

# The Tie

A very short play  
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## THE TIE

### CHARACTERS

JUDY                      Late 20s, early 30s. A secretary

MAX                      Slightly younger than Judy.  
                                An aspiring stand-up comedian.

### SETTING

Judy's apartment. Necessary furniture includes a couch and small end table with a phone on it.

### TIME

The present.

*(Lights rise on JUDY sitting on the couch reading. MAX enters. She doesn't look up.)*

Hey. JUDY

Hey, how are you? MAX

Good. JUDY

Good. That's good. I'm fine. MAX

Oh. JUDY

Work was pretty awful, thanks. I take it you didn't catch it? MAX

No, I stayed home. JUDY

Great, that's great. How was it? MAX

What? JUDY

How was it, I said "How was it." MAX

I heard what you said. Thank you. How was what? JUDY

How was home. I was asking how your evening at home was. MAX

Sit-coms were crap. JUDY

Not funny tonight. MAX

Not really funny ever. JUDY

Never. MAX

Almost. Stopped watching about an hour ago. JUDY

Gave up in disgust, they weren't funny. MAX

No. I've been reading. JUDY

Good. Not funny, gave up in disgust. MAX

Just gave up. JUDY

Right. MAX

How was your night? JUDY

Thank you for asking. My night was a total fucking disaster. MAX

Oh? JUDY  
*(looking up)*

They hated me. All five of them. Not a single laugh. MAX

Come on. JUDY

Not one. MAX

You're exaggerating again. JUDY

No I'm not. MAX

*(pause)*  
Not one laugh at my jokes.

Other laughter. JUDY

My tie got the two drunk G.I.s giddy. MAX

Well, it's all part of the act. JUDY

I'm so proud, maybe I should go into clown suit design. MAX

Come on. JUDY

I used to like it. MAX

You liked it when I got it for you. JUDY

What are you talking about? MAX

I got it for you two years ago, you liked it then. JUDY

The tie? MAX

The tie. JUDY

I didn't mean the tie. MAX

You didn't. JUDY

No, no, I didn't. MAX

Oh. Sorry. Which one did you use? JUDY

What? This one. MAX

No, I didn't mean the tie. JUDY

You didn't? MAX

No, I meant which routine. JUDY

Oh, all right. I used my first date material... the first date routine. MAX

I'm trying to remember – JUDY

You remember... it's old but... you know, the one about how nervous I've always got – MAX

Oh, right. JUDY

...on any first date. MAX

That one. JUDY

How I always make an ass of myself, because... you like it? MAX

Yeah, yeah, it's fine. JUDY

It's gone over real well before. MAX

Uh-huh. JUDY

MAX  
“And then you get that gristle in your teeth, and you can't just swallow it, but she's watching you, and your mouth's perpetually full, so you can't talk, and then there's a meaningless silence, which you hope she thinks is romantic, and as soon as she looks away, it's up with the napkin. . .”

Right. JUDY

MAX

(*pause*)  
What, does it suck?

JUDY

No, no, it doesn't suck.

MAX

(*pause*)  
Do I make my living doing it?

JUDY

Stand-up?

MAX

Yes, stand-up.

JUDY

No, of course not. Not by a long shot.

MAX

Then why do I do it?

JUDY

Love?

MAX

I just said I hated it.

JUDY

I know but—

MAX

I mean it. I dread it. I go in and terror, no, not terror, abhorrence engulfs me.

JUDY

Oh.

MAX

Thank you.

JUDY

What?

MAX

You've summed it up nicely, thank you very much.

What are you talking about? JUDY

Your response. "Oh." Fuck you very much, that pretty much does sum it all up, doesn't it? MAX

Don't you even try to take this out on me. JUDY

Oh. MAX

What? *(pause)* JUDY

Feels shitty, doesn't it? I bared myself to you, and what do you give me? "Oh." Which really means "Oh, tough shit, your problems bore me, keep it to yourself." MAX

I didn't even imply – JUDY

You did. You have. MAX

Don't blame me you tried to make a hobby your life. That is not my fault. JUDY

A hobby! MAX

Yes, a hobby. JUDY

*(ripping off the tie)*  
Have the fucking thing. Here. Here! Take it!  
*(throws it at her)* MAX

Please stop. JUDY

Far be it from me to be a fucking beggar, a fucking leech. Take it. Go on, pick it up and put it in the pile of things that are yours. MAX



JUDY

Come on, Max. You have a routine entirely based on rude jokes you used to giggle at with your friends in the nut-house. Things you stole off television, changed a word and called your own.

MAX

That is not true.

JUDY

Yes, it is. If you were paying attention, you'd notice. You'd do something.

MAX

Like what? What are you talking about?

JUDY

Max.

MAX

No, what am I supposed to do? Should I quit, is that it? I'm a talentless, unoriginal moron—

JUDY

I didn't say that!

MAX

—and I should fucking go be a secretary!

JUDY

*(rising)*

Thanks.

MAX

Wait.

JUDY

Thank you very much. I'm going to go to sleep now. Here, take this.

*(hands him the tie)*

You'll need it.

*(She walks toward her door, then turns the other direction, heading towards the front door.)*

MAX

Where are you going?

JUDY

*(grabbing her coat)*

Out for a drink. I was thinking to myself, "I'm not going to let him drive me out of here." But, really, I don't want to let you make me stay.

Oh. MAX

(*pause*)  
Judy. . .

JUDY  
Max, don't. You're not invited.

MAX  
Invited? I'm not—

JUDY  
I don't want you near me right now—

MAX  
Judy—

JUDY  
Max! You can push this right now, or you can leave me alone. I'm telling you, if I were you, I'd leave me alone.

*(JUDY leaves. MAX looks at the door for a few moments, then grabs the phone. He hits a number on the speed dial. He waits a moment...)*

MAX  
Mom, hi, it's me, Max... Mom, this just isn't working out... no, I don't hate her... no, Mom, no, I don't hate my sister, but she's just... I just don't think... yes... I understand that, I understand the terms of my release... yes... She called it a nut-house again! I was not in a nut-house!

*(MAX sinks lower in the couch, obviously taking a tongue lashing.)*

Okay... okay... okay, I understand. Bye... Mom?

*(She's gone. He hangs up and stares ahead. Slowly, he starts laughing. It builds in intensity, in desperation, in loneliness. He stops suddenly and sighs.)*

Well, I think I'm funny.

*(He sits motionless as the lights fade out. The end.)*