

Romeo's Cousin

An improvisational Comedy based on William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in Two Acts



By Vincent Ferrelli

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

Romeo's Cousin was developed in an improvisational workshop over the course of several months. The result is a comedy that weaves its way from the Sixteenth Century to the present and draws the audience in for some lively participation. The boundary between what is happening in the play and what is happening backstage and in the audience is broken in the first scene and characters that start in Verona may end up in the lap of an audience member. Each performance will be a bit different.

Portions of the original drama, *Romeo and Juliet*, by William Shakespeare, remain intact, as well as a good deal of his dialogue. But the opportunity for comedy is never further away than the next scene. There are, per se, no stage hands that are strictly stage hands. The Stage Manager, Props master, and lighting technicians are all pulled into the story and even given some very important tasks, like getting the all-important letter to Romeo. While there are some suggestions in the script along these lines, each cast will have to improvise some "what-if" scenarios when, for instance, the audience member who is given Romeo's letter decides to REALLY deliver it to Romeo on stage. It can happen!

As most improvisation projects go, the set is minimal, consisting of a series of platforms to suggest particular areas needed for the play. Characters can enter from the two proper SR and SL entrances or HL and HR or down the center aisle, as the Prince is often wont to do.

All of the roles are written for a male cast and the female roles are played more as men playing women than men attempting to authentically play women. In other words, deep voices and hairy arms would not disqualify an actor from a female role. Costumes should be very simple – tights, tunics, hats, wigs, and sneakers. For the women characters, free flowing skirts and dresses for easy movement. For the fencing scenes, it is a nice touch for the actors to take some professional fencing lessons for the Mercutio/Tybalt and Tybalt/Romeo scenes. The simplicity of the costumes and set requires more attention to details like fencing and proficiency with the Shakespearian dialogue.

As for the alternate ending, the audience usually chooses the "Happy Ending" but the cast needs to be ready for both. In reality, Benvolio can always break the tie and control this as he "runs" the portions of the play that require audience interaction. With respect to the improvisational theme of this script, I would like the director to adhere to the form and structure presented herein, but to be free to change specific references to people and places as suits the area and situation of the performance. When it comes to the specific areas of interaction between the actors, the crew, and the audience, please feel free to take some artistic license and have fun.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the original cast for their many and varied contributions to the script and the action. Thanks also to those who encouraged me to publish this play and to Philip Payne, from the original cast, who proofread the published script and helped me remember what we did and did not do.

Preview Copy

Romeo's Cousin

Based on William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*

By Vincent Ferrelli

Verona, Italy—Sixteenth Century and Now.

ROMEO..... Son of MONTAGUE
BENVOLIO Montague cousin of ROMEO
LORD MONTAGUE..... Father of ROMEO
JULIET Daughter of CAPULET
TYBALT Capulet cousin of JULIET
PHIL Capulet servant
NICK..... Montague servant
LORD CAPULET Father of JULIET
LADY CAPULET..... Mother of JULIET
NURSE Capulet servant to JULIET
PETER Capulet servant to NURSE
MERCUTIO..... Friend of ROMEO, related to PRINCE
COUNTY PARIS Count to wed JULIET, related to PRINCE
PRINCE ESCALUS Prince of Verona
FRIAR LAWRENCE..... Franciscan who marries ROMEO & JULIET
APOTHECARY Sells poison to ROMEO
WILL Stage Manager
ROBBY Lighting Board Operator
BILLY Prop Master
JOE..... Stage Hand
ROSALINE Former Beloved of Romeo

Original Production

Warners, NY

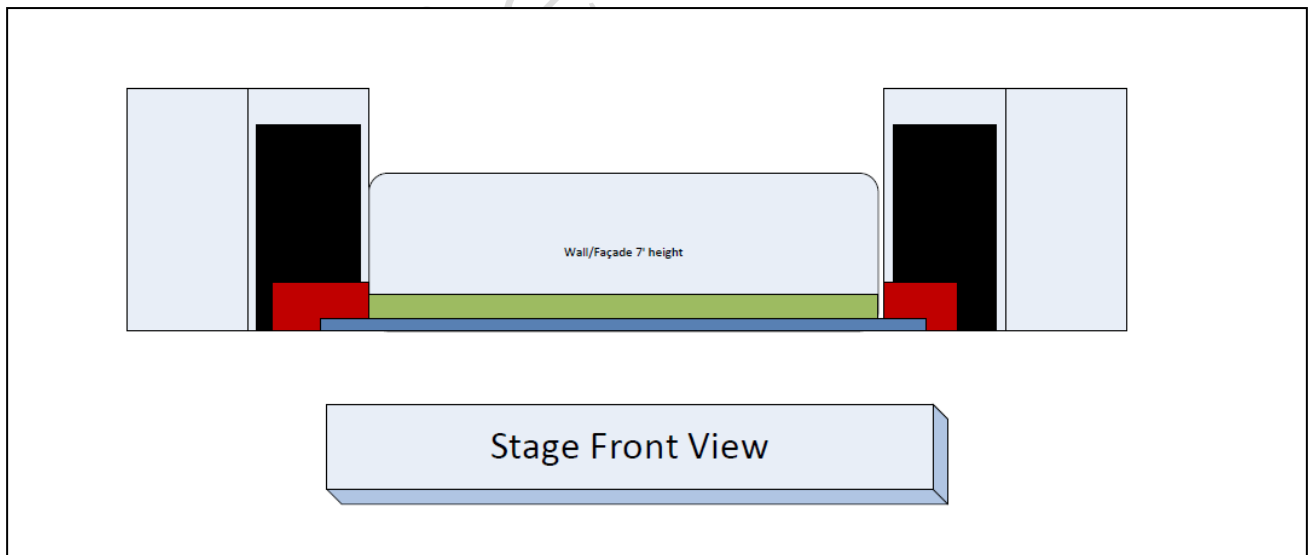
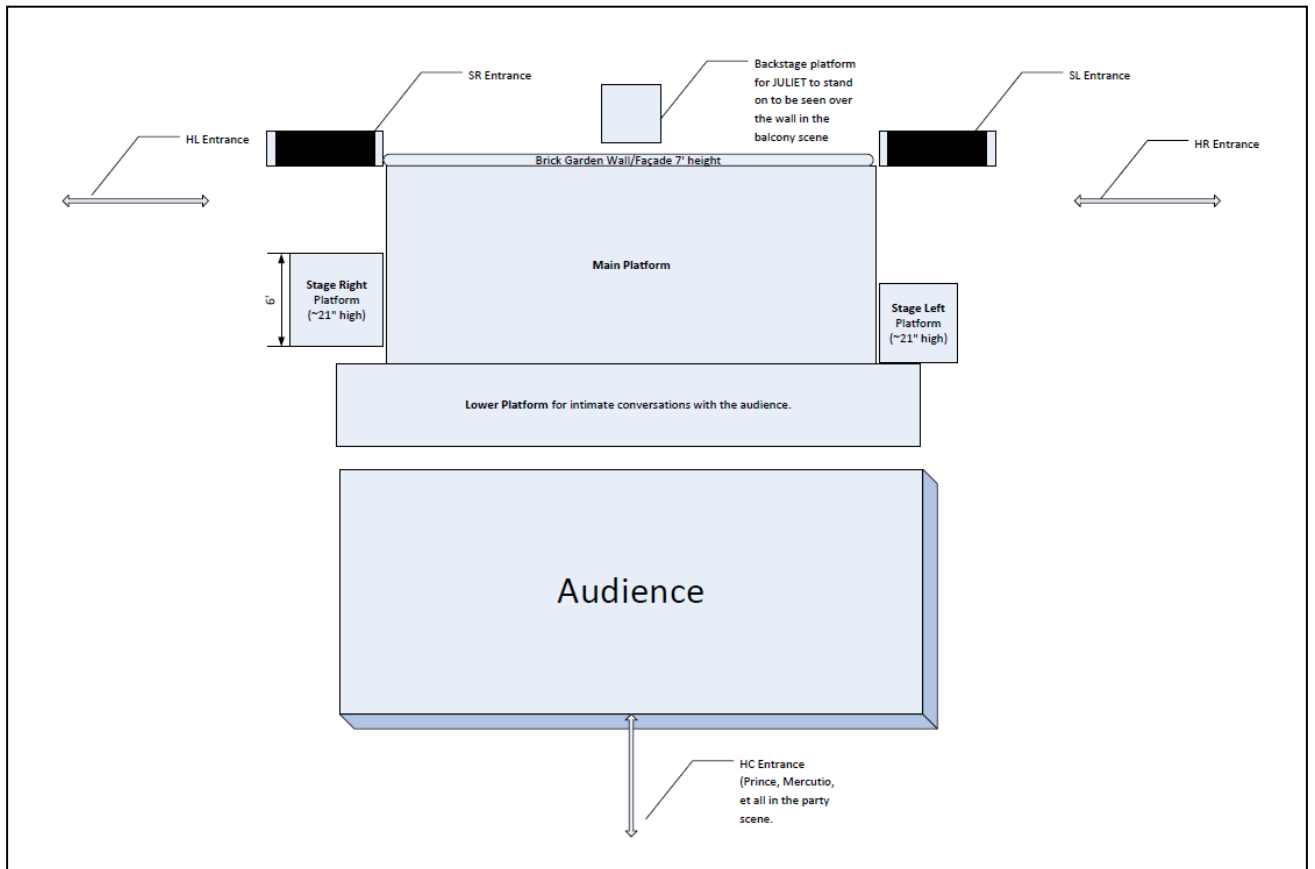
STAFF

Director Vincent Ferrelli
Sets Frank Cichowski
Costumes..... Shari Ferrelli
Publicity..... Tom Rowe
Lighting..... BAM Productions
Assistant to the Director..... William Hatty
Lighting Technician..... Robert Betz
Follow Spot..... Thaddeus Petersen
Properties..... William Betz
Stage Manager..... Joseph Dillon

CAST

ROMEO Christopher Mc Donough
BENVOLIO..... Kyle Edwards
LORD MONTAGUE, NURSE..... Stephen Simonton
JULIET..... Joseph Hable
TYBALT, FRIAR LAWRENCE..... Brendan Webster
PHIL, MERCUTIO, LORD CAPULET..... Philip Payne
NICK, LADY CAPULET, APOTHECARY, PARIS Nicholas Pham
PETER, PRINCE..... Peter Fullerton
WILL..... William Hatty
ROBBY..... Robert Betz
ROSALINE, BILLY..... William Betz
JOE..... Joseph Dillon

STAGE



PROLOGUE

[Enter BENVOLIO in a spot light downstage.]

BENVOLIO

Fellow wayfarers in life, I bid you welcome. I am Benvolio and my task, nay my charge, nay my duty, as pledged to my dear uncle and godfather, my lord Montague, is to keep his son, my cousin, Romeo, out of trouble. An easy task, you might think. For good Romeo is prone to swing as easily into ecstasy as to melancholy, as likely to launch a mutiny as a sonnet to woo a maid. The latter is his first weakness, as he swooneth over every maid, plain and fair, young or old, slight or not, chatty or subdued. Aye, to keep my good cuz on the straight and narrow, was never a more treacherous nor stormy employ.

So welcome to fair Verona, where we lay our scene.

From forth the fatal loins of these two foes

My own house of Montague and that of the house of Capulet

A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life,

Whose misadventured piteous overthrows

Doth with their death bury their parents' strife. *[Lights up on set.]*

It is my thankless lot to divert young Romeo from both battle and infatuations, and somewhere, remain quiescent between the two.

[NICK and PHIL enter, armed.]

The which if you with patient ears attend, what here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

By Zeus, cometh hither Phil, a Capulet and Nick a Montague,

No good can come of such a chance meeting in the street. I must take care that Romeo not be near, ere to thus be drawn to brawl, with these two lads I fear.

ACT 1, SCENE 1

[Verona, a street, morning.]

PHIL

A dog of the house of Montague moves me.

NICK

To move is to stir, and to be valiant is to stand.

Therefore if thou art moved, thou runn'st away!

PHIL

A dog of that house shall move me to stand. I will take the wall of any man or maid of Montague's.

NICK

That shows thee a weak slave for the weakest goes to the wall.

PHIL

'Tis true, and therefore women, being the weaker vessels, are ever thrust to the wall. Therefore I will push Montague's men from the wall, and thrust his maids to the wall.

NICK

The quarrel is between our masters and not their men.

PHIL

'Tis all one. I will show myself a tyrant. When I have fought with the men, I will be civil with the maids, and cut off their heads!

NICK

'Tis well thou art not fish; if thou hadst, thou hadst been a poor catch. Draw thy tool!

PHIL

My naked weapon is out.

[PHIL turns to BENVOLIO to see his reaction]

NICK

How, turn thy back and run?

PHIL

Nay, I will bite my thumb at you,
which is a disgrace if you bear it.

[Bites his thumb]

NICK

Do you bite your thumb at me, sir?

PHIL

I do bite my thumb, sir.

NICK

But do you bite your thumb at me, sir?

PHIL *[aside to BENVOLIO]*

Is the law on my side if I say "aye"?

BENVOLIO *[aside to PHIL]*

No!

PHIL

No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but I bite my thumb, sir.

NICK

Do you quarrel, sir?

PHIL

Quarrel sir? No, sir!

NICK

If you do, sir, I am for you! I serve
as good a man as you.

PHIL

No better?

NICK

Well, sir—

PHIL

Say "better"!

NICK

Ha! Here comes one of my master's kinsmen. Yes, better, sir.

BENVOLIO

Just when you think this might all blow over without injury,

In swaggers Tybalt. Ah Tybalt. N'ary was there a more vain, hot-headed, hot blooded,

Self-righteous ribald

..as Tybalt

[In the background, PHIL and NICK jaw with each other in a pantomime as BENVOLIO and TYBALT speak].

