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BIG DOG PUBLISHING



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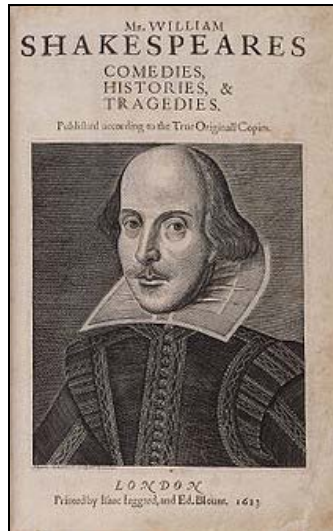
Romeo Loves Juliet

COMEDY. William Shakespeare's cousin, Willa, wants to turn Romeo and Juliet's love story into a rom-com. To escape becoming the butt their friends' jokes, the real Romeo and Juliet time travel from the 16th century to the modern day and wind up at Verona High School just in time to audition for Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*. Delighted that Romeo and Juliet are wearing period clothing, the drama teacher asks Juliet to audition for the role of the Nurse, and Romeo auditions for the role of Romeo. Perry, the big man on campus, instantly takes a shine to Juliet, while the school's queen bee, Ophelia, is smitten with Romeo. Jealous, Juliet calls Ophelia a "half-faced pignut" and Romeo calls Perry an "idle-headed boar-pig." With all the drama, Romeo and Juliet inadvertently create their own modern-day rom-com. Perfect for teen actors. Easy to stage with one simple set.

Performance Time: Approximately 90-120 minutes.

Romeo Loves Juliet

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First Folio, 1623

About the Story

Romeo and Juliet was popular during Shakespeare's lifetime (1564-1616) and has become one of Shakespeare's most frequently performed plays and one of his most famous. It is not known exactly when Shakespeare wrote *Romeo and Juliet*, but scholars believe the play was probably written sometime between 1591 and 1595 and was first published in 1597. Since its publication, *Romeo and Juliet* has been adapted many times for the stage as well as for film and opera. The most famous musical adaptation is *West Side Story*, with music by Leonard Bernstein and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim. *West Side Story* debuted on Broadway in 1957 and was made into a film in 1961.

Characters

(7 M, 9 F, opt. extras)

WILLA SHAKESPEARE: William Shakespeare's cousin who writes all his plays; female.

ROMEO MONTEGUE (aka "Rolie"): Dating Juliet and doesn't want his romance with her to become fodder for Willa's new rom-com; male.

JULIET CAPULET (aka "Julie"): Dating Romeo and doesn't want Willa to turn their love story into a rom-com; female.

FRIAR LAURENCE: Friar who makes a time machine that transports Romeo and Juliet from 1595 to the modern day; male.

MURKY MACDUFF: Student at Verona High School who befriends Romeo; loves to play videogames; male.

PERRY PETERS: A senior at Verona High who plays basketball and thinks he's the big man on campus; dating Ophelia but has a crush on Juliet; male.

DION: A student at Verona High and Perry's friend and fellow basketball player; male.

OPHELIA: Perry's cheerleader girlfriend who has a crush on Romeo; has been in every play in Verona since she was five years old and is auditioning for the role of Juliet; female.

BIANCA: Ophelia's friend and a fellow cheerleader; female.

EMELIA: Ophelia's friend and a fellow cheerleader; female.

PERDITA: Student who befriends Juliet; female.

MS. ROSALIND FAIRE: Drama teacher who is auditioning students for Verona High's performance of *Romeo and Juliet*; has a crush on Mr. Rowland; female.

MR. OLIVER ROWLAND: Social studies teacher who has a crush on Ms. Faire; male.

COACH CRATER: Basketball coach at Verona High who has a crush on Ms. Faire; male.

DR. LEAR: Principal who doesn't appreciate romance in general; female.

NURSE: Overzealous school nurse at Verona High; spies on teachers and students and serves as an informant for Principal Lear; female.

EXTRAS (opt.): As additional Students.

Setting

Willa Shakespeare's attic, 1595, and Verona High School, modern day.

Sets

Willa Shakespeare's attic. Played before the curtain. There is a small bench. A backdrop may be used, if desired.

Verona High School lobby. Wing entrance SR leads to main entrance. Wing entrance DSL leads to other parts of the school, with the gym close by. There is a counter UCS. Behind the counter is a door labeled "Office." Tables with several chairs sit SL and SR. Comfortable chairs are grouped CS around a low coffee table. A picture or flag on upstage wall reads, "Go Vipers!" and shows a funny snake mascot. A bulletin board hangs on the upstage wall with several posters. One large, colorful poster reads, "Winter Dance Tonight!" Another poster reads, "Romeo and Juliet Tryouts Coming Soon!" Other décor as desired.

Synopsis of Scenes

ACT I

Scene 1: Before the curtain. Willa Shakespeare's attic, 1595.

Scene 2: Lobby of Verona High School, present day, a few minutes later.

Scene 3: Lobby of Verona High School, that evening.

Scene 4: Lobby of Verona High School, the following morning.

Intermission, opt.

ACT II

Scene 1: Before the curtain. Verona High School parking lot.

Scene 2: Lobby of Verona High School, that evening.

Scene 3: Lobby of Verona High School, after school, the following day.

Scene 4: Willa Shakespeare's attic, 1595, immediately after.

Props

Manuscript	Poster that reads, " <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> Tryouts Coming Soon!"
Quill pen	
Chest or box	
Time machine (a box with a wheel on it with a number of years identified so a knob can turn the dial to a specific year. Two headbands are attached to the machine by long wires. A large hourglass sits on top of the machine. Attached lights flash and sparkle, opt.)	Thermometers, for Nurse
2 Medallions	Yardstick
Backpack, for Murky	Trashcan
Books, for Bianca and Emelia	Briefcase, for Oliver
Envelope	Briefcase, for Rosalind
2 Tongue depressors	Small bag
Modern clothes, for Romeo	\$10 bill attached to fish line
Whistle, for Lear	Gold-colored coins
Modern clothes for the dance, for Juliet	3 Pies
Sunglasses, for Romeo	Small notebook, for Murky
Sunglasses, for Murky	Piece of paper (for sonnet)
Colorful poster that reads, "Winter Dance Tonight!"	Student papers to grade
	4 <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> scripts
	Large sparkly ring, for Ophelia
	Receipt
	Basketball uniform, for Perry
	Basketball uniform, for Dion
	Book, for Juliet
	Papers, for Rosalind
	Book, for Perdita
	Several wiffle ball bats
	Cream pie, for Nurse

Special Effects

Whirring sound (for time machine)
Lights flash and loud noise (time-travel effect)
School bell
Dance music
Loud laughter
Basketball buzzer
Loud cheer
Loud scream

"Oh, Romeo, Romeo...
where didst we end up?"

-Juliet

ACT I

Scene 1

(Before the curtain. Willa Shakespeare's attic, 1595. Willa paces SL with a manuscript in one hand and quill in the other.)

WILLA: *(To herself.)* Romeo, Romeo, Romeo, Romeo...
(Shakes her head.) No, that's a bit much. Just three will do.
(Writes.) "Romeo, Romeo, Romeo... *(Thinks.)* ...dump thy father and change thy name." *(Shakes her head, frustrated. Brightly.)* "Deny thy father and change thy name." *(Sighs.)* Close, but no cigar. The next time Burbage asks me to write a play for him, I'll just refuse, that's all! Refuse! *(Gets an idea.)* That's it! *(Writes.)* "Deny thy father and refuse thy name." *(Reads.)* "O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo? Deny thy father and refuse thy name."

(Romeo and Juliet enter SR.)

ROMEO: I shall do no such thing, Master Shakespeare.

