

THE MISADVENTURES OF ROMEO AND JULIET

(A REHEARSAL NIGHTMARE)

By Stephen Frankenfield

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SYNOPSIS: Welcome to the final dress rehearsal for *Romeo and Juliet* where our director is trying to direct egos, stagehands, stage managers and lost actors moseying into the wrong rehearsal – like Dorothy (yes, the one from Kansas) and Blatman, who freakishly resembles another caped crusader. Even Shakespeare has returned to do some minor – or major, depending on how you view an alien invasion of Verona – rewrites on his beloved tragedy. Can the director’s sanity last long enough to bring his cast and crew together for this final rehearsal? And can the stagehands hold off on the pyrotechnics long enough to make it to opening night...please?!!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 females, 3 males, 7-12 either, gender flexible)

JULIET (f)	A Capulet, and to her disappointment, one half of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> . (58 lines)
DOROTHY (f)	A lost and confused girl from Kansas. (26 lines)
DIRECTOR (f/m)	A frustrated professional who just wants to make it to opening night. (100 lines)
ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR (f/m)	An enthusiastic assistant who thinks he’s the assistant director. (29 lines)
STAGE MANAGER (f/m)	Is just trying to keep the rehearsal moving forward. (38 lines)
STAGEHAND #1 (f/m)	Confused about the details of the production. (12 lines)
STAGEHAND #2 (f/m)	Also confused about the details of the production. (8 lines)

STAGEHAND #3 (f/m).....	Very confused about the details of the production. (7 lines)
STAGEHAND #4 (f/m).....	Yet another one confused about the details of the production. (6 lines)
STAGEHAND #5 (f/m).....	Last but not least, confused about the details of the production. (8 lines)
ROMEO (m).....	A Montague, and happy to be the other half of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> . (46 lines)
BLATMAN (m).....	A hero who just wants a chance to be in one of Shakespeare's plays. (32 lines)
DIVA ACTRESS (f).....	A Julliard alumni who wants things the way she wants them. (25 lines)
STAGE MOM (f).....	Wants nothing more than to have her daughter be a star. (32 lines)
DAUGHTER (f).....	The one, and probably only, scenic actress. Teenager. (6 lines)
SOUND DESIGNER (f/m).....	Has a rock n' roll idea about how this love story should sound. (15 lines)
SHAKESPEARE (m).....	Back from the dead to rewrite his famous love story. (29 lines)
UNDERSTUDY (f/m).....	Will play any role, any time! (34 lines)
HIP WRITER #1 (f/m).....	Paid to rewrite Shakespeare's famous love story. (14 lines)
HIP WRITER #2 (f/m).....	Paid to rewrite Shakespeare's famous love story. (14 lines)

ALL LINE COUNTS ARE APPROXIMATE

DURATION: 45 minutes

TIME: Present

PLACE: [Insert your theatre's name here]

STAGE SETTING: Simple, easy to move set pieces.

PRODUCTION NOTES

This play is fast-paced with minimal, if any, set changes. In the play-within-the-play, Blatman is always in the Blatman mask (which, of course, is very similar to another superhero). It's visually funnier to see Blatman play Tybalt still wearing the mask. I mean, he still has to keep his secret identity, right?

PROPERTY LIST

- Clipboard
- Romeo and Juliet* script
- Coffee cup
- Headshot/resume
- Swords (2)
- Bottle of poison
- Two-by-fours
- Tools (hammers...and other tools if desired)
- Boom box (stereo)
- Cell phone
- 6+ small costume pieces that can be taken off easily

COSTUMES

JULIET: Elizabethan dress

DOROTHY: Traditional Dorothy dress

ROMEO: White rabbit, Elizabethan-style clothes

BLATMAN: Mask and cape

DIVA ACTRESS: Animal costume

SHAKESPEARE: Elizabethan-style clothes

STAGEHANDS: Stage Crew T-shirts

HIP WRITERS #1 and #2: Urban-style clothing, hats, glasses, etc.