BENVOLIO

Part, fools!

Put up your swords! You know not what you do!

TYBALT *[enters, to BENVOLIO]*

What, art thou not drawn among these heartless hinds?

BENVOLIO *[To the audience as PHIL and NICK begin sword fighting in earnest in the background.]*

Typical Tybalt... He is such a ...

[To TYBALT] ... I do but keep the peace. Put up thy sword,

Or manage it to part these men with me.

TYBALT

Talkest thou of peace? I hate the word,

As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee!

BENVOLIO

[To the audience]

He is so annoying. It is always just about him. Zounds!

[During this, TYBALT turns and with a single stroke skewers PHIL who has been fighting with NICK. Due to the improve nature of this play, sometimes, TYBALT slays NICK instead of PHIL – for variety’s sake. LORD MONTAGUE enters.]

PRINCE *[Enters with JOE and BILLY as attendants. If possible, the PRINCE should enter through the audience.]*

Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace!

BENVOLIO

[To the audience]

Wouldn’t you know it. Who might just be out for an afternoon stroll but the Prince.

This one is very liberal .. unlimited immigration .. no walls around Verona .. Bow control.. no more than five bows to a quiver.

PRINCE

Profaners of this neighbor-stained steel ...

BENVOLIO *[To the audience]*

Also very blustery .. nobody understand his speeches.

PRINCE

... that quench the fire of your pernicious rage with purple fountains issuing from your veins!

BENVOLIO

[To the Prince] “purple fountains issuing from your veins”?

PRINCE

Blood

BENVOLIO

That’s disgusting.

PRINCE

On pain of torture, from those bloody hands

Throw your mistempered weapons to the ground,

And hear the sentence of your movèd Prince!

BENVOLIO

He also says “mov-ed” instead of moved and ”punish-ed” instead of punished.

Typical politician.. very full of himself

PRINCE

Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word

By the Capulets, and Montagues,

Have thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets,

If ever you disturb our streets again,

Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace!

For this time, all the rest depart away.

And Montague, come you this afternoon,

To know our further pleasure in this case,

To old Freetown, our common judgment-place.

Once more, on pain of death, beat it!

[All exit but Lord Montague and BENVOLIO]

LORD MONTAGUE *[to BENVOLIO]*

Who set this ancient quarrel new abroad?

Speak, nephew, were you by when it began?

BENVOLIO

Here were the servants of your adversary,

And yours, enlightening the audience thus,

ere I did approach.

LORD MONTAGUE *[For the first time noticing there is an audience. They step down to the lower platform for a better look at the audience. In the original set, the lowest and most downstage platform was only four feet from the first row of the audience. This next exchange was highly improvised based on the audience for the evening with references to local towns and familiar places. The cast may improve and substitute other places in the performing area familiar to the audience.]*

From whence cometh this audience?

BENVOLIO

Some cometh from the village..

LORD MONTAGUE

Greenwich?

BENVOLIO

Cazenovia

LORD MONTAGUE *[acknowledges]*

BENVOLIO

Some cometh from Kansas

LORD MONTAGUE

They would escape the severe summer winds?

BENVOLIO

Nay .. the smokers. *[MONTAGUE acknowledges]*

Some cometh from the Third World.

LORD MONTAGUE

Mexico?

BENVOLIO

New Jersey.

LORD MONTAGUE

For what purpose camest they here anon?

BENVOLIO

Some were summon-ed.

Some forced to come by guilt of conscience.

Some haveth naught better to do.

Some such as this one *[indicating an audience member]*, I know not why.

LORD MONTAGUE *[Here, any authority figures are pointed out if applicable. In schools, for example, principals, or security personnel, or clergy, etc. In other venues, take your pick and improvise a response.]*

.. and what of these?

BENVOLIO

They cometh to ensure that our language be pure.

LORD MONTAGUE

... a plague ..

LORD MONTAGUE

Cometh none for the art?

BENVOLIO *[Long pause looking at the audience]*

If thou comest primarily for the art, raiseth thy left hand.

LORD MONTAGUE

Some knoweth not their left from right.

BENVOLIO

A fickle audience, indeed!

LORD MONTAGUE

Where were we?

BENVOLIO

The fight. I moved to part them. In the instant came the fiery and annoying Tybalt, with his sword prepared, which, as he breathed defiance to my ears,

He swung about his head and cut the winds

And, by chance, here slayeth Phil *[or NICK]*

Came the Prince, who parted either part.

LORD MONTAGUE

Where is Romeo? Saw you him today?

Right glad I am he was not at this fray.

BENVOLIO

Sir, an hour before the worshipped sun

Peered forth the golden window of the east,

A troubled mind drove me to walk abroad,

Where, underneath the grove of sycamore
That westward rooteth from the city's side ...

LORD MONTAGUE [*Cutting him off.*]

Where is he?

BENVOLIO

Tavern...So early walking did I see your son.

LORD MONTAGUE

Many a morning hath he there been seen,
Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs.

BENVOLIO [*aside to audience*]

Upon fair Rosaline, a crush he hath
Methinks I'll play the dupe. [*To MONTAGUE*]

My noble uncle, do you know the cause?

LORD MONTAGUE

Would we could but learn from whence his sorrows grow,
We would as willingly give cure as know.

[*ROMEO enters*]

BENVOLIO

See where he comes. So please you, step aside.
I'll know his grievance or be much denied. [*MONTAGUE exits*]

BENVOLIO

Good morrow, cousin.

ROMEO

Is the day so young?

BENVOLIO

But new struck nine.

ROMEO

Ay me, sad hours seem long.

Was that my father that went hence so fast?

BENVOLIO

It was. What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?

ROMEO

Not having that, which having, makes them short.

BENVOLIO [*To the audience*]

Sometimes, he drives me crazy with these riddles.

"Not having that with makes them short."

Cigarettes?

ROMEO

No

BENVOLIO

Cigars?

ROMEO

No.

BENVOLIO

In love?

ROMEO

Out—

BENVOLIO

Of love?

ROMEO

Out of her favor where I am in love.

[*Author's Note: Here the cast can improvise the names of girls as suits the production and performance.*]

BENVOLIO

Alas, is it Mary?

ROMEO

No
BENVOLIO
Phyllis
ROMEO
No
BENVOLIO
Ann?
ROMEO
Never
BENVOLIO
Never?
ROMEO
Hardly ever
BENVOLIO
Jane?
ROMEO
Ha
BENVOLIO
Cybil?
ROMEO
Please!
BENVOLIO
Who?
ROMEO
Alas, fair Rosaline
BENVOLIO
Rosaline?
ROMEO
Alas yes
BENVOLIO
Seriously?
ROMEO
Utterly...
BENVOLIO
"The" Rosaline
ROMEO
The only Rosaline.
[long pause]
BENVOLIO
She is ancient...
ROMEO
Everlasting
BENVOLIO
Was she not a classmate of your mother?
ROMEO
Benvolio, thou tirest me with thy jests.
She hath Dian's wit,
O, she is rich in beauty, only poor that, when she dies, with beauty dies her store.
BENVOLIO
Then she hath sworn that she will still live chaste?
ROMEO
She hath, and in that sparing makes huge waste,
For beauty, starved with her severity, cuts beauty off from all posterity.
She hath forsworn to love, and in that vow do I live dead, that live to tell it now.
BENVOLIO
Be ruled by me; forget to think of her.

ROMEO

O, teach me how I should forget to think!

BENVOLIO

By giving liberty unto thine eyes.

Examine other beauties!

ROMEO *[sighs]*

Where shall we dine?

[Sees dead body still on stage] O me! What fray was here?

[Examines body]

A *[Nick]* Pham?

BENVOLIO

[Depending on who was slain] No, a Phil *[or]* Aye, A Pham.

Yet tell me not, for I have heard it all.

Here's much to do with hate, but more with love.

Why, then, O brawling love, O loving hate,

O anything of nothing first create¹!

O heavy lightness, serious vanity,

[Pause .. briefly considering the corpse. Then ...]

I am famished. Let us eat.

[They exit. Blackout.]

ACT 1, SCENE 2 *[Enter BENVOLIO in spot light.]*

BENVOLIO *[To the audience]* Little did Romeo know that this would be the day that he would meet his star-crossed love, Juliet. What can I tell you about Juliet? She is fair, handsome, sweet, a bit nervous, a bit flighty, and a bit self-conscious that she is the tallest maid in Verona. She is, in fact, taller than most men in Verona. She and Romeo would meet by chance at a party this evening and nothing will ever be the same. I think you best make her acquaintance before things get more complicated. *[He calls out]*

Oh Juliet ... come hither fair one.

JULIET *[From back stage]* Giveth me a sec.

BENVOLIO *[After a moment]* The audience waiteth.

JULIET Uno momento!

BENVOLIO *[Aside, to the audience]* She speaks Italian...

[Enter JULIET. She is obviously a boy dressed as a girl. The actor should not play her as very feminine but more as a boy playing a girl. No heavy makeup but a simple dress that is easy to move around in. An excessive hairpiece/wig would be in order. BENVOLIO addresses this to the audience ...]

This is Juliet. *[To JULIET]* This is the audience.

JULIET Oh! *[Awkward moment – inevitable giggling from the audience.]*

Benvolio, why do they titter so?

BENVOLIO They are nervous because they knoweth not whether to laugh or not.

JULIET Oh .. silly audience.

BENVOLIO .. and some covet thy beauty.

JULIET Oh! Are any of them husband-worthy?

BENVOLIO I knoweth not, My Lady.

JULIET *[assess the males in the audience]* That one is cute. ... Oh I like that one.

BENVOLIO Hush my lady. Makest thou not engagements with these, for this evening your life shall by chance be chang-ed by a brief meeting with your star-cross-ed lover. Make haste and ready yourself for this evening's gala in the hall of your father, Lord Capulet.

JULIET *[gets ready to leave]* Oh I love hall galas. I shall wear my long dress with great hoops and my zebra slippers and perhaps my pineapple earrings. *[She stops short of exit and comes back.]* Benvolio, when you said "star-crossed", what meaneth thou by that phrase?

BENVOLIO It is but a turn of speech.

JULIET

Be it a good thing or a bad thing?

BENVOLIO

Let us consult the audience. Some of them payeth good money to be here.

JULIET

O audience. Raiseth thy hands if star-crossed lovers be a bad thing. *[Waits for audience response.]* These are far too many to count. If thou payest not to be here, keepeth thy hands in thy laps ... or on thy drinks. Now raiseth thy hands if star-crossed lovers be a good thing.

[Counts...then to BENVOLIO]

This audience is indeed fickle. Anon .. off I go to prepare to make merry, for to do otherwise would faint be contrary. *[JULIET exits.]*

BENVOLIO

[Indicates for the audience to clap for JULIET.]

It would be best to applaud Juliet whenever she enters or exits or dies, it helps with her self-esteem .. and makes it less likely she will molest you in one of the later scenes. So, now my lot is to convince Romeo to attend this party to get his mind off the ancient Rosaline.

[enter ROMEO]

BENVOLIO

How now?

ROMEO

How now thou?

BENVOLIO

I'm *[seeks a word for his mood]* chill.

ROMEO

Word.

BENVOLIO

Word

ROMEO

Chillest thou here?

BENVOLIO

Me thinkst that we should both chilleth at the ancient feast of Capulet's

ROMEO

Indeed .. say on.

BENVOLIO

Sups there the fair Rosaline, whom thou so loves, with all the admired beauties of Verona. Go thither, and with untainted eye compare her face with some that I shall show, and I will make thee think thy swan a crow.

ROMEO

One fairer than my love! The all-seeing sun
Ne'er saw her match since first the world begun.

BENVOLIO

That I will show you shining at this feast,
And she shall scant show well that now seems best.

ROMEO *[Considers a moment]*

OK .. lets go.

[They exit]

ACT 1, SCENE 3

[Capulet house. Enter NURSE. She is a BIG woman who needs help getting up every time she sits on the Left Platform or Right Platform. Enter LADY CAPULET.]

LADY CAPULET

Nurse, where's my daughter? Call her forth to me.

NURSE

Now, by my maidenhead at twelve year old,

I bade her come.—What, lamb! What, ladybird!—
Where's this girl?—What, Juliet!

JULIET *[enters]*

How now, who calls?

NURSE

Your mother.

JULIET

Madam, I am here. What is your will?

LADY CAPULET

This is the matter.—Nurse, give leave awhile,

We must talk in secret.—*[NURSE begins to exit]*

Juliet, you are of an age...Nurse, come back again! *[NURSE hustles back]*

I have remembered me, thou's hear our counsel.

Thou know'st my daughter's of a pretty age.

NURSE

Faith, I can tell her age unto an hour.

LADY CAPULET

She's not fourteen.

NURSE

I'll lay fourteen of my teeth, and yet, to my teen

be it spoken, I have but four. She's not fourteen.

How long is it now to Lammas-tide?

LADY CAPULET

A fortnight and odd days.

NURSE

Even or odd, of all days in the year,

Come Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen.

Susan and she—God rest all Christian souls—

Were of an age. Well, Susan is with God;

She was too good for me. But, as I said,

On Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen.

That shall she. Marry, I remember it well.

'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years,

And she was weaned—I never shall forget it—

Of all the days of the year, upon that day.

My lord and you were then at Mantua.

—Nay, I do bear a brain!—But, as I said,

LADY CAPULET

Enough of this. I pray thee, hold thy peace!

NURSE

Yes, madam, yet I cannot choose but laugh,

To think it should leave crying and say "Ay."

And yet, I warrant, it had upon its brow

A bump as big as a young cockerel's stone,

A perilous knock, and it cried bitterly.

"Yea," quoth my husband, "Fall'st upon thy face?"

JULIET

[Interrupting] And stint thou too, I pray thee, Nurse, say I!

NURSE

Peace, I have done. God mark thee to his grace,

Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nursed.

