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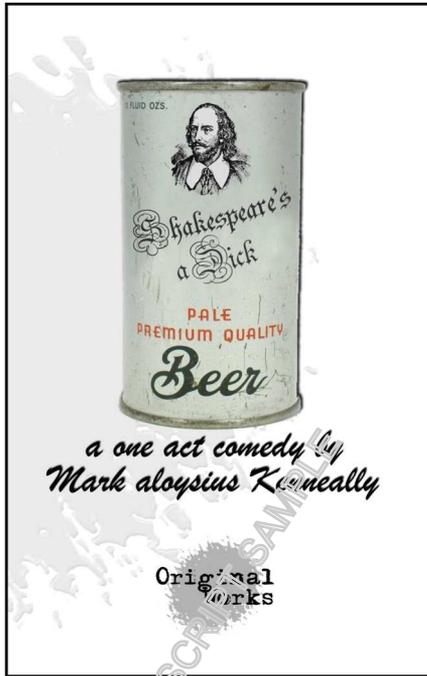
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Cover photo by Hunter Canning,  
featuring Matt Hurley as Romeo and Melody Bates as Juliet

*R & J & Z*  
© Melody Bates  
Trade Edition, 2020  
ISBN 978-1-63092-127-9

*Also Available From  
Original Works Publishing*



**Shakespeare's a Dick  
by Mark aloysius Kenneally**

**Synopsis:** When the young redneck Wally curses the name of Shakespeare and opts to attend a Monster Truck Show instead of "As You Like It," he feels the wrath of the Bard. Waking up after a heavy night of boozing, he finds he can only speak in Shakespearian verse. His best friend Ramie searches for a cure from their high school English teacher Ingrid, while his girlfriend Doris swoons for the new Wally.

**Cast Size:** 2 Males, 2 Females

# **R & J & Z**

**By Melody Bates**

SCRIPT SAMPLE

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

### *ROMEO MONTAGUE*

A young nobleman of Verona, in love with and recently married to Juliet.

### *BALTHASAR*

A young man of Verona, friends with and employed by Romeo.

### *THE APOTHECARY*

Former student of Friar Lawrence: an evil mastermind. Has a shop in Mantua.

### *FRIAR LAWRENCE*

A priest in Verona, chief confidant of Romeo & Juliet. Highly versed in naturally-derived medicines, drugs, and occult lore.

### *FRIAR JOHN*

A priest, of Friar Lawrence's order.

### *PARIS*

A nobleman of Verona; engaged to Juliet.

### *PARIS' PAGE*

A young page, easily frightened.

### *JULIET CAPULET*

A young noblewoman of Verona, in love with and recently married to Romeo.

### *FIRST SEARCHER*

A female Veronese official charged with examining all dead bodies to determine whether or not they died of the plague. Also part of a secret, ancient order with a deeper purpose. A formidable fighter, not entirely trustworthy.

*SECOND SEARCHER*

The First Searcher's partner in official and secret duties. Also a formidable fighter. The more trustworthy of the two women.

*PRINCE ESCALUS*

Prince of Verona. Dies early.

*LADY CAPULET*

Juliet's mother.

*LORD CAPULET*

Juliet's father.

*LORD MONTAGUE*

Romeo's father.

*TYBALT*

Juliet's cousin. Deceased at the start of the play.

*MERCUTIO*

Romeo's best friend. A wild child—the life of the party. Deceased at the start of the play.

*A BOY*

An orphan in service to the Apothecary.

*ROSALINE*

Former crush of Romeo's.

*THE HORDE*

A horde of undead revenants in thrall to the Apothecary. Includes Juliet's Nurse.

**TIME and PLACE:** R & J & Z begins very late on a Thursday night in mid-July, at the end of the 16th Century. The events play out over the course of the following day and night in Verona and Mantua, Italy.

*R & J & Z* was developed in partnership with Opera House Arts in Stonington, ME, where it had its world premiere in July 2014, directed by Joan Jubett.