WILLA: Oh, puh-leese, Romeo! I'm "Willa Shakespeare" to you two, even if my public knows me as William Shakespeare.

JULIET: I fear 'tis awful that no one knows you've written all those plays.

WILLA: I'm a woman! They'd hang me down by the Thames for witchcraft if anybody found out. Just as you, dear Juliet, can't act on stage.

JULIET: I should die before I set foot upon the wicked stage!

WILLA: Well, at least you won't die in my new play.

ROMEO: Pray, good lady, that's...well, that's what we want to talk to you about.

WILLA: Not again!

ROMEO: Aye! We're really worried, Willa.

JULIET: If you use our real names, everybody will make jest of us!

WILLA: But your names are perfect for a rom-com!

ROMEO: "Rom-com"? Is that another one of your made-up words?

WILLA: I don't make up words.

JULIET: Oh, no? What about "gloomy"?

ROMEO: "Gnarled"?

JULIET: "Dislocate"?

ROMEO: "Bloody"?

JULIET: "Critical"?

WILLA: You make me sound positively morose! Don't forget I've got my sunny side like "laughable," "pious," and "sportive."

ROMEO: So, what's a rom-com?

WILLA: A romantic comedy.

ROMEO: Romance isn't a comedy. It's love, deep and sincere. 'Tis the way I feel about Juliet every time I think of her.

JULIET: And I of you!

WILLA: Boring! That works in real life, but what the groundlings want are laughs! And lots of 'em!

ROMEO: We don't want you making fun of our love.

WILLA: You signed a release.

JULIET: That's before you told us you were writing a comedy.

WILLA: Rom-com. And, kids, it's gonna make a million!

ROMEO: Aye, and we turn into poster children for happy endings, right?

WILLA: What's so wrong with that?

JULIET: Everybody will want advice. I shall have to change my name to something like "Dear Abigail."

ROMEO: And I won't be able to hold my head up at a rugby match.

WILLA: Forget playing rugby anyway, Romeo. You're too cute to get your face smashed by some bruiser's elbow.

JULIET: Please, Willa, change our names in the play.

WILLA: Change your names in real life! Why don't you be Nick and Nora? No? George and Martha? A bit too colonial, ha? Bill and Hill? That's got a nice rhyme.

ROMEO: Willa, if you don't do something to protect our futures, we'll have to sue.

WILLA: Sue?! You've got to be kidding!

JULIET: We don't want to be hounded and pestered forever. We want a quiet life...just the two of us—

ROMEO: And maybe the pitter-patter of little feet occasionally.

WILLA: You want cats and dogs? They're easy to find.

JULIET: Thou art impossible!

WILLA: Think of my future. If I don't write a rom-com, nobody's going to come see the show, and I'll be out in the cold.

ROMEO: Look, have you ever given any thought to killing us off?

WILLA: What?

JULIET: 'Tis the perfect solution. We both die at the end of the play. That way, everybody will think of us as dead.

WILLA: You die? You can't! You're too young to die! Audiences want happy endings! They want to leave the theater with smiles on their faces!

ROMEO: Are you afraid to try something new?

WILLA: Me? Afraid? *(Slight pause.)* You bet!

JULIET: Can't you see it? Somehow or other we try to get together but our plans are thwarted.

WILLA: Thwarted! Ooooh, that's good! *(Writes.)*

ROMEO: In desperation, I kill myself with poison.

JULIET: *(To Willa.)* And when I find out, I stab myself to death.

WILLA: Oh, but that's awful! Awful! Bodies littered across the stage!

ROMEO: Tears will flow like cheap wine.

JULIET: *(To Willa.)* It shall be the first rom-trag.

WILLA: What's a "rom-trag"?

JULIET: A romantic tragedy.

WILLA: (*Sarcastically.*) And you don't think people will bother you then?

JULIET: Look, Willa, we were just kidding about suing you.

WILLA: Good! You had me scared for a minute.

JULIET: If you don't change the play, we'll just have to tell the authorities to question William Shakespeare about all the plays he's written.

WILLA: He's my cousin. He's seen them all.

ROMEO: And what happens when they ask him to write a few lines of poetry?

WILLA: They wouldn't dare!

JULIET: But he's supposed to have written some pretty heavy stuff.

ROMEO: (*From "The Tragedy of Richard III," reciting, dramatically.*)

"Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York."

WILLA: (*Proudly.*) That was good, wasn't it?

JULIET: One of William's most popular plays, "Richard III."

ROMEO: Which dabbles in history and politics.

JULIET: What if the authorities found out a woman wrote it?

WILLA: You're blackmailing me!

JULIET: Blackmail's such a dirty word.

WILLA: What are you talking about? I just invented it.

JULIET: Well, it sounds dirty.

ROMEO: (*To Willa.*) Downright criminal. You shall end up in the Tower.

WILLA: But I must have my play done by the end of the week, and I'm too far into it to start something anew. I'm right at the point where Friar Laurence marries you two!

JULIET: Perfect! And he's the very one who is going to help us...escape.

WILLA: What does he have to do with all this?

ROMEO: He's come up with a very good plan.

JULIET: (*Calls.*) Friar Laurence! Friar Laurence, you can come in now.

(*Friar Laurence enters SR, dragging a chest or box.*)

FRIAR: Finally! Did you know it's cold out there? I nearly froze my hoodie off!

ROMEO: Sorry, Friar Laurence, but it took a little convincing.

WILLA: I'm still not convinced of anything.

JULIET: Our plan is very simple, Willa. And you two do know each other, don't you?

WILLA: We've met.

FRIAR: More than that! Thou hast written me into every play you ever wrote. I do not know why I let you demolish my character like you do!

WILLA: For the coins I so generously give you for the monastery, Friar Laurence, remember?

FRIAR: Aye, aye.

ROMEO: And I've given you some gold coins, too, haven't I?

FRIAR: Coins? Coins? Yes! By George, you did! Three gold sovereigns.

JULIET: And you're helping us out, aren't you?

FRIAR: I am. That I am.

WILLA: How, exactly?

ROMEO: Friar Laurence is sending Juliet and me into the future!

WILLA: Oh, oh, how...amusing! How positively funny! And you don't want to be the star of a romantic comedy?

ROMEO: (*Pointing to box.*) This, Willa Shakespeare, is the cutting edge of science.

WILLA: With a lot of fiction thrown in. Hmmm..."science fiction." There might be something in that.

FRIAR: Oh, my dear, you're way ahead of your time thinking about that. This is just a simple time machine that uses the alignment of the sun, the stars, and the moon to bend the

particles of light and the relative speed of mass to accelerate the forward or backward possibilities of motion.

(Note: During the following, Friar removes a machine from the box or trunk and places it on top. The machine is a box with a wheel on it with a number of years identified so a knob can turn the dial to a year. Two headbands are attached to the machine by long wires. A large hour glass sits on top of the machine. If desired, attach lights to flash and sparkle.)

WILLA: *(Confused.)* Huh?

ROMEO: *(Indicating time machine.)* That doesn't matter. What matters is this: You kill us off—

JULIET: *(To Willa.)* And we disappear.

ROMEO: *(To Willa.)* We shall be quickly forgotten.

JULIET: *(To Willa.)* And no one shall pester us. We can live happily ever after in our cute little cottage in the forest.

WILLA: With the pitter-patter of little feet running all over.

ROMEO: *(Indicating Juliet.)* We'll have to talk about that.

WILLA: Well, you two smarty-pants, if you're going into the future somewhere...how will you know if I write a rom-com about you, anyway?

JULIET: Our lawyer has a letter ready to be sent to the authorities in the event you double-cross us.

WILLA: "Double-cross"! I like that one, too! Thank you. *(Writes.)*

ROMEO: So, this is goodbye, Willa. Farewell.