And I might live to see thee married once,

I have my wish.

LADY CAPULET

Marry, that "marry" is the very theme

I came to talk of.—*[All three move to sit on the Right Platform]* Tell me, daughter Juliet,
How stands your disposition to be married?

JULIET

It is an honor that I dream oft of *[nudged by NURSE]*... I mean, not of.

NURSE

An honor? Were not I thine only nurse,
I would say thou hadst sucked wisdom from thy teat.

JULIET

[Reacting] Nurse, that's gross!

LADY CAPULET

Well, think of marriage now. Younger than you,
Here in Verona, ladies of esteem
Are made already mothers. By my count
I was your mother much upon these years
That you are now a maid. Thus then in brief:
The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.

NURSE

A man, young lady! Lady, such a man
As all the world. Why, he's a man of wax!

LADY CAPULET

Verona's summer hath not such a flower.

NURSE

Nay, he's a flower, in faith, a very flower.

LADY CAPULET

What say you? Can you love the gentleman?
This night you shall behold him at our feast.
Read o'er the volume of young Paris' face, *[JULIET is interested]*
And find delight writ there with beauty's pen.
Examine every married lineament *[JULIET is getting more excited, so is the NURSE]*
And see how one another lends content,
And what obscured in this fair volume lies *[By now, both are fanning themselves vigorously.]*
Find written in the margin of his eyes.
This precious book of love, this unbound lover,

JULIET

OK OK stop! Thou makest me perspire.

NURSE

Unbound lover, indeed. For bigger women grow by men.

JULIET

Stop I said!

LADY CAPULET

Speak briefly. Can you like of Paris' love?

JULIET

Is the Pope Catholic?

PETER *[enters]*

Madam, the guests are come, supper served up,

NURSE *[..with exaggerated innuendo...]*

Go, girl, seek happy nights to happy days.

JULIET

Nurse .. knock it off!

[They exit]

ACT 1, SCENE 4 *[Verona street at night]*

[Enter BENVOLIO].

BENVOLIO Finally, the night of the party arrives. Juliet is excited that her parents are setting her up to meet the rich and fairly tall County Paris and if all goes well, perhaps marry. I have

convinced Romeo to go to the Capulet party disguised and compare the ancient Rosaline to other maidens. So off we go to the party with Romeo's best friend Mercutio in tow.

[Enter ROMEO, MERCUTIO, JOE, BILLY. JOE and BILLY are dressed in minstrel costumes.]

ROMEO

What shall this speech be spoke for our excuse?

Or shall we on without apology?

BENVOLIO

No excuses need be fabricated. We'll wear a mask

And so mask our visage, tho not our vision,

But let them measure us by what they will.

We'll measure them a measure and be gone.

ROMEO

Give me a torch, I am not for this ambling.

Being but heavy, I will bear the light.

MERCUTIO

Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.

ROMEO

Not I, believe me. You have dancing shoes

With nimble soles. I have a soul of lead

So stakes me to the ground I cannot move.

MERCUTIO

You are a lover. Borrow Cupid's wings

And soar with them above a common bound.

ROMEO

I am too sore enpierced with his shaft

To soar with his light feathers, and so bound

Under love's heavy burden do I sink.

MERCUTIO

And to sink in it, should you burden love,

Too great oppression for a tender thing.

ROMEO

Is love a tender thing? It is too rough,

Too rude, too boisterous, and it pricks like thorn.

MERCUTIO

If love be rough with you, be rough with love!

Prick love for pricking, and you beat love down.

Give me a case to put my mask on:

an ugly mask for my ugly face. What care I

BENVOLIO

Come, knock and enter, and no sooner in,

But every man betake him to the dance floor.

ROMEO

I will not dance. I dreamt a dream tonight.

MERCUTIO

Soft, there are children in the audience.

ROMEO

No listen .. a dream dreamt I.

MERCUTIO

And so did I.

ROMEO

Well, what was yours?

MERCUTIO

That dreamers often lie!

ROMEO

In bed asleep, while they do dream things true!

MERCUTIO

O, then I see Queen Mab hath been with you!

BENVOLIO

Queen Mab? What's she?

MERCUTIO

She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the forefinger of an alderman,
Drawn with a team of little atomies
Over men's noses as they lie asleep.
Her wagon-spokes made of long spinners' legs,
Tickling a parson's nose as he lies asleep,
This is she—

ROMEO

Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace! Thou talk'st of nothing.

MERCUTIO

True, I talk of dreams, Which are the children of an idle brain,
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy,

BENVOLIO

This wind you talk of blows us from ourselves!

Supper is done, and we shall come too late!

[MERCUTIO and ROMEO go into the party.]

BENVOLIO *[To the audience.]*

So they went into the party where there was much celebrating ...

[From backstage – “29 bottles of beer on the wall”]

And much merriment ...

[From backstage – “For he’s a jolly good fellow”]

And Rosaline was there, and Romeo doted on her. *[ROMEO sighs backstage]*

And Paris was there and Juliet was mildly impressed. *[Backstage, JULIET says “Meh”]*

And then came the moment when Romeo’s gaze first fell upon Juliet ...

[Backstage, ROMEO intake of breath.]

... And Juliet’s gaze first fell on Romeo ...

[JULIET: off stage: “I like him”]

... And that was that. The stars crossed.

And this new love between these two

In course of time, a payment due.

Now we find Romeo outside of Capulet Hall after the gala.

[BENVOLIO exits]

ACT 1, SCENE 5

[Outside the garden wall of the Capulet house, same night. Enter ROMEO.]

ROMEO

Can I leave when my heart is here?

Turn back, dull earth, and find thy center out.

Have I ever seen beauty before this night?

Have I ever seen grace before this night?

Have I ever seen such height before tonight.

Ah Juliet, my towering rose.

Nay not a rose, for a rose is short and stings those who touch it

She is a sunflower, tall as the Tower of Pisa, yet straight

[MERCUTIO, BENVOLIO, JOE, BILLY enter from back of audience, a bit intoxicated.]

ALL *(As they slowly make their way to the stage .. not calling together)*

Romeo! Romeo!

ROMEO

Dang! I must beseech a place hiding,

Lest these good friends my love be chiding. *[ROMEO crouches behind the Left Platform.]*

MERCUTIO

One, two, three *[together]* Romeo!

He is wise, and, on my life, hath stol'n him home to bed.

BENVOLIO *[All finally reach the stage]*

He ran this way and leaped this orchard wall.

Call, good Mercutio.

MERCUTIO Nay,

Romeo! Humors! Madman! Passion! Lover!

Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh!

Speak but one rhyme and I am satisfied.

Cry but "Ay me!" Pronounce¹ but "love" and "dove"¹.

He heareth not, he stirreth not, he moveth not.

The ape is dead, and I must conjure him.—

Gather 'round me. *[As if conjuring him up from the earth]*

I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright eyes,

By her high forehead and her scarlet lip,

That in thy likeness thou appear to us! *[Nothing happens. He tries again with more purpose.]*

Rise!

BENVOLIO

And if he hear thee, thou wilt anger him!

MERCUTIO

This cannot anger him. 'Twould anger him

To raise a spirit in the likeness of Roseline

And plant a kiss upon her brow *[MERCUTIO grabs JOE by the ears and kisses his forehead .. all laugh.]*

That would provoke him!

BENVOLIO

Come, he hath hid himself among these trees

MERCUTIO

Now will he sit under a medlar tree and wish his mistress were that kind of fruit.

Romeo, good night.—I'll to my bed.

BENVOLIO

Aye, go ye then to thy bed, for 'tis in vain

To seek him here that means not to be found.

[They exit]

ROMEO *[Comes out of hiding from behind left platform]*

He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

[JULIET enters above garden wall, center. She can be seen from the waist up over the wall.]

But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?

It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,

Who is already sick and pale with grief

It is my lady. O, it is my love!

JULIET

[Testy] Hello?

ROMEO

O, that she knew she were! She speaks, yet she says nothing. What of that?

Her eye discourses; I will answer it. No, I am too bold. 'Tis not to me she speaks.

JULIET

[More testy] Who's down there!?

ROMEO

Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,

Having some business, do entreat her eyes

JULIET

[Warning] I have a concealed carry permit!

ROMEO

To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek!

JULIET

Ay me!

ROMEO

She sighs. O, speak again, bright angel, for thou art as glorious to this night, being o'er my head as is a wingèd messenger of heaven.

JULIET

O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?

[Upon hearing his name, ROMEO rushes downstage to converse in pantomime with the audience. "Do you hear that! She said my name! That is me she is talking about"]

Deny thy father and refuse thy name. Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

ROMEO *[To the audience.]*

Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

JULIET

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy.

Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.

What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,

Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part¹

Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!

What's in a name? That which we call a rose

By any other name would smell as sweet.

So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,

Romeo, doff thy name,

And for that name, which is no part of thee,

Take all myself.

ROMEO *[to her]* I take thee at thy word.

Call me but Love, and I'll be new baptized;

Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

JULIET *[Skreeches]*

What man art thou that thus bescreened in night so stumblest on my counsel? *[She rushes from behind the wall and appears on the Right Platform.]*

ROMEO

By a name I know not how to tell thee who I am.

My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,

Because it is an enemy to thee.

Had I it written, I would tear the word.

JULIET

My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words

Of thy tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound.

Art thou not Romeo and a Montague?

ROMEO

Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.

[ROMEO crosses from the darkness of SL to Center Stage into the spot light. ROMEO is shorter than JULIET and much of the comedy is built on this. He does not need to be significantly shorter, but at least noticeably shorter. The shorter he is, the more the comedy works.]

JULIET

Oh! .. Oh! Oh my. When I first gazed upon you this 'een

Through spell of spirit I did not see thee clear.

But now, recover-ed my senses,

I see that though art ... rather ...small.

ROMEO

Be it so, lovely one, but my heart for these grows so that it
Can hardly be contained within my breast.

JULIET

How came'st thou hither, little one, tell me, and wherefore?
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb for one as fragile and tiny as thou,
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

ROMEO

With love's light wings did I o'er-perch these walls,
For stony limits cannot hold love out,
Therefore thy kinsmen are no stop to me.

JULIET

If they do see thee, they will murder thee, my hummingbird!

ROMEO

Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye
Than twenty of their swords! Look thou but sweet,
And I am proof against their enmity.

JULIET

I would not for the world they saw thee here, my child.

ROMEO

I have night's cloak to hide me from their eyes,
And but thou love me, let them find me here.
My life were better ended by their hate
Than death proroguèd, wanting of thy love.

JULIET

By whose direction found'st thou out this place? Your teacher at school?

ROMEO

By love, who first did prompt me to inquire.

JULIET

Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face,
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say "Ay,"
And I will take thy word. Yet if thou swear'st,

ROMEO

Lady, by yonder blessèd moon I swear
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops—

JULIET

O, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,
That monthly changes in her circled orb,
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

ROMEO

What shall I swear by?

JULIET

Do not swear at all, my miniature love.
lest I cleanse thy mouth out with soap

ROMEO

O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

JULIET / *A bit flustered, intrigued, considering the possible insinuation.*

Shall I make thee chocolate milk?

ROMEO

No milk of chocolate, dear maiden, nor any other elixir
But th' exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

JULIET

I gave thee mine before thou didst request it, my child,
And yet I would it were to give again.

ROMEO

Wouldst thou withdraw it? For what purpose, love?

JULIET

But to be frank and give it thee again. *[NURSE back stage, calls for Juliet.]*

JULIET

I hear some noise within. Adieu tiny one!

[To her] Anon, good Nurse!

[To him] Sweet Montague, be true.

Stay but a little; I will come again. *[Goes in]*

ROMEO

O blessèd, blessèd night! I am afeard,

Being in night, all this is but a dream,

Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.

JULIET *[Comes out again]*

Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.

If that thy bent of love be honorable,

Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow, along with a permission note

From thy parents by one that I'll procure to come to thee,

Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite,

And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay

And follow thee my lord throughout the world.

NURSE *[From back stage.]*

Madam!

JULIET

[To her] I come, anon!

[To him] But if thou mean'st not well,

I do beseech thee—

NURSE *[inside]* Madam!

JULIET *[To her]* By and by I come!

[To him] To cease thy suit and leave me to my grief.

Tomorrow will I send.

ROMEO

So thrive my soul—

JULIET

A thousand times good night! *[goes in]*

ROMEO

A thousand times the worse to want thy light. *[ROMEO sprints off SL, but before he gets completely off stage...]*

JULIET *[Comes out again]*

Romeo! *[He sprints back. He is on the lowest downstage platform, JULIET is standing on the RP.]*

How old art thou?

ROMEO *[To the audience]*

It is my soul that calls upon my name!

How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,

Like softest music to attending ears!

[To her] I am 17 years on this earth.

[By the look on her face, JULIET does not seem to be convinced]

...and a half

JULIET

[Not 100% convinced, but...] O-O-OK .. *[Finally]* I believe you.

[He turns to leave.] One other thing.

ROMEO

My dear?

JULIET

What o'clock tomorrow
Shall I send to thee?

ROMEO

By the hour of nine.

JULIET

I will not fail. 'Tis twenty years till then. (*ROMEO again sprints SL to leave*)

WAIT!

[He rushes back. Then after a pause...] I have forgot why I did call thee back.

ROMEO

Let me stand here till thou remember it.

JULIET

I shall forget, to have thee still stand there, fragile one,

Remembering how I love thy company.

ROMEO

And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget,

Forgetting any other home but this.

JULIET

Oh .. I remembered. Sendith thou to me they birth certificate. I do believe thee but I would sleep easier.

ROMEO

I would I were thy bird.

JULIET

Yes, thou art my sweet baby robin with no feathers

Or facial hair. I fear yet I should kill thee with much cherishing. Good night, good night!

Parting is such sweet sorrow that I shall say good night till it be morrow.

