

# CLOTHES-MINDED

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A one-act dramedy by  
Andy AA Rassler

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

ATHLETIC MOM, strong, active, brave; she has a history with errant laundry that makes her protective.

ATHLETIC CHILD 1, brash, active, happy, a little sharper than the rest.

ATHLETIC CHILD 2, vacant but cheerful.

ANKLE DAD, buttoned tight; suburbanite. The "man" of the load.

ANKLE MOM, yuppy, "basic" middle-aged woman.

ANKLE CHILD, pre-teen; privileged, but not entirely spoiled.

PILLOWCASE 1, tired, old but still fighting the good fight.

PILLOWCASE 2, cantankerous, argumentative.

COLORED SOCK, just wants to live his/her life with peace, harmony, and happiness. Doesn't understand the prejudices of the people around him/her.

## SETTING

The inside of a washing machine.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

The washing machine can be indicated with merely an agitator-looking contraption in the center of the stage or, if that's not possible, a blank stage will do. It helps create the world if there is a sound effect of a washing machine in the background at least in the beginning of the play; after a bit it can fade out so it doesn't compete with the dialogue.

Nearly all of these characters are non-gender specific. For example, Athletic Mom can be Athletic Dad if you need. Also, if you are needing or wanting to expand the cast, you may

have three or four Athletic Children, more than one Ankle Child, or more Pillowcases. Keep the integrity of the idea and all is good.

For ease of reading, certain gender pronouns were used in the script. If other genders are cast, feel free to change the pronoun genders accordingly.

All laundry, with the exception of Colored Sock, must be costumed in white! It is a white load. Colored Sock was red in the original production, which visually worked out extremely well, but there is flexibility here, too. What worked best for the premiere production was to have the "bleed" color as a t-shirt and leggings or shorts underneath the white and red clothes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*Clothes-Minded* was first produced under the title *Don't Bleed On Me* at Northwest Cabarrus High School in Concord, NC on November 18, 2016. It was directed by Andy AA Rassler. The stage manager was Michaela Wehner. Costume and sound by Taylor Rinaldo. Lighting by Alexandra Thurber. The set crew was Samuel Cunningham. The agitator crew was Brian Rassler and Jon Kadela. Script editing by Matt Webster, Jean Kadela, and Brian Rassler. The cast was as follows:

Jasmine Herbert.....ATHLETIC MOM  
Lauren Rowland.....ATHLETIC CHILD 1  
Bailey Siner.....ATHLETIC CHILD 2  
Blake Sackeli.....ANKLE DAD  
Mya D'Amico.....ANKLE MOM  
Haley Shinn.....ANKLE CHILD  
Chaeli Kruckenberg.....PILLOWCASE 1  
Tyler Shuntich.....PILLOWCASE 2  
Ashley New.....COLORED SOCK

## DEDICATION

Dedicated to my family, both biological and of the heart.

ISSUED TO BRYAN HIGH SCHOOL

*(We see an agitator on stage [or a blank stage]. After a few beats, ALL [except COLORED SOCK] tumble – literally – onto the stage. We hear the sound of a washing machine filling with water and they all start standing as though floating. The fill sound changes to agitation and they start moving around. They should be in their family groups as soon as possible and move with them, at least initially. ANKLE MOM, DAD and CHILD; ATHLETIC MOM and ATHLETIC CHILD 1 and 2; PILLOWCASES. In the premiere production, the group reversed direction every so often, as agitators will do.)*

**ANKLE CHILD:** Yay! It's wash day again!

*(Ankle Child splashes around.)*

**ANKLE MOM:** Enough splashing! You're giving Mommy a headache.

**ANKLE CHILD:** Aw, Mom...

**ANKLE DAD:** You heard your mother!

**ANKLE CHILD:** I only get to play like this once a week, Mom.

**ANKLE MOM:** Everyone will think I never discipline you.

**ANKLE CHILD:** So?

**ANKLE MOM:** Shhh!!

*(Escorts Ankle Child to one side.)*

You want the rest of the laundry to think I'm raising a wild, untamed child?

**ANKLE CHILD:** Ah, fuzz buckets –

**ANKLE MOM:** *(To Ankle Dad:)* Honey!

**ANKLE DAD:** Do not disrespect your mother!

**ANKLE CHILD:** Aw, come on, Dad.

**ANKLE DAD:** She's waiting. We're waiting. Apologize.

**ANKLE CHILD:** *(With an appropriate pre-teen eye roll:)* Sorry, Mom. Sorry, Dad.

**ANKLE DAD:** Did you just roll your eyes?

**ANKLE CHILD:** I – maybe??

**ANKLE MOM:** We didn't raise you like that!

**ANKLE DAD:** We certainly did not!

**ANKLE CHILD:** You guys get frayed about every little thing. Can you just let me do me? Please?

*(Ankle Child swims away. Ankle Mom tries to follow.)*

**ANKLE MOM:** Honey –

**ANKLE DAD:** *(Intercepting:)* Now, dear. Let's just let that one go. Go with the flow. Get it? Go with the flowww??

**ANKLE CHILD:** *(From her distance:)* Oh, no...a dad joke!

**ANKLE MOM:** I get it.

**ANKLE DAD:** Terrible teens, you know. We can address it later, maybe in the dryer when we're all feeling a little more...refreshed.

**ANKLE MOM:** You're right. *(Deep breath.)* It does feel good to get out of that smelly hamper.

**ANKLE DAD:** Ah, yes. The "Tide" has come in! Do you get it? The "Tide"? 'Cuz the deterg –

**ANKLE MOM:** Oh, good. Another dad joke to brighten our day.

**ANKLE CHILD:** Clean, clean, clean!

**ANKLE DAD:** I got a million of 'em.

**ANKLE MOM:** I know you do. Gee, look at the time.



**ANKLE DAD:** *(As Ankle Mom swims away:)* What happened to the leopard who fell into the washing machine? He came out spotless!! Get it!? Get it???