JULIET: *(To Willa.)* It has been real, it has been fun, but it shall be a lot more fun from here on out.

FRIAR: Now, you've got all the extra gold sovereigns, young man?

ROMEO: Check.

FRIAR: They should buy you anything you need. And you've got your photo IDs?

JULIET: Our what?

FRIAR: Oh, forget that. Just an ugly nightmare I had last night. All right, let us put these on... *(Romeo and Juliet each take a headband and put it on.)* Now, I just need to turn this switch to a year. Hmm... *(Thinks.)* ...1790? No. 1860? No. 1955. No. How about [2024]? *[Insert current year.]*

ROMEO: That sounds just far enough.

FRIAR: *(Handing Romeo and Juliet a medallion.)* Now, one last thing. I am giving you each a small medallion. If, for any reason, you need to return to 1595, scratch the surface off.

JULIET: *(Trying to scratch it.)* Like this?

FRIAR: No! No! You can only use it once!

ROMEO: We will not need it. We shall be so happy, we shall never want to come back!

WILLA: Listen to him! Well, if "Romeo and Juliet Laugh Out Loud" is a flop, you'll know whose fault it is!

JULIET: Do not fear, Willa. We know thou shalt create a masterpiece.

WILLA: Yeah, sure! Go on, Friar, get 'em out of here. I've got some pretty extensive rewrites to do!

FRIAR: *(To Romeo and Juliet.)* Ready?

(Romeo and Juliet hold hands.)

ROMEO: Ready.

FRIAR: *(Turning over the hourglass.)* Then we begin. You'll be activated as soon as the sand runs out.

JULIET: When will that be?

FRIAR: It's called an "hourglass" for a reason.

ROMEO: An hour?!

FRIAR: And you can't move the entire time, or all your parts might not come back together in the right spots once you're reassembled.

JULIET: Reassembled?!

FRIAR: How do you think you go forward in time? Now, hold still...and try not to breathe too deeply.

(A whirring sound is heard.)

WILLA: *(Writes.)* "Act III. Romeo and Juliet awake after their wedding. If they only knew what was in store for them!"

(Lights flash, loud noise. Blackout.)

Scene 2

(AT RISE: The lobby of Verona High School. Wing entrance SR leads to the main entrance. Wing entrance DSL leads to other parts of the school, with the gym close by. Counter UCS, behind which is a door labeled "Office." Tables with several chairs sit SL and SR. Comfortable chairs are grouped in the center around a low coffee table. A picture or flag on the upstage wall reads, "Go Vipers!" and depicts a funny snake mascot. A bulletin board hangs on upstage wall with several posters. One large colorful one reads, "Winter Dance Tonight!" Another reads, "Romeo and Juliet Tryouts Coming Soon!" Other décor, as desired. Murky is asleep at a table SL. His backpack is on the table. Perry and Dion enter SR.)

PERRY: (To Dion, indicating Murky.) Well, will you look at Sleeping Beauty!

DION: Hey, Murky! Time to rise and shine!

PERRY: I don't think Murky's ever shined in his entire life.

DION: Whatdaya think, a cold shower?

PERRY: Nah, this oughta do the trick.

(Perry jerks the chair out from under Murky, but Murky doesn't move.)

DION: (Indicating Murky.) How'd he do that?

PERRY: Maybe he's dead!

DION: You better put the chair back before somebody accuses us of killing him!

(Perry slips the chair back under Murky.)

PERRY: We better get to practice.

DION: (To Murky, ruffling up his hair.) Sleep tight! Don't let the bed bugs bite!

(Dion and Perry exit SL. Murky raises his head for a moment.)

MURKY: Somebody say something?

(Murky goes back to sleep. Whirring sound is heard. Lights flash. Romeo enters SR, nervously.)

ROMEO: *(Calls.)* Juliet? Juliet? Are you here? *(Looks behind the counter.)* Juliet? *(Approaches Murky.)* I say, good sir, hast thou seen a lady who goes by the name Juliet? *(Murky doesn't wake up. Louder.)* I say, good man...

(Romeo shakes Murky by the shoulder. Murky wakes up.)

MURKY: *(Sleepy.)* Huh?

ROMEO: Hast thou seen fair lady Juliet?

MURKY: Tryouts aren't till Friday.

(Murky goes back to sleep. Bianca and Emelia enter SR, carrying books.)

BIANCA: *(To Emelia.)* Well, Ophelia is wearing that dress she picked up at [Ross]— *[Or insert the name of another clothing store.]*

(Bianca and Emelia see Romeo.)

EMELIA: *(Indicating Romeo.)* Is today Halloween? *(Laughs.)*

BIANCA: I don't think so. *(Laughs.)*

ROMEO: *(Horried.)* Art thou witches?

EMELIA: What?

ROMEO: Thou art dressed in men's clothing. Only witches do such a thing.

BIANCA: Are you all right? This is, like, what everybody wears.

EMELIA: *(Laughs at Romeo's outfit.)* Almost everybody!



ROMEO: A thousand pardons. I say, fair ladies, hast thou seen Lady Juliet?

EMELIA: Friday. You tryout on Friday, okay?

BIANCA: *(Laughs.)* Wow! Some people go all out, don't they!

EMELIA: *(To Romeo.)* Who's your tailor?

(Bianca and Emelia laugh as they exit SL.)

ROMEO: *(Calls.)* His name is Fernando. *(To himself.)* At least it was.

(Murky wakes up and sees Romeo.)

MURKY: That is one cool getup, dude!

ROMEO: Get up?

MURKY: *(Rises, stretching.)* Yeah...I better get up. Didn't get much sleep last night. I played Dragonslayer way past my bedtime.

ROMEO: Dragonslayer?

MURKY: You ever tried it? I'm the wizard of Cornish, and I got to level 18. The dragon's fire breath did me in.

ROMEO: This world is inhabited with dragons?

MURKY: Well, just computer-generated ones.

ROMEO: "Computer-generated"? What language do you speak?

MURKY: Just plain ol' English, dude. Oh, I get it! You're trying out for the play! That's why you've got the wicked duds on. Well, you're a day early, but whatever.

ROMEO: I hadn't thought clothes would change so...

(Rosalind enters SL, followed by Bianca and Emelia.)

ROSALIND: *(Gushing.)* Oh! Oh, my gracious me!

(Rosalind rushes over to Romeo and grabs him by the shoulders.)

BIANCA: See? We told you!

EMELIA: *(To Rosalind.)* Don't we get a finder's fee?

ROSALIND: Yes! Yes! A thousand times, yes!

BIANCA: Gee, Murky, glad to see you finally woke up.

EMELIA: *(To Murky.)* If you hurry, you'll be in time for your nap in first period.

(Bianca and Emelia wave and smile at Murky.)

MURKY: You two are about as funny as the plague!

ROMEO: *(Terrified.)* Pray, the plague has not infested this place, has it?

ROSALIND: You even speak the part! *(Spins Romeo around.)*
Wherever did you get this magnificent costume?

ROMEO: From Fernando. He makes all my clothes.

ROSALIND: Fernando? I'll have to give him a call. Now, you're new to Verona High, aren't you?

ROMEO: Verona High?

MURKY: That's the name of this place: Verona High School, home of the Vipers. *(Recites, flatly.)*

"Vipers, Vipers, spit your venom,
One big bite, and that'll end 'em."

ROSALIND: *(To Romeo.)* It's impossible to find something that rhymes exactly with "venom."

ROMEO: Willa Shakespeare could.

ROSALIND: Willa Shakespeare?

MURKY: William's younger sister?

ROMEO: *(Correcting.)* Cousin. But pray, do you know of William Shakespeare?

ROSALIND: Young man, the world loves William Shakespeare!

ROMEO: And hast thou perchance heard of a piece about Romeo and Juliet?

