

Secondhand Blues

*by Delaney
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Setting: A secondhand store in a suburb of Chicago.

Characters:

Worker #1: New to job at store, still excited about it.

Worker #2: Worked at secondhand store for years, a lot less excited about it.

Fedora: A type of hat. Think business casual, work trips, and the upper class.

Beret: A French type of hat. Typical French character, dark, bitter, and angry.

Baseball Cap: A very American type of hat. Think golf trips, BBQ, and football games

Y2K Bucket Hat: Trendy and unoriginal. Think VSCO, tik tok trends, and Gen Z language.

Customer: Someone purchasing something from the secondhand store.

(A second-hand store at closing time. There are a few rows of clothes center stage and a rack of belts, bags, and hats on stage left. On stage right is a cash register. The only people in the store are the workers. The two workers put clothes that fell on the floor on hangers and hanging them back on the rack.)

WORKER #1.

Has anyone ever bought a hat here?

WORKER #2.

What?

WORKER #1.

I have worked here for about a week, and I always see people come over to that rack and try on the hats, but they never buy them. Is there something wrong with them?

WORKER #2.

I mean they're second-hand hats, nobody knows where they have been, and like whose head they have touched.

WORKER #1.

But this is a second-hand store, nobody knows who has worn any of these clothes.

WORKER #2.

But hats are different.

WORKER #1.

How?

WORKER #2.

I don't know, lise? Listen man, I have worked here for a year and those hats have never been bought. People love to put them on and pretend that they are going to buy them, but when it comes down to it, they never do. But who cares, they're hats.

WORKER #1.

I guess I was just curious if there was a reason that I didn't know about, that would explain why nobody ever buys them.

WORKER #2.

Well, I wish I could tell you a cool story about why they are still here, but I can't. People just don't like hats that much.

WORKER #1.

Sucks for the hats.

WORKER #2.

I think they are doing alright. But I'm sure they appreciate the concern.

WORKER #1.

I mean, someone has to look out of them.

WORKER #2.

Are you about done?

WORKER #1.

Yeah, I've got everything hung up.

WORKER #2.

Good, let's get out of here.

WORKER #1.

Alright.

(WORKER #2 walks out off stage while WORKER #1 lingers behind for a second or two longer before exiting as well. Once WORKER #1 is offstage there is a short black out before a single light is turned back on and the hats that were on the rack somehow come alive.)

FEDORA.

Another day, and nobody has bought me. I just don't understand, what is there not to like about a fedora. They are stylish and business casual!

BASEBALL CAP.

You're just uptight is all, nobody wants a hat that tells them how to live their life.

FEDORA.

I do not tell people how to live their life!

BASEBALL CAP.

Oh really? What about that one guy who tried you on earlier? He seemed like he wanted to buy you, but you refused to look good on him.

FEDORA.

I can't look good on someone who manages a Subway franchise for a living! I was made for the upper class, for someone who appreciates the finer things in life!

BASEBALL CAP.

And how is a six-inch sub not one of the finer things in life?

FEDORA.

I don't even know why I'm having this conversation with you. You cap would never get it! *(To BERET)* These subpar head gear just never get us do they.

(BERET, smoking a cigarette, takes a moment to look at FEDORA up and down, in a very French and judgy way.)

BERET.

Do not even begin to tell me about your problems. They are nothing compared to mine. I have traveled thousands of miles to come to this country and for what? To be discarded as some American trash in a second-hand store in Chicago!

BASEBALL CAP.

Naperville.

BERET.

Oh, whatever!

Y2K BUCKET HAT.

Guys, we just have to remain positive. Like put some good vibes out into the universe and we will be rewarded.

BERET.

I have been through two world wars! I am getting too old to remain positive.

COWBOY HAT.

I have had enough of all of you negative nancys! If the kid wants to have some hope, then so be it!

FEDORA.

Sorry, Cowboy, I'm with Beret on this one. It's better to let the kid down now, so they don't waste so much time believing that someone is ever going to buy them.

Y2K BUCKET HAT.

Guys, I'm like really trendy right now, so I'm definitely going to be gone soon. Like when I was being made, we were getting shipped out by the thousands, so I'm sure some trendy teen born after 2000 will be in any day to snatch me up, okay.

BERET.