*(Ankle Dad swims after his family as Pillowcase 1 and 2 take the stage.)*

**PILLOWCASE 1:** Move your arthritic keister, you old sloth. We'll never get clean if we can't move faster than this.

**PILLOWCASE 2:** I am moving my arthritic keister exactly as fast as I need to. Stop nagging me.

*(The Athletic family starts to overtake the slow Pillowcases. Their dialogue intersperses.)*

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Go long, kid!

*(Athletic Child 1 runs ahead of Athletic Mom and successfully catches the ball [wadded up sock].)*

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** I caught it, Mom! I caught it!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Betcha I can catch it, too.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** Can not, either. You're too weak.

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Hey!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Too weak? Too weak?? Oh, yeah??

*(Athletic Child 2 throws down Athletic Child 1 and pins him down, getting ready to deliver multiple punches to the face. Athletic Mom grabs her arm to stop her.)*

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Okay, kids.

**PILLOWCASE 1:** Are you comin'?

**PILLOWCASE 2:** I am right here, old lady!

**ATHLETIC MOM:** We're here to get clean. All of us. Together. Get along!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** I can get along, Ma. I can. She's the one who —

*(Athletic Child 2 starts to sputter and flail around as the agitator changes direction.)*

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Oh, here we go...

*(Mom has seen this a zillion times. She starts stretching.)*

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** I'm drowning! I think I'm drowning!

**PILLOWCASE 2:** *(Now ahead:)* I thought you said we should move faster?

**PILLOWCASE 1:** The agitator changing directions does not mean you're in the lead, you moldy old onion.

**PILLOWCASE 2:** Well, I look back and see you, you wrinkled old raisin.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Help! Help! I can't breathe... I. Can't. Breathe!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** You really think you're drowning, don't you?

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** This is it! This is it!! Is that a light? Do I see a light?!?

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** Fluorescent light, yes. On the ceiling. Of the laundry room.

**PILLOWCASE 2:** The agitator kicks up my rheumatism something fierce. I hate laundry day.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Help me!

**PILLOWCASE 1:** Rheumatism, arthritis, gout, constipation... Is there anything you DON'T complain about?

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** A little help here?

**PILLOWCASE 2:** I wouldn't complain at all if I could just STAY on the PILLOW, which I believe is our JOB.

*(As the agitator changes directions again, Athletic Child 2 starts crawling toward Athletic Mom.)*

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Anyone?

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** You're not drowning!

**PILLOWCASE 1:** Now who's ahead again, you decrepit, faded old pillow sham!

**PILLOWCASE 2:** Case! Pillow CASE!

**PILLOWCASE 1:** Po-tay-toe, Po-tah-toe.

**PILLOWCASE 2:** Nobody says Po-tah-toe! NOBODY!!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** I'm drowning! I can't breathe! Mom!!

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Just power through, honey! You're tough, you can do it!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** I. can't. I'm dying! I'm dying! I can't breathe!!!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** *(Pulling Athletic Child 2 off the floor:)* Of course you can't breathe! We don't breathe! Laundry doesn't breathe!

*(Slaps Athletic Child 2's face.)*

Snap out of it!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Wh — what??

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** Every time wash day comes around we go through this, you cotton-brained idiot.

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Name-calling!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** We can live in the air. We can live in the water. You're not drowning.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Oh, thank God. That was a close one.

*(As Athletic Child 2 finishes this line, Colored Sock tumbles in and falls face first in the center of the load. At this point, the rotation [clockwise/counter] stops and the load is soaking. Colored Sock stays face down for a beat or two, as the rest of the white load freezes in place and looks at the new member. Colored Sock slowly sits up and looks around at her surroundings. All are frozen. After a long beat of frozen stillness on stage, Ankle Dad panics and starts screaming. This startles the rest of the load, and they all start screaming and running around as well. Total chaos and panic! After a few beats of this, the younger members of the white load [Athletic Child 1 and 2, Ankle Child] approach with curiosity [others are still panicking] and one gingerly reaches out to touch the strange outer "skin" of this Colored Sock. Only because these kids are strangers, the Colored Sock avoids the touch and moves away. This amuses the children, who chase after her. As this happens, the adults are universally alarmed and gather together – Pillowcase 1 with Pillowcase 2, Ankle Mom and Dad, and Athletic Mom on her own – each with disgust, worry or horror on their faces. At an appropriate time, the action goes to slow-motion and Colored Sock pointedly looks to the Pillowcases, the Ankle Parents, and Athletic Mom while she is playing, seeing these looks on their faces. Colored Sock is still playfully keeping away from the inquisitive kids. After the three pointed looks, the action goes to normal pace.)*

**ANKLE DAD:** What are they doing?

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Are they – playing – ?

**ANKLE DAD:** With a...with...with a...

**ANKLE MOM:** You'd better go get them, honey.

**ANKLE DAD:** Me?

**ATHLETIC MOM:** I'll go get them.

**ANKLE MOM:** But, he's the man of the load.

**ATHLETIC MOM:** And—your point?

**PILLOWCASE 1:** What is going on over there? Does anyone know who that is?

**PILLOWCASE 2:** There's trouble brewing here, I can promise you that.

**ANKLE DAD:** It's okay, everyone. I'll take care of this.

*(Ankle Dad saunters over. He stops abruptly, realizing he has no clue how to handle this.)*

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Look, Ma! We found a new friend.

**ATHLETIC MOM:** A friend!?

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** That would be your ONLY friend, dork.

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Kids...

**ANKLE CHILD:** Hey, Dad— isn't she cool?

**ANKLE DAD:** I—I think—

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Oh, for corn's sake, let me—

**ANKLE DAD:** I said I'll handle this!!

*(Hedges toward the children.)*

Kids...kids, what are you doing?