ROSALIND: We're putting it on this spring! Tryouts are tomorrow. That's why you're dressed like this, isn't it?

ROMEO: *(Covering.)* Why, pray, how did you guess?

ROSALIND: You might make a very good Romeo.

ROMEO: I'm not very good at comedy.

ROSALIND: But "Romeo and Juliet" is the greatest tragedy ever written.

ROMEO: *(Pulls down his fist in triumph.)* Yes!

ROSALIND: Young man, what's your name so I can add you to the tryout list.

ROMEO: My name?

MURKY: You know, what you call yourself? I'm Murky, by the way. Murky Macduff. That's short for Mercutio. My mother loved Shakespeare's character so I got labeled for life. So what's your handle?

ROMEO: My "handle"? *(Thinks.)* Oh, my name! Ah, yes...it's...it's...Rolly. Rolly Montague.

ROSALIND: Montague. What a coincidence. We've got Mercutio and a Montague. Do you know what this means?

ROMEO: I have no idea.

(Oliver enters SR.)

ROSALIND: *(To Romeo.)* Our production will be flawless! *(Indicating Oliver.)* And speaking of flawless...

OLIVER: *(Sweetly.)* Good morning, Miss Faire.

ROSALIND: Oh, Mr. Rowland, how nice to see you.

(Dr. Lear enters from the office.)

OLIVER: How about meeting in the faculty lounge for lunch?

ROSALIND: I'll count the minutes!

OLIVER: And there's a new coffee shop open for an after-school pick-me-up.

ROSALIND: I can't wait!

DR. LEAR: Rowland! Faire! What are you two up to?

OLIVER: *(Terrified.)* Nothing, Principal Lear.

ROSALIND: *(To Lear.)* Just saying good morning.

DR. LEAR: You know how I feel about faculty members fraternizing during school hours!

OLIVER: We weren't exactly –

MURKY: We were discussing tryouts for the play tomorrow, Principal Lear.

DR. LEAR: You don't have to defend these two, Mr. Macduff. If I find any evidence they're fraternizing in or out of school, and they're fired, understand?

ROSALIND: Yes, Principal Lear.

DR. LEAR: Good! Now get to class. *(Rosalind rushes off SR. Oliver rushes off SL. Indicating Romeo.)* Now, who's the clown?

MURKY: This is Rolly. He's new. He's just showing off his costume for "Romeo and Juliet."

DR. LEAR: *(To Romeo.)* Get changed! We don't allow goofy outfits like that!

ROMEO: But, Your Highness, I have nothing –

DR. LEAR: What did you call me?!

ROMEO: Thou art royalty, and in deference to that –

DR. LEAR: I'm Principal Lear to you, got it?

ROMEO: I do.

DR. LEAR: Now, get out of that clown suit and report to the office to fill out some papers. *(Exits into office.)*

ROMEO: *(To Murky.)* I see why this place is home to vipers.

MURKY: Oh, don't mind Lear. She's just a big kitty cat...if you consider a mountain lion a kitty cat.

ROMEO: She does not appreciate romance.

MURKY: Lear? It's against her rules for teachers to fall in love. That's why they're all grumpy. C'mon...I'll show you where you can change.

ROMEO: I have naught to change into.

MURKY: There are plenty of clothes backstage. You can find something there. *(Moves SL.)*

ROMEO: *(Calls.)* Juliet? Juliet, wherefore art thou?

MURKY: No, no, no! It's "O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?" C'mon!

(Murky leads Romeo off SL. Juliet enters SL with Ophelia.)

OPHELIA: *(To Juliet.)* I think you're a bit over the top for tryouts.

JULIET: Tryouts? Pray, what are tryouts?

OPHELIA: You want a part in the play, don't you?

JULIET: Oh, but I'm a female.

OPHELIA: So?

JULIET: Females can now appear on stage?

OPHELIA: It's the 21st century, kiddo. Women rule!

(Dr. Lear opens the office door.)

DR. LEAR: Girls, get to class!

OPHELIA: We're just on our way, Principal Lear.

DR. LEAR: *(To Juliet.)* And you, wearing the funny dress, get changed...fast!

OPHELIA: She will. Leave it to me.

DR. LEAR: Don't screw up! *(Slams the door.)*

JULIET: I see what thou meanest about women ruling.

OPHELIA: Principal Lear? Yeah, she runs a tight ship.

JULIET: So I can act upon the stage?

OPHELIA: Yeah, but if you're thinking about trying out for Juliet, forget it. I've got my eye on that part, and I've been in plays here since seventh grade.

JULIET: Juliet? There's a part for Juliet?

OPHELIA: Duh! The play is called "Romeo and Juliet."

JULIET: Not by Master Shakespeare by any chance.

OPHELIA: Yes, by Master Shakespeare, but we all call him William.

JULIET: Then she made a success of it!

OPHELIA: Who did? What are you talking about?

JULIET: Nothing. Ah...did you happen to see a young man with laughing eyes, a bright smile, tall, and built like a Greek statue?

OPHELIA: I've only seen guys like that in movies.

JULIET: The movies?

OPHELIA: Yeah...you know, ["Twilight,"] ["Breaking Dawn,"] ["Hunger Games."] Even ["Harry Potter"] wasn't so bad. *[Or insert the titles of other movies.]*

JULIET: *(Confused, but trying to play along.)* Oh, oh, yes. I like those. Them. Him. *(Changing the subject.)* So, what does one do in this...this place?

OPHELIA: You're really into this, aren't you?

JULIET: Into what?

OPHELIA: Playing the Juliet bit. Do you have a name?

JULIET: Of course, I do. I'm Jul...Julie.

OPHELIA: For a minute, I thought you were going to say Juliet, and then I'd have called the nurse.

JULIET: Nurse? You've got a nurse here?

OPHELIA: Well, yeah...if you want to call her that. She dispenses Band-Aids, aspirin, and does throat swabs. By the way, I'm Ophelia.

JULIET: That's a pretty name.

OPHELIA: Yeah, my folks were going to name me Hamlet if I was a boy. But I turned out to be a girl, so it was either Ophelia or Gertrude. I'm sure glad they picked Ophelia.

(Perry and Dion enter SL.)

PERRY: Hey, Ophelia, all set for the dance... *(Sees Juliet and falls in love. Dreamily, staring at Juliet.)* ...tonight.

OPHELIA: Yes, Perry, we're going to the dance tonight. *(Snaps her fingers in front of his face.)* You and me, remember?

PERRY: Right, sure. Looking forward to it. *(Approaches Juliet.)* And you are...?

OPHELIA: Julie. She's new here, and she doesn't need the "big man on campus" coming on to her like the plague.

JULIET: *(Terrified.)* The Plague is here? But, pray, where can we go to escape?

DION: Hey, chill out. It's just an expression.

PERRY: *(To Juliet.)* And I'd protect you.

(School bell rings.)

OPHELIA: Time for class, guys!

DION: Yeah...biology test.

OPHELIA: And Perry knows all about biology, don't you?

PERRY: *(Looking at Juliet, dreamily.)* Yeah...

DION: So you'll feed me all the answers to the test?

PERRY: *(Terrified.)* Test?! Biology?! Why didn't you tell me?

DION: Didn't you study?

PERRY: We can cram now, can't we?

OPHELIA: We've got five minutes!

PERRY: Tell me everything you know on the way there!

(Dion and Ophelia exit SL, but Perry stops, turns back to Juliet, and waves weakly. Ophelia re-enters SL, and drags Perry off SL. Perdita enters SR.)

PERDITA: *(To Juliet.)* Hi!

JULIET: Greetings.

PERDITA: Wow, you're a bit overdressed for Verona High.

JULIET: I fear so. Tell me, do all ladies dress as such these days?