NURSE: Head-dress

UNDERSTUDY: Robe

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Some of the characters could double with other characters, such as STAGEHANDS can be combined to any number you need, and any of the STAGEHANDS can also play STAGE MOM, DAUGHTER, SOUND DESIGNER, SHAKESPEARE, HIP WRITER #1 and HIP WRITER #2.

As written, the characters listed below return to play characters in the play-within-the-play (SCENE 2). If you need a larger cast, the roles in the play-within-the-play (SCENE 2) could be played by different actors. **Suggestion:** Keep Blatman as Tybalt. The visual of having Blatman as a Shakespeare character provided many laughs in the original production.

- ◆ Blatman as Tybalt, Citizen of Verona
- ◆ Understudy as Chorus, Nurse, Balthasar, Citizen of Verona
- ◆ Dorothy as Lady Capulet, Citizen of Verona
- ◆ Diva Actress as Mercutio, Citizen of Verona
- ◆ Hip Writer #1 as Benvolio, Citizen of Verona
- ◆ Hip Writer #2 as Prince, Citizen of Verona

MUSIC SUGGESTIONS: In the original production, we used Celtic and Renaissance-style music for the majority of the play. When the SOUND DESIGNER asks for the DIRECTOR's opinion on two different styles of music for the Love Scene, we used a snippet of "Love Theme from Romeo and Juliet" or "A Time for Us" (written by Henry Mancini) from Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* for the soft, obvious choice, and a very loud heavy metal guitar riff for the alternate.

SCENE ONE

AT RISE: *Lights up on JULIET, who is standing on a balcony upstage left. She leans on a railing, day-dreaming of a boy she encountered earlier that evening.*

JULIET: Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou, Romeo? Deny thy father and refuse thy name; or—

DOROTHY enters upstage right.

DOROTHY: Lions, and tigers, and beavers, oh my! Lions and tigers and beavers, oh my! Wait, that sounds wrong-

JULIET: Hey, you're not Romeo!

DOROTHY: (*Startled.*) Oh! No, I'm not. And you're not a lion, a tiger, or a beaver. Oh my!

JULIET: What do you think you're doing?

DOROTHY: Well, you see, my name is Dorothy Gale. The Lion, the Tin-Man, the Scarecrow and I are walking through the forest and... (*Looks around.*) Wait! Where'd they go? (*Yelling off stage.*) Hey guys!

JULIET: I think you're in the wrong theatre. This is— [*Insert your theatre's name*]

DOROTHY: [*Insert your theatre's name*]?

JULIET: Yup. And this is *Romeo and Juliet* rehearsal.

DIRECTOR: Hold! Everyone hold. (*Entering from the audience.*)

JULIET: Wait. Did you say, lions and tigers and beavers?

DIRECTOR: What's going on here?

JULIET: Dorothy is a bit confused.

DOROTHY: No, I'm not. I just don't know where my friends are...or where I'm at... or who any of you are—

JULIET: Yeah, you don't sound confused at all.

STAGE MANAGER enters.

STAGE MANAGER: Sorry! I'm sorry!

DIRECTOR: Where were you? You're supposed to be making sure things like this don't happen.

STAGE MANAGER: Yeah, I know. I'm sorry.

DIRECTOR: You already said that.

STAGE MANAGER: Yeah, I know. I'm sorry.

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR: Okay, people, let's start again.

From the top of the scene.

DOROTHY: Who are you?

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR: I am the assistant director.

JULIET: No, you're not.

STAGE MANAGER: He's the assistant to the director.

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR: I beg your pardon, but I am not a gofer, do you understand?

DIRECTOR: *(Looking at his script.)* Go grab me some coffee, will you?

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR: Yes, sir. *(Quickly exits.)*

STAGE CREW #1: *(Off stage.)* Over here!

STAGEHANDS enter. They are all wearing tool belts and carrying two-by-fours. They place them on the balcony, except for STAGEHAND #2, who continues past the balcony.