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** We're running around.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Playing!

**ANKLE CHILD:** You started it!

**ANKLE DAD:** Well, come on over here now, kids. We don't want to bother this poor person. Maybe she doesn't want to play with you.

**ANKLE CHILD:** Aw, Dad. We're having fun! (*To Colored Sock:*) Aren't we?

**COLORED SOCK:** Well, sure.

**ANKLE CHILD:** See?

**ANKLE MOM:** Well, I'm sure she has better things to do than entertain you kids. So...just leave her alone and come play over here. Okay?

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** (*Continuing playing:*) Tag! You're it!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** You're it, you're it, you're it, you're it...

**COLORED SOCK:** I'm it, huh?

**ANKLE CHILD:** Try and catch me!

**PILLOWCASE 2:** Back in our day, those kids would've snapped right to it.

**PILLOWCASE 1:** Or else!

**ATHLETIC MOM:** (*This has gone on long enough:*) Over here! NOW!

*(Athletic Children obey immediately. Ankle Child notices, then slowly slinks back over to her parents.)*

**PILLOWCASE 2:** Well, my Aunt Gertrude's corset cover —

**PILLOWCASE 1:** Yup, that's how it was done alright. (*To Athletic Mom:*) Bravo, darlin'.

**ANKLE MOM:** Just calm down, honey.

**ANKLE CHILD:** Calm down? I am calm.

*(The rotation resumes here. The white load does its best to stay clear of Colored Sock. The movement can be silent for a few beats as it dawns on Colored Sock what they're doing.)*

**COLORED SOCK:** (*Showing amusement:*) What are you doing?

**ANKLE MOM:** What are we doing? What in the world do you mean?

**ANKLE DAD:** We're not doing anything. You know, just swishing around, minding our own business. Just like you.

**COLORED SOCK:** Just like me, huh?

**ANKLE MOM:** Yes. Just like you.

**COLORED SOCK:** *(Makes a deliberate move towards the Ankle family, who moves decidedly away:)* Boo!

*(Makes a move toward the Pillowcases, same reaction.)*

Boo!

*(Then a move toward the Athletic family.)*

Boo! Well, look at that. I must be pretty scary, huh?

**ATHLETIC MOM:** We're not afraid of you. We're just keeping our distance.

**PILLOWCASE 1:** We'll just keep our distance over here until we know it's safe.

**PILLOWCASE 2:** If it's ever safe.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Stranger danger, right Mom? Is that it? Stranger danger?

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** Your face is stranger danger.

**ATHLETIC MOM:** *(Quick to agree:)* That's right, honey! Stranger danger.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** I knew it! I was right!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** Mark today on your calendar, dummy.

**COLORED SOCK:** Stranger danger. Right. I see. I am pretty scary.

**ANKLE DAD:** Look, no offense or anything, but this is just common sense. Think about it. We can't get too close to your —

**ANKLE MOM:** It's not you. I mean not just you. I mean, everybody knows that we can't mix with—that we can't get close to—it says right on our label: Wash with like colors! Look! It probably says it on yours, too.

**PILLOWCASE 1:** We didn't make the rules, we just follow them.

**COLORED SOCK:** So you just follow the label? You've never been washed with any other colors?

**PILLOWCASE 2:** Of course not! We're white!

**COLORED SOCK:** You sure are.

**ANKLE DAD:** So, let's all do what we're supposed to do, and you just keep your distance, okay?

**ANKLE MOM:** You stay over there. And we'll stay over here.

**PILLOWCASE 2:** Amen!

**ANKLE CHILD:** Guys, maybe we should —

**ATHLETIC MOM:** This is a white load and you're just not supposed to be here.

**COLORED SOCK:** I'm not supposed to be here? Do you think I want to be here?! I didn't ask to be here, okay? I was just lying on the floor, minding my own business. Next thing I know, I'm tumbling around in here with you.

**ANKLE DAD:** Yeah, well, you being here is obviously a mistake and now you have to stay away from us.

**ANKLE MOM:** Please.

**COLORED SOCK:** I don't have to stay away. This place belongs to me, too. It's not just yours.



**PILLOWCASE 2:** We were here first.

**PILLOWCASE 1:** Yeah, we were here first.

**COLORED SOCK:** You were here first? First before who? There have been a multitude of multi-colored, variegated, mixed loads in here before you. Even – dare I say it – different *fabrics*.

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Well, we got here before you did, and we were having a great swim around before you came.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** I thought I was drowning, but I wasn't, I guess.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** Shut up, you twit.

**COLORED SOCK:** I'm not bothering you! You want to swim? Go ahead and swim! Go enjoy your stupid white bubbles and swim.

**ANKLE CHILD:** Can we, Mom? Can we swim?

**ANKLE MOM:** I don't –

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1 & 2:** Mom?

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Absolutely not.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Aw, Mom!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** Why not??

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Our labels are clear. The rules are clear. You have no idea how dangerous this is. God knows what could happen if you all swim together.

**ANKLE CHILD:** Mom, Dad, you'll let me go, right?

**PILLOWCASE 2:** We can't all swim together! Not ever! It's on our labels, for God's sake!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** We don't have to all swim together. We'll swim over here!!

*(The Children all escape and go swimming around, go around the agitator, etc...and generally have fun – just don't pull focus. They are, with respect for their parents, swimming on the other side, away from Colored Sock. Colored Sock is between the Children and the Adults, which is what keeps the Adults from getting the Children right away.)*

**ATHLETIC MOM & ANKLE MOM:** Kids, no!

**ANKLE DAD:** Come back here!

**PILLOWCASE 2:** This can't happen!

**PILLOWCASE 1:** Somebody do something!

**COLORED SOCK:** That's right! Go ahead, swim! Get clean and white again!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** I even smell better!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** Better than what?

