

ROMEO REVISED

TEN MINUTE PLAY

By Wade Bradford

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SYNOPSIS: Remember how Romeo and Juliet ends? UTTER TRAGEDY! Romeo visits Juliet, assuming she is dead, drinks some poison and dies just as Juliet wakes up from her nice long potion-induced nap. She's distraught, decides to kill herself, and the rest is literary history. But what if Shakespeare had revised his greatest romance just a bit? What if Juliet didn't stab herself? What if Romeo's poison was a dud? What would happen next? ABSOLUTE HILARITY! This utterly original spoof is the perfect comic gem for a talented actor and actress.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 MAN, 1 WOMAN)

ROMEO (48 lines)

JULIET (50 lines)

SCENE: The Tragic Tomb of Juliet, at the final act of Shakespeare's great romantic tragedy.

AT RISE:

Juliet lies on a tomb. Romeo enters.

ROMEO: Oh, my love, my wife! *(He raises a vial of poison.)* Come bitter conduct! Come unsavory guide! Here's to my love! *(Drinks, the poison quickly takes effect.)* O, true apothecary! Thy drugs are quick! Thus, with a kiss, I die.

He kisses her, then falls to the floor, supposedly dead. Juliet awakens with a yawn. She sees Romeo and gasps in sadness.

JULIET: What's here? A cup closed in my true love's hand? Poison I see hath been his timeless end. Ah churl! Drink all; and leave no friendly drop to help me after? Then I'll be brief. O happy dagger! *(Takes Romeo's blade.)* This is thy sheath. *(Stabs herself.)* There rust, and let me die.

She falls back on the tomb, supposedly dead once again. Romeo suddenly awakens with a gasp.

ROMEO: What madness is this? Is heaven so dark as a tomb? Oh, wait, I am not dead but live. Damned apothecary! Thou hast sold me a sleeping potion and not poison! Thou hast punk'd me! Where is my lady? She should be beside me in deathly rest. What's this? She lies upon the stony floor as if she had been moved, or had moved herself. Could it be that she still lives? Oh revive bright angel! But lo, a dagger lies within her tender heart. She must have awakened and stricken with grief at the sight of my supposed corpse, she stabbed herself in my honor. O poor self-killing beauty! The very thought of it makes me faint . . . Alas, I swoon!

He swoons and falls back onto the tomb. Juliet awakens.

JULIET: Oh! It seems I am not dead. Yet this not-so-happy dagger

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sticks forth from my bosom. Oh wait, the blade has not pierced my skin. What's this? The dagger has not stabbed me but instead has killed a book! (*She removes the knife, it has a book connected to it.*) Oh, now I remember; I brought Yorick's Classic Book of Danish Jokes so that I might chuckle with glee while waiting for my Romeo to pluck me from this darkened tomb. But there lies my Romeo, still dead from that fatal poison. And so I must join him. Come reluctant dagger, let us try this again! (*She's about to stab herself. Romeo stirs.*)

JULIET: Wait! Gentle Romeo! He stirs. What miracle is at work? My husband, art thou alive? O speak to me!

Romeo sits up, startled.

ROMEO: Who's there?!

He whacks Juliet as he flails his arms about. She falls to the ground, unconscious.

ROMEO: My Juliet! She lives! Or at least she was alive until I killed her. O, curse thee brutal elbow! Of all the connective joints in the body, thou art the most wretched! But how could it be that she was alive before being slain? I thought she had been stabbed. What's this? A book with a blade mark enpierced throughout each page. And what sort of words hath saved my love only for me to take her away again. A book of jokes? Cruel jests! No merriment can I gain from thee in this hour of woe. Although this one does look funny. (*He reads one of the jokes. He begins to chuckle, then laughs hysterically. Suddenly, he has a heart attack.*) Oh no! My heart!

He spasms and collapse on top of Juliet.

JULIET: Oof! Get off me you creep! O, it is my husband! Sweet Romeo, can this not wait until we are on our honeymoon? O, fret upon fret, you are not back to life but still in a state of raga-mortis! O, do get off of me! My word, this suicide business is very exhausting! (*Frees herself from Romeo and grabs dagger.*) Friendly dagger, here we go again! (*She is about to stab but hesitates.*) On second thought, methinks there might be a more comfortable way to die. Perhaps this pillow could gently smother me until I awake again in paradise. Come pillowy death. (*She puts her head inside the pillow.*) Come eternal sleep!

She lies down. Romeo suddenly gets up.

ROMEO: Thank goodness! It was only a minor heart attack.

JULIET: (*Sits up, head still in pillow.*) Romeo?