[He races off SL again but before he can get off...]

Shall I kiss him, good audience?

[ROMEO wildly encourages the audience to clap their agreement. They do, and he rushes back to JULIET. ROMEO is standing on the lowest downstage platform and JULIET is standing on the highest Right Platform. Even though the actors are facing each other, JULIET should be higher, without bending down, than ROMEO. JULIET closes her eyes and puckers for a kiss but alas ROMEO, even standing on his tip toes, is too short to meet her lips.]

[After a comic moment or two...]

Art thou on the tip toes?

ROMEO

I am!

[JULIET ends up blowing him a kiss instead. He is love-struck]

Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast!

Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest!

Hence will I to my ghostly Friar's close cell,

His help to crave, and my dear hap to tell. *[exits]*

ACT 1, SCENE 6

[St. Peter's Church, dawn. FRIAR LAWRENCE with basket]

FRIAR

The grey-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night,

Check'ring the eastern clouds with streaks of light,

And fleckled darkness like a drunkard reels

From forth day's path and Titan's fiery wheels.

Now, ere the sun advance his burning eye,

The day to cheer and night's dank dew to dry,

ROMEO *[Enters]*

Good morrow, Father.

FRIAR

Benedicite! What early tongue so sweet saluteth me?
Young son, it argues a distempered head
So soon to bid good morrow to thy bed.
Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye,
And where care lodges, sleep will never lie;
Or if not so, then here I hit it right:
Our Romeo hath not been in bed tonight.

ROMEO

That last is true. The sweeter rest was mine.

FRIAR

God pardon sin! Wast thou with ancient Rosaline?

ROMEO

With Rosaline, my ghostly Father? No!

I have forgot that name and that name's woe.

FRIAR

That's my good son. But where hast thou been then?

ROMEO

I'll tell thee ere thou ask it me again.

I have been feasting with mine enemy,

FRIAR

Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift.

Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift.

ROMEO

Then plainly know my heart's dear love is set

On the fair daughter of rich Capulet.

As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine,

And all combined, save what thou must combine

By holy marriage. When and where and how

We met, we wooed and made exchange of vow,

I'll tell thee as we pass, but this I pray,

[..on his knees..] That thou consent to marry us today.

FRIAR

Holy Saint Francis, what a change is here!

Is Rosaline, whom thou didst love so dear,

So soon forsaken?

ROMEO

Thou chide'st me oft for loving Rosaline.

FRIAR

For doting, not for loving, pupil mine.

ROMEO

And bade'st me bury love.

FRIAR

Not in a grave to lay one in, another out to have!

ROMEO

I pray thee, chide me not. Her I love now

Doth grace for grace and love for love allow.

The other did not so.

FRIAR

[FRIAR takes several moments to consider this, facing away from ROMEO, fingering his rosary beads. Finally we see a resolution come to his eyes.]

In one respect I'll thy assistant be,

For this alliance may so happy prove

To turn your households' rancor to pure love.

ROMEO

O, let us hence! I stand on sudden haste!

FRIAR

Wisely and slow. They stumble that run fast.
[*They exit*]

ACT 1, SCENE 7

[*A street, noon. BENVOLIO & MERCUTIO & JOE*]

MERCUTIO

Where the devil should this Romeo be?
Came he not home tonight?

BENVOLIO

Not to his father's. I spoke with his man.

MERCUTIO

Ah, that same pale hard-hearted wench, that Rosaline,
Torments him so, that he will sure run mad.

BENVOLIO

Tybalt, the kinsman of old Capulet,
Hath sent a letter to his father's house.

MERCUTIO

A challenge, on my life.

BENVOLIO

Romeo will answer it.

MERCUTIO

Any man that can write may answer a letter.

BENVOLIO

Nay, he will answer the letter's master,
how he dares, being dared.

MERCUTIO

Alas poor Romeo, he is already dead, stabbed with a white wench's black eye, shot through
the ear with a love-song, the very pin of his heart cleft with the blind bow-boy's butt-shaft.
And is he a man to encounter Tybalt?

BENVOLIO

Why, what is Tybalt?

MERCUTIO

More than Prince of Cats, I can tell you.

O, he's the courageous captain of compliments ... a duelist, a duelist,

[*ROMEO enters*]

BENVOLIO

Here comes Romeo.

MERCUTIO

Without his roe, like a dried herring.—Signor Romeo, bonjour!

There's a French salutation to your French slop.

You gave us the counterfeit fairly last night.

ROMEO

Good morrow to you both. What counterfeit did I give you?

MERCUTIO

The slip, sir, you gave us the slip. Capisco?

ROMEO

Pardon, good Mercutio, my business was great, and
in such a case as mine a man may strain courtesy.

Thou wast never with me for anything when thou wast
not there for the goose!

MERCUTIO [*Grabs ROMEO by the ear causing him to go to his knees.*]

I will bite thee by the ear for that jest!

ROMEO

Nay, good goose, bite not!

MERCUTIO

Thy wit is a very bitter sweeting; it is a most sharp sauce.

ROMEO

And is it not then well served into a sweet goose?

MERCUTIO [*Helping him up.*]

Why, is not this better now than groaning for love? Now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo, now art thou what thou art, by art as well as by nature. For this driveling love is like a great natural that runs lolling up and down to hide his bauble in a hole!

[*NURSE & PETER enter*]

ROMEO [*sees NURSE; to MERCUTIO*]

Here's goodly gear!

MERCUTIO [*Making fun of her clothes and veil.*]

A sail, a sail!

NURSE

Peter!

PETER

Anon!

NURSE

My fan, Peter.

MERCUTIO

Good Peter, to hide her face, for her fan's the fairer face.

NURSE

God ye good morrow, gentlemen.

MERCUTIO

God ye good e'en, fair gentlewoman.

NURSE

Is it good e'en?

MERCUTIO

'Tis no less, I tell ye, for the bawdy hand of the dial is now upon the prick of noon.

NURSE

Out upon you! What a man are you?

ROMEO

One, gentlewoman, that God hath made for himself to mar.

NURSE

Gentlemen, can any of you tell me where I may find Romeo?

ROMEO

I am the youngest of that name.

NURSE

If you be he, sir, I desire some confidence with ye.

BENVOLIO [*Making fun of her wrong word for "conference"*]

She will "indite" him to some supper!

MERCUTIO

Romeo, will you come to your father's?

We'll to dinner thither.

ROMEO

I will follow you.

[*MERCUTIO goes to the NURSE and bending down on one knee takes her hand to kiss it, talking sweetly in French, and after a kiss, bites her hand. MERCUTIO, JOE & BENVOLIO laugh and quickly exit*]

NURSE

Aye!! Scurvy knave! Aye!! I pray you, sir, what saucy merchant was this?

ROMEO

A gentleman, Nurse, that loves to hear himself talk and will speak more in a minute than he will stand to in a month.

NURSE

If he speak anything against me, I'll take him down,
Scurvy knave! I *[to Peter]* And thou must stand by too, and suffer every knave to use me at his pleasure!

PETER

I saw no man use you at his pleasure. If I had, my weapon should quickly have been out, I warrant you!

NURSE

Now, afore God, I am so vexed that every part about me quivers. Scurvy knave!

[She finally calms down and then, to ROMEO]

Pray you, sir, a word.

[She goes to sit on the Left Platform. Every time she sits, its more like aim and let go and she crashes into her seat like a dropped sack of potatoes. Whenever she tries to stand, she can never manage it by herself. She says, sometimes mid-sentence "Help me up, help me up"] And as I told you, my young lady bade me inquire you out. What she bade me say, I will keep to myself. But first let me tell ye, if you should lead her into a fool's paradise...

ROMEO

Nurse, commend me to thy lady and mistress.

I protest unto thee—

NURSE

Good heart, and i' faith I will tell her as much.

Lord, Lord, she will be a joyful woman!

ROMEO

Bid her devise some means to come to shrift this afternoon,

And there she shall at Friar Lawrence' cell ...

Be shrived and married!

NURSE

[Shocked and speechless]. What .. no .. really .. you ... no!

Wait ..How old are you?

ROMEO

I am seventeen years upon this earth.

[She gives him a questioning look]

... and a half.

NURSE

Okay, I believe you. (Help me up help me up.)

[Very excited] This afternoon, sir? Well, she shall be there.

ROMEO

Farewell, commend me to thy mistress.

NURSE

Ay, a thousand times. *[ROMEO exits]*

Peter!

PETER

Anon!

NURSE

Before and apace.

[They exit]

ACT 1, SCENE 8 *[Capulet house.]*

JULIET

The clock struck nine when I did send the Nurse.

In half an hour she promised to return.

Perchance she cannot meet him. That's not so.
O, she is lame! Love's heralds should be thoughts,
Which ten times faster glide than the sun's beams,
[NURSE & PETER enter]

O God, she comes! O honey Nurse, what news?
Hast thou met with him? Send thy man away.

NURSE

Peter, stay at the gate. [Peter exits]

JULIET

Now, good sweet Nurse—O Lord, why look'st thou sad?
Though news be sad, yet tell them merrily.
If good, thou shame'st the music of sweet news
By playing it to me with so sour a face.

NURSE

I am aweary, give me leave awhile.
Fie, how my bones ache! What a jaunt have I had!

JULIET

I would thou hadst my bones, and I thy news.
Nay, come, I pray thee, speak! Good, good Nurse, speak!

NURSE

Jesu, what haste! Can you not stay awhile?
Do you not see that I am out of breath?

JULIET

How art thou out of breath, when thou hast breath
To say to me that thou art out of breath?
Is thy news good, or bad? Answer to that!
Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance!
Let me be satisfied: is't good or bad?

NURSE

Well, you have made a simple choice! You know not
how to choose a man. Romeo? No, not he! Though
his face be better than any boy's. [She plops down on the right platform].

JULIET

No, no. But all this did I know before.
What says he of our marriage? What of that?

NURSE

Lord, how my head aches! What a head have I!

JULIET

[Almost under her breath.] I shall break thy back and strangle the very life out of thee.

[JULIET calms down] I' faith, I am sorry that thou art not well.

Sweet, sweet, sweet Nurse, tell me, what says my love?

NURSE

Your love says, (help me up, help me up), [She rises and crosses to Stage Left] like an honest
gentleman, and a courteous,
and a kind, and a handsome, and, I warrant, a virtuous—
Where is your mother?

JULIET

Where is my mother? Why, she is within.
Where should she be? How oddly thou repliest!
"Your love says, like an honest gentleman,
"Where is your mother?"

NURSE

O God's lady dear!
Are you so hot? [She plops down on the Left Platform]

JULIET

What says Romeo?

NURSE *[She beckons JULIET over to the Left Platform where she is sitting]*

Have you got leave to go to shrift today?

JULIET

I have.

NURSE

(Help me up, help me up). Then hie you hence to Friar Lawrence' cell. [They hold hands.]

There stays a husband to make you a wife! [They jump up and down and do a couple of 360 degree turns until the NURSE collapses again on the Left Platform, exhausted].

Hie you to church. I must another way to fetch a ladder, by which your man-child must climb a bird's nest soon when it is dark. Go! I'll to dinner. Hie you to the cell!

JULIET

Sweet, sweet , nurse.

[JULIET exits and the NURSE is left on stage at the blackout with no one to help her up.]

[Blackout as BENVOLIO enters in spotlight.]

BENVOLIO

And so Juliet hastened to Friar Lawrence' cell

And there, met she her Romeo

And there were they, by the sacrament of good Friar,

Made one in Holy Matrimony.

And so, to the second act our tale progresses

With deeds in secret, sins, confesses

And these the words, foreboding, bleak

To me did Romeo privately speak:

"I fear , in my mind of late

A consequence hanging in the stars

Shall bitterly begin his fearful date

A forfeit of our happiness mars."

The source of Romeo's superstition

You shall know after the intermission. *[Lights down]*

INTERMISSION

ACT 2, SCENE 1 [*A street.*]

[*Enter MERCUTIO, BENVOLIO, JOE.*]

BENVOLIO [*To the audience*]

You might ask, what could possibly go wrong?
Juliet and Romeo married. The inlaws are already enemies – perfect.
[*He joins the others.*] I pray thee, good Mercutio, let's retire.

The day is hot, the Capulets abroad,
And if we meet we shall not 'scape a brawl,
For now these hot days is the mad blood stirring.

MERCUTIO

Thou art like one of these fellows that when he enters
the confines of a tavern claps me his sword upon the
table and says, "God send me no need of thee!"
and by the operation of the second cup,
draws it on the drawer, when indeed
there is no need.

BENVOLIO

Am I like such a fellow?

MERCUTIO

Come, come, thou art as hot a jack in thy mood as
any in Italy,

BENVOLIO

How meaneth thou?

MERCUTIO

Why, thou wilt quarrel with a man that hath a hair more or a hair less in his beard than thou
hast. Thou wilt quarrel with a man for cracking nuts, having no
other reason but because thou hast hazel eyes. Thou hast quarreled with a
man for coughing in the street because he hath wakened thy dog that hath lain asleep in the
sun. Didst thou not fall out with a tailor for wearing his new doublet before Easter? And yet
thou wilt tutor me from quarreling?

BENVOLIO

[*after a beat*] That doublet was ugly.

[*TYBALT & BILLY enter*]

By my head, here come the Capulets.

MERCUTIO

By my heel, I care not!

TYBALT

[*to BILLY*] Follow me close, for I will speak to them.

[*to BENVOLIO & MERCUTIO*]

Gentlemen, good e'en. A word with one of you.

MERCUTIO

And but one word with one of us? Couple it with
something; make it a word and a blow!

TYBALT

You shall find me apt enough to that, sir,
and you will give me occasion!

MERCUTIO

Could you not take some occasion without giving?

TYBALT

Mercutio, thou consort'st with Romeo—

MERCUTIO

Consort! What, dost thou make us minstrels?