STAGEHAND #1: Hey, over here.

STAGEHAND #2: I thought we were using these to build the bridge.

STAGEHAND #1: What bridge?

STAGEHAND #3: In Act Two, Scene Two.

STAGEHAND #2: You know, the bridge scene, where Romeo and Juliet bungee jump to show their love for one another.

STAGEHAND #5: My favorite scene.

DIRECTOR: Excuse me, but—

STAGEHAND #4: The bridge scene was cut, I think.

STAGEHAND #5: What? You gotta be kidding me!

DIRECTOR: There was never a bridge scene. Who authorized that?

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR: *(Entering with coffee.)* That was me. My bad. Consider it cut.

STAGEHAND #1: I think it's actually for the balcony.

STAGEHAND #2: They're going to bungee jump off the balcony?

STAGEHAND #3: I think we're going to need a taller balcony.

STAGEHAND #5: I can't believe they're cutting the bridge scene for a balcony.

STAGEHAND #2: The play doesn't make sense without the bridge scene.

DIRECTOR: There was never a bridge scene.

STAGEHAND #4: Are you sure?

DIRECTOR: I'm very sure.

STAGEHAND #2 places the board on the balcony, along with the others.

DOROTHY: Excuse me. I didn't mean to interrupt. I was just on my way to see the great and powerful—

ROMEO – dressed as a white rabbit – enters hurriedly upstage right.

ROMEO: I'm late! I'm late! For a very important date!

DIRECTOR: Yes, you are late.

ROMEO: What? (*Sees everyone.*) Wait, what do you mean?

JULIET: And you're in the wrong play, Romeo.

ROMEO: Oh. (*Tearing off his rabbit costume. Goes down to one knee, facing JULIET.*) Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

DIRECTOR: No. You're late. You're late.

ROMEO: (*Putting rabbit ears back on.*) I just said that line and she told me I was in the wrong play.

STAGE MANAGER: I think he means you're late for rehearsal.

ROMEO: Oh, sorry.

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR: Why?

ROMEO: Why am I sorry?

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR: No. Why are you late?

ROMEO: Oh. There's a guy in the back distracting me.

STAGE MANAGER: Yeah, that guy was the reason I was late too. He's distracting everyone.

DIRECTOR: A guy?

ROMEO: In the back.

STAGE MANAGER: He wants to audition.

DIRECTOR: Oh, no!

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR: No way, no how!

JULIET: Now? We're having a rehearsal.

DIRECTOR: I don't have time to audition actors right now.

ROMEO: I don't think he's an actor.

JULIET: Not an actor?

STAGE MANAGER: But he has a headshot and resume.

DIRECTOR: What's his name?

STAGE MANAGER: He said his name is Bruce Blayne.

DIRECTOR: (*Did he hear this correctly?*) Bruce Blayne?

STAGE MANAGER: Yup.

DIRECTOR: You're serious?

STAGE MANAGER: Very. I tried to get more info out of him, but he rushed off to the bathroom.

The STAGEHANDS begin to use their tools: hammers, drills, etc. Needless to say, it's not quiet.

DIRECTOR: What's going on?

STAGE MANAGER: (*Over the noise.*) Sir? What do you want me to do about Mr. Blayne?

DIRECTOR: (*Distracted.*) What?

STAGE MANAGER: Bruce Blayne? What should I do?

DIRECTOR: Just send him in. (*To the STAGEHANDS.*) What are you doing?

STAGEHAND #1: (*Looks at hammer.*) Uh... hammering.

DIRECTOR: Can you please do it later?

STAGEHAND #1: Sure. If you don't mind the balcony collapsing again.

JULIET: The balcony collapsed?

STAGEHAND #3: Yeah, but it was my fault. I should've been more careful.

JULIET: What were you doing?

STAGEHAND #3: Standing on it.

DIRECTOR: I thought you already fixed it?

STAGEHAND #4: We were going to fix it after we built the bridge.