PERDITA: You mean comfortably?

JULIET: Is that what you call it?

PERDITA: If I didn't know better, I'd think you were from another century or two—

JULIET: Or five.

PERDITA: I bet you thought tryouts were today. But they're not until tomorrow. The Winter Dance is today.

JULIET: A dance!

PERDITA: Yeah, it's a reward for finishing all the state testing.

JULIET: I don't understand.

PERDITA: State testing? Nobody does, so don't feel bad. Anyway, you want something else to change into? You'll never fit into the desks wearing that thing.

JULIET: Desks?

PERDITA: Yeah...this is school, okay? You sit in desks.

JULIET: Ladies attend school?

PERDITA: Your name wouldn't be Cinderella or anything like that, would it?

JULIET: My name is Julie.

PERDITA: I'm Perdita.

JULIET: That's an unusual name.

PERDITA: That's what everybody says until they see "One Hundred and One Dalmatians."

(Rosalind enters SR followed by Coach.)

ROSALIND: Mr. Crater, I don't need a ride to the dance tonight.

COACH: You could really let your hair down with both of us riding my bike.

ROSALIND: Your bike makes too much noise. I'd be deaf by the time I arrived here.

COACH: You can't hear a thing wearing a helmet.

ROSALIND: At least then we wouldn't have to try and talk. Now, once and for all, I'll find my own way here.

COACH: Which means you'll probably come with Oliver Twist.

ROSALIND: I'll thank you not to make fun of Mr. Rowland. He's everything you're not.

COACH: Oh, yeah? Well, well, I'll...I'll show you! *(Exits SR.)*

PERDITA: Good morning, Ms. Faire.

ROSALIND: Good morning, Perdita... *(Indicating Juliet.)*
...and who do we have here?

PERDITA: This is Julie. Like the dress?

ROSALIND: Why, you're the second student this morning wearing period clothing! I am so excited.

PERDITA: Who was the other one?

ROSALIND: A young man...quite a good-looking fellow.

JULIET: Romeo?

ROSALIND: (*Coyly.*) Well, maybe. He'll have to try out for that part. I think he said his name is Rolly. Rolly Montague.

JULIET: Oh, joy! He has made it here!

ROSALIND: You two are friends?

JULIET: You might say.

PERDITA: That's it, Julie...be coy. Everybody doesn't have to know your business.

ROSALIND: Speaking of being coy, Perdita...would you see that Mr. Rowland gets this in first period?

(Rosalind slips Perdita an envelope. Nurse enters SL.)

NURSE: What's that? What's that, now?

ROSALIND: A note for Perdita to take home to her mother.

NURSE: She's been wicked in class, has she?

ROSALIND: The exact opposite. It's a smiley-face note.

NURSE: Don't like those things! We baby these kids! Get to class! Teach! *(Rosalind exits SL. To Perdita.)* Stick out your tongue! *(Perdita sticks out her tongue. Nurse checks it with a tongue depressor.)* Say, "ahhhh"!

PERDITA: Ahhhh!

NURSE: You're okay. *(To Juliet.)* Now, you! Stick out your tongue! *(Juliet hesitatingly sticks out her tongue. Nurse checks it with a tongue depressor.)* Say, "ahhhh"!

JULIET: Ahhhh.

NURSE: Your throat's a bit red. I want to see you in my office right now.

PERDITA: Julie's got to change. She'll be in later.

(Perdita grabs Juliet and pulls her SL.)

NURSE: You make sure she gets to my office. If we have an outbreak of strep, it'll be on your head, young lady!

(Dr. Lear enters from the office.)

DR. LEAR: Good morning, Nurse.

NURSE: Good morning, Principal Lear.

DR. LEAR: Anything to report?

NURSE: Loads!

DR. LEAR: Then come right in and make yourself comfortable.

NURSE: First, stick out your tongue!

DR. LEAR: *(Sticking out tongue.)* Ahhhhh!

NURSE: You're okay. So...you want it from the top?

DR. LEAR: Every incriminating movement!

(Dr. Lear leads Nurse into office. Blackout.)

Scene 3

(AT RISE: Verona High School lobby, that night. Music is heard offstage. Rosalind enters SL, looking about nervously.)

ROSALIND: *(Stage whisper.)* Oliver? Oliver? Are you here?
(Moves to the counter.) Oliver?

(Rosalind is looking DSL as Oliver's hand comes up from behind the counter and grabs her hand. Rosalind isn't shocked.)

OLIVER: Guess who!

ROSALIND: Fred?

OLIVER: Nope!

ROSALIND: Richard?

OLIVER: Not a chance!

ROSALIND: Surely, not Charley.

OLIVER: Not in a million years!

ROSALIND: Then it must be—

(Lear opens the office door and steps out.)

LEAR: Rowland! What are you doing down there? And why are you holding Ms. Faire's hand?

(Oliver stands.)

OLIVER: *(Terrified.)* I...I...dropped something.

LEAR: Oh, you did, did you?

ROSALIND: He did, Principal Lear. I saw him.

LEAR: *(To Oliver.)* What'd you drop?

ROSALIND: His keys.

OLIVER: *(To Lear.)* My glasses.

LEAR: She's a better liar than you, Rowland. You don't wear glasses!

ROSALIND: We...we didn't think you were going to attend the dance tonight.

LEAR: I know. That's why I'm here.

OLIVER: Well, we'll get back to our chaperoning duties.

LEAR: I think you're the two who need a chaperone! (*Murky enters SR with Romeo, who is now wearing modern clothes.*) You know my rule about staff members fraternizing with one another! Any romantic involvement between teachers will be dealt with in the harshest terms.

MURKY: Not according the ACLU, Principal Lear.

LEAR: Mr. Macduff, I'll thank you to—

MURKY: In the case of Belchmore vs. the Stanfell Board of Education, the Supreme Court declared that rules prohibiting staff getting together are unconstitutional on the grounds that they violate the rights of interstate commerce.

LEAR: Nonsense!

MURKY: Really? The ACLU is watching you, Principal Lear. They're watching you like a hawk!

(Loud laughter is heard off SL.)

LEAR: *(To Oliver and Rosalind.)* Chaperones, get to your duties! I don't want kids having that much fun at this dance!

ROSALIND: Yes, Principal Lear.

(Lear exits into the office.)

OLIVER: *(To Murky.)* Belchmore vs. the Stanfell Board of Education?

MURKY: That case is right up there with all the greats, Mr. Rowland.

OLIVER: Thanks for the reminder! New student?

MURKY: Yeah, this is Rolly Montague.

ROSALIND: Who is trying out for a part in "Romeo and Juliet," right?

ROMEO: Pray, that would almost smack of redundancy.

OLIVER: He's sure got the lingo down.

ROMEO: What might "lingo" be?

MURKY: It's a game on TV.

ROMEO: TV?

MURKY: Where'd you come from, Rolly? Antarctica?

ROSALIND: Don't mind Mr. Macduff, Rolly. You stay in character! Shall we, Mr. Rowland?

(Oliver offers his arm to Rosalind. Rosalind takes his arm. Lear opens the office door and blows her whistle. Oliver and Rosalind break apart. Oliver exits SL. Lear closes the door with a satisfied look on her face.)

MURKY: Lear must have radar or something.

ROSALIND: Personally, I think...well, it doesn't matter what I think.

ROMEO: I fear the harpy's behavior smacks of jealousy.

MURKY: "Harpy"?

ROSALIND: Winged creatures in Greek mythology who were agents of punishment capturing and torturing those they sought.

MURKY: That's Lear, all right. C'mon, Rolly, I want to get my shades from my locker.

ROMEO: "Shades"?

MURKY: In Greek mythology, dark glasses to make me look as cool as I am.