(Taking a long drag of their cigarette.) I was trendy too once, back when your grandmother was a young woman and still had life inside of her.

COWBOY HAT.

Beret, stop that! All you are doing is making the kid feel miserable!

Y2K BUCKET HAT.

Yeah, and it's only been a week since I've gotten here. Give it another day or two and I will be outta here.

COWBOY HAT.

I'm sure it will happen soon.

BASEBALL CAP.

Sure kid, whatever floats your boat. *(Laughs.)*

Y2K BUCKET HAT.

Well, how long have you guys been here?

COWBOY HAT.

You don'—

BERET.

I have been here 15 years! I'm one of a kind Parisian vintage worth hundreds and hundreds of dollars! And now look at me! Forced to endure day after day of greasy, sweaty heads, that wish they could afford me, force me on their big, fat American heads, just to disregard me and put me back on the rack.

BASEBALL CAP.

I've been here since the 90's and I haven't been touched my someone in 5 years.

BERET.

You lucky bastard.

FEDORA.

I've been here for five long years. You think you have a good thing going with someone, they take you on family vacations, business trips, then suddenly they move, and you find yourself in the donate pile because their new wife says that 'Fedoras are so out of style'.

Y2K BUCKET HAT.

Oh, my God, I'm going to be stuck here forever, or at least until I'm old and gross like you guys.

BERET.

Such is the pain of life.

COWBOY HAT.

No, no, kid that's not true.

Y2K BUCKET HAT.

Really? How long have you been here?!

BASEBALL CAP.

Woah, go easy on him.

Y2K BUCKET HAT.

No, I want the truth. *(To COWBOY HAT.)* How long?

COWBOY HAT.

Since the store has been open.

Y2K BUCKET HAT.

And when was that?

COWBOY HAT.

1985.

Y2K BUCKET HAT.

Jesus.

COWBOY HAT.

I was once a young hat, worn on the head of a young boy, with big dreams of owning a cattle ranch of his own one day. But, when times got tough, the boy's family had to sell the farm out in the countryside and move to the suburbs to find work, and the boy left his dream and his need for me back on the farm, and I've been here ever since.

BASEBALL CAP.

Time hasn't always been the best to us hats, but we have to stick together.

COWBOY HAT.

Exactly. People may come and go, but hats are forever. You just have to appreciate the time we have here, and keep the faith that one day, we too will have a head to sit on once again.

Y2K BUCKET HAT.

Wow, that was beautiful, Cowboy. Very American dream, pick yourself up by your bootstraps of you.

COWBOY HAT.

Thank you, Bucket Hat, I really appreciate you still having some hope still in you. It's refreshing when the only other hats I have been around are some cranky, up-tight old ones.

BERET.

What, I am French, I cannot help that I am cranky and uptight. But I must say, it is nice to have something, or someone to believe in again.

FEDORA.

Yeah, I'm sorry that I ever thought I was better than any of you guys. We are all just hats after all, no matter our age, origin, or style.

BASEBALL CAP.

And if we keep the faith, we can have our very own person who will love us and place us upon their head with joy.

Y2K BUCKET HAT.

You guys, that was all so beautiful the way we just opened up like that.

FEDORA.
It truly was.

COWBOY HAT.
Alright everyone, bring it in. Hat hug!

(All the hats come together into one big hat hug. After a second or two in the hug there is a sound of keys jangling in the distance.)

BERET.
Hurry! We must get back on the rack! It sounds like they are about to open!

(The hats all gather back onto the rack in the same position as they were in before they became alive. WORKER #2 walks in and 'turns' on all the lights in the store. And then turns flips the sign at the front of the stage to open. There are a few moments of stillness before a group of customers enter the store. The group of customers are young, probably around college age, with fun, interesting clothes on. They walk around the store for a little while, occasionally taking a clothing piece off the rack to look at it up close. Then they make their way over to the rack with the hats on it. Each of them takes a different hat and try it out and maybe offer it to one of their friends to try on as well. One person in the group really digs the way Y2K BUCKET HAT looks on them, and with the encouragement of the others in the group, decides to buy it. The customer takes it up to WORKER #2 at the register to pay for it.)

WORKER #2.
Is this it for you today?

CUSTOMER.
Yep, just the hat.

(Lights fade. End of play.)