STAGEHAND #2: But since the bridge scene was cut, we'll just do it now.

STAGEHAND #5: Cutting the bridge scene in *Romeo and Juliet* is a bad move, if you ask me.

DIRECTOR: There was never a bridge scene. Look, could you please do it later? We're trying to rehearse right now.

STAGEHAND #3: Yeah, I guess. I mean, you should be fine. As long as you don't make the same mistake I did and stand on it. *(Exits.)*

STAGEHAND #4: And watch the railing. We haven't had a chance to secure that yet. *(Exits.)*

JULIET: *(To DIRECTOR.)* Can I talk to you for a moment?

DIRECTOR: Why not? Everyone else wants to talk to me.

DOROTHY: I'd like to talk to you.

DIRECTOR: Of course you do. Go ahead.

DOROTHY and JULIET speak the next two lines simultaneously.

DOROTHY: I'm not sure where I'm supposed to be right now. I was with my friends and we were on our way to see—

JULIET: I don't understand anything I'm saying right now. Why does Shakespeare have to be so confusing—

DIRECTOR: Stop! One at a time.

Again, DOROTHY and JULIET speak on top of each other.

DOROTHY: I'm not sure where I'm supposed to be right now. I was with my friends and we were on our way to see—

JULIET: I don't understand anything I'm saying right now. Why does Shakespeare have to be so confusing—

DIRECTOR: Stop! Juliet?

JULIET: I don't understand anything I'm saying.

DIRECTOR: Boy and girl fall in love and die tragically in the end. It's very romantic. Dorothy?

DOROTHY: I feel lost. I don't know where I'm at.

DIRECTOR: You're an actor on stage. Get used to it.

STAGEHAND #1: Listen, I've got some bad news. I don't think it's gonna be in the budget for the rotating stage.

DIRECTOR: I never asked for a rotating stage. *(Looks at the ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR.)*

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR: My bad. Cut the rotating stage!

STAGEHAND #5: That's great actually. That'll give us more time to work on the elevator.

STAGEHAND #1: Good point. That way Romeo won't have to climb up the balcony to get to Juliet. *(Exits.)*

STAGEHAND #5: If we would've stuck with the bridge scene, we wouldn't be having this problem. (*Exits.*)

STAGEHAND #2: What kind of production of *Romeo and Juliet* cuts the bridge scene and the rotating stage? (*Exits.*)

DIRECTOR: There was never a... oh, never mind.

STAGE MANAGER enters, followed by BLATMAN who is very similar to another popular cape crusader – outfit, deep voice and all.

STAGE MANAGER: So, here he is... you know, for the audition.

DIRECTOR: Okay, interesting. Should I even ask - what's your name?

BLATMAN: (*In a deep, disguised voice.*) I'm Blatman.

DOROTHY: I thought your name was Bruce?

BLATMAN: Uh...yeah, Bruce couldn't make it.

JULIET: I like his voice.

ROMEO: (*To JULIET.*) Are you kidding me?

DIRECTOR: You said your name is *Blat...man*.

BLATMAN: Yup, that's right. Blatman.

DIRECTOR: Don't you mean—

BLATMAN: Nope. It's Blatman.

DIRECTOR: (*After a moment.*) Okay. I've seen crazier. Why not? Do you have a resume?

BLATMAN: It's right here. On the back of my headshot. (*Hands his headshot/resume to DIRECTOR.*)

DIRECTOR: This is your headshot?

BLATMAN: That's right.

DIRECTOR: It's just a drawing.

BLATMAN: Yup. Of me. I'm Blatman.

ROMEO: Did you draw this?

BLATMAN: Sure did.

JULIET: A man of many talents.

ROMEO: It looks like a kindergartner drew this.

JULIET: I think it's quite good.

ROMEO: You would.

JULIET: What's that supposed to mean?!

DIRECTOR: Alright, enough! (*To BLATMAN.*) This'll do. Do you have a monologue prepared?