(Murky and Romeo exit SL. Coach enters SL.)

COACH: Rozzy, baby! Glad you made it!

ROSALIND: Now, Coach, I'm here as a chaperone—

COACH: *(Getting closer.)* That doesn't mean we can't have a dance...or two.

ROSALIND: *(Backing away from him.)* You know what Principal Lear thinks about staff members getting together...

COACH: What the old bag doesn't know, won't hurt her.
ROSALIND: But, Coach, she's got a kind of radar that senses these things.
COACH: C'mon, Rozzy, baby! Just one little dance.
ROSALIND: I guess her radar isn't working!
COACH: Rozzy, you know you want a date with me!
ROSALIND: Not as much as the police.
COACH: What about the police?
ROSALIND: They...they were...they were here looking for you.
COACH: For five lousy parking tickets?
ROSALIND: They said they were going to boot your bike.
COACH: What?! They can't do that! *(Runs off SL.)*
ROSALIND: *(To herself.)* Oh, where's the principal when you need her?

(Rosalind exits SL. Juliet and Perdita enter SR. Juliet is now dressed in modern clothes for the dance.)

PERDITA: *(To Juliet.)* So you do know how to dance, right?
JULIET: Oh, yes. I love the pavane...the galliard...the gavotte.
PERDITA: *(Bewildered.)* Huh?
JULIET: But my favorite is the tourdion.
PERDITA: We're talking dancing here, not French cooking.
JULIET: Do you not know the tourdion? *(Holds up her hand and does a few simple steps.)*
PERDITA: That's not dancing, Juliet. That's yoga.
JULIET: Oh, but my love and I have often danced the tourdion.

(Juliet dances a few more steps, her arm up. Perry and Dion enter SL. Dance music is heard SL. Perry grabs Juliet's hand and begins to dance with her.)

PERRY: Hey, baby, this is the way we dance in Verona!

DION: Perry!

JULIET: *(To Perry.)* Pray, this is most lively!

PERRY: And I'm the coolest cat in the jungle.

PERDITA: Her name is Julie, Perry.

JULIET: *(To Perry.)* May I but catch my breath?

PERRY: *(Stops dancing.)* Sure. I guess I have a habit of taking girls' breath away.

PERDITA: *(To Juliet.)* Pay no attention to Mr. Egomaniac.

JULIET: I thought you said his name is Perry.

PERRY: Perdita's just joking, Julie. I'm Perry Peters. Senior, all-conference, all-district, and all-state.

PERDITA: And all wrapped up in himself.

PERRY: I wouldn't mind being all wrapped up with you, Julie. You're new here, huh?

JULIET: I fear I am.

DION: With this guy around, you'd better be afraid.

PERDITA: *(To Juliet.)* Of course, if Ophelia sees him putting the moves on you, he'll be in major trouble.

PERRY: I can handle Ophelia.

DION: Like you did when we wanted to go camping instead of to that Fall Fling Dance?

PERDITA: What happened?

PERRY: Nothing!

DION: Ophelia sent a limo and two bruisers kidnapped us from the dock where we were fishing and dragged us to the dance.

PERRY: But we had the last laugh.

PERDITA: How come?

PERRY: We smelled like fish the whole night.

PERDITA: What's your excuse now?

DION: You're about as funny as the last act of "Romeo and Juliet."

JULIET: Oh, pray! You know their story?

PERDITA: Who doesn't?

PERRY: *(Recites, mockingly.)* "O, Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?"

JULIET: I do hope he's here.

PERRY: (*Dramatically.*) Look no further, Juliet, for I am thy
Romeo!

JULIET: I fear not. My Romeo is gentle, kind, and dances a
gavotte divinely.

DION: Three strikes you're out, Perry.

PERRY: Save a couple of gavottes for me, Julie.

(*Juliet and Perdita exit SL.*)

DION: You better be careful, man.

PERRY: What are you all of a sudden...[Dear Abby]? [*Or
insert the name of another celebrity who gives advice, e.g. Dr. Phil,
etc.*]

DION: Ophelia won't like it.

(*Murky and Romeo enter SL, both wearing sunglasses. Dion and
Perry don't see them.*)

PERRY: (*To Dion.*) Look, that new girl, Julie, is hot as a
firecracker.

(*Romeo suddenly tenses.*)

DION: Yeah, well, you better keep cool.

PERRY: And that's exactly what she's going to fall for...Mr.
Cool.

DION: Oh, brother! Let's go get our jackets.

PERRY: Yeah, it's cold in there.

DION: I thought you're Mr. Cool.

PERRY: Yeah, but I don't want to freeze.

(*Perry and Dion exit SR.*)

ROMEO: (*To Murky.*) That fiend! That wretch! That
snagwumple!

MURKY: You said a mouthful.
ROMEO: He has set his sights on my one, my only love!
MURKY: Look, Rolly, do you even know this...Julie kid?
ROMEO: In a sense, yes.
MURKY: Oh, brother. Meaning you've never really met.
You've seen her from afar and it was love at first sight.
ROMEO: Thou hast a fine understanding.
MURKY: Look, that might fly on paper, but in real life? Give
me a break!
ROMEO: I fear your words confuse me greatly.
MURKY: It doesn't happen.
ROMEO: Pray, find the lady and leave her to me.
MURKY: You want to talk to the new girl, right?
ROMEO: Aye! A thousand times "aye"!
MURKY: Okay, okay. I'll go find her. You wait here.
ROMEO: The seconds shall be like hours.
MURKY: *(To himself.)* Brother! Somebody's got it bad!

(Murky exits SL. Ophelia, Bianca, and Emelia, who is looking behind her, enter SR.)

OPHELIA: *(To Emelia.)* Are they following us?
EMELIA: No.
OPHELIA: What do you mean, "no"? What's Perry doing?
EMELIA: Combing his hair.
BIANCA: I guess that's why it's always perfect.
OPHELIA: Is he coming now?
EMELIA: No. He's looking up at the sky.
OPHELIA: He should be looking up at me. *(Notices Romeo.)*
Hold it! Hold the phone! *(Approaches Romeo.)* You're that
new kid, right? The one who was in the funny costume?
ROMEO: I must be he.
OPHELIA: You talk like a grammar book. But we won't let
that get in the way.
ROMEO: In the way of what?
OPHELIA: The way of the world.

EMELIA: He's coming, Ophelia!

BIANCA: Perry's on his way!

OPHELIA: Goodie for Perry.

EMELIA: You said you wanted to be dancing when he saw you.

OPHELIA: *(To Romeo.)* How about you and me dancing, big boy?

ROMEO: I'm waiting for somebody.

OPHELIA: *(Shrugs.)* Catch you later, babaloo.

ROMEO: Babaloo?

(Ophelia exits SL. Bianca and Emelia move SL. Murky enters SL.)

MURKY: *(Calls.)* Hey, guys!

BIANCA: Cows eat hay, Murky.

EMELIA: *(To Murky.)* But I'll dance with you.

MURKY: Such a deal! *(Bianca and Emelia exit. To Romeo.)* She's on her way, man.

ROMEO: Do I present a stellar figure?

MURKY: Yeah...sure...whatever that is. *(Romeo removes his sunglasses.)* Nope! Be sure to wear the shades. That way you keep her guessing.

(Romeo puts the sunglasses back on. Juliet enters SL and sees Romeo.)

JULIET: *(To Romeo, calls.)* Is it thee?

ROMEO: Aye, fair Juliet!

JULIET: *(Giving Murky a look.)* Pray that we might be alone.

MURKY: Pray all you want. I'm outta here! *(Exits SL.)*

JULIET: Oh, Romeo, Romeo...where didst we end up?

ROMEO: A strange new world, full of words and noise.

JULIET: *(Indicating poster.)* And yet I fear we are still a part of it.