BENVOLIO

We talk here in the public haunt of men.
Either withdraw unto some private place,

Or reason coldly of your grievances,
Or else depart! Here all eyes gaze on us.

MERCUTIO

Men's eyes were made to look, and let them gaze.
I will not budge for no man's pleasure, I!

[ROMEO enters]

TYBALT

Well, peace be with you, sir. Here comes my man.
Romeo! The love I bear thee can afford
No better term than this: Thou art a villain!

ROMEO

Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee
Doth much excuse the appertaining rage
To such a greeting. Villain am I none.
Therefore farewell. I see thou know'st me not.

TYBALT

Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries
That thou hast done me. Therefore turn and draw!

ROMEO

I do protest I never injured thee,
But love thee better than thou canst devise
Till thou shalt know the reason of my love.
And so, good Capulet, which name I tender
As dearly as mine own, be satisfied.

MERCUTIO

O calm, dishonorable, vile submission!

[draws his sword]

Tybalt, you rat-catcher, will you walk?

TYBALT

What wouldst thou have with me?

MERCUTIO

Good King of Cats, nothing but one of your nine lives.

TYBALT

I am for you. *[draws his sword]*

[The sword fight is initially good natured. TYBALT certainly did not have it in his mind to kill the cousin of the Prince. Their sword play should be a bit campy as they have fun with one another. When MERCUTIO is injured, it should be more accidental than intentional.]

ROMEO

Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up!

MERCUTIO

Come, sir, your passado!

[They fight]

ROMEO

Draw, Benvolio, beat down their weapons!
Gentlemen, for shame, forbear this outrage!
Tybalt! Mercutio! The Prince expressly hath
Forbidden bandying in Verona streets!
Hold, Tybalt! Good Mercutio!

[ROMEO tries to separate them and MERCUTIO is wounded accidentally under ROMEO's outstretched arm. BILLY and TYBALT look in fear at the blood on TYBALT's sword. Billy ushers TYBALT away. During this next sequence, as MERCUTIO is always the showman, all think that he is merely performing an act.]

MERCUTIO

I am hurt. A plague o' both your houses! I am sped.
Is he gone and hath nothing?

BENVOLIO

What, art thou hurt?

MERCUTIO

Ay, ay, a scratch, a scratch. Marry, 'tis enough. Where is my page?—*[To JOE]* Go, villain,
fetch a surgeon! *[All laugh]*

ROMEO

Courage, man, the hurt cannot be much.

MERCUTIO

No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a
church door, but 'tis enough, 'twill serve. Ask for me
tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave man. I am
peppered, I warrant, for this world. A plague o' both
your houses! Why the devil came you between us? I was hurt under your arm!

ROMEO

I thought all for the best.

MERCUTIO

Help me into some house, Benvolio,
Or I shall faint. A plague o' both your houses!
They have made worms' meat of me.

[He collapses. A final round of applause from all.]

ROMEO

*[ROMEO removes the handkerchief that MERCUTIO was holding to his breast to reveal it
covered with blood. All immediately sober up in horror.]*

This gentleman, the Prince's near ally, my very friend, hath got his mortal hurt in my behalf.
Tybalt, that an hour hath been my cousin! O sweet Juliet,
Thy beauty hath made me effeminate. Tybalt! Tybalt!

[TYBALT re-enters]

ROMEO

Alive, in triumph! And Mercutio's soul is but a little way above our heads?
Either thou, or I, or both, must go with him!

TYBALT

Thou, wretched boy, that didst consort him here, shalt with him hence!

ROMEO

This shall determine that!

[They fight]

[ROMEO slays TYBALT in a fierce sword fight.]

BENVOLIO

Romeo, away, be gone! The citizens are up, and Tybalt slain.
Stand not amazed! The Prince will doom thee death if thou art taken! Hence, be gone, away!

ROMEO

O, I am Fortune's fool! *[Bell rings]*

BENVOLIO

Why dost thou stay? Go!

[ROMEO exits. Enter PRINCE, BILLY & LADY CAPULET through the audience.]

PRINCE

Where are the vile beginners of this fray?

BENVOLIO

O noble Prince, I can explain all
The unlucky cause of this fatal brawl.
There lies the man, slain by young Romeo,
That slew thy kinsman, brave Mercutio.

LADY CAPULET

Tybalt, my cousin! O my brother's child! Prince, as thou art true,

For blood of ours, shed blood of Montague!

PRINCE

Benvolio, who began this bloody fray?

BENVOLIO

Tybalt, here slain, whom Romeo's hand did slay.

PRINCE

And for that offence, immediately we do exile him hence.

I have an interest in your hate's proceeding:

My blood for your rude brawls doth lie a-bleeding.

But I'll inflict you with so strong a fine

That you shall all repent the loss of mine!

Let Romeo hence be banished from Verona,

Else, when he's found, that hour is his last!

[All exit. Blackout]

ACT 2, SCENE 2

[Capulet house. Lights up on JULIET sitting on R.P.]

JULIET

Come, night. Come, Romeo. Come thou day in night.

Give me my tiny Romeo, and when he shall die,

Take him and cut him out in little stars,

And he will make the face of heav'n so fine

That all the world will be in love with night

O, here comes my Nurse,

And she brings news, and every tongue that speaks

But Romeo's name speaks heavenly eloquence.

[NURSE enters]

Now, Nurse, what news? Why dost thou wring thy hands?

NURSE

Ah, weraday! He's dead, he's dead, he's dead!

We are undone, lady, we are undone!

Alack the day! He's gone, he's killed, he's dead!

JULIET

Can heaven be so envious?

NURSE

Romeo can, though heaven cannot. O Romeo, Romeo!

Whoever would have thought it? Romeo!

JULIET

What devil art thou that dost torment me thus?

Hath Romeo slain himself?

NURSE

I saw the wound, I saw it with mine eyes

—God save the mark—here on his manly breast.

JULIET

O, break, my heart!

NURSE

O Tybalt, Tybalt, the best friend I had!

O courteous Tybalt, honest gentleman!

That ever I should live to see thee dead!

JULIET

What storm is this that blows so contrary?

Is Romeo slaughtered and is Tybalt dead?

My dearest cousin, and my dearer lord?

NURSE

Tybalt is gone, and Romeo banishèd. Romeo that killed him, he is banishèd.

JULIET

O God! Did Romeo's hand shed Tybalt's blood?

NURSE

It did, it did, alas the day, it did!

JULIET

O, that deceit should dwell in such a gorgeous palace!

NURSE

There's no trust, No faith, no honesty in men. All perjured,
All forsworn, all naught, all dissemblers. Shame come to Romeo!

JULIET

Blistered be thy tongue for such a wish! He was not born to shame!
Upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit,
For 'tis a throne where honor may be crowned
Sole monarch of the universal earth!
O, what a beast was I to chide at him!

NURSE

Will you speak well of him that killed your cousin?

JULIET

Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?
That villain cousin would have killed my husband.
And Tybalt's dead, that would have slain my husband.
But Romeo is exiled. Come, Nurse, I'll to my wedding-bed,
And Death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead! *[JULIET collapses in a heap sobbing. NURSE crosses to JULIET to comfort her.]*

NURSE

Hie to your chamber. I'll find Romeo
To comfort you. I know well where he is.
Hark ye, your Romeo will be here at night.
I'll go to him. He is hid at Lawrence' cell.

JULIET

O, find him! Give this ring to my true knight, *[hands her a ring]*
And bid him come to take his last farewell.
[NURSE exits. Lights down.]

ACT 2, SCENE 3

[Church, that night. Lights up on FRIAR, ROMEO weeping in the corner.]

FRIAR

Romeo, come forth. Come forth, thou fearful man.

ROMEO

Father, what news? What is the Prince's doom?

FRIAR

Too familiar is my dear son with such sour company.
I bring thee tidings of the Prince's doom.

ROMEO

What less than doomsday is the Prince's doom?

FRIAR

A gentler judgment vanished from his lips: Not body's death, but body's banishment.

ROMEO

Banishment? Be merciful, say "death"!
For exile hath more terror in his look,
Much more than death! Do not say "banishment"!

FRIAR

Hence from Verona art thou banishèd.
But be patient, for the world is broad and wide.

ROMEO

There is no world without Verona walls,
But purgatory, torture, hell itself!
As "banishèd" is "banish'd from the world," then "banishèd" is death.

FRIAR

O deadly sin! O rude unthankfulness!
Thy fault our law calls death, but the kind Prince,
Taking thy part, hath rushed aside the law
And turned that black word "death" to "banishment."
This is dear mercy, and thou see'st it not.

ROMEO

'Tis torture, and not mercy! Heav'n is here
[NURSE knocks at door]

FRIAR

Arise. One knocks. Good Romeo, hide thyself.

ROMEO

Not I, unless the breath of heartsick groans,
Mist-like, enfold me from the search of eyes.
[Knocking]

FRIAR

Hark, how they knock!—Who's there?—Romeo, arise,
Thou wilt be taken!

[Knocking]

—Stay awhile!—Stand up. Run to my study!

[Knocking]

—By and by!—God's will. What simpleness is this!

[Knocking]

—I come, I come!

Who knocks so hard? Whence come you? What's your will?

NURSE [outside]

Let me come in, and you shall know my errand.
I come from Lady Juliet.

FRIAR [opens door]

Welcome then!

NURSE [enters]

O Holy Friar, O, tell me, Holy Friar,
Where is¹ my lady's lord? Where's Romeo?

FRIAR

There on the ground, with his own tears made drunk.

NURSE

O, he is even in my mistress' case,
Even so lies she, blubbering and weeping, weeping and blubbering.
[to ROMEO] Stand up, stand up! Stand, and you be a man!
For Juliet's sake, for her sake, rise and stand!

ROMEO

Nurse. Spake'st thou of Juliet? How is it with her? Doth she not think me an old murderer.
Where is she? And how doth she? And what says my concealed lady to our cancelled love?

NURSE

O, she says nothing, sir, but weeps and weeps,
And now falls on her bed, and then starts up,
And "Tybalt" calls, and then on sweet tiny Romeo cries,
And then down falls again.

ROMEO

As if that name, shot from the deadly level of a gun,
Did murder her, as that name's cursèd hand murdered her kinsman!

FRIAR

Art thou a man? Thy form cries out thou art! Thy tears are womanish.

Thou has't slain Tybalt! Wilt thou slay thyself?

Rouse thee, man! Thy Juliet is alive. There art thou happy!

Tybalt would kill thee, But thou slew'st Tybalt.

There art thou happy!

The law that threatened death becomes thy friend and turns it to exile.

There art thou happy!

[Angrily] But, like a misbehaved and sullen wench,

Thou pouts upon thy fortune and thy love.

[Pauses, reflects]

Go, get thee to thy love, as was decreed. Ascend her chamber hence and comfort her.

But look thou stay not till the watch be set, for then thou canst not pass to Mantua,

Where thou shalt live till we can find a time to blaze your marriage, reconcile your friends,

Beg pardon of the Prince, and call thee back with twenty hundred thousand times more joy

Than thou went'st forth in lamentation.

[to NURSE] Go before, Nurse. Commend me to thy lady,

And bid her hasten all the house to bed, which heavy sorrow makes them apt unto.

Romeo is coming.

NURSE

O Lord, I could have stayed here all the night

To hear good counsel. O, what learning is!

[to ROMEO] My lord, I'll tell my lady you will come!

Here, sir, a ring she bid me give you, sir. *[hands him the ring]*

Hie you, make haste, for it grows very late! *[exits]*

ROMEO

How well my comfort is revived by this!

FRIAR

Go hence, to Mantua. I'll find out your man,

And he shall signify from time to time

Every good hap to you that chances here.

Give me thy hand. 'Tis late. Farewell. Good night.

ROMEO

But that a joy past joy calls out on me,

It were a grief, so brief to part with thee. *[ROMEO takes the Friar's hand and kisses it]*

Farewell.

[ROMEO exits, blackout]

ACT 2, SCENE 4

[Capulet house. LORD CAPULET is in the dress of a Verona noble but he has the accent of a big and boisterous Staten Island wiseguy.]

LORD CAPULET

Things have fallen out, sir, so unluckily

That we have had no time to move our daughter.

Look you, she loved her kinsman Tybalt dearly,

And so did I. Eh, we were born to die.

'Tis very late. She'll not come down tonight.

I promise you, but for your company,

I would have been a-bed an hour ago.

PARIS

These times of woe afford no time to woo.

LORD CAPULET

Sir Paris, Of my child's love, I think she will be ruled

In all respects by me. Nay, more, I doubt it not.

My wife, will acquaint her of my son Paris' love,

And bid her—mark you me?—on Wednesday next—
But soft, what day is this?

PARIS

Monday, my lord.

LORD CAPULET

Monday! Well, Wednesday is too soon.

O' Thursday let it be. She shall be married to this noble earl!

[CAPULET takes PARIS head in his hand and gives him a big kiss on each cheek ... mafia style]

Will you be ready? Do you like this haste? We'll keep² no great ado, a friend or two,

And there an end. But what say you to Thursday?

PARIS

[Putting his hand on Capulet's shoulder] My lord, I would that Thursday were tomorrow!

LORD CAPULET

[Glaring at Paris' hand on his shoulder]

[Quietly] Don't touch me.

[PARIS quickly withdraws his hand]

Well get you gone. O' Thursday be it, then!

[They exit]

ACT 2, SCENE 5

[Juliet's bedroom, dawn. Lights up on ROMEO & JULIET.]

JULIET

Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day.

It was the nightingale, and not the lark,

That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear.

ROMEO

It was the lark, the herald of the morn,

No nightingale.

JULIET

Yon light is not daylight, I know it, I.

ROMEO

I am content, so thou wilt have it so.

Come death, and welcome; Juliet wills it so!

