

# AFTERLIFE

## By Leon Kaye

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**At rise: ALEX, a teenage surfer with long blond hair, walks onto the stage under bright lights. HE's wearing a long Hawaiian shirt, shorts and old sneakers.**

Hi. My name is Alex. I've never been in a play before. Actually, I never saw a play before. But I think I'd be really excellent as Mercutio. Why? I like sword-fighting. I think it's, like, really boss. And I don't mind dying in a play. As long as everyone knows it's, like, pretend dying. And I promise I'll work real hard. So I hope you all would just look past that I'm not, like, this thespian-Shakespeare-dude and maybe give a guy a chance. **(HE pauses as HE stares at those in charge awaiting an answer)** A reading? Like, is that totally necessary? I mean, like, I'm right here and you can see that I'm all honest and everything...

**(pause)**

Yeah, that's a good point, but sometimes the wording in those old plays slows me down. I mean, like, if you wanted me to read from *The Matrix* or something like that, you would be, like, mondo pleasantly surprised.

**(pause)**

Yeah, but I tried reading all that "forsooth" and "alas" stuff and, nobody uses those words anymore, right? It's, like, we, the actors, are talking and –

**(HE stops as if someone has interrupted him)**

Right. I'm not an actor yet. Okay. Touché. I'm just saying that if we're doing this for a high school audience, shouldn't we be updating the words? Instead of "to be or not to be" - shouldn't it be more like... like... should I off myself? Or should I not off myself?

**(pause)**

Okay, it's the wrong play. But you get what I'm saying?

**(HE frowns)**

Okay, so you wanna leave the words how they are... fine. That's your call. I'm just saying I would be good as Mercutio. I feel like we can really relate. Like, if I were alive back then, we'd be best buds.

**(pause)**

He's not a real person? Whoa, dude, that is, like, a tad disappointing. I thought he was real, man. I mean, he comes across as real. He's a lot like me. 'cause I had, like, a near death experience once just like he did so I understand how he felt.

**(pause)**

Yeah, right, he actually died.

**(HE listens to a question from those in charge)**

How did I... well, it's kinda hard to talk about. Sometimes, I still get, like, nightmares. And it's not 'cause I'm on drugs. I mean, I am on drugs, yeah. But they're legal. I've got prescriptions and everything. Actually, quite a few prescriptions.

**(pause as HE listens to a question)**

Yeah, well... About three years ago, I was surfing off Big Sur when there was this big gnarly wave. I let it go, but this other guy was riding it, and his board clipped me in the head.

**(HE points to one of those in charge)**

Yeah, right. It did a number on my short term memory. You must have been talking to my Spanish teacher. Anyway, I blacked out, and I don't remember too much of what happened to my physical body. But I was, like, totally conscious, only in another place, and that place wasn't the beach. Some people say they float and watch what's going on with their bodies. But that didn't happen. My buds pulled my body back to shore, but I don't remember anything about that. I woke up in this really dark place. It was black like those nights you wake up in your car and there's no moon and you don't know where you are for a few minutes.

**(HE points to someone in the audience)**

That dude knows what I'm talking about. So, I look up, and there's this chess board and a guy with no face and a black hood. And he wants me to play; only I don't know how to play chess. So I apologize and, I, like, walk away from him. And I could tell he was P-O'd 'cause he was waving this sickle around up over his head like you would a flag. And he was yelling in Norwegian or something. And then there was this bright light. So I walked toward it. And then I noticed I was in a dark tunnel. And I said to myself, whoa, this can't be good. Dude, you best be getting out of here. But you know it's true what other people say. You are drawn to the light. Kinda like a mosquito. So you take two steps toward the light, then you stop. And you say, man, I'm gonna get zapped. But then you take another step. And then another. And I looked around and I noticed there was other people walking toward the light with me. And I thought, wow, we're all going to Heaven. This is gonna be cool after all. This is

gonna be, like, the last day of school, just hangin' out, laughing at those people taking finals.

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