ROMEO: "Kinda cool," as Murky wouldst say.

JULIET: Does it not worry you?

ROMEO: Why wouldst it worry me? My love for you is constant.

JULIET: But temptations lie everywhere.

ROMEO: I swear, I love you, Juliet.

JULIET: If thou swear'st, thou may prove false.

ROMEO: "Lady, by yonder blessed moon I vow—"

JULIET: "O, swear not by the moon, th' 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;

Or if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,

Which is the god of my idolatry

And I'll believe in thee."

ROMEO: "If my heart's dear love—"

(Ophelia enters SL with Bianca and Emelia.)

OPHELIA: So what's he waiting for...Christmas? *(Sees Romeo.*

Feigning dizziness.) Oh! Oh! What's happening?

Everything's spinning! Oh, my! Oh, my!

(Ophelia stumbles into Romeo's arms.)

BIANCA: Ophelia! What's wrong?

EMELIA: Oh, my gosh!

OPHELIA: I just need...to...rest...a second.

JULIET: Here, sit down.

OPHELIA: No, this is just the way I like it.

(Juliet exits SL.)

ROMEO: *(Calls.)* Juliet! Juliet!

OPHELIA: She's not going to be Juliet, but I am.

ROMEO: You?

BIANCA: Ophelia's been in every play in Verona since she was five.

OPHELIA: *(Correcting.)* Four and a half. I played a dwarf in Snow White.

EMELIA: *(To Romeo.)* Ms. Faire loves the way Ophelia disappears into a character.

ROMEO: Would it be that she could demonstrate this talent now.

OPHELIA: Hey! I don't think I like the sound of that!

(Perry and Dion enter SR.)

PERRY: *(To Romeo.)* Hey! Get your hands off my girl!

(Romeo lets go of Ophelia, who slides down to the floor.)

OPHELIA: *(To Romeo.)* Golly! If he told you to jump off a bridge would you do it?!

(Ophelia gets up. Perry approaches Romeo.)

PERRY: *(To Romeo.)* What gives, sap face?

ROMEO: Sap face?

PERRY: If the shoe fits!

ROMEO: *(Looking at his shoes.)* These fit just fine.

(Perry grabs Romeo by the collar.)

DION: Perry! Go easy! He's new here!

PERRY: He better not be...making a play for my girl!

OPHELIA: Gee, Perry, I didn't know you cared.

BIANCA: Ophelia!

EMELIA: Yeah, don't look a gift horse in the mouth.

PERRY: *(Threateningly.)* You stay away from Ophelia, if you know what's good for you, got that?

(Nurse enters SL with Juliet.)

NURSE: What's going on here? Ophelia, you know better than to come to a dance when you're sick!

OPHELIA: For crying out loud!

NURSE: Let's get you down to the clinic and check your vitals.

OPHELIA: My vitals are fine.

PERRY: Are you sick, Ophelia?

ROMEO: *(To Nurse.)* The poor lady collapsed. Perhaps it's the Plague!

JULIET: Saints in heaven, spare us all!

NURSE: *(To Ophelia, holding out a thermometer.)* Here, stick this under your tongue.

OPHELIA: But— *(Nurse jams a thermometer under Ophelia's tongue. Garbled.)* You can't do this to me!

NURSE: March, young lady! Now!

BIANCA: *(Calls.)* See you later, Ophelia!

EMELIA: *(To Ophelia, calls.)* Hope you get better soon.

(Nurse drags Ophelia off SR. Perry approaches Juliet.)

PERRY: *(To Juliet.)* So, how's about that dance you owe me?

(Perry puts his arm around Juliet's waist.)

ROMEO: Unhand the lady, swine!

(Perry shoves Romeo to the floor.)

DION: *(To Romeo.)* Kid, you just gotta learn who's king in Verona.

(Perry drags Juliet off, with Dion following. Murky enters SL.)

MURKY: Hey, Emelia, you wanna —? (*Notices Romeo and goes to help him up.*) What happened?

ROMEO: That...that...foot-licker! That “roast-meat for worms”! That “canker-blossom”! That “quintessence of dust”!

MURKY: What’s the principal done now?

BIANCA: He means Perry!

EMELIA: And I think he means trouble with a capital “T”!

ROMEO: That “poisonous bunch-backed toad”!

(As the lights fade to black, Romeo charges off SR.)

Scene 4

(AT RISE: *The lobby, the following morning. Romeo is dressed as he was in Scene 3 and is standing at CS sword fighting with a yardstick.*)

ROMEO: (*After a few moves.*) Pray, how do these people defend themselves or seek vengeance with rulers?

(*Romeo hears voices and ducks behind the counter. Oliver and Rosalind enter SR, carrying their briefcases, etc.*)

ROSALIND: Oh, Oliver, why can't today be the first day of spring break?

OLIVER: We just need to be a bit more patient.

ROSALIND: Have you got the tickets?

OLIVER: Two round trips to Aruba.

ROSALIND: I wish they were one way.

OLIVER: Oh, Ms. Faire, even if we have to come back, we'll have a very sweet memory.

ROSALIND: But we've got to come back here and live a lie!

OLIVER: Only till the end of the year —

ROSALIND: Then we can tell the entire world we're —

(*Romeo pops up.*)

ROMEO: Oh, speak not another word, fair lady, for the plague-sore resides herein.

ROSALIND: Oh, Mr. Montague, we didn't mean for you to hear!

OLIVER: (*To Romeo.*) We...we're just supposing.

ROMEO: Your hearts speak true, and who am I to upend the course of true love?

ROSALIND: You are going to try out for the play this afternoon, aren't you?

OLIVER: *(To Romeo.)* And you're not going to say anything about—

ROMEO: I have a fine friend who writes plays. Would it be that she could be present now, for she would devise a way out of your dilemma.

ROSALIND: We've tried to think of something...anything.

ROMEO: But, wait! Have you tried this?

(Romeo, Oliver, and Rosalind huddle for a moment.)

OLIVER: *(To Romeo.)* Really?

ROSALIND: *(To Romeo.)* Do you think?

ROMEO: It is a proven plot device!

(Lear enters from the office.)

LEAR: Ah-ha!

ROSALIND: *(Feigning anger.)* I never want to see you again, Mr. Rowland!

OLIVER: *(Feigning anger.)* Oh, yeah? Well, it'll be a cold day when I try to help you out!

ROSALIND: *(Feigning anger.)* I asked you to fix my flat, not punch a hole in my gas tank!

OLIVER: *(Feigning anger.)* How was I to know that your car is so cheap the jack tore through the bumper and the gas tank?

ROSALIND: *(Feigning anger.)* You put the jack in the wrong spot!

OLIVER: *(Feigning anger.)* What would you know about where to put a car jack?

ROSALIND: *(Feigning anger.)* That does it, buster!

(Rosalind chases Oliver off SL.)

LEAR: Well, well, well, miracles do happen!

ROMEO: "The course of true love never did run smooth."

LEAR: And that's just the way I like it. *(Nurse enters DSL.)*
Oh, Nurse, anything to report?

NURSE: *(Indicating Romeo.)* This kid looks pretty peaked!
(Pulls out a thermometer. To Romeo.) Open up, buster! *(Pops a thermometer in Romeo's mouth. To Lear.)* So, what've you got?

LEAR: Inside, and I'll give you all the gory details.

NURSE: *(To Romeo, indicating thermometer.)* Don't touch that thing!

(Nurse and Lear exit into office. Murky enters SR.)

MURKY: *(Yawns. To Romeo.)* How come you got here so early?
(Garbled response from Romeo, who still has the thermometer in his mouth.) Why do you have that thing in your mouth?
(Garbled response from Romeo.) Gimme that!

(Murky pulls the thermometer out of Romeo's mouth.)