JULIET *[realizing it is late]*

It is, it is! Hie hence, be gone, away!

It is the lark that sings so out of tune,

O, now be gone! More light and light it grows.

ROMEO

More light and light, more dark and dark our woes!

NURSE *[enters]*

(sing-song) Madam! What are you doing in there?

JULIET

[whispers] Nurse!

NURSE

Your lady mother is coming to your chamber! The day is broke. Be wary. Look about! *[exits]*

ROMEO

Yikes! Your mom is coming.

Farewell, farewell! One kiss, and I'll descend.

[They take their original positions on the platforms so that, once, again, they are just out of kissing range. She puckers for a kiss.]

Are thou on thy tip toes?

ROMEO

Aye, alas I am again.

JULIET

Well, then I shall blow thee a kiss again.
I must hear from thee every day in the hour,
For in a minute there are many days.
O, by this count I shall be much in years
Ere I again behold my Romeo!

ROMEO

Farewell! I will omit no opportunity that may convey my greetings, love, to thee.

JULIET

O think'st thou we shall ever meet again?

ROMEO

I doubt it not, and all these woes shall serve for sweet discourses in our time to come.

JULIET

O God, I have an ill-divining soul!
Methinks I see thee, now thou art below,
As one dead in the bottom of a tomb.
Either my eyesight fails, or thou look'st pale.

ROMEO

And trust me, love, in my eye so do you.
Dry sorrow drinks our blood. Adieu, adieu! *[exits]*

JULIET

Text when you get to Mantua!

LADY CAPULET *[off-stage]* Ho, daughter, are you up?

JULIET

Actually .. snapchat me. My nurse reads my messages!
Who is't that calls? It is my lady mother.

Is she up so early?

LADY CAPULET *[enters]*

Why, how now, Juliet?

JULIET

Madam, I am not well.

LADY CAPULET

Evermore weeping for your cousin's death? As that the villain lives which slaughtered him.

JULIET

What villain madam?

LADY CAPULET

That same villain Romeo.

JULIET

I love Romeo!

LADY CAPULET

What??

JULIET *[Correcting herself]*

I'd .. love .. Romeo's name upon a tombstone inscribed for all to see.

But, God pardon him. I do, with all my heart.

And yet no man like he doth grieve my heart.

LADY CAPULET

That is because the traitor murd'rer lives.

JULIET

Ay, madam, from the reach of these my hands.

Would none but I might hold Romeo thus *[demonstrates a loving embrace. Changes to miming the throttling of ROMEO when LADY CAPULET looks at her.]*

.... And revenge my cousin's death!

LADY CAPULET

We will have vengeance for it, fear thou not!

JULIET

Indeed, I never shall be satisfied with Romeo till I behold him in my bed.

I meandead...

O, how my heart abhors to hear him named and cannot come to him..

[LADY CAPULET looks at her]

To wreak the love I bore my cousin upon his body thus.*[‘Longing for him’ changes to pantomime of beating him.]*

LADY CAPULET

But now I'll tell thee joyful tidings, girl!

JULIET

And joy comes well in such a needy time. What are they, I beseech your ladyship?

LADY CAPULET

Well, well, thou hast a careful father, child,
One who, to put thee from thy heaviness,
Hath sorted out a sudden day of joy
That thou expects not, nor I looked not for.

JULIET

Madam, in happy time! What day is that?

LADY CAPULET

Marry, my child, early next Thursday morn,
The gallant, young and noble gentleman,
The County Paris, at Saint Peter's Church,
Shall happily make thee there a joyful bride!

JULIET

[Screeches .. throws tantrum]

Now, by Saint Peter's Church and Peter too,
He shall not make me there a joyful bride!

LADY CAPULET

He beith a fine man and goodly to behold!

JULIET *(pauses)*

That mayest well be....

LADY CAPULET

And he is rich.

JULIET

How rich?

LADY CAPULET

Fabulously!

JULIET

[Thinks about it for a few moments]

No.. no...

I pray you, tell my lord and father, madam,
I will not marry yet! And, when I do, I swear,
It shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate,
Rather than Paris. These are news indeed!

LADY CAPULET

Here comes your father. Tell him so yourself,
And see how he will take it at your hands.

[CAPULET & NURSE enter]

JULIET

[gingerly....]

Hi daddy...

LORD CAPULET

What, still in tears?

How now, wife!

Have you delivered to her our decree?

LADY CAPULET

Yes.

LORD CAPULET

Oh! Very good ... and?

LADY CAPULET

...and ...*[she moves further away]*

LORD CAPULET

...AND...

LADY CAPULET

...she.. saith...

...nay!

LORD CAPULET

Wait ... wait. What. Help me with this. Saith she nay?

Doth she not give us thanks?

Is she not proud? Doth she not count her blest,

Unworthy as she is, that we have wrought

So worthy a gentleman to be her bridegroom⁵?

He is rich, handsome, famous, manly, has great muscular arms.

JULIET

[Hesitates] He is rich?

LORD CAPULET

Aye!

JULIET

.. and he hath great muscular arms?

LORD CAPULET

Massive!

JULIET

[..considers..]

Welllllll.....No, no I shall not abandon my Romeo, even for massive muscular arms..

Father, I cannot marry on Thursday next.

Good father, I beseech you on my knees,

Hear me with patience but to speak a word.

LORD CAPULET

Hang thee, young baggage! Disobedient wretch!

I tell thee what: get thee to church o' Thursday,

Or never after look me in the face!

Speak not, reply not, do not answer me!

My fingers itch!—Wife, we scarce thought us blest

That God had lent us but this only child,

But now I see this one is one too much,

And that we have a curse in having her.

NURSE

God in heav'n bless her!

You are to blame, my lord, to rate her so!

LORD CAPULET

And why, my Lady Wisdom? Hold your tongue,

Good Prudence! Smatter with your gossips, go!

NURSE

I speak no treason—

May not one speak?

LORD CAPULET

Peace, you mumbling fool!

Utter your gravity o'er a gossip's¹ bowl,

For here we need it not!

LADY CAPULET

You are too hot!

LORD CAPULET

God's bread! It makes me mad!

To answer "I'll not wed; I cannot love,

I am too young, I pray you pardon me!"
[to Juliet] But if you will not wed, I'll "pardon" you:
Graze where you will, you shall not house with me!
Look to't. Think on't. I do not use to jest!
Thursday is near. If you be mine, I'll give you to my friend.
If you be not, hang! Beg! Starve! Die in the streets!
For, by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee!
Trust to't. Bethink you. I'll not be forsworn!

[exits]

JULIET

[After a beat] He'll get over it.

LADY CAPULET

Talk not to me,

JULIET (*kneels*)

O, sweet my mother, cast me not away!
Delay this marriage for a month! A week!
Or if you do not, make the bridal bed
In that dim monument where Tybalt lies.

LADY CAPULET

I'll not speak a word.

Do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee. [exits]

JULIET

O God! O Nurse, how shall this be prevented?
Alack, alack, that heav'n should practice stratagems
Upon so soft a subject as myself!
What say'st thou? Hast thou not a word of joy?
Some comfort, Nurse. (*NURSE beckons JULIET to sit on LP, arranges her hair*)

NURSE

Faith, here it is.

Romeo is banished, and since the case so stands as now it doth,
I think it best you married with the County Paris.

JULIET (*abruptly stands*) WHAT?

NURSE O, he's a lovely gentleman!

Your first is dead, or as good as,
since you have no use of him.

JULIET

Speakest thou from thy heart?

NURSE

And from my soul too, else beshrew them both.

JULIET

Amen.

NURSE

What?

JULIET

Well, thou hast comforted me marvelous much.
Go in and tell my lady I am gone,
Having displeased my father, to Lawrence' cell,
To make confession and to be absolved.

NURSE

Merry, I will; and this is wisely done. [exits]

JULIET

Most wicked fiend of a nurse!
... to wish me to thus forswear my Romeo?
Go, counselor.
Thou shall henceforth never again hear my secrets

I'll to the Friar to know his remedy.
If all else fail, myself have power to die. *[exits]*

ACT 2, SCENE 6

[Church, later that day.]

FRIAR

On Thursday, sir? The time is very short.

PARIS

My father Capulet will have it so,

FRIAR

You say you do not know the lady's mind?

Uneven is the course. I like it not.

PARIS

Immoderately she weeps for Tybalt's death,
And therefore have I little talked of love,
For Venus smiles not in a house of tears.
Now, sir, her father counts it dangerous
That she doth give her sorrow so much sway,
And in his wisdom hastes our marriage
To stop the inundation of her tears,
Now do you know the reason of this haste.

FRIAR

[aside] I wish I knew not why it should be slowed.

[JULIET enters]

Look, sir, here comes the lady toward my cell.

PARIS

Happily met, my lady and my wife!

JULIET

That may be, sir, when I may be a wife.

PARIS

That "may be" must be, love, on Thursday next.

JULIET

What must be shall be.

PARIS

Come you to make confession to the Friar¹?

JULIET

None of your business.

PARIS

Poor soul, thy face is much abused with tears.

Thy face is mine.

JULIET

Yea right.

[to FRIAR] Are you at leisure, Holy Father, now,
Or shall I come to you at evening mass?

FRIAR

My leisure serves me, pensive daughter, now.

[to him] My lord, we must entreat the time alone.

PARIS

God shield I should disturb devotion! —

Juliet, on Thursday early will I rouse you.

Till then, adieu, and keep this holy kiss. *[She turns away, preventing the kiss. He bows, exits]*

JULIET

O, shut the door, and when thou hast done so,
Come weep with me, past hope, past cure, past help!

FRIAR

O Juliet, I already know thy grief.
It strains me past the compass of my wits.
I hear thou must, and nothing may prorogue it,
On Thursday next be married to this County.

JULIET

Tell me not, Friar, that thou hear'st of this,
Unless thou tell me how I may prevent it!
If in thy wisdom thou canst give no help,
Do thou but call my resolution wise,
And with this knife I'll help it presently!
[threatens to stab herself]

FRIAR

Hold, daughter! I do spy a kind of hope,
Which craves as desperate an execution
As that is desperate which we would prevent.
If, rather than to marry County Paris,
Thou hast the strength of will to slay thyself,
Then is it likely thou wilt undertake
A thing like death to chide away this shame,
And if thou dare'st, I'll give thee remedy.

JULIET

O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,
From off the battlements of any tower,
Or hide me nightly in a graveyard
Or bid me go into a new-made grave
And hide me with a dead man in his shroud⁴

FRIAR

Hold, then. Go home, be merry. Give consent
To marry Paris. Wednesday is tomorrow.
Tomorrow night look that thou lie alone.
Let not thy Nurse lie with thee in thy chamber.
Take thou this vial, being then in bed,
And this distilling liquor drink thou off.
When presently through all thy veins shall run
A cold and drowsy humor, for no pulse
Shall keep his native progress, but surcease.
No warmth, no breath shall testify thou live'st.
The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade
Like Death when he shuts up the day of life.
And in this borrowed likeness of shrunk death
Thou shalt continue two and forty hours,
And then awake as from a pleasant sleep.
Now, when the nurse in the morning comes
To rouse thee from thy bed, there art thou dead.
Then, thou shalt be borne to that same ancient vault
Where all the kindred of the Capulets lie.
In the meantime, against thou shalt awake,
Shall Romeo by my letters know our plan
And hither shall he come, and he and I
Will watch thy waking, and that very night
Shall Romeo bear thee hence to Mantua.
And this shall free thee from this present shame,

JULIET

What does it taste like?

FRIAR

A potion mild it is.

JULIET

I hate spicy drinks.

FRIAR

A small price for a blessed resolution.

JULIET

Gluten giveth me pimpleless. Has it gluten?

FRIAR

Nay tiresome one, it containeth not glute.

JULIET

Very well!

FRIAR

Hold. Get you gone. Be strong and prosperous

In this resolve. I'll send a friend with speed

To Mantua with my letter to thy lord explaining our plan.

JULIET

Love give me strength, and strength shall help afford!

Farewell, dear Father!

[They exit. Blackout]

ACT 2, SCENE 7

[Capulet house, almost night.]

[BENVOLIO enters in spotlight]

BENVOLIO

So the plan is laid.

Romeo waits in Mantua for word of when he can return.

Juliet will straighten things with her father, agree to marry Paris,

And then Juliet will take a potion that will make her appear to be dead.

Be buried in her crypt. The Friar wrote this note to tell Romeo

About the plan and the potion and that Juliet is not really dead, she just

Looks that way.

Foolproof .. what could go wrong.

Will!

[WILL, the stage manager, comes out dressed in his stage crew blacks with a headset and clipboard. BENVOLIO hands him a letter in an envelope.]

Could you make sure that Romeo gets this – it is very important so give it to him personally.

Put it in his hands. If he doesn't get it, he will come back here thinking that Juliet is dead,

And not know it is just a trick to get him and her safely out of here. Got it? *[WILL takes notes on his clipboard.]*

WILL

Sure.

[BENVOLIO exits. WILL looks around and calls to the lighting board operator, ROBBY]

Robby. Are you busy?

ROBBY

[Sarcastically] No Will, not at all, why?

WILL

Could you come here for a minute, I need your help.

[ROBBY comes down from the lighting booth and joins WILL in the spotlight.]

Could you make sure that Romeo gets this – it is very important so give it to him personally.

Put it in his hands. If he doesn't get it, he will come back here thinking that Juliet is dead,

And not know it is just a trick to get him and her safely out of here. Got it? Are you sure?

[WILL exits quickly]

ROBBY

[Looks around considering his options. Finally, he turns upstage and calls for PHIL/LORD CAPULET/MERCUTIO.]

Hey Phil!

[PHIL comes on from SL in his LORD CAPULET costume but without his LORD CAPULET wig and joins ROBBY in the spotlight.]

PHIL

Yes?