ROMEO: Ahh! Pillow Demon!

JULIET: Pillow Demon?! Where?! (*Romeo runs offstage. Juliet staggers about.*) Romeo? If you be alive, help remove this blinding garment. (*She fumbles around with the pillow on her head, then her hands touch a skeleton – or at least a skull.*) What's this? (*Takes off pillow. She realizes she's holding a skeleton.*) Aaaaaghhh!!! (*She exits in fear.*)

Note: *If a skeleton is too difficult a prop to come by, a simple skull could be used. Romeo enters, wielding a sword.*

ROMEO: Stand down, demon! I am no longer afeared. You shall not torment the body of my sweet Juliet. (*Sees skeleton in Juliet's place.*) Alas, I am too late! Poor Juliet! Eaten down to the bone! (*He sits next to the skeleton and leans against it.*)

Upstage, Juliet enters. She listens to the kind words.

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ROMEO: Juliet, my beloved wife, I will love you forever. Even your grotesque skeleton is delightful to me. Forgive my delay in joining you in your deathly slumber. I suppose I should kill myself now in some deadly manner and be reunited with my beautiful angel.

Juliet has been listening to these endearing words. When she realizes Romeo might kill himself, she shakes her head no, and is about to say something . . .

ROMEO: Or, I could visit my old girlfriend Rosaline. She was cool too.

JULIET: *(Instantly outraged.)* You philandering husband! How dare you betray my devotion!

As she speaks, she chokes Romeo. He collapses, apparently dead.

JULIET: Holy St. Frances, what have I done?! I have murdered my only love! What a wretched woman I am! *(She slowly raises the dagger, then rethinks.)* Hmm, Maybe I'll go see that handsome young Paris; maybe he still wants to get married. Good night, my Romeo, may flights of angels sing thee to thy - ow! Bee sting! Oh piteous allergies!!! *(Starts to die next to Romeo.)* Scoot over! *(Gasps and apparently dies.)*

ROMEO: *(Awakens with a yawn and a stretch.)* Oh, my neck . . . It feels so much better than before. But who could have - ? Juliet! O sweet chiropractor, awaken so that thou might attend to other muscles! Juliet? *(He listens to her heart.)* Alack the day, her heart beats not. What's this? *(He finds a note hidden in her dress.)* A note. It's from the good friar. It says: "Romeo, Beware the fair faced Juliet. She is actually a vampire."

Suddenly Juliet bolts up from death. She has vampire fangs. She bites into Romeo's neck. Romeo falls. Juliet rises, looking devious.

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JULIET: Poor, innocent Romeo, little did you realize that I was a - what's this? A medic alert bracelet? It reads: "In case of a full moon, beware. I am a werewolf."

Romeo jumps up, howls and bites her. They roll onto the tomb. She pushes him off.

JULIET: You bit me!

ROMEO: You bit me!

JULIET: Wait a moment. I feel like myself again.

ROMEO: And so do I . . . I've heard when a werewolf bites a vampire it reverses the devilish effects.

JULIET: And when a vampire bites a werewolf the houndish creature is cursed no more!

BOTH: We're cured!

ROMEO: Juliet, we can finally be together!

JULIET: O husband! Embrace me!

They run to each other to kiss. Unfortunately, they bump heads and stumble backwards.

JULIET: Ow!

ROMEO: Ouch!

JULIET: Wh . . . Where am . . . Who are you?

ROMEO: I . . . I . . . don't know . . . Who are you?

JULIET: I can't remember. I can't remember anything!

ROMEO: We must both be plagued with amnesia.

JULIET: The blight of forgetfulness caused by severe head trauma!
Tell me stranger, how can we regain our memories?

ROMEO: Let us search this dreary place. Perhaps we can uncover a clue to this murky mystery.

JULIET: *(They search around.)* So dark it is.

ROMEO: Take my hand.

JULIET: Thy hand is warm and comforting.

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ROMEO: And thy palm that holds mine hand is soft and smooth.

JULIET: And your wrist is strong - -

ROMEO: Your skin tender - -

JULIET: Manly is thy elbow.

ROMEO: Fragrant is the pit of thy arm.

JULIET: Your broad shoulder . . .

ROMEO: The nape of your neck . . .

JULIET: Your cleft chin . . .

ROMEO: Your perniciously kissable lips . . .

JULIET: Your attempt at a mustache . . .

ROMEO: Your uneven nostrils . . .

JULIET: Your eyes . . .

ROMEO: *Your* eyes . . .

JULIET: Perfectly beautiful . . .

ROMEO: Beautifully perfect . . .

They kiss.

ROMEO: Wait!

JULIET: Do you remember something?

