

# The Cost of Love is Not Immune to Inflation

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a short play by Matthew Konkel

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### Cast of Characters

Valve and Leak: Two deflating plastic blow-up snowmen.

TIME Late winter/early spring

PLACE The front yard of a suburban home

*(Small patches of snow and wet brown grass make up the landscape. VALVE and LEAK, should have been taken down months ago so now they both sag, having lost a lot of air. At rise VALVE is sleeping. LEAK speaks longingly to someone off stage.)*

LEAK

Oh my darling. My sweet, sweet darling. One day we'll be together. I see your face in my dreams. I can feel the soft, soft caress of your hooves. *(to himself)* Soft caress of your hooves? *(he tries again)* Your face is...your face is like...a star. A shining star and I am bathed— immersed in the light of your shining beauty. Your quiet nature fuels the fire in my heart for you. *(suddenly self-reproachful)* The fire of my heart? My heart of air. My plastic heart. My futile love.

*(LEAK turns to the slumbering VALVE by his side.)*

LEAK

Hey. Hey. Hey, airhead.

VALVE

Huh? What? Oh. What?

LEAK

You know what I wish?

VALVE

Don't call me that.

LEAK

You know what I wish?

VALVE

I know what I wish.

LEAK

You were sleeping again, Valve.

VALVE

I know, I know. I know I was. I was in a deep sleep.

LEAK  
So, guess.

VALVE  
Guess what?

LEAK  
Guess what I wish.

VALVE  
I don't know, Leak.

LEAK  
C'mon. Guess. Guess what I wish.

VALVE  
*(sighs)*  
You wish you were a real snowman instead of just a plastic  
blow-up.

LEAK  
That's right.

VALVE  
Well, you're not. Okay? You're not. You're not a real snowman,  
you're a fake snowman. You're a faux-man *(heh-heh)*, okay?

LEAK  
I know.

VALVE  
Well, if I know what you wish and you know what you wish, then  
why did you have to wake me up to tell me?

LEAK  
I didn't wake you up just to tell you that.

VALVE  
So why did you, then? Huh? Why did you?

LEAK  
I'll tell you when you change your attitude.

VALVE  
Okay, Leak. I'm sorry. Okay?

LEAK

That sounded real sincere.

VALVE

Leak—

LEAK

You've always been like this, Valve. Too concerned for yourself to care about anybody else.

VALVE

What?

LEAK

Yeah. Ever since the first snowfall. Ever since you were inflated.

VALVE

You're crazy.

LEAK

Am I? What about the big storm?

VALVE

Big storm?

LEAK

I got buried in that drift while you were left clean, dry and untouched.

VALVE

That wasn't my fault.

LEAK

No, but you couldn't even talk to me through the snow. Tell me what's going on. You got to relax and laze around in the beautiful winter sun while I languished in the drift, cold miserable and alone. Waiting, just waiting for it to melt. It lasted for weeks.

VALVE

I'm—I-I didn't—

LEAK

And then there was the bird.

VALVE

Bird?

LEAK

After the drift finally melted and I could actually see around and talk again, this robin decided to use my head as a perch slash toilet.

VALVE

What's that got to do with me?

LEAK

Nothing, except instead of helping me get rid of the bird you tormented me about it. You said things like, "oh, what a lovely pet you have," and, "are you a snowman or a birdman?" And my personal favorite, "what's that on your face? Oh, it's poop." And then you went to sleep.

VALVE

The bird flew away.

LEAK

Yeah, hours later. No thanks to you.

*(A long pause.)*

VALVE

I'm sorry, Leak.

LEAK

Yeah.

VALVE

Let me make it up to you.

LEAK

It's okay. You don't have to. What's done is done.

VALVE

No, really. I am sorry. I'm sorry. I really am so very sorry for having a bad attitude. I don't mean to depreciate your concerns. So, please, tell me what you want to say.

LEAK

Okay, I'll tell you but you gotta keep it under your balls.

VALVE

Who am I gonna tell, Leak? Huh? Who am I gonna tell? The mail carrier? Huh? The birdbath? Maybe that brown, dead corner of grass over there. Or that dirty snow patch. He looks hungry for some gossip.

LEAK

I'm not talking about the dirty snow patch or the grass—

VALVE

Well, who, huh? Who would be interested in whatever apparently cataclysmic news you have to tell me?

LEAK

I don't—I don't know. I'm just saying I would rather this be kept between us.

VALVE

Just tell me.

LEAK

There's that attitude again.

VALVE

Aw, Leak. I'm really tired. Can't you see that? Look at me. I'm not really feeling chipper here.

LEAK

I know, Valve, I know.

VALVE

Look, Leak, I don't exactly have a lot of energy or patience for the building of suspense today. So please, whatever it is, just tell me. Can you do that, please?

LEAK

Okay.

VALVE

Okay.

LEAK

First of all, I think there's a reason why you feel so...fatigued.

VALVE

Yeah, because you keep yapping at me all the time. All day and all night. Hey, Valve. Hey, Valve. Guess what, guess what. It's really draining.

LEAK

Yes, you're exhausted. I understand. But it's not because of me. Valve, you've got a deflation problem.

VALVE

A-a def-a what?

LEAK

Deflation.

VALVE

Yeah, well, you've got a deflation problem.

LEAK

You're right. I do.

VALVE

Huh?

LEAK

I've got it too. Deflation. I'm not as bad off as you are but-

VALVE

Get out. You're just trying to get back at me.

LEAK

No, really. You see how soft you've gotten. You used to be much firmer. Especially around the middle.

VALVE

Well, maybe I let myself go a little bit, yeah, but...

LEAK

It's not because you let yourself go. It's not because I keep waking you up. It's not anything we've done. It just is. And unless we get pumped- unless we get some air into us- and I mean soon- then we are looking at some serious ground time. I mean, really getting up close and personal with the Earth, y'know what I'm saying?

VALVE

You're full of it.