ROBBY

What are you doing?

PHIL

I am getting ready for Lord Capulet in the next scene. *[ROBBY hands him the letter.]*

ROBBY

Could you make sure that Romeo gets this – it is very important so give it to him personally. Put it in his hands. Okay. Phil, stay with me here, alright? If he doesn't get it, he will come back here thinking that Juliet is dead, and not know it is just a trick to get them safely out of here. Got it? Seriously, this is a big deal, got it?

PHIL

Yes, yes, sure, I got it.

[ROBBY returns to the lighting board. PHIL looks around at audience and chooses one of the Patrons. Spotlight follows him wherever he goes.]

Excuse me. Firstly .. did you buy your ticket or did you get in for free?

[Wait for answer]

OK good. Could you make sure that Romeo gets this – it is very important so give it to him personally. Put it in his hands. If he doesn't get it, he will come back here thinking that Juliet is dead, and not know it is just a trick to get him and her safely out of here. Got it?

Thanks .. I would do it but I'm on as Lord Capulet in the next scene and I haven't quite memorized all of my lines. *[Turns to leave and then turns back for a fist bump with audience member. Before he can reach the stage, lights come up and the NURSE enters.]*

NURSE

Lord Capulet! *[PHIL is startled]* I did not expect to find thee consorting with the audience.. and without thy hair! *[The NURSE is holding LORD CAPULET's wig behind his back and tosses it to him across the stage.]*

LORD CAPULET

[As he puts on his wig and says with embarrassment ...] Eh ... So many guests! *[To NURSE]*

So, has my daughter gone to Friar Lawrence?

NURSE

Ay, forsooth.

LORD CAPULET

Well, he may chance to do some good on her.

A peevish self-willed tramp it is.

[JULIET enters]

NURSE

See where she comes from shrift with merry look. *[LADY CAPULET enters]*

LORD CAPULET

How now, my headstrong! Where have you been gadding?

JULIET

Where I have learned me to repent the sin

Of disobedient opposition

To you and your behests, and am commanded

By Holy Lawrence to fall prostrate here

To beg your pardon. Pardon, I beseech you.

Henceforward I am ever ruled by you. *[JULIET kneels before her father.]*

LORD CAPULET

This is great! This is very nice!

Send for the County! Go tell him of this!

I'll have this knot knit up tomorrow morning!

JULIET

I met the youthful lord at Lawrence' cell

And gave him what becomèd love I might,
Not stepping o'er the bounds of modesty.

LORD CAPULET

Why, I am glad on't! This is well! Stand up!
This is as't should be! — Now, afore God, this reverend Holy Friar,
All our whole city is much bound to him.

LADY CAPULET

We shall be short in our provision.

'Tis now near night!

LORD CAPULET

Tush, I will stir about,
And all things shall be well, I warrant thee, wife.
I'll not to bed tonight. Let me alone.
My heart is wondrous light
Since this same wayward girl is so reclaimed!

[He exits]

JULIET

Gentle Nurse,
I pray thee, leave me to myself tonight,
For I have need of many prayers
To move the heavens to smile upon my state,
Which, well thou know'st, is cross and full of sin.

LADY CAPULET

Need you my help?

JULIET

No, madam. So please you, let me now be left alone,
And let the Nurse this night sit up with you;
For I am sure you have your hands full all
In this so sudden business.

LADY CAPULET

Good night. Get thee to bed and rest, for thou hast need.

[They exit]

JULIET

Farewell. God knows when we shall meet again.
I have a faint cold fear which thrills through my veins
That almost freezes up the heat of life.
Come, vial. What if this mixture do not work at all?
What if it tastes bad and merely giveth me heartburn?
Shall I be married then tomorrow morning?
No, no, this shall forbid it. *[Takes a dagger and puts it by the bed]*
Romeo, I come! This do I drink to thee. *[She drinks]*
Oh that is really nasty! Uh oh...

[She falls back onto the Right Platform.]

[Light slowly fades on JULIET. Lights up SL on LORD CAPULET's entrance.]

ACT 2, SCENE 8

[Capulet house, before dawn. NURSE enters with basket doing busy work.]

LORD CAPULET *[enters]*

Come, stir, stir, stir! The second cock hath crowed;
Go waken Juliet. Go and trim her up!
I'll go and chat with Paris. Hie, make haste,
Make haste! The bridegroom he is come already!
Make haste, I say! *[He exits]*

NURSE

[NURSE sees JULIET lying on the Right Platform across stage]

What, dressed? And in your clothes? And down again?

I must needs wake you. Lady? Lady? Lady!—

[*NURSE shrieks*]

Alas, alas! Help, help! My lady's dead!

LORD CAPULET [*enters*]

What noise is here?

NURSE

O lamentable day!

LORD CAPULET

What is the matter? Bring Juliet forth! Her lord is come.

NURSE

She's dead, deceased! She's dead! Alack the day!

LORD CAPULET

What? Let me see her.

[*LORD CAPULET rushes to JULIET. The next lines are very big, over-dramatic, and comical with much crying and weeping.*]

Out, alas! She's cold!

Her blood is settled, and her joints are stiff!

[*He begins to give her CPR and chest compressions*]

Life and these lips have long been separated!

Death lies on her like an untimely frost

Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.

NURSE

O lamentable day!

LORD CAPULET

Death, that hath ta'en her hence to make me wail,

[*FRIAR enters*]

FRIAR

Come, is the bride ready to go to church?

LORD CAPULET

[*Rushes to FRIAR and throws himself on him with much wailing – very over-the-top*]

Ready to go, but never to return.—

She's dead, holy friar, she's dead; Death is my heir.

FRIAR

Sir, go you in, And go. Everyone prepare

To follow this fair course unto her grave.

[*All exit except the FRIAR who gently picks up JULIET's arm and lays it across her breast.*]

Perfect!

[*Exit FRIAR.*]

ACT 2, SCENE 9 [*Mantua, that afternoon.*]

[*BENVILIO rushes on from SL*]

BENVOLIO

Meanwhile back in Mantua ... [*BENVOLIO rushes off*]

ROMEO

If I may trust the flattering truth of sleep,

My dreams presage some joyful news at hand.

[*Peter enters, very sad and solemn.*]

News from Verona!—How now, Peter! Page of my Lady wife's nurse.

Dost thou not bring me letters from the Friar or my lady?

How doth my lady? Is my father well?

How fares my Juliet? That I ask again,

For nothing can be ill if she be well.

PETER

Then she is well and nothing can be ill. [*pause*]

Her body sleeps in Capel's monument,
And her immortal part with angels lives.
I saw her laid low in her kindred's vault,

ROMEO

Art thou sure?

PETER

Aye, my lord.

ROMEO

Then I defy you, stars! —

Go hire horses. I will hence tonight.

PETER

I do beseech you, sir, have patience!

Your looks are pale and wild, and do import
Some misadventure.

ROMEO

Tush, thou art deceived!

Leave me, and do the thing I bid thee do.

Hast thou no letters to me from the Friar?

PETER

No, my good lord.

ROMEO

No matter. Get thee gone,

And hire those horses. I'll be with thee straight.

[PETER exits]

Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee tonight.

I do remember an apothec'ry,

And hereabouts he dwells, which late I noted

In tattered weeds, with overwhelming brows,

What, ho! Apothec'ry!

APOTHECARY *[enters]*

Who calls so loud?

ROMEO

Come hither, man. I see that thou art poor.

Hold, there is forty ducats. Let me have a dram of poison,

APOTHECARY

Such mortal drugs I have, but Mantua's law

Is death to any he that utters them.

ROMEO

Art thou so bare and full of wretchedness,

And fear'st to die? Famine is in thy cheeks,

Need and oppression starveth in thy eyes,

Contempt and beggary hangs upon thy back.

APOTHECARY

OK OK You don't have to rub it in.

Be kind to me lest I turn thee into a toad.

My poverty, but not my will, consents.

Put this in any liquid thing you will

And drink it, and if you had the strength

Of twenty men, it would dispatch you straight.

ROMEO *[Hands him the money]*

There is thy gold,

Farewell. Buy food and get thyself in flesh.

[APOTHECARY exits]

Come, cordial and not poison, go with me

To Juliet's grave, for there must I use thee. *[exits. Blackout]*

ACT 2, SCENE 10

[WILL enters from SR in spotlight and looks up at the lighting booth.]

WILL

Hey Robby?

ROBBY

Yes?

WILL

Did you give that very important letter to Romeo?

ROBBY

I gave it to Phil.

FRIAR

Phil? Are you serious. *[To the audience]* An icy coldness courses through my veins.

Phil!

[PHIL enters]

Please tell me you delivered that letter to Romeo in Mantua.

[PHIL just looks down nervously and then slowly goes to the audience member who has the letter, all the time making excuses about learning his lines and finally retrieves the letter from the audience member and puts it behind his back.]

PHIL

I've been really busy working the last scene as Lord Capulet. I am trying to really capture the anguish and horror ... I'll um .. deliver it now. *[He rushes off.]*

[WILL]

NO!!!!!!

[lights out]

ACT 2, SCENE 11 *[Capulets mausoleum. JULIET is laying on the Right Platform. All lights out except for faint light on JULIET.]*

[Enter PARIS and PETER]

PARIS *[with flashlight and sword from SL]*

This graveyard is dark. Give me thy torch, boy. Hence and stand aloof.

Give me those flowers. Do as I bid thee, go.

PETER *[aside]*

I am almost afraid to stand alone

Here in the churchyard, yet I will adventure. *[hides]*

PARIS *[Scattering flowers over the tomb]*

Sweet flower, with flowers thy bridal bed I strew.

[PETER whistles]

The boy gives warning something doth approach.

What cursèd foot wanders this way tonight

What, with a torch! Muffle me, night, awhile. *[hides]*

[ROMEO enters with BENVOLIO with flashlight]

ROMEO

Give me the light. Upon thy life, I charge thee,

Whate'er thou hear'st or see'st, stand all aloof,

And do not interrupt me in my course.

Why I descend into this bed of death

Is partly to behold my lady's face,

But chiefly to take thence from her dead finger

A precious ring, a ring that I must use

In dear employment. Therefore hence, be gone.

BENVOLIO

I will trouble ye, dear cuz, and stay, for I fear a subtle madness in thy proceedings.

ROMEO

So shalt thou show me friendship thus, good fellow. Go.

BENVOLIO *[aside]*

For all this same, I'll hide me hereabout.

His looks I fear, and his intents I doubt. *[hides as ROMEO approaches the tomb.]*

PARIS

[aside] This is that banish'd haughty Montague
That murdered my love's cousin, with which grief
It is supposed the fair creature died!

And here is come to do some villainous shame

To the dead bodies! I will apprehend him.

[to ROMEO] Stop, vile Montague!

Can vengeance be pursued further than death?

Condemned villain, I do apprehend thee!

Obey, and go with me, for thou must die!

ROMEO

Good gentle youth, tempt not a desperate man!

Fly hence, and leave me!

Put not another sin upon my head,

By heav'n, I love thee better than myself,

PARIS

I do defy thy threats,

And apprehend thee for a felon here.

ROMEO

Wilt thou provoke me? Then have at thee, boy!

[ROMEO shines his flashlight in PARIS' eyes.]

PARIS

O, I am blind!

[ROMEO takes his sword and skewers PARIS.]

O, I am slain! *[falls]* If thou be merciful,

lay me with Juliet. *[dies]*

ROMEO

In your dreams. *[ROMEO kneels at the crypt]*

Here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes

This vault a feasting presence full of light.

O my love! My wife!

Death, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath,

Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty.

Ah, dear Juliet, why art thou yet so fair? I still will stay with thee,

And never from this palace of dim night

Depart again. Here, here will I remain

With worms that are thy chambermaids. O, here

Will I set up my everlasting rest,

From this world-wearied flesh. Eyes, look your last.

Arms, take your last embrace. And lips, O, you

The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss

Come, bitter conduct, come, unsavory guide,

Here's to my love! *[Drinks and kisses her.]*

Thus with a kiss I die. *[falls]*

FRIAR *[enters with flashlight]*

Saint Francis be my speed!—Who's there?

BENVOLIO

Here's one, a friend, and one that knows you well.

FRIAR

Bliss be upon you! Tell me, good my friend,

What torch is yond, that vainly lends his light

To grubs and eyeless skulls? As I discern,

It burneth in the Capel's monument.

BENVOLIO

It doth so, Holy sir, and there's my master,
One that you love.

FRIAR

Who is it?

BENVOLIO

Romeo.

FRIAR

How long hath he been there?

BENVOLIO

Full half an hour.

FRIAR

Go with me to the vault.

BENVOLIO

I dare not, sir.

My cousin knows not but I am gone hence,
And fearfully did menace me with death
If I did stay to look on his intents.

FRIAR

Stay, then. I'll go alone. Fear comes upon me.

O, much I fear some ill unthrifty thing.

FRIAR

Romeo! Alack, alack, what blood is this, which stains
The stony entrance of this sepulchre?

[enters tomb]

Romeo! O, pale! Who else? What, Paris too?
And steeped in blood? Ah, what an unkind hour
Is guilty of this lamentable chance!

[JULIET wakes]

The lady stirs!

JULIET

O comfortable Friar, where is my tiny lord?

I do remember well where I should be,

And there I am. Where is my Romeo?

[Offstage: "What ho, My lord!"]

FRIAR

I hear some noise! Lady, come from this nest

Of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep.

A greater power than we can contradict

Hath thwarted our intents! Come, come away!

Come, go, good Juliet! I dare no longer stay!

JULIET

Go, get thee hence, for I will not away!

[FRIAR exits]

[JULIET sees PARIS.] Oh .. that's just nasty.

[finds ROMEO and lets out a blood curdling scream].

[ROMEO sits up startled]

Oh my child groom. My babe in arms. My elfin lover.

