

Scenes from Romeo & Juliet (Sort of...Almost)

John Shanahan

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DEDICATION

To the amazing FBMS cast and crew, because they made it shine.

STORY OF THE PLAY

A drama class is bringing a cutting of “Romeo and Juliet,” the famous play about star-crossed lovers, to competition. But the truck with their set pieces and props has broken down on the highway, Romeo’s throwing up backstage, and Juliet is adamantly not using a tall stepladder to replace the missing balcony. But the show must go on! This funny, fast-paced ensemble comedy mixes legitimate Shakespeare scenes with controlled chaos, theater inside jokes, and absolutely no respect for the fourth wall. About 30 minutes.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

Scenes from Romeo & Juliet (Sort of...Almost) was originally performed in preview by the Furnace Brook Middle School Theater Program, Marshfield MA, on April 15, 2025 and again on May 3, 2025 as part of the Massachusetts Educational Theater Guild competition. The show was directed by Stacey Shanahan, with Casey White, Meg Bonney, and Jennifer Mundt. The cast, in order of appearance:

Stage Manager: Katherine Leahy
Lead Techie: Elizabeth Callaghan
Techies: Emma Costa,
 Sophia Maroney, Morgan Muller
Prologue: Rosie Woodard
Sampson: Micah Salazar Moises
Gregory: Abigail Donnelly
Abram: Rowan O'Halloran
Servant and Server: Isaac Fielding
Benvolio: Ella Boshans
Tybalt: Alexa Thibeault
Montague: Larson Smith

Lady Montague: Kyla Egan
Romeo: PJ Afanasiw
Cousin: Gianna Dieppa
Capulet: Kayla Budd
Mercutio: Lola Hobin
Juliet: Anna Anderson
Friar Lawrence: Madeline Gross
Technical Crew: Alex Budd, Atticus
 Fleming, Maeve Henderson,
 Lucille Lydiard, Cora Norcott,
 Patrick O'Callahan, Emma
 Oberg, and Zoey Pananas

CAST OF CHARACTERS

*Approximately 20 Actors. Some doubling possible.
(In order of appearance)*

STAGE MANAGER
LEAD TECHIE
TECHIES (at least two, but as many as you like, splitting their
lines and bits)
PROLOGUE
SAMPSON
GREGORY
ABRAM
SERVANT (no lines)
BENVOLIO
TYBALT
(Lord) MONTAGUE
LADY MONTAGUE
ROMEO
COUSIN (audience plant)
(Lord) CAPULET
SERVER AT MASQUERADE (one line)
MERCUTIO
JULIET
FRIAR LAWRENCE

“He” and “she” are used in the script in reference to the genders of the characters within the world of “Romeo and Juliet” itself. To avoid confusion, I have used that same gender when referring to the actors playing those roles. You should change those references to that of your actors to fit your casting.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This piece is written specifically to be performed for timed theater competitions, preferably those where teams are given time to both set up and break down their sets.

This play is a broad comedy. It's also a comedy wrapped around a Shakespearean tragedy. And both of those things are woven through the story of a theater club that wants to do well at competition with a cutting of *Romeo and Juliet*—no matter what. To that end, while the comedy bits can be maximized for laughs, the Shakespeare should not. The scenes should be performed earnestly. The actors should know and understand the text. My hope is that judges will see a crew that can bring the humor while also honoring the Bard. Have fun!

SCRIPT FORMAT NOTE

Actual lines from *Romeo and Juliet* are in italics and should be performed as part of the “play.” Lines in regular font are outside of the “play,” spoken by the actors, not the Shakespearean characters.

For reference, these are the scenes used:

Act 1, Sc 1
Act 1, Sc. 5
Act 2, Chorus 1
Act 2, Sc 1
Act 2, Sc. 2
Act 3, Sc. 1
Act 4, Sc. 1
Act 4, Sc, 3
Act 5, Sc. 3

Scene 1

(In competition when the setup timer starts, nothing happens at first. STAGE MANAGER comes onto the bare stage. They look around, look out toward the audience a bit sheepishly. A TECHIE meets them. They whisper and look worriedly around them. An ACTOR comes out to join them. More whispering. Pointing. It's clear that something's not right. The actor leaves, gesturing a sort of "I don't know" to others offstage. The Techie has one more exchange with the Stage Manager, then exits. The Stage Manager looks around, then says, "We're done" and walks uncertainly off. This whole scene should cover no more than two minutes.)