BLATMAN: Yes, I do. I'd like to share a dramatic piece from *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare. (*As Hamlet, which not surprisingly, sounds exactly the same.*) To be or not to be, that is the question, whether tis nobler in the mind to suffer the—

DOROTHY: They're not doing that play.

JULIET: But we can. I'm okay with that.

BLATMAN: Oh, okay. I also have a comedic monologue from *Midsummer Night's Dream*. I'll be playing the part of Puck. (*Again, he sounds no different.*) If we shadows have offended, think by this, and all is mended—

JULIET: (*Moved by his performance.*) Beautiful. Just beautiful.

ROMEO: It wasn't that good.

STAGE MANAGER: Excuse me, Bruce—

BLATMAN: Bruce couldn't make it, remember?

STAGE MANAGER: Oh, yeah, that's right. Mr. uh... Blatman. We're doing *Romeo and Juliet*.

BLATMAN: I can play Romeo. I have a soft side.

JULIET: Okay.

ROMEO: No way! I'm Romeo.

BLATMAN: Maybe that should change.

BLATMAN gets into a fighting stance. ROMEO, terrified, runs behind DOROTHY.

DIRECTOR: Okay, okay. Enough. (*Points to ROMEO.*) He's Romeo. (*To BLATMAN.*) We'll try to find something else for you.

BLATMAN: I can juggle.

DIRECTOR: I'll keep that in mind. (*To STAGE MANAGER.*) Can we start again, please? Bring the lights back down.

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR: Let's go people! Make it happen!

STAGE MANAGER: Bring the lights back down. (*Exits.*)

Lights dim. DIVA ACTRESS enters upstage right. She is wearing an elephant trunk and ears (or whatever other animal costume you may have, the sillier the better.). She is visibly upset.

DIVA ACTRESS: Can we bring the lights back up?

Lights immediately come back up.

DIRECTOR: What's the problem?

DIVA ACTRESS: I will not wear this. I am an actress. Not an animal.
I went to Juilliard.

ROMEO: Big deal.

DIVA ACTRESS: What did you say?!

DIVA ACTRESS gets into a fighting stance. ROMEO runs behind DOROTHY.

DIRECTOR: Who told you to wear that?

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR: That was me. My bad. Consider it cut.

STAGEHAND #1 enters.

STAGEHAND #1: So, I've got the explosives ready to go. Do you want them to go off for this rehearsal or are we saving them for opening night?

DIRECTOR: There's no explosions in *Romeo and Juliet*.

STAGEHAND #1: Oh, okay. *(Begins to exit, then returns.)* So... no explosions tonight?

DIRECTOR: No. No explosions.

STAGEHAND #1: Got it. Save it for opening. *(Exits.)*

DIRECTOR gives a stern look to the ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR.

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR: My bad. Consider it cut. No explosions, people!

DIRECTOR: Listen, can we please get back to rehearsal. We open tomorrow night. *(To STAGE MANAGER.)* Top of the show. *(Exits into audience.)*

STAGE MANAGER: *(Enters.)* Places for the top of the show everyone. *(Exits.)*

Lights dim. STAGE MOM enters, followed by her DAUGHTER. They cross to center stage.

STAGE MOM: Hello. Why is it so dark in here? Honey, stay close to me. Hello.

DIRECTOR: Can I help you?

STAGE MOM: Yes, can I speak to the director of this production?

DIRECTOR: I'm sorry, but we're in the middle of a rehearsal—

STAGE MOM: Why is it so dark in here?

DIRECTOR: As I just said, we're right in the middle of a—

STAGE MANAGER: (*Entering.*) Do want me to bring the lights back up?

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR: Yes, please.

STAGE MANAGER: (*Exiting.*) Bring the lights back up.

DIRECTOR: No, don't bring the lights—

STAGE MANAGER is gone.

STAGE MOM: My daughter is a very experienced and talented actress. Tell them honey.