**ANKLE CHILD:** I love laundry day!

*(As the Children swim around, Colored Sock turns and looks at the Adults.)*

**COLORED SOCK:** Aren't you going to swim?

**ANKLE DAD:** This isn't going to work.

**COLORED SOCK:** What? That we just leave each other alone?

**ANKLE DAD:** We can try to keep our distance as much as we want –

**ANKLE MOM:** But it doesn't make any difference.

**COLORED SOCK:** What do you mean?

**ANKLE DAD:** We're all in the same water.

**COLORED SOCK:** And?

**ANKLE DAD:** And, if we're all in the same water, then it doesn't matter how far away you are —

**COLORED SOCK:** I'm still going to color the load? Is that what you're trying to say?

**ANKLE MOM:** It's nothing personal.

**COLORED SOCK:** Oh, it's not?

**ATHLETIC MOM:** We don't mean anything.

**COLORED SOCK:** Well, did you "well-meaning" people stop to think that no matter how far away you stay in the water, you're going to fade me? Ever think of that?

*(The Children have expanded their playing and get awfully close to Colored Sock.)*

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** I can't wait for the rinse cycle. I love the rinse cycle.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** I'll give you a rinse cycle!!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Woo-hoo! Oh, Lord, I don't ever want to leave here!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** We can arrange that, you know.

**ANKLE CHILD:** This is awesome!!!

**ATHLETIC MOM:** *(A heroic dive between Athletic Children and Colored Sock, causing a ripple of "water":)* Not too close!! You want her to — to — corrupt you??

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** Corrupt us?

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** What does that mean?

**ANKLE CHILD:** Criminals are corrupt. Is she a criminal?

**COLORED SOCK:** Is that what you're saying, "Mom"? Am I a criminal?

**ANKLE MOM:** Well —

**COLORED SOCK:** You're serious, aren't you?

**ANKLE DAD:** We're white. You're not.

**ANKLE MOM:** The water mixes us together —

**ATHLETIC MOM:** —and we're tainted. We're soiled. We're not so white anymore.

**PILLOWCASE 1 & 2:** Nobody wants that.

**COLORED SOCK:** Oh, no! Nobody wants that! What's going to happen to our world if the lily-whites don't stay that lily-white? How will the humans organize their sock drawers?? How will they know one sock from another? How will they label socks and know which outfits to wear with them? How will they know how to pair them together or where they belong? Tragedy in here! Tragedy up in here! Tragedy in the washing machine!!! Help!! Help!!

**PILLOWCASE 2:** Hey, make fun of us all you want, but if we're not white anymore —

**ANKLE MOM:** We're not bad people, you know.

**COLORED SOCK:** Do I know that?

**PILLOWCASE 2:** We just like things the way they are, you know? I'll bet you do, too. Like things just the way they are. Am I right?

**COLORED SOCK:** You prejudiced, jacked-up son-of-a — (*Restrains herself.*) All of you! I'm not so bad, you know. Why do you hate me? You don't even know me!

**ANKLE MOM:** I don't hate you! One of my very best friends is a colored sock.

**COLORED SOCK:** Oh, is that right? Where is this so-called best friend?

**ANKLE MOM:** Well, she doesn't belong in h—. She knows better than to — well, I —

**COLORED SOCK:** *(Perhaps a slow clap here:)* Great friendship. I'm very impressed.

**ATHLETIC MOM:** This isn't about you! We're fighting for us! You get that?

**COLORED SOCK:** No, I'm sorry! I don't get that!

**PILLOWCASE 1:** This is the way it's always been.

**PILLOWCASE 2:** We're fighting to keep things normal.

**COLORED SOCK:** What's normal?

**PILLOWCASE 1:** This is who we are.

**ANKLE DAD:** We're fighting to stay the way we are. That's not evil, that's just science. You mix with us, we change.

**COLORED SOCK:** And?

**PILLOWCASE 2:** And that's not how it's supposed to be.

**COLORED SOCK:** Says who?

**ANKLE MOM:** Says our labels! Can't you read?! Are you stupid?? Wash. With. Like. Colors!!

**COLORED SOCK:** So what happens if you don't follow the label? What happens if you try something new? What happens?!

**ATHLETIC MOM:** She makes us into rags.

**PILLOWCASE 1:** I've seen it happen. Many times.

**PILLOWCASE 2:** Me too.

*(A beat.)*

**COLORED SOCK:** *(Starts laughing:)* She makes you into rags? That's it? That's what you're so worried about?

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** What's so funny? Why is she laughing, Mom?

**ATHLETIC MOM:** It's not funny.

**COLORED SOCK:** *(Still chuckling:)* A trip to the ol' rag pile. What a horrible tragedy.

**PILLOWCASE 1 & 2:** It is a tragedy!

**COLORED SOCK:** I'm so scared to go on a giant, soft heap of fabric!

**ANKLE DAD:** Are you mocking us?

**ANKLE MOM:** Honey —

*(The Children have felt the humor of this and start to gravitate toward the happiness of Colored Sock. They aren't sure what they're laughing about, but they like it.)*

**COLORED SOCK:** Watch out, kids! You might end up in a giant dog pile of soft, fluffy RAGS!

*(The Children think this is outrageously funny and they mock landing in a pile together, and roll around some. The Adults [of course] are flabbergasted by this display. Athletic Mom finally explodes.)*

**ATHLETIC MOM:** This isn't a joke! You have no right to come in here and make this all into a joke. The rag pile is real, you clueless idiot. Look around. Just take a hard look around. Do you see my match anywhere? Huh? Answer me! Where is he?!? He went to the RAGPILE.

**ANKLE MOM:** Oh, my Lord.

**PILLOWCASE 1:** It can't be.

**ATHLETIC MOM:** I've seen and felt the hell of losing someone to that horrifying, atrocious pile and I won't have

you stand here and make fun of it. Nothing good comes out of colors mixing, I can testify to that!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Dad...? Is that what happened to...?