## CAST

ROMEO: Matt Hurley

JULIET: Melody Bates

MERCUTIO: J.Stephen Brantley

FRIAR LAWRENCE: Peter Richards

TYBALT: Per Janson

FIRST SEARCHER: Yvonne Roen

SECOND SEARCHER: Cait Cortelyou

APOTHECARY: Rachel Murdy

BALTHAZAR: D. T. Bennett

PAGE: Marvin Merritt IV

ESCALUS: Rachel Murdy

PARIS: J.Stephen Brantley

LADY CAPULET: Cherrie Mason

CAPULET: Jeff Brink

MONTAGUE: Larry Estey

BOY: Ian Cust

FRIAR JOHN: Elena Kirk

ROSALINE: Nicole Nolan

ENSEMBLE/ HORDE: Maude Burke, Callie Jacks,  
Emma Grace Keenan

*R & J & Z* had its New York premiere in April 2015 at the New Ohio Theatre, produced by Hard Sparks and directed by Joan Jubett. 2015 New York Innovative Theatre Awards Nominations: Outstanding Revival of a Play, Lighting Design, Winner for Innovative Design (Gore and Special Effects)

## CAST

ROMEO: Matt Hurley  
JULIET: Melody Bates  
MERCUTIO: J. Stephen Brantley  
FRIAR LAWRENCE: Ren Jackson  
TYBALT: Per Janson  
FIRST SEARCHER: Margi Douglas  
SECOND SEARCHER: Cait Cortelyou  
APOTHECARY: Rachel Murdy  
BALTHAZAR: David Bennett  
PAGE: Marshall Spain  
ESCALUS: Drae Campbell  
PARIS: Blaze Mancillas  
LADY CAPULET: Elizabeth Bell  
CAPULET: Randy Howk  
MONTAGUE: Chris Tramantana  
BOY: Clara Sanchez-Vela / August Geraci  
FRIAR JOHN: Russell Sperberg  
ROSALINE: Michele Q. Williams  
NURSE: Drae Campbell

## R & J & Z

### ACT I, SCENE 1

Mantua: A street in front of the Apothecary's shop

*[Deep night, just before dawn. ROMEO is sleeping on the ground, passed out in front of the APOTHECARY OF MANTUA's evil-looking shop. At first we are not sure that ROMEO is alive. Something is not right about the way his body lies there. Then, he stirs. He is dreaming. We watch this. It is unsettling. He could be having a very bad dream or a very good dream. Suddenly, he wakes.]*

ROMEO

I dreamt my lady came and found me dead—  
Strange dream, that gives a dead man leave to think!—  
And breathed such life with kisses in my lips,  
That I revived, and was an emperor.  
Ah me! how sweet is love itself possessed,  
When but love's shadows are so rich in joy!

*[Enter BALTHASAR]*

News from Verona!--How now, Balthasar!  
Dost thou not bring me letters from the friar?  
How doth my lady? Is my father well?  
How fares my Juliet? that I ask again;  
For nothing can be ill, if she be well.

BALTHASAR

Then she is well, and nothing can be ill:  
Her body sleeps in Capel's monument,  
And her immortal part with angels lives.

I saw her laid low in her kindred's vault,  
And presently took post to tell it you:  
O, pardon me for bringing these ill news,  
Since you did leave it for my office, sir.

ROMEO

Is it even so? then I defy you, stars!  
Thou know'st my lodging: get me ink and paper,  
And hire post-horses; I will hence to-night.

BALTHASAR

I do beseech you, sir, have patience:  
Your looks are pale and wild, and do import  
Some misadventure.

ROMEO

Tush, thou art deceived:  
Leave me, and do the thing I bid thee do.  
Hast thou no letters to me from the friar?

BALTHASAR

No, my good lord.

ROMEO

No matter: get thee gone,  
And hire those horses; I'll be with thee straight.