ROMEO: Sadly, no, yet I have an idea as to our dire situation. Clear it is that we are strongly attracted to each other. Perhaps you and I met, not long ago, and blessed by love at first sight, we devoted ourselves to one another, spiting all family and friends, whereupon, before we could be together as man and wife perhaps I was banished, and the only way you could join was to by feigning thy death. Thus, I was sent here to revive you and steal you away, where we would then find some nest of love hidden away in the hills above Verona, and hence we would spend the rest of our lives snuggling in the spoon position.

JULIET: *(Thinks a moment.)* Nah, I don't think so.

ROMEO: True. No one could fall in love so quickly. It doesn't make sense.

JULIET: You are cute though.

ROMEO: You too!

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They kiss again.

JULIET: *(Speaking between kisses.)* But what . . . *(Kiss.)* if *(Kiss.)* we're *(Kiss.)* siblings?

They quickly pull away, wiping their lips.

ROMEO: Egads! Could that be true?!

JULIET: It's a possibility. Let us search for sense in this somber abode, that we might discover a clue to our relationship.

ROMEO: Excellent idea. Can we hold hands whilst we search?

JULIET: Certainly.

They walk around looking for clues. They notice the tomb, center stage.

JULIET: This one lies empty.

ROMEO: *(Examining the tomb.)* Here's an inscription. The words read: "Juliet Capulet." Yet no Juliet lies upon this grave.

JULIET: Juliet . . . That name is familiar to me. As though it has echoed in my ears a thousand times. What about you?

ROMEO: Hmm. The name doesn't suit me. But you look like a Juliet. Perhaps thou were placed in here by mistake.

JULIET: And why art thou here?

ROMEO: I know not. But soft! There lurks further inscription. Read on.

JULIET: It says . . . hmm . . . by chance do you recognize the name Montegue?

ROMEO: Monegue? Yes! That is my surname, though I cannot recall the first.

JULIET: Does the name Romeo ring familiar?

ROMEO: Why it does so seemingly. Perhaps that is my namesake: Romeo Montegue.

JULIET: *(Suddenly angry.)* Then behold this inscription, Montegue!

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“Here lies Juliet Capulet. She died of a broken heart, grief-stricken by the murder of Tybalt, noble cousin, slain by the dreaded villain Romeo Montegue.

ROMEO: Montegue?

JULIET: Yes! Montegue! Thou art my mortal enemy!

ROMEO: Well, uh, upon recollection, I don't think Romeo suits me -

JULIET: How like a Montegue, trying to lie his way out of justice. Now I know what mischief brought you here to this premature tomb. Thou hast come to finish me off!

ROMEO: Never! Although I will say you Capulets seem brash and hot-headed. It's no wonder we Montegues had to thin out your ranks.

JULIET: (*Picks up a sword from floor.*) Thou wretched boy that did send my beloved cousin to the shores of Hades, thou shall join him hence!

ROMEO: (*Draws sword.*) This shall determine that!

They engage in a mighty battle. Juliet is winning. Romeo suddenly hides. Juliet can't find him, so she searches him out.

JULIET: (*Evil and taunting.*) Romeo . . . Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?

She spots him, he shrieks like a girl and the fighting continues. Finally, they simultaneously run each other through with their blades, so that Romeo and Juliet lean against each other. They shout in pain, then suddenly snap out of their amnesia.

JULIET: Romeo! I just remembered who I am!

ROMEO: As did I!

JULIET: And who you are!

ROMEO: And how we love one another . . .

JULIET: Oh my darling . . . I'm so sorry . . . Does it hurt?

ROMEO: Aside from the punctured organs, it's not so bad. And how do you fair?

JULIET: I wish I had kept Yorrick's Classic Book of Danish Jokes hidden in my dress.

ROMEO: (*Dying.*) Oh my beautiful Juliet . . .

JULIET: Oh Romeo . . . Romeo . . .

ROMEO: And here we die . . . two sword-crossed lovers.

JULIET: Then let us die with a kiss.

Grunting, they lean forward, skewering themselves a bit more. They kiss, then gasp and twitch. They seemingly die. But then they twitch and gasp (comically) once more. Maybe a few times more . . . but then, they are finally dead, propped up against one another. Then, the actors break character and stand up straight. They look out towards the audience as if about to ask their director a question.

ROMEO: So, Shakespeare, sir, what did you think?

They listen attentively and nod.

JULIET: Uh-huh. That's what we thought too. It's way too long.

ROMEO: So we'll cut some of it then? Maybe right after she stabs herself the first time? Great . . . now, could you make it a happy ending?

BLACKOUT.

THE END