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** Shhh...

*(During Athletic Mom's rant, Ankle Child has trouble getting back up from the pile. Ankle Child's somewhat comical efforts to get back up are amusing to Colored Sock – she is grinning at Ankle Child, which Athletic Mom misinterprets as about her.)*

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Are you smiling? Are you mocking my pain??

**COLORED SOCK:** No, I—

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Wipe that stupid grin off your face, you ignorant scrap of fabric!

**COLORED SOCK:** I'm ignorant??

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Ignorant, stupid, clueless, brainless, mindless, dim-witted waste of cotton! You don't even know what you're doing here! I lost my mate, my one and only mate. I lost him forever and no one can change that. But I'll be damned if I'm going to stand by and watch it happen to my children, too. [But I will NOT stand by...] I'd rather die. I *will* die before I see that happen!

*(Athletic Mom launches herself at Colored Sock, who is caught off-guard. Adults try to pull Athletic Mom off Colored Sock, and it ends up in a scuffle with all of them on the floor, rolling over and over. The Children see this as great fun, and they jump in to mix things up. Pillowcases are caught in a series of being knocked down and trying to get up. Dialogue below (or something like it) happens during the scuffle. During this scuffle, all will pull off their shirts to reveal a color underneath that is all the same – a shade somewhere between Colored Sock's color and white. [This seems the best way to handle this, but if*

*the director sees some other clever way of handling this color change, the answer is: yes!]* Please do choreograph this fight to create definite moments, not just a pile of fighting socks.)

Get off her! Get off!!

**COLORED SOCK:** You get off! —

**ATHLETIC MOM:** I'll kill you!

**ANKLE DAD:** Killing her isn't the answer!

**PILLOWCASE 2:** My hip! I may have broken my hip!

**ANKLE MOM:** Get away from us! Oh, no! No!!

**COLORED SOCK:** I'm trying to get away —

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Fight! Fight! We're having a fight!

**PILLOWCASE 1:** I am entirely too old for this!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** Hot dog! I can finally pulverize you —

**ANKLE CHILD:** My leg! I think I hurt my leg!

**PILLOWCASE 2:** You're too young to hurt yourself fighting.

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Let me at her! I can take care of this!

**ANKLE DAD:** You need to stop this —

**ANKLE MOM:** She's attacking us! Help! Help!!

**COLORED SOCK:** I'm not attacking you, I'm tangled up in —

**ANKLE MOM:** Somebody save us! Help!!! Do something!

**ANKLE CHILD:** We are doing something!

**PILLOWCASE 1:** I've fallen and I can't get up!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** This is awesome!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** Hold still so I can pound you!

**ATHLETIC MOM:** We're — it's —



*(The cacophony of sound builds, so people can repeat dialogue, ad lib, etc. until all characters have their white [or colored] clothes off and they are all one color. When they see that everyone has turned pink, they fall away from the center [agitator] to the stage floor as Colored Sock says:)*

**COLORED SOCK:** Get away from me!!!!

*(All separate and fall flat. There is a good 10 seconds of stillness on stage. All begin to sit up and inspect themselves, now a new and strange color. All are inspecting themselves and others to see this new reality.)*

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Aw, snap dragons. Look at me!

**PILLOWCASE 1:** Oh, my God. It happened.

**ATHLETIC MOM:** It actually happened. You bled all over us.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** *(Fascinated/happy:)* I'm totally not white anymore.

**ANKLE MOM:** It's over.

**PILLOWCASE 2:** I knew it. I knew it.

**ANKLE DAD:** We're rags now.

**COLORED SOCK:** What about me, huh? My match didn't get in this load. I'm a different color now and we don't even go together anymore. I don't belong there anymore. I don't belong here. I don't belong anywhere!

**ANKLE DAD:** *(Anger rising:)* Why did you come in here?

**ANKLE CHILD:** Dad...Dad —

**ANKLE DAD:** I told you to stay away from us. I told you to stay away!!

**ANKLE MOM:** Honey? Please...honey?! Violence isn't the answer.

**ANKLE DAD:** Isn't it? She has polluted this whole load. Ruined our lives. It's the RAG PILE, honey!! The ACTUAL rag pile!!

**ANKLE CHILD:** Just go with the flow, Dad. Remember?

**ANKLE DAD:** What? Who said that? Did I say that? I couldn't have said that.

**ANKLE CHILD:** Dad, remember? Go with the flowwwwwwwwww...

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Don't be ridiculous. This is no time for jokes! We are not white anymore!

**ALL CHILDREN:** We know that!

**ATHLETIC MOM:** You aren't either! This is what I was protecting you from. It's over. Do you get that?

**ANKLE DAD:** That stupid sock plopped in here and bled all over us and now it's all over.

**ANKLE MOM:** (*Cries:*) Wash with like colors. It's all over.

**ANKLE CHILD:** Mom. It's not over.

**ANKLE MOM:** She hates when her whites aren't white! Wash with like colors!!

**ATHLETIC MOM:** It'll never be the same. Do you understand?

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** Of course we understand.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Duh!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** We won't get back in her sock drawer again. And you won't get on her pillows again. So what?

**ANKLE DAD:** So what?

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Yeah, so what?

**ATHLETIC MOM:** So—everything! We can't get back in her sock drawer! They can't get on her pillows! It's the rag pile.

**PILLOWCASE 2:** The rag pile! The unknown!

**PILLOWCASE 1:** Our whole lives will be turned upside down!

**ANKLE CHILD:** So, okay—right. We go to the rag pile. Our whole lives turned upside down. What's so bad about that?

**PILLOWCASE 2:** Are you insane?

**ANKLE DAD:** Maybe we can hide! Yes! Hide!

**ATHLETIC MOM:** (*Sensing trouble:*) Kids! Over here!! Now!!

*(The Children obey, and Athletic Mom protects them.)*

*(Pillowcases and Colored Sock drift a little away to avoid this tension.)*

**ANKLE DAD:** It's the only way! If we scrunch down really, really small—

*(He does this as he talks:)*

—in the waaaay corner of the washing machine, maybe she won't see us when she throws us all in the dryer. We can just hide!