ROMEO

[Gets up]

OK, this is getting a bit old. Look I am not that small. I am 5' 5" tall. I just have not hit my
Late teen growing spurt.

JULIET

Oh I carest not about size, my child. All I care about is that we shall live together forever
In love and happiness in a nice big house with servants and nurses to care for our children,
Just as I was raised.

ROMEO

[They both sit on the Right Platform facing the audience].

Well, I have some good news, some bad, news, and some news that is even worse still.
Which would you like to hear first?

JULIET

I am brave, by deft mab's bonnet I can bear the worst news.

ROMEO

OK, the good news. I love you more than life itself!

JULIET

Oh! And I loveth you! ... and the bad?

ROMEO

I just dispatched the County Paris, there slain. Second man I slew in the same week.
Not good.

JULIET

... and the worst news yet.

ROMEO

I just drank an ounce of the deadliest poison known to man.

JULIET

But why?

ROMEO

Hello?

Because I heard you were dead and found you in a crypt in your father's mausoleum.

JULIET

Didn't you get the Friar's letter?

ROMEO

What letter?

[PHIL comes sprinting onstage with the letter, stops, sees body. He is obviously too late.]

PHIL

I'll .. uh .. just .. uh .. leave this letter here .. for you .. to read .. um whenever.

[He hands the letter to ROMEO and slinks off stage. ROMEO opens the letter and reads it.]

ROMEO

This is a great plan! Friar thought this up? This is perfect. .. Uh oh..

[He falls back on to the Right Platform and really dies.]

JULIET

[Gasps] Oh, my Romeo!

What's here? A vial, closed in my true love's hand?

Poison, I see, that hath been his timeless end.

O churl! Drunk all, and left no friendly drop

To help me after? I will kiss thy lips.

Haply some poison yet doth hang on them

To make me die. *[She leans over to kiss ROMEO. Then reconsiders.]*

Maybe not ... germs. *[Offstage: "What ho, My lord!"]*

JULIET

A noise? Then I'll be brief.

[finding ROMEO's dagger]

O, happy dagger!

This is thy sheath! *[stabs herself]*

There rust, and let me die. *[She dies. ROBBY and BILLY enter]*

BILLY

This is the place.

ROBBY

The ground is bloody. Pitiful sight! Here lies the County slain,
And Juliet bleeding, warm, and newly dead,
Go, tell the Prince. Run to the Capulets.
Raise up the Montagues.

PRINCE *[enters with JOE]*

What misadventure is so early up

That calls our person from our morning rest?

[Lights come up for the remainder of the scene. A GUARD is supposed to enter with Friar but the FRIAR comes in, alone, a bit confused with his hand held out together as if being led by an imaginary guard. He comes over to BENVOLIO and whispers in his ear. They exchange words and looks. Then finally, BENVOLIO steps to the lower platform.]

BENVOLIO

It looks like we are short an actor to play the part of the guard. So, we will need a volunteer from the audience to help. Lets see. *[BENVOLIO chooses an audience member to portray the GUARD.]*

Could you come up here, it will just take a few minutes. Don't be bashful.

Will! *[WILL comes out with script.]*

What is the line?

WILL

"Here is a friar that trembles, sighs and weeps."

BENVOLIO

[To the audience victim.] Can you repeat that line?

[Audience victim says the line.]

Again.

[Audience victim says the line.]

One more time.

[Audience victim says the line.]

Good, OK, We need you to play the guard who brings the Friar in. So, you lead him in, bow to the Prince, and say your line.

[BENVOLIO rehearses the entrance of the GUARD and FRIAR and the line. This should take several tries looking for volume and intensity. Help the person find the character. Get the cast's opinion for each try. Finally, when everyone is happy with his performance you can let him/her go and solicit applause from the audience.]

GUARD

Here is a friar that trembles, sighs and weeps.

[GUARD exits]

BENVOLIO

[Solicits an applause for guard]

PRINCE

What fear is this which startles in our ears?

ROBBY

Sovereign, here lies the County Paris slain,

And Romeo dead, and Juliet, dead before,

Warm and new killed.

PRINCE

Search, seek, and know how this foul murder comes!

BILLY

Here is the Friar, and slaughtered Romeo's man,

LORD CAPULET

O heavens! O look how my daughter bleeds!

PRINCE

Come, Montague, for thou art early up

To see thy son and heir now early down.

LORD MONTAGUE

Alas, my liege, my wife is dead tonight.

Grief of my son's exile hath stopped her breath.

What further woe conspires against mine age?

PRINCE

Look, and thou shalt see.

LORD MONTAGUE

O! What manner is in this,
To go before thy father to a grave?

PRINCE

Quiet your outcries
Till we can clear these ambiguities
Bring forth the parties of suspicion.

FRIAR

I am the greatest, able to do least,
Yet most suspected, as the time and place

PRINCE

Then say at once what thou dost know in this.

FRIAR

I will be brief.

Romeo, there dead, was husband to that Juliet,
And she, there dead, that's Romeo's faithful wife.
I married them. Then gave I her, A sleeping potion, which wrought on her
The form of death. Meantime I writ to Romeo
That he should hither come as this dire night
To help to take her from her borrowed grave,
But PHIL, who bore my letter of explanation to Romeo,
Was much occupied in learning his lines for other scenes
And so, the letter remained undelivered.

PRINCE

We still have known thee for a holy man.—
Where's Romeo's cousin? What can he say to this?

BENVOLIO

Informed of Juliet's death came Romeo from Mantua
To this same place, to this same monument.

PRINCE

Where be these enemies? Capulet! Montague!
See what a scourge is laid upon your hate,
That heav'n finds means to kill your joys with love!
And I for winking at your discords too
Have lost a brace of kinsmen! All are punished!
All are punished!

LORD CAPULET

O brother Montague, give me thy hand.
For my daughter's sake, no more can I demand.

LORD MONTAGUE But I can give thee more,
For I will raise her statue in pure gold,
That while Verona by that name is known,
There shall no figure at such rate be set
As that of true and faithful Juliet.

LORD CAPULET

As rich shall Romeo's by his lady's lie,
Poor sacrifices of our enmity!

[they begin to leave .. Capulet pauses]

You know I was pondering your nephew Benvolio. He is handsome
And goodly, and of popular acclaim in Verona. I have a niece that would
Be a worthy match for him.

LORD MONTAGUE

Is she fair?

LORD CAPULET

One of the fairest in the land.

[They begin to exit]

LORD MONTAGUE

What is her name?

LORD CAPULET

Rosaline.

LORD MONTAGUE

Marvelous.

LORD CAPULET

Do you smoke cigars... *[as they leave]*

BENVOLIO

Although this tale is neigh to finish

Your own opinion we'll not diminish

So aft' this pause, you shall be sad

Unless you deign to go home glad

For now the end on you depending

Will it be sad or happy ending?

All in favor of the traditional ending, raiseth thy hands

All in favor of a happy ending raiseth thy hands

[Here BENVOLIO takes account of the audience vote and appropriately proceeds to either the traditional or the happy ending.]

*[If the **Traditional ending** is chosen...]*

The traditional ending you did choose.

Veiled within these graying hues.

A glooming peace this morning with it brings.

The sun, for sorrow, will not show his head.

Go hence to have more talk of these sad things.

Some shall be pardoned, and some punished.

For never was a story of more woe

Than this of Juliet and my cousin Romeo.

[Lights down. All exit.]

*[If the **Happy Ending** is chosen...]*

BENVOLIO

A happy ending we shall see
For as you choose, so shall it be.

[Blackout. This entire scene is done with no stage lighting except for the actor's flashlights. As such, a good bright LED flashlight works best with a wide beam. For the premiere production, Ustopfire Super Bright 2000 Lumen XM-L2 flashlights were used. The actors must light their fellow actors when they are speaking. The PRINCE lights himself with his flashlight to give his entrance line.]

[ROMEO and JULIET lie on RP, JULIET on left, ROMEO on right, feet facing the audience. ROMEO and JULIET simultaneously awaken and slowly turn and sit on the platform almost back to back, pick up flashlights facing away from each other. Increasingly aware that someone is behind them they very slowly turn their flashlights upstage. They finally turn and confront each other. They simultaneously stand and screech at each other, point at each other and screech again, and then drop behind each side of RP. They each slowly get up and shine the flashlight at each other just peering over the edge.]

JULIET

Art thou a spirit? Begone from this place and haunt me not.

ROMEO

Juliet! Thou livest?

[They both rise and examine each other]

JULIET

Is it truly my Romeo?

ROMEO

It is.

[They kneel on the Right Platform and embrace]

JULIET

Oh Romeo, Romeo, Romeo.

ROMEO

Oh Juliet, Juliet, Juliet.

JULIET

Oh Romeo, Romeowait....

How is it that thou art still alive?

ROMEO

I was about to ask the same of thee.

JULIET

Where is thy poison?

[She finds the vial of poison and holds it up to examine it closely with her flashlight. She gasps.]

Look here ... at the date. This poison didn't expire five years ago!

ROMEO

[Takes it from and examines it]

Wretched apothecary.

But stop...

How did'st thou not perish from the mortal wound of the dagger?

[JULIET produces the dagger.]

JULIET

In truth, I faint at the sight of blood. The weapon is but a stage prop ... see?

[She demonstrates stabbing herself several times with the prop knife that has a spring-loaded blade that collapses when one is stabbed. Finally, playing around, she stabs ROMEO. He opens his eyes wide and gasps holding the knife.]

ROMEO

I think it stuck open ...

[JULIET gasps]

[He finally withdraws the knife and smiles].

I jest!

JULIET

What shall we do?

[FRIAR, BENVOLIO, and ROSALINE approach from HR].

FRIAR

Benvolio, giveth me the jar of Holy Water to bless this place.

ROMEO

But soft, methinks I hearest movement!

JULIET

Perhaps it is the spirt of Tybalt?

ROMEO

Extinguish thy torch, lest we betray ourselves to these foul demons of the night.

[They extinguish their torches and huddle together. FRIAR slowly makes his way in followed by BENVOLIO and ROSALINE. Finally his torch falls on ROMEO and JULIET. He screams and points at them, they scream, BENVOLIO and ROSALINE scream. Friar throws the Holy Water at them. He falls to his knees and raises his crucifix.]

FRIAR

Depart from this sacred place ye cursed demons. I order ye to go back to the depths of hell which spawned ye and never....

ROMEO *[He tries to interrupt during this. Finally...]*

Friar ... Friar....Good Friar!!

FRIAR *[Stops lowers his crucifix and tries to get a better look at the couple]*

Romeo?

JULIET

...and Juliet, good father.

FRIAR

Thou liveth both?

ROMEO

Indeed we do.

FRIAR

But how?

JULIET

A miracle .. no more nor less.

FRIAR

I came to anoint your bodies with Holy Water.

ROMEO

[Fairly drenched with Holy Water]

Consider that duty complete.

FRIAR *[Turns to BENVOLIO]*

Look Benvolio, thy cousin liveth!

BENVOLIO

How now cuz?

ROMEO

How now Benvolio. and ... Rosaline?

BENVOLIO *[a bit embarrassed]*

Ah .. yes... we are just betrothed.

JULIET

Meh! She looketh like a boy dressed as girl to me.

ROMEO

Thou wasteth not much time, Benvolio. Thou might have waited at least until my bones cooled off in the sepulcher.

BENVOLIO

The Friar thought it the best course to calm things down ... but didn't he also give me this strange vial of evil smelling liquid, "just in case".

JULIET

Art thou selling thy potions by the six-pack now, good Friar?

[a new noise is heard from SR].

ROMEO

Soft .. we are not alone! *[All turn off their lights. A shuffling noise is heard as all see a figure appear at SR. Finally ROMEO shines his light on MERCUTIO. All scream as before as the Friar falls on his knees and throws another jar of Holy Water held by BENVOLIO, at MERCUTIO and begins the exorcism again.]*

MERCUTIO

Stop.

FRIAR

Mercutio...thou livest?

MERCUTIO

Ye, verily!

ALL

But how.

MERCUTIO

[Striking his breast]

A bit of a practical joke taken too far, I fear. Fake blood, theatrics. Sorry! I had no idea my prank would so stir up my hot-headed little friend here and then with the Tybalt affair - I thought it best to slip away to Monte Cassino for a bit.

ROSALINE

Where is that?

MERCUTIO

Just north of Nicholville, fair one.

[Sound from HR] "What ho my lord!"

ROMEO

More spirits! *[All lights off]*

[Prince enters with sword and Holy Water.]

PRINCE

How can there be noises coming from this place of the dead?

[ROMEO turns on his light. The PRINCE cries out.]

Begone spirits of the dead!

[Prince crosses and throws Holy Water on ROMEO and JULIET]

ROMEO

My fingers are starting to wrinkle from all this Holy Water.

[PRINCE approaches and nudges MERCUTIO with sword]

MERCUTIO

Ow.*[Second time]* Ow .. stop.

PRINCE

Wait a minute, Thou art substantial and not a shade!

Benvolio, please explain what has happened here.

[Here the entire cast comes downstage and kneel facing upstage in a half-circle facing BENVOLIO who remains standing. All light BENVOLIO with their flashlights.]

BENVOLIO

[Indicating ROMEO and JULIET]

Romeo and Juliet are alive it transpired,

Through springing knives, and potions expired.

[Indicating MERCUTIO]

Mercutio livest, though passions were stoked,

Due to his ill-conceived practical joke.

[Indicating ROSALINE]

Rosaline here, tough dubiously clothed

Through brief lapse of judgement am I now betrothed

[Indicating Friar]

And Good Friar Lawrence, a money-making notion
Now sells a full line of 'The Friars Sleep Potion'

[Facing audience]

And lest more of the Bard's tale comes unraveled
We bid you all "Farewell, Good Night, and safe travel".

[All flashlights out and all exit]

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