DAUGHTER: (*Quiet.*) I am a very experienced and—

STAGE MOM: Honey, speak up. And stand straight.

DAUGHTER: (*Adjusts to her mother's liking.*) I am a very experienced and talented actress.

STAGE MOM: See?

DIRECTOR: I'm sorry, but there aren't any roles for her in this production—

STAGE MOM: Nonsense. Sweetie, show him what you can do.

DAUGHTER lifts her arms.

STAGE MOM: Spread your feet apart. Widen your stance.

DAUGHTER spreads her feet apart and widens her stance. She holds this position.

DIRECTOR: Wow. That's... that's... what is that?

STAGE MOM: She is a pine tree. She can also play a fern, a maple, an oak—

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR: She just plays trees?

STAGE MOM: No, she does not just play trees. My daughter is what they call in the business... a scenic actress.

DIRECTOR: A scenic—

STAGE MOM: Actress, that's right.

DIRECTOR: That's very interesting, but—

STAGE MOM: I knew you would love her.

DIRECTOR: Listen, I'm going for a very minimal set for this production, so I don't think we're going to need a tree.

STAGE MOM: Nonsense. Every show needs a tree. Anyway, there was this ad in the paper this morning. *(Pulls out newspaper from purse. Reads.)* "Actors needed. Must be able to play rocks and shrubs. Preferable skills in all kinds of trees." *(To DIRECTOR.)* So, you see why we came right over.

DIRECTOR: *(To ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR.)* Did you—

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR: My bad. Consider it retracted. *(He grabs newspaper and tears it in half.)*

DIRECTOR: Listen, I'm sure she's very talented but—

STAGE MOM: How about something else, then? Last year she was in a production of *Sleeping Beauty*. She played a rock. Limestone. Honey, show him your limestone rock.

DAUGHTER goes to the ground and becomes a limestone rock.

STAGE MOM: No, honey, the limestone rock. The one from *Sleeping Beauty*.

DAUGHTER slightly changes positions. Slightly.

STAGE MOM: See? A natural. And she can stay like that for hours.

DIRECTOR: That's a fine rock—

STAGE MOM: Limestone rock.

DIRECTOR: Limestone rock, yes, but again, I don't think—

Everyone enters.

DIRECTOR: What is everyone doing? Stay in places for the top of the show.

JULIET: I thought we were taking a break.

DIRECTOR: No, we're not taking a break.

SOUND DESIGNER – wearing giant headphones around his neck – enters upstage left.

SOUND DESIGNER: Can I get your opinion on something?

DIRECTOR: Not right now. I've got too much going on.

SOUND DESIGNER: Great. It won't take but a minute. For the love scene between Romeo and Juliet, would you prefer this?

SFX: Soft, orchestrated music plays over the speakers.

Everyone is swept away by the beauty of the piece. *SOUND DESIGNER* looks bored.

SOUND DESIGNER: Or this?

SFX: Hard rock music plays.

Everyone covers their ears, except for *SOUND DESIGNER*, who is rockin' out.

DIRECTOR: Okay, turn it off!

SFX: Music stops.

SOUND DESIGNER: So, which one?

DIRECTOR: The first one.

SOUND DESIGNER: What? Why?

DIRECTOR: Because I'm the director.

SOUND DESIGNER: That's not fair. Can we take a vote?

DIRECTOR: No.

SOUND DESIGNER: Oh, come on, please?

DIRECTOR: *(Reluctantly.)* Fine. *(To everyone.)* All in favor of the first song?

Everyone, except for the *SOUND DESIGNER*, raises their hands as high as they can.

DIRECTOR: All in favor of the second song?

Everyone lowers their hands, except for SOUND DESIGNER, who raises his with great enthusiasm.

DIRECTOR: First song it is.

SOUND DESIGNER: Whatever. *(He exits in a huff.)*

SHAKESPEARE enters from the lobby. He is a distinguished-looking man, delighted to be alive and well.