(AT "RISE," STAGE MANAGER and LEAD TECHIE enter and address the audience.)

STAGE MANAGER: Uh, hi, so...I'm [ACTOR'S NAME]. I'm the stage manager for SCHOOL*. So, yeah, the truck with a bunch of our stuff in it? It's, like, not here. And, like, our director? She was driving the truck, but she called my mom—hi, Mom!—and said it's broken down on the highway or something? So that's why we don't have a set. Or a director. *(*If your school is hosting the competition, or if the rules of the competition state that adjudicators should not know which school is doing each show, you should make up a fun name for the school, to preserve the "our truck isn't here" idea. If you're travelling and/or it's okay to do so, use your school's name!)*

LEAD TECHIE: But we're doing it anyway.

STAGE MANAGER: Oh, yes, right, absolutely we're doing it anyway 'cause, you know, the show must go on, right? With or without a set.

LEAD TECHIE: Most of our props were in the truck, too.

STAGE MANAGER: Everybody brought their own costumes.

LEAD TECHIE: Good thing.

STAGE MANAGER: Yeah, so... *(THEY look at each other and shrug.)* We'll see what we can do. Uh... hope you like it?

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(STAGE MANAGER and LEAD TECHIE exit. PROLOGUE enters to MUSIC. As they pass, Lead Techie pats Prologue on the shoulder like "Good luck.")

PROLOGUE: *Two households, both alike in dignity
(THEY make a broad stage wave meant to indicate the set.)
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene—*

STAGE MANAGER: *(Off.)* Oh, hang on! *(Enters.)* I just wanted to say we *would* lay our scene there and it would be, uh, right up here, and it was, like, you should see it, it's so good, it's a big wall and these two gates that open and close on their own. It's very—

(A couple TECHIES poke their heads out.)

TECHIE: Excuse me—the gates open *(Making air quotes.)* "on their own"?

STAGE MANAGER: Sorry—not on their own. The techies do it behind the wall, of course.

TECHIE: Thank you.

PROLOGUE: And it looks so cool. Creepy at first, but cool.

TECHIE: You mean good creepy.

PROLOGUE: Yeah, definitely.

STAGE MANAGER: And just because you should know, they're closed when the Montagues and Capulets are, like, beefing—

TECHIE: Right, and they're open when it's just Romeo and Juliet.

PROLOGUE: It's a symbol. Like, their love can open the gates of—

STAGE MANAGER: We shouldn't overexplain it. They get it. You all get it, right? But yeah, it's totally cool. Oh, and there's a throne.

PROLOGUE: Two.

STAGE MANAGER: Right. Two thrones. Here and over there. Because two households, right?

STAGE MANAGER and PROLOGUE: Both alike in dignity.

STAGE MANAGER: But... the thrones are on the truck.

TECHIE: *(Off.)* Hey! There's a chair back here!

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STAGE MANAGER: Is there? Send it!

(A standard folding chair slides onto stage. The TECHIE onstage sets it in place.)

STAGE MANAGER: That'll do, I guess. *(Calling off.)* Any chance of another one?

TECHIE: *(Off.)* I'll look in one of the classrooms.

(The TECHIE onstage exits.)

STAGE MANAGER: *(To PROLOGUE.)* Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt. I just wanted them to have an idea—

PROLOGUE: No, no, I get it.

STAGE MANAGER: Because it's a great set.

TECHIE: *(Off.)* Thank you!

(STAGE MANAGER exits, motioning for PROLOGUE to continue. They visibly go over the first two lines in their head, then...)

PROLOGUE: *From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life;
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.
The fearful passage of their death-marked love
And the continuance of their parents' rage,
Which, but their children's end, naught could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;*

STAGE MANAGER: *(Off.)* THIRTY-TWO MINUTES!*
*(*When you know your show's actual run time, you can change this line to match how much time is left.)*

PROLOGUE: *(Like a reflex.)* Thank you, thirty-two! Um...
*The which, if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss,
Like a set and props.
our toil shall strive to mend.*

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(PROLOGUE exits. SAMPSON and GREGORY enter.)