ROMEO: But Nurse forbid me to take that thing from my mouth.

MURKY: She didn't forbid me, did she? We'll set it right here...on the heater. *(Places the thermometer behind the counter.)* That'll give the old girl something to chirp about. So, what're you doing here at the crack of dawn?

ROMEO: I came seeking a sword, but all I could find is this bit of twaddle. *(Indicates yardstick.)*

MURKY: A sword? What for?

ROMEO: I am determined to skewer that foul-breathed Perry Peters.

MURKY: Rolly, we don't keep swords in school. The sharpest thing you'll find is a number-two pencil.

ROMEO: Then how dost one settle differences?

MURKY: Look, you two are squabbling over a girl, right?

ROMEO: Not just a girl! 'Tis Juliet, my light, my love.

MURKY: Yeah, well, her name's Julie, and she's a nice, new kid. But you're too young to go overboard on a girl, you know.

ROMEO: Go overboard?

MURKY: Look, we're just getting our sea legs. Who wants to tie an anchor around their neck?

ROMEO: I fear you are speaking in riddles.

MURKY: Chill out, man! Just chill out. I've got a great way to get Peters back for being such an oaf. Here.

(Murky hands Romeo a small bag.)

ROMEO: Ah! Poison! I knew you had something worthwhile up thy sleeve.

MURKY: It's not poison!

(Romeo pulls a ten dollar bill attached to a length of fish line from the bag.)

ROMEO: A garrote?

MURKY: What? Romeo, this is a joke, and Perry's just dumb enough to fall for it.

ROMEO: A joke?

MURKY: It's a million laughs. *(Takes the money and places it on the floor under one of the tables.)*

ROMEO: What are you doing?

MURKY: Seeing who'll fall for temptation.

ROMEO: Oh. And before another moment passes, I must thank thee, Murky, for allowing me to spend the night at your home. Your mother and father are most admirable.

MURKY: Anytime, dude. By the way, where are your folks?

ROMEO: I...I...have no...folks.

MURKY: Gosh, sorry to hear that.

ROMEO: Oh, they live.

MURKY: Then what are you, emancipated?

ROMEO: You might say.

MURKY: You're emancipated?! Wow, that is like so completely cool! I've never met anybody who's really emancipated. Do they give you money and everything?

ROMEO: Aye. Here, you see? *(Tosses gold coins on the table.)*

MURKY: Whoa! These are gold coins! Real gold! How many of those things do you have?

ROMEO: Twenty.

MURKY: Look, hide them! Now! *(Romeo picks up the coins.)*
And whatever you do, don't put them in the soda machine!
(Looks off SR.) Well, look who's coming!

ROMEO: The weedy bat-fowling flap-dragon?

MURKY: Anybody ever tell you you got a way with words?
Get back here and hide!

(Murky and Romeo hide behind the counter. Perry and Dion enter SR.)

DION: *(To Perry.)* So, how'd it go with that new girl?

PERRY: *(With a sly laugh.)* Wouldn't you like to know?

(Romeo growls from behind the counter.)

DION: You hear something?

PERRY: Your stomach because you didn't have any breakfast.

DION: I did, too! A bowl of [Count Chocula]. Hey! Look!
(Points to the ten dollar bill.) [Or insert the name of another breakfast cereal.]

PERRY: And I thought I was lucky!

(Romeo growls.)

DION: That was your stomach this time!

PERRY: No way! I had three breakfast burritos.

DION: And your stomach isn't making noise?

PERRY: Now, stand back and watch a master at work!
(*Limbers up his fingers and reaches for the money. Murky pulls the money back.*) Hey!

DION: That's weird!

PERRY: Must be a breeze or something. (*Reaches for the bill. Murky pulls it back.*) No way! (*Dives for the bill, hitting his head on the table.*) Ouch!

(*Perry falls. Murky and Romeo rise from behind the counter, laughing.*)

MURKY: (*To Perry.*) Funny what people will do for money!

ROMEO: (*To Perry.*) Or steal what belongs to another man.

PERRY: (*Rising.*) Your idea of a joke, huh, new kid?

MURKY: Actually, it was my idea.

DION: Looks like you're gonna have a nice bruise there,
Perry.

PERRY: (*To Romeo.*) Why you...you—!

ROMEO: "Idle-headed boar-pig"? Degenerate clapper-
clawed minnow? Arrogant beetle-headed miscreant?

PERRY: Huh?

DION: I liked the one about the clapper-headed minnow pig.

(*Juliet and Perdita enter SR, unseen by Romeo or Murky.*)

PERRY: (*To Romeo, making fists.*) Put 'em up!

ROMEO: Put up what?

PERRY: Your dukes!

ROMEO: I know no duke!

MURKY: He means your fists, Rolly! He's the school boxing
champ!

PERRY: And now that I've got an audience, I guess I'll have to
show off.

(*Perry swings his arm around in circles, limbering up. Romeo "punches" Perry straight in the nose. Perry goes down like a rock.*)

ROMEO: *(To Perry, shouts.)* Take that, thou mumbling fool-born ingested lump!

PERDITA: You killed him!

ROMEO: Julie?!

JULIET: I fear you've done terrible damage to this good man.

(Juliet kneels next to Perry.)

DION: I'm gonna get the Nurse!

(Dion runs off SL. Ophelia, Bianca, and Emelia enter SR, each carrying a pie.)

BIANCA: *(To Emelio and Ophelia.)* Thanks for helping me make the pies, guys.

EMELIA: I wish I could hear your speech.

OPHELIA: *(Indicating Terry.)* Looks like somebody's down for the count.

MURKY: Rolly didn't mean it.

OPHELIA: Why not? I go for winners.

ROMEO: But...but...

JULIET: Thou hast dishonored thy name Montague.

ROMEO: But, fair lady—

OPHELIA: Look, if she isn't impressed, I am! *(Kisses Romeo on the cheek. Murky takes the thermometer from behind the counter and kneels by Perry. Juliet rises.)* Here, hold this, sweetie. *(Hands Juliet a pie.)* I wanna properly congratulate this guy!

(As Ophelia moves in to kiss Romeo, the Nurse enters from the office, followed by Lear.)

NURSE: I thought I heard a thud!

LEAR: What's going on here?

MURKY: Perry collapsed. I took his temperature.

(Murky hands the Nurse the thermometer. Nurse reads the thermometer.)

NURSE: Holy cow! This kid's on fire! Help me get him to the clinic...stat! *(Murky and Nurse lift Perry and move him SL.)*
We'll get him on an IV and antibiotics after a nice big dose of castor oil!

(Nurse, Murky, and Perry exit SL.)

LEAR: *(To Students.)* And the rest of you, move it!

OPHELIA: *(To Romeo.)* See you later, champ!

(Bianca and Emelia follow Ophelia off SL.)

JULIET: *(To Romeo.)* It appears thou hast a new lady love in thy life!

ROMEO: And, pray, what transpired betwixt thee and that withered dismal-dreaming worm's meat last night?

JULIET: Less than transpired betwixt thee and that lascivious half-faced pignut!

ROMEO: So, 'tis true what I am thinking!

JULIET: And if what you are thinking is true, then what I fear must be true as well!

ROMEO: Huh?

JULIET: Thou lovest another!

ROMEO: No more than thee!

JULIET: I rue the day I first set eyes on you!

ROMEO: No more than I!

JULIET: Would that I could recapture the hours wasted on loving you!

ROMEO: You can start now because I intend to do the same!

JULIET: Oh, yeah?

ROMEO: Oh, yeah!

JULIET: Then how about a bite to eat before you get started?

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(Juliet smashes the pie into Romeo's face and exits SL.)

ROMEO: "For never was a story of more woe
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo."

[END OF FREEVIEW]