SHAKESPEARE: Hello, my good and merry country men... *(Looks at STAGE MOM and winks.)* ...and women.

STAGE MOM: *(Smiles.)* Hello.

ROMEO: It's William Shakespeare.

SHAKESPEARE: Indeed, I am he. The one and only.

ROMEO: But we thought you were...

SHAKESPEARE: What?

ROMEO: Well. Were, were...

SHAKESPEARE: Words. Do spit them out, lad. You thought I was what?

ROMEO: Well... *(Looks at everyone.)*

ALL: Dead!

SHAKESPEARE: *(Chuckles.)* Oh no, I am very much alive and well in fair Verona, where we lay our scene.

UNDERSTUDY: *(Entering.)* Hey, that's my line.

STAGE MANAGER: No, it's not. It's... *(Looks around at everyone.)* Wait. Where's the actor who does the prologue?

DIVA ACTRESS: I think you mean the chorus.

STAGE MANAGER: Chorus, prologue, whatever. Where is he?

UNDERSTUDY: He's at home, sleeping.

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR: And who are you?

UNDERSTUDY: I'm the understudy.

DIRECTOR: Wait, he's at home sleeping?

UNDERSTUDY: Yeah, that's why I'm here.

STAGE MANAGER: Why is he sleeping?

UNDERSTUDY: He got a part in that film they're shooting down the street. He was super excited. The character is supposed to be really tired, so to get into character, he stayed up for the last three days straight.

DIVA ACTRESS: That's called method acting.

JULIET: We all know what method acting is.

DIVA ACTRESS: I doubt that.

DIRECTOR: When is the film shoot?

UNDERSTUDY: It was this morning. He missed it. (*Excited.*) I was the understudy for that role too!

SHAKESPEARE: (*To DIRECTOR.*) I wanted to speak with you, if you have a minute?

DIRECTOR: I'm sorry, I don't.

SHAKESPEARE: Great. You're doing *Romeo and Juliet*, right?

DIRECTOR: That's right.

SHAKESPEARE: Good. I thought about changing the ending.

DIRECTOR: What? No, you can't change the ending.

SHAKESPEARE: Why not? I wrote it.

DIRECTOR: Yes, well... (*At a loss.*) ...But it's a classic. People love this story. *Especially* the end.

BLATMAN: Actually, I've never liked it.

JULIET: Me neither. I never liked it.

ROMEO: What? You said it was your favorite ending of all his plays.

JULIET: No, I didn't. I never said that. (*To BLATMAN.*) I never said that.

DIVA ACTRESS: (*To SHAKESPEARE.*) I hope you're joking. You're joking, right?

SHAKESPEARE: I believe that if we tweak the ending ever so slightly, it would be more satisfying to the audience.

STAGE MOM: If my memory serves me, I think there may be a royal oak tree at the end of *Romeo and Juliet*. Honey, show them your royal oak.

DAUGHTER becomes a royal oak tree.

DOROTHY: What do you want to change?

SHAKESPEARE: Oh, just a slight tweak. Nothing much. I think that *Romeo and Juliet*... should live!

Everyone gasps.

DIVA ACTRESS: No. That's horrible.

DOROTHY: That's not very romantic.

ROMEO: I'd say that's more than tweaking the play.

UNDERSTUDY: Awesome! I love it. Can I play Juliet?

JULIET: Uh, no. I'm Juliet. *(To BLATMAN.)* You can be my Romeo.

ROMEO: I'm Romeo.

BLATMAN: I can play the prologue dude.

UNDERSTUDY: No, that's why I'm here.

BLATMAN: I thought you wanted to play Juliet?

UNDERSTUDY: *(Points to JULIET.)* She won't let me.

Everyone begins to argue.

STAGE MANAGER: Everyone please. *(They continue to argue.)*
Please, everyone.