*[BALTHASAR exits]*

Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee to-night.  
Let's see for means: O mischief, thou art swift  
To enter in the thoughts of desperate men!  
I do remember an apothecary,--

And hereabouts he dwells,--which late I noted  
In tattered weeds, with overwhelming brows,  
Culling of simples; meagre were his looks,  
Sharp misery had worn him to the bones:  
And in his needy shop a tortoise hung,  
An alligator stuffed, and other skins  
Of ill-shaped fishes; and about his shelves  
A beggarly account of empty boxes,  
Green earthen pots, bladders and musty seeds,  
Remnants of packthread and old cakes of roses,  
Were thinly scattered, to make up a show.  
Noting this penury, to myself I said  
'An if a man did need a poison now,  
Whose sale is present death in Mantua,  
Here lives a caitiff wretch would sell it him.'  
O, this same thought did but forerun my need;  
And this same needy man must sell it me.  
As I remember, this should be the house.  
Being holiday, the beggar's shop is shut.  
What, ho! apothecary!

*[He bangs on the door. The APOTHECARY opens it, disheveled]*

APOTHECARY  
Who calls so loud?

ROMEO  
Come hither, man. I see that thou art poor:  
Hold, there is forty ducats: let me have  
A dram of poison, such soon-speeding gear  
As will disperse itself through all the veins  
That the life-weary taker may fall dead

And that the trunk may be discharged of breath  
As violently as hasty powder fired  
Doth hurry from the fatal cannon's womb.

APOTHECARY

Such mortal drugs I have; but Mantua's law  
Is death to any he that utters them.

ROMEO

Art thou so bare and full of wretchedness,  
And fear'st to die? famine is in thy cheeks,  
Need and oppression starveth in thine eyes,  
Contempt and beggary hangs upon thy back;  
The world is not thy friend nor the world's law;  
The world affords no law to make thee rich;  
Then be not poor, but break it and take this.

APOTHECARY

My poverty, but not my will, consents.

ROMEO

I pay thy poverty, and not thy will.

APOTHECARY

Put this in any liquid thing you will,  
And drink it off; and, if you had the strength  
Of twenty men, it would dispatch you straight.

ROMEO

There is thy gold, worse poison to men's souls,  
Doing more murders in this loathsome world,  
Than these poor compounds that thou mayst not sell.  
I sell thee poison; thou hast sold me none.

Farewell: buy food, and get thyself in flesh.  
Come, cordial and not poison, go with me  
To Juliet's grave; for there must I use thee.  
*[Exeunt]*

SCRIPT SAMPLE

## ACT I, SCENE 2

Verona: The Graveyard

*[Enter the SEARCHERS of the Town, cloaked. They move stealthily through the churchyard, prodding new graves, scanning the periphery.]*

SECOND SEARCHER

There's three fresh graves dug up and robbed tonight.

FIRST SEARCHER

The corpses gone, or just the valuables?

SECOND SEARCHER

The corpses. Who is taking them? And how  
Have we not seen the thief, patrolling here  
Amidst the graves as we do every night?

FIRST SEARCHER

Perhaps you fell asleep while on your watch.

SECOND SEARCHER

I never slept, sister. My oath is sacred.  
Your mood is sour tonight.

FIRST SEARCHER

Or perhaps you  
Were off deflow'ring stablehands again.  
You really ought to let the poor boys be—

SECOND SEARCHER

My unofficial hours are mine own.  
Freedom is for using, sister, you know that:



## SECOND SEARCHER

There is great honor in the work we do—  
And danger, which takes fortitude to face.  
Our training makes us strong, our calling keeps  
Us free: for me, that power is enough.

## FIRST SEARCHER

Some nights it is not quite enough for me.

## SECOND SEARCHER

But there's an older purpose to our order:  
Ancienter evils we are sworn to watch for.  
By day we seek out plague; report on it—  
By night we search for something far more grim.  
The annals of our Sisterhood contain  
A list of harbingers that presage dire  
Catastrophe—the rising of the dead;  
And ever vigilant, we stand the watch,  
That when or if the bloody tide should come,  
The Searchers will defend the world against it.

