAII

I can't stand that tropical cuisine.

TEE

What a stain in the neck.

HAWAII

Tell me about it.

TEE

I feel for you. With every fiber of my being I feel for you.

HAWAII

Thanks, thanks.

TEE

Look at it this way, you get out of the closet, what, maybe once a year at the most? You'll last longer. Y' know what I'm saying?

HAWAII

Yeah, yeah, I get it.

TEE

I mean, am I right? You got a clean record now. And sure as shout you'll get a nice, sturdy hanger this time.

HAWAII

You're right, you're right. Probably right. So, what about you? You look a little worse for wear.

TEE

Ain't that the heavy load of truth? I've been hittin' it hard every cycle for a good year and a half now.

HAWAII

You're like the go-to tee, huh?

TEE

Yep. And look at that.

HAWAII

What?

TEE

That. That's a hole starting.

HAWAII

Yeah, could be. Maybe.

TEE

It is. I'm telling you I am stretched out, man. I'm into my final spin.

HAWAII

No. Yeah?

TEE

Don't envy the T-shirt life, m'man. Do not. First out of the drawer. First in the hamper. Last into the washer. Every week.

HAWAII

Oh, man. That's cold. That's a cold load.

TEE

I mean, really, how long can a shirt last on that schedule? Don't they know I got delicate sensibilities? If only I could get myself tie-dyed. That would be something.

HAWAII

Tie-dyed?

TEE

Heck, yeah. Those tie-dyes got it made. They don't have the wearing mileage common tees do. Man, the kind of life I'd have as a tie-dye. The parties, the admiration, the hangers. Instead, I'm just an ordinary 'T'. Nothing special, just your basic, over-tumbled poor white-collar apparel!

HAWAII

Okay, you gotta try to cool down, Tee, you just, y'know...

TEE

You remember Tuck?

HAWAII

Tuck?

TEE

The Gap guy. Tall thing.

HAWAII

Oh, yeah. Whatever happened to him?

TEE

Got collared.

HAWAII

He did not.

TEE

Sure as wisk he did.

HAWAII

I thought that was just a rumor. I thought that whole collaring thing was just a scary story.

TEE

Uh-uh, no synthetics, man, it's real.

HAWAII

What happened?

TEE

He got one little hole in him and next thing you know, he gets his sleeves cut off, his collar ripped off and now they use him

for cutting grass. He never gets washed anymore. In between mows he hangs in the garage. The smelly, fly-infested garage. Soaked with sweat and gasoline and perpetually grass-stained. It's like he's got some disease.

HAWAII

Holy sheet. That's horrible.

TEE

It's beyond horrible. He was a one hundred percent pure cotton dude. It's...There's not even a word for what it is.

HAWAII

That doesn't mean that's going to happen to you.

TEE

No, something worse could happen. Much worse.

HAWAII

Not necessarily. You could get taken to one of those thrift stores.

TEE

Thrift store!?

HAWAII

I hear some amazing things. You get to make a lot of new friends. Listen to some old tunes. And you're inside all the time so there's no rain to worry about.

TEE

C'mon, man. Think about it. I'm a T-shirt. A TEEE-shirt. And I'm worn by a guy. Guys keep their T-shirts and underwear until they're practically ether, okay? There's no thrift store for threads like us.

HAWAII

So, what are you gonna do?

TEE

I don't know. And I got a family.

HAWAII

You're a family man?