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR: Can everyone just calm down, please! *(Still arguing.)* If you could please just calm down so the director can give his direction, so we can move in a direction that works with the director's direction! *(Everyone stops.)*

DIRECTOR: That's good, thanks—

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR: —because we still have a lot to do, people. And I'd appreciate your focus and commitment to this production, especially for tonight's very important rehearsal!

DIRECTOR: Great—

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR: Because we open tomorrow night and we are nowhere near being ready for an audience!!

There is an awkward pause as everyone stares.

DIRECTOR: Okay. I said, thanks.

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR: *(Calmly now.)* You're welcome.

DIVA ACTRESS: That seemed unnecessary.

The same hard rock music from before begins to play. Everyone covers their ears. SOUND DESIGNER enters. STAGE MANAGER runs off stage to silence the noise.

SOUND DESIGNER: *(Screaming.)* If you could just listen to it and give it a second chance. I think you'll agree it captures the spirit of *Romeo and Juliet!*

Music stops.

SOUND DESIGNER: Hey! *(Sees SHAKESPEARE. Excited.)* Are you who I think you are?

SHAKESPEARE: Indeed, I am.

SOUND DESIGNER: Great! *(Takes off jacket.)* Could you wash my jacket, I got some ketchup on it. *(Hands SHAKESPEARE his jacket.)*

SHAKESPEARE: I'm not the costumer.

DIVA ACTRESS: If you're washing costumes, could you take my gloves? *(Takes off her gloves and hands them to SHAKESPEARE.)* There's a stain on them.

SHAKESPEARE: I am a poet. I wrote the greatest plays of all time.

SOUND DESIGNER: That's awesome. So, can you? It's my lucky jacket, and I want it to be clean for opening night.

HIP WRITER #1 and #2 enter wearing sunglasses. One holds a giant, old-fashioned boom box.

HIP WRITER #1: Hello, hello.

HIP WRITER #2: What's happening?

DIRECTOR: Who are you two?

HIP WRITER #1: We're here for the rewrites.

STAGE MANAGER: What rewrites?

SHAKESPEARE: Oh, yes. I hope you don't mind. I called Rewriters "R" Us to help with the rewriting of my play.

HIP WRITER #1: Yup. That's why we're here. To give it a more hip feeling.

HIP WRITER #2: Yeah, to give it a more flowin' vibe.

ROMEO: I think it's already got enough flowin' vibe.

SHAKESPEARE: Just be still and quiet conscience. That is all I require of thy.

JULIET: It's thee.

SHAKESPEARE: Beg pardon?

JULIET: I think you meant to say: 'That is all I require of *thee*.'

BLATMAN: No, I think it's *thou*.

DIVA ACTRESS: You're both wrong. I spent years studying the Bard.

SHAKESPEARE: Who's the Bard?

UNDERSTUDY: You are.

JULIET: Actually, the Bard can refer to any professional poet or storyteller.

DIVA ACTRESS: It's *thart!*

DOROTHY: What?

DIVA ACTRESS: Listen, it's a well-known fact that Shakesy here made up a lot of the words that we use now in the English language.

And one of them happens to be *thart*.

ROMEO: I've never used that word.

STAGE MANAGER: So, you're saying it should be, "That is all I require of *thart*"?

ROMEO: That's totally wrong.

JULIET: Yeah, that doesn't sound right.

BLATMAN: Sounds right to me. I think it's *thart*.

JULIET: Yeah, me too. It's definitely *thart!*

DIVA ACTRESS: Can we just hurry up and listen to these guys so we can get on with the play?

DIRECTOR: Fine. Go ahead.

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR: Let's make it fast.

Everyone finds a seat around HIP WRITER #1 and #2 – most sit on the floor.

HIP WRITER #1: So... there's Romeo.

HIP WRITER #2: And Juliet.

DIVA ACTRESS: (*Bored.*) Wow. This is great so far.

HIP WRITER #1: And it's the end of the play.

HIP WRITER #2: They are both lying there, dead.

HIP WRITER #1: But...are they really?

HIP WRITERS #1 and #2: NO!

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