**ANKLE CHILD:** We can't scrunch way down in the corners of the washing machine. There aren't any corners in here, Dad! This is a circle.

**ANKLE MOM:** Don't you think she'd find us? Eventually?

**ANKLE DAD:** (*To Ankle Child as he leads Ankle Mom away to talk:*) We'll be right back, honey.

**PILLOWCASE 2:** I thought we could spend our last days just enjoying ourselves, you know?

**PILLOWCASE 1:** In pure white peace and quiet.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** *(To Pillowcases:)* And you two!

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Get back here!

*(Athletic Child 1 and 2 get in a few parting thoughts as Athletic Mom drags them both away.)*

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** You just lie there, day after day, night after night. You just lie there. What's so great about that?

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Yeah, what's so great about that?

**PILLOWCASE 1:** It's — pretty — great...

**ATHLETIC MOM:** That's enough.

**ANKLE DAD:** *(To Ankle Mom:)* I'm scared, honey.

*(Looks at new color.)*

I don't even know who I am anymore and I don't know what's going to happen and...I'm scared.

*(A hug from Ankle Mom as Ankle Child comes over. Note: after the hug, Ankle Dad tries to convince his family to hide in pantomime. Focus on stage shifts to Pillowcases and Colored Sock.)*

**COLORED SOCK:** So...

*(Pillowcase 1 and 2 just look at her.)*

How's it...goin'?

**PILLOWCASE 2:** We don't have to talk, you know.

**COLORED SOCK:** Oh. I mean. Okay.

**PILLOWCASE 1:** Do you have to be a jerk to everyone you meet?

**ATHLETIC MOM:** *(Pulls her kids into a huddle:)* Maybe we can escape! We can gather our forces, let her throw us into the dryer...then, when she's not looking — we escape! I've heard a

lot of successful escape stories. I mean, it's usually only one escaping from the dryer, but—

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** Ooooh, like go on the lam? Oh, yeah! Let's bust outta here!

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Yeah, bust out!!

**ATHLETIC MOM:** I mean, not this second; I have to think of a plan.

*(By this time, the kids are already searching the walls of the washing machine for an escape route. Athletic Child 2 starts singing something in the vein of the Mission Impossible theme while they search.)*

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Kids! Kids, not yet—I don't have a plan yet!!

**COLORED SOCK:** Hey, what are you guys doing?

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** We're lookin' for a way out of here!

**ANKLE DAD:** What?

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Going on the lam.

*(Starts singing the theme again.)*

**PILLOWCASE 2:** You're wasting your time, you idiots!

**ANKLE CHILD:** We're leaving?

**ATHLETIC MOM:** No, *we're* leaving. Not you. Us.

**PILLOWCASE 1:** You can't just leave us here.

*(Indicating Ankle family:)*

Look at them. They need help. We need help.

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Survival of the fittest, gang. Sorry.

**ANKLE DAD:** We don't deserve to be left here! This isn't our fault!

**COLORED SOCK:** Oh, here we go again! How can you blame me for this?!

**ANKLE MOM:** We never said we were blaming you.

**PILLOWCASE 2:** You're the different one. And you didn't leave.

**COLORED SOCK:** How was I supposed to—?? I didn't leave?!?! I couldn't leave!!

**PILLOWCASE 1:** Po-tay-toh, Pot-ah-to.

**COLORED SOCK & PILLOWCASE 2:** Nobody says po-tah-to!

*(They both look at each other, stunned and wary—they have something in common! A little slower and tapering off:)*

Nobody.

**ATHLETIC MOM:** I don't care how this happened. I don't care whose fault it is or how we could have done any of this differently. We're not white anymore and it's finished. What's done is done.

**ANKLE MOM:** I'm still white! Do you hear me?! I'm still white!

**COLORED SOCK:** Hey, if that's what you want to call yourself.

**ANKLE MOM:** *(Trying to get her colored clothes off:)* If I could just get this off...OFF...OFF!!!

**ANKLE CHILD:** Mom!

**COLORED SOCK:** You can't just take it off, you know. Believe me.

**ATHLETIC MOM:** She stained you!! Discolored us!! It's over!! It's in the past. We can just swirl around here in helpless ignorance, point fingers at whoever's to blame, play the

victim, roll around crying and beating ourselves up, or we can DO something. I'm doing something. Come on, girls.

*(Athletic Mom grabs both Children and begins to drag them away.)*

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** But – Mom.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Ouch! Mom!

**ANKLE DAD:** Stop! PLEASE, I'm begging you. Please help us!

**ANKLE MOM:** Please. We need help.

**COLORED SOCK & PILLOWCASE 2:** I'm scared.

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Look. You're all being fooled by the illusion of our outward appearance. We all look the same now, but we're not really the same. Not really. So it's every man for himself.

**ANKLE CHILD:** But we are the same.

**ATHLETIC MOM:** We're not! We might all be this weird, kind of gross shade of pink, but inside we are vastly different. Really, look at you. You're a weak little girl.

*(Points at Ankle Dad:)*

There's a cowardly grown man.

*(Points at Ankle Mom:)*

A fragile, pathetic woman.

*(At Colored Sock:)*

A defensive, belligerent creature.

*(At Pillowcases:)*

And two useless, old, feeble shams. Why should I risk my children's lives for all of you?!?

**PILLOWCASE 1:** Why? Why should you risk your children's lives for us?? Wake up, stupid! Wake up!! You risk your lives for ours because we're all made of the same material, that's why. You may be "brave" and they may be "weak" and we are definitely "old," but our very molecules, the very stuff we're made of, they are all the same. Don't you see? We can be the same or different on the surface. We can—and should—think differently, feel differently, live differently, love differently. Because that's what makes life...