SAMPSON: *Gregory, on my word we'll not carry coals.*

GREGORY: *No, for then we should be colliers.*

SAMPSON: *I mean, an we be in choler, we'll draw.*

GREGORY: *Ay, while you live, draw your neck out of collar.*

SAMPSON: *I strike quickly, being moved.*

GREGORY: *But thou art not quickly moved to strike.*

SAMPSON: *A dog of the house of Montague moves me. Draw thy tool. Here comes of the house of Montagues.*

(THEY both reach to their hips but suddenly realize they don't have the swords they're supposed to. ABRAM and SERVER start to enter, see that something's wrong, and step back. A pause.)

SAMPSON: *(Cont'd.)*

Draw thy tool. Here comes of the house of Montagues.

(GREGORY pulls SAMPSON aside.)

GREGORY: *(Stage whisper.)* We haven't got swords.

SAMPSON: *(Stage whisper.)* I know that! Just pretend!

(SAMPSON mimes pulling a sword out, pretending to make wild, overly dramatic flourishes like a swashbuckler. GREGORY does the same. They both keep doing this during their lines. Upstage, TECHIES run in from either side of the stage. As the actors continue their lines, the Techies have a quick unheard discussion, one pointing off the stage to both sides like "You go that way, I'll go this way." They run off.)

SAMPSON: *(Cont'd.)* My naked weapon is out. Quarrel, I will back thee.

GREGORY: *How? Turn thy back and run?*

SAMPSON: *Fear me not.*

GREGORY: *I will frown as I pass by, and let them take it as they list.*

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(ABRAM and SERVER come back on as they're supposed to.)

SAMPSON: *Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb at them, which is disgrace to them if they bear it. (HE does.)*

ABRAM: *Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?*

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

GREGORY: *Do you quarrel, sir?*

ABRAM: *Quarrel, sir? No, sir.*

SAMPSON: *But if you do, sir, I am for you. I serve as good a man as you.*

ABRAM: *You lie!*

SAMPSON: *Draw, ummm...*

(TECHIES run in and hand THEM things: A ruler, a pool noodle, a big paint brush or roller, and a large candlestick holder with a candle in it. Or whatever silliness you can come up with.)

SAMPSON: *(Cont'd.) Draw, if you be men.*

(THEY fight, very cautiously and tenuously, moving around the stage with half-hearted "hiyas" and "ho's" like they're in combat. It's unconvincing and awkward. BENVOLIO enters quickly.)

BENVOLIO: *Part, fools! Put up your, uh... those things.*

GREGORY: *(Stage whisper.) Just say "swords"!*

BENVOLIO: *Put up your... (A TECHIE runs in and hands HIM an old telephone receiver.) swords, I guess? You know not what you do.*

(TYBALT enters.)

TYBALT: *What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds? Turn thee, Benvolio;*

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(A TECHIE runs in and hands TYBALT a hobby horse. He looks at it and the Techie like, "Are you serious?" Techie shrugs and runs off.)

TYBALT: *(Cont'd.) Look upon thy death. (Pause.) Why do they even have this?*

BENVOLIO: *I do but keep the peace. Put up thy sword... thing Uh, or manage it to part these men with me.*

TYBALT: *What, drawn and talk of peace? I hate the word
As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee.
Have at thee, coward!*

(A light scuffle between ALL. CAST members enter as a "mob" and clear out the fight. LIGHTS fade.)

(LIGHTS rise. LADY MONTAGUE sits in the chair. (LORD) MONTAGUE and BENVOLIO stand nearby. As the scene begins, TECHIES enter upstage. They have large cardboard boxes of unequal size, a piece of trellis about three feet by two feet, and a roll of duct tape. They start to work on figuring out how to tape the trellis between the boxes. They move the boxes around, try them in different orientations, try the trellis a couple of ways, etc. They're trying to be quiet but can be heard talking to each other about the project. They can ad lib. The actors are aware of them; Benvolio tries to keep going but he's faltering.)

MONTAGUE: *Who set this ancient quarrel new abroach?
Speak, nephew, were you by when it began?*

BENVOLIO: *Here were the servants of your adversary,
And yours, close fighting ere I did approach.
I drew to part them. In the instant came
The fiery Tybalt with his sword prepared,
Which, as he breathed ... defiance ... to my... my ears
He swung ... about his ... head — (HE can't go on.)
What is happening right now?*

TECHIE: Nothing. Keep going. Doing great.

BENVOLIO: It's kind of distracting.

LADY MONTAGUE: Really distracting!

End of Freeview

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