An Ode to Juliette

A one-act drama

by
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STORY OF THE PLAY

A high school drama teacher directs her students in rehearsing a version of *Romeo and Juliet.* A creative writing teacher encourages her students to compose poems that reflect their personal lives. And a man, the narrator, weaves these school experiences –and his own– into a play he has written. The result is a beautiful mosaic of the familiar lives of students and culture inherent in high schools. The play deals with tragedy, bullying, sexuality, grieving, and perseverance with vital sensitivity. A mix of a few hockey players, accidentally scheduled into the creative writing class, provide humorous breaks. Revealing information at certain points in this drama will keep the audience interested to the very end. Running time is approximately 50 minutes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

21 characters; 10 m, 11 f, extras, doubling possible.

NARRATOR: (M) His play is part of his story; reveals insights as play progresses.
SANDIE: (F) Plays Friar; has an attitude and a guilty secret.
DAVE: (M) A kind, supportive friend to classmates.
MISS JENARE: (F) Drama teacher.
ANAKAH: (F) Plays Juliet; has a sick mother.
KELLY (M) Plays Romeo; lives with narrow-minded grandfather; writes a dark poem.
JESSIE (F) Plays Apothecary.
MRS. LAURIE KAY: (F) Creative writing teacher.
JASON: (M) Reads aloud his mysterious love poem; knows the part of Romeo perfectly.
ERIKA: (F) Writes poem about cello.
VINCE: (M) Hockey player.
ARNOLD: (M) Another.
EPSTEIN: (M) Another.
MITCH: (M) Another.
PAUL: (M) Plays Paris; likes Erika.
NADINE: (F) Fearful of Sandie but surprises all at end.
CAROL: (F) Kind-hearted custodian.
MRS. LARKIN: (F) Anakah's sick mother.
TOM: (M) Understudy for role of Romeo.
ELLIE: (F) Prompter.
SARAH: (F) Friend of the Narrator.
EXTRAS: Extra 1, Extra 2, Capulets, and Montagues.

Playwright's Notes:

The scene for the Narrator is perhaps most effective with a spotlight from waist up off to the side of stage.

The scenes for the *Romeo and Juliette* rehearsals is simply a bare stage.

For the scenes in the creative writing class a simple setting such as a table, a few chairs and a podium should do. It's important that these props can be taken off the stage quickly before the next scene.

As for entrances and exits, an aisle or entrance to the theatre and offstage wings should be used depending on the scene. Also, it should be assumed that offstage from either side are doors that lead to the school hallways.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: A SPOTLIGHT on NARRATOR from waist up.)

NARRATOR: I wrote a play. Thought I'd run it by you. It's pretty remarkable really. I've tweaked in it places and there's one twist you'll notice right away, but other than that, it develops much like the way my life unfolded this year. *(Indicates his bag with various props.)* Brought a few things in my bag I'll share with you later. Guess I'll start from the beginning…

(SPOTLIGHT fades to black. LIGHTS up on the rehearsal of "Romeo and Juliette." SANDIE, DAVE and EXTRAS are sword fighting as MRS. JENARE is watching.)

ALL CAPULETS: Down with the Montagues!
ALL MONTAGUES: Down with the Capulets!

(THEY fight. Enter EXTRA 1.)

EXTRA 1: Part, fools! Put up your swords; you know not what you do.

(EXTRA 1 beats down their swords. Enter EXTRA 2.)

EXTRA 2: What art thou drawn among these heartless hinds? Turn thee, Benvolio, look upon thy death.
EXTRA 1: I do but keep the peace: put up thy sword or manage it to part these men with me.
EXTRA 2: What, drawn, and talk of peace! I hate the word as I hate hell, all the Montagues and thee: Have at the coward!
ALL CAPULETS: Down with the Montagues!
ALL MONTAGUES: Down with the Capulets!
SANDIE: Ouch! You really hit me that time.
DAVE: You're supposed to lift your foot the way we planned it remember?
SANDIE: Fine, but you nearly took my head off too!

DAVE: I know. Good thing I caught myself before I did.
SANDIE: Well, watch it! That was way too close.
DAVE: It's not my fault. Remember how we practiced it? I wind up, then I stop, you duck, then I proceed to swing.
SANDIE: You're pathetic. All of you. My great-grandma can do better.
MISS JENARE: Okay that's enough with the put-downs. We'll go through the fighting sequence again later.
SANDIE: I'd like to move on to some more advanced stuff.
MISS JENARE: One step at a time. I know a student who fences competitively and can help with the fighting scenes. She's a little shy and needs some encouragement. But I'm confident I can get her to rehearsals.
SANDIE: I can't wait.
MISS JENARE: Go to the stage left wing and quietly talk through the fighting sequence, and a little later, I can at least show you how to parry and lunge without getting tangled up.

(ACTORS in fight scene exit SL.)

MISS JENARE: *(Cont'd.)* Let's go on to the next part of the rehearsal. Scene 5, the open gallery to Juliette's chamber, overlooking the garden. Take it from "Wilt thou be gone?" Kelly and Anakah are you ready?
ANAKAH and KELLY: *(From offstage.)* Ready.

(ANAKAH and KELLY enter.)

ANAKAH: Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day:
It was the nightingale and not the lark,
That pierc'd the fearful hollow of thine ear.
KELLY: It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
No nightingale: look, love, what the envious streaks,
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east:
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on misty mountain tops.
I must be gone and live or stay and die.

End of Freeview

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