*(Searches for the right word.)*

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Not boring!

**PILLOWCASE 1:** That's it! Not boring. Bless your heart, hon. We should have listened to the kids a long, long time ago. Yes, even in our difference, we are all the same. In the most fundamental parts of our very fibers, we are simply and universally the same. For whatever cosmic reason, we're plopped down on this tiny little planet for a few spins around. And I don't know why we're here, or what will happen if we go to the rag pile, or if we escape, or if we hide in a corner...

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** I mean, nobody really knows, right?!

**PILLOWCASE 1:** But if we do it together, join hands, hold on tight and do it all together, it just makes more sense somehow. All of it makes more sense somehow. Take it from someone who knows—life is just too damn [darn] short! Don't you think?!?

*(Long pause – they all look around at how others are responding to this.)*

**ANKLE DAD:** I do think.

**PILLOWCASE 2:** Where in Neptune's ocean did that come from?



**PILLOWCASE 1:** Keep your eyes open, honey. I'm just full of surprises.

*(Pillowcase 1 walks over and gives Colored Sock a big hug. Ankle Mom sees all this and is moved by it. She approaches Colored Sock.)*

**ANKLE MOM:** I'm...sorry.

**COLORED SOCK:** Well, that's a start.

*(Ankle Mom and Colored Sock shake hands. Ankle Dad approaches.)*

**ANKLE DAD:** Me, too. Sorry.

**ANKLE CHILD:** Atta boy, Dad!

**COLORED SOCK:** Okay.

*(They shake hands, too. Athletic Children both go to their mom and give her a look. Athletic Mom starts crossing to Colored Sock, then stops and looks at her children.)*

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** Go on.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Do it!

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Oh, all right. All right!

*(Athletic Mom gives Colored Sock a handshake. All then turn to look at Pillowcase 2, who looks back at them all.)*

**PILLOWCASE 2:** What?

*(Whoever is closest to Pillowcase 2 pushes him toward Colored Sock. He shakes hands, but it's not that friendly.)*

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Group hug!!

*(They all hug, and there is a sudden jerk as they begin their final spin. Feel free to get your laundry going fairly fast.)*

**COLORED SOCK:** I actually kind of like this color, you know?

**ANKLE MOM:** I don't know that I've seen this exact shade before.

**ANKLE DAD:** It's new.

**PILLOWCASE 2:** I've seen it before. Looks like infected, milky pink eye.

*(Athletic Child 2 starts giggling.)*

**PILLOWCASE 1:** Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, you irritable sack of insults.

**PILLOWCASE 2:** I call 'em like I see 'em.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** What's so funny, lint head? What's so funny?!?

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** She is gonna PEE HER PANTS when she looks in here! Look at us!

*(Laughs.)*

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** Ha, ha, ha I can see her now—  
*(Imitating the woman:)* Oh, my God—they're pink!!

*(Various characters repeat the word "pink" as the following lines are delivered:)*

**ANKLE CHILD:** *(Joins the mocking:)* My whole load is pink!!  
Ahhhh!!

**ANKLE DAD:** *(Imitating also:)* What happened to my bright white laundry!!

**ATHLETIC MOM:** *(Imitating:)* It's ruined! It's absolutely ruined!!

**PILLOWCASE 2:** *(Imitating:)* I can never sleep on that again!

**PILLOWCASE 1:** *(Imitating:)* There's not enough bleach in the whole world to fix that pink disaster!

**ANKLE MOM:** (*Imitating:*) Oh, no! My laundry is ruined! My life is ruined!

(*As the laughter dies down:*)

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Pink. Huh. I have to say, it's definitely different.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Like a blob fish. Those are different.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** Blob fish?

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Blob fish.

(*Does a blob fish impression.*)

Different.

**ANKLE DAD:** (*To Colored Sock:*) I guess this isn't so bad.

**ANKLE MOM:** Not so bad.

**PILLOWCASE 2:** Isn't it?

**PILLOWCASE 1:** Shut up.

**ANKLE MOM:** (*To Colored Sock:*) You're not so bad.

**COLORED SOCK:** (*With a grin:*) I told you that before. Hey, white isn't really even a color, did you know that?

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** What?! Mind. Blown.

(*Cycle begins to spin slower.*)

**ANKLE MOM:** Well, the cycle is about over.

**PILLOWCASE 2:** It's about time.

**PILLOWCASE 1:** You in a hurry for this next part?

**ANKLE DAD:** Nothing we can do now but—go with the flow.

**ANKLE CHILD:** Is that the only joke you know, Dad?

**ANKLE DAD:** Knock, knock.

**ANKLE CHILD:** (*With a good-natured eye roll:*) Who's there?

**ANKLE DAD:** Dwayne.

**ANKLE CHILD:** Dwayne who?

**ANKLE DAD:** Dwayne the tub, I'm dwowning!

**ANKLE CHILD:** And the hits just keep on coming...

**COLORED SOCK:** Well, I don't know about you all, but I think the rag pile sounds like fun.

**PILLOWCASE 2:** Oh, right. Fun, fun, fun. Nothing but fun.

**PILLOWCASE 1:** You'd have to look "fun" up in a dictionary to know what it means, you old poop.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** Sounds a lot more fun than that stupid, stuffy drawer.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** I think I'm going to like the rag pile.

**PILLOWCASE 2:** Does the rag pile have air-conditioning? I'm going to need air conditioning.

**PILLOWCASE 1:** What about the winter? Will it have heat?

**PILLOWCASE 2:** You've got enough hot air to keep us comfortable in the winter.

**PILLOWCASE 1:** Ha, ha.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** The drawer wasn't a picnic.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 2:** That's for sure.

**PILLOWCASE 2:** No heat, no air conditioning. Rag pile sounds horrible to me.

**PILLOWCASE 1:** Oh, everything's horrible on your side of the bed.

**ATHLETIC MOM:** We're slowing down.

**ANKLE MOM:** It's almost time.

**ATHLETIC CHILD 1:** Hey, Mom. Maybe we'll see Dad again.

*(Athletic Mom pulls both her kids in for a meaningful hug. There is a buzz for the end of the cycle.)*

**COLORED SOCK:** That's it. The cycle's done.

**ANKLE DAD:** Yup. That's the signal all right.

**PILLOWCASE 2:** I say it's about time.

**ATHLETIC MOM:** That seemed even shorter than usual. Did she have us on the quick cycle?

**ANKLE MOM:** Time flies, you know.

**PILLOWCASE 1:** It certainly does.

**ANKLE MOM:** Well, this was not what I was expecting when I woke up this morning.

**PILLOWCASE 1:** Thank God you plopped in here. We all needed a little shaking up!

**PILLOWCASE 2:** A little?!?

**ATHLETIC MOM:** That's for sure.

**ANKLE DAD:** Here she comes!

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Over here, over here! We'll show her we're all pink! Together!

*(All gather on one side of the stage.)*

**PILLOWCASE 2:** Together?

**PILLOWCASE 1:** Yes, together. You remember that concept of being the opposite of a crabby old hermit?

*(They all gather stage right and face left, looking up [waiting for her]. Colored Sock is a little toward center. Pillowcase 2 sees her.)*

**PILLOWCASE 2:** Well, what are you doing way over there?

**ALL:** Get over here!!

**ATHLETIC MOM:** Ready, guys?

**ALL:** Ready!!

**ALL:** COWABUNGAAAAAAA!!!

*(Holding hands, they all run toward the opposite side of the stage as the lights black out. End of play.)*

### **About the Author**

**Andrea (Andy) Rassler** has been involved in various aspects of theatre all her life. With roots in community theatre, Andy has acted and directed in many venues both in her home state of Minnesota and in North Carolina. She has held the position of theatre instructor and director at Northwest Cabarrus High School for most of her teaching career. Playwriting began for Andy as a natural outgrowth of acting and directing and she has seen local, regional, and international productions of her work realized. Her hope is to continue exploring all aspects of theatre, as it is her love. Andy lives in Concord, NC and is married with two children.

## About YouthPLAYS

**YouthPLAYS** ([www.youthplays.com](http://www.youthplays.com)) is a publisher of award-winning professional dramatists and talented new discoveries, each with an original theatrical voice, and all dedicated to expanding the vocabulary of theatre for young actors and audiences. On our website you'll find one-act and full-length plays and musicals for teen and pre-teen (and even college) actors, as well as duets and monologues for competition. Many of our authors' works have been widely produced at high schools and middle schools, youth theatres and other TYA companies, both amateur and professional, as well as at elementary schools, camps, churches and other institutions serving young audiences and/or actors worldwide. Most are intended for performance by young people, while some are intended for adult actors performing for young audiences.

YouthPLAYS was co-founded by professional playwrights Jonathan Dorf and Ed Shockley. It began merely as an additional outlet to market their own works, which included a substantial body of award-winning published and unpublished plays and musicals. Those interested in their published plays were directed to the respective publishers' websites, and unpublished plays were made available in electronic form. But when they saw the desperate need for material for young actors and audiences—coupled with their experience that numerous quality plays for young people weren't finding a home—they made the decision to represent the work of other playwrights as well. Dozens and dozens of authors are now members of the YouthPLAYS family, with scripts available both electronically and in traditional acting editions. We continue to grow as we look for exciting and challenging plays and musicals for young actors and audiences.

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## About ProduceaPlay.com

Let's put up a play! Great idea! But producing a play takes time, energy and knowledge. While finding the necessary time and energy is up to you, ProduceaPlay.com is a website designed to assist you with that third element: knowledge.

Created by YouthPLAYS' co-founders, Jonathan Dorf and Ed Shockley, ProduceaPlay.com serves as a resource for producers at all levels as it addresses the many facets of production. As Dorf and Shockley speak from their years of experience (as playwrights, producers, directors and more), they are joined by a group of award-winning theatre professionals and experienced teachers from the world of academic theatre, all making their expertise available for free in the hope of helping this and future generations of producers, whether it's at the school or university level, or in community or professional theatres.

The site is organized into a series of major topics, each of which has its own page that delves into the subject in detail, offering suggestions and links for further information. For example, Publicity covers everything from Publicizing Auditions to How to Use Social Media to Posters to whether it's worth hiring a publicist. Casting details Where to Find the Actors, How to Evaluate a Resume, Callbacks and even Dealing with Problem Actors. You'll find guidance on your Production Timeline, The Theater Space, Picking a Play, Budget, Contracts, Rehearsing the Play, The Program, House Management, Backstage, and many other important subjects.

The site is constantly under construction, so visit often for the latest insights on play producing, and let it help make your play production dreams a reality.



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No sooner do we leave the womb than we're bombarded by gender expectations. Boys are like this. Girls are like that. Whether it's how they dress, the rules of dating, body image, parental pressures or a host of other ways, through scenes and monologues that range from hilarious to heartbreaking, the teens of this flexible ensemble reveal how gender expectations affect them and how they "role."

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by Daniel Guyton

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When the mysterious "Motherboard in the Stone" appears at Kim Arthur's favorite arcade emporium, she and her magical friend Marlene decide to check it out. Soon Kim realizes that only she has the power to remove the Motherboard from the Stone, thus becoming queen of Game-A-Lot. And she must save her "kingdom" from closing—by creating the greatest video game of all time. She knows she can't do it alone: she'll need the help of all her fellow nerds. And so begins the legend of Kim Arthur and the Nerds of the Round Table.