## FIRST SEARCHER

You are a dreamer, sister. Airy notions  
Of dead come back to life for us to fight  
May well beguile a story-telling hour,  
But that is all they are. We do our work.

## SECOND SEARCHER

I think the time is near. The signs abound:  
The opening of graves; the heaps of dead;  
The creeping sickness in the populace—  
These omens stand in writing in our books.

FIRST SEARCHER

The mothy fantasies of moldering texts.

SECOND SEARCHER

But what of Mantua eight months ago?  
We fought a creature who had surely died.

FIRST SEARCHER

He was dying of the ordinary plague,  
And nothing more exotic was at play.

FRIAR JOHN *[off]*

Holy Franciscan friar! brother, ho!

FIRST SEARCHER

Hoods up, sister. We should not be seen.  
If any apprehend thee, say thou art  
The night's watch.

SECOND SEARCHER

Unless the dead should rise tonight,  
And we are called upon to fight them off,  
Revealing our true purpose to the world—

FRIAR JOHN *[entering]*

Friar Lawrence!

*[The FIRST SEARCHER hushes the SECOND SEARCHER, motioning for her to take cover. They vanish into the dark as FRIAR LAWRENCE enters, meeting FRIAR JOHN]*

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Friar John!

Welcome from Mantua: what says Romeo?

Or, if his mind be writ, give me his letter.

FRIAR JOHN

The searchers of the town,

Suspecting that I had been in a house

Where the infectious pestilence did reign,

Sealed up the doors, and would not let me forth;

So that my speed to Mantua there was stayed.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Who bare my letter, then, to Romeo?

FRIAR JOHN

I could not send it,—here it is again,—

Nor get a messenger to bring it thee,

So fearful were they of infection.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Unhappy fortune! by my brotherhood,

The letter was not nice but full of charge

Of dear import, and the neglecting it

May do much danger.

Now must I to the monument alone;

Within three hours will fair Juliet wake:

Poor living corse, closed in a dead man's tomb!

*[From off, we hear PARIS calling to his PAGE.]*

PARIS

Give me thy torch, boy:

*[The priests hurry out of sight as PARIS and his PAGE enter]*

hence, and stand aloof:

Yet put it out, for I would not be seen.  
Hold thou thine ear close to the hollow ground;  
So shall no foot upon the churchyard tread,  
Being loose, unfirm, with digging up of graves,  
But thou shalt hear it: whistle then to me,  
As signal that thou hear'st something approach.  
Give me those flowers. Do as I bid thee, go.

PAGE

*[Aside]* I am almost afraid to stand alone  
Here in the churchyard; yet I will adventure.  
*[He retreats back among the tombs]*

PARIS

Sweet flower, with flowers thy bridal bed I strew,--  
O woe! thy canopy is dust and stones;--  
Which with sweet water nightly I will dew--  
*[The Page whistles]*  
The boy gives warning something doth approach.  
*[Enter ROMEO and BALTHASAR. PARIS hides]*

ROMEO

Give me that mattock and the wrenching iron.  
Hold, take this letter; early in the morning  
See thou deliver it to my lord and father.  
Give me the light: upon thy life, I charge thee,  
Whate'er thou hear'st or seest, stand all aloof,  
And do not interrupt me in my course.  
But if thou, jealous, dost return to pry  
In what I further shall intend to do,

By heaven, I will tear thee joint by joint  
And strew this hungry churchyard with thy limbs!

BALTHASAR

I will be gone, sir, and not trouble you.

ROMEO

So shalt thou show me friendship. Take thou that:  
Live, and be prosperous: and farewell, good fellow.

BALTHASAR

*[Aside]* For all this same, I'll hide me hereabout:  
His looks I fear, and his intents I doubt.

*[He hides]*

ROMEO

Thou detestable maw, thou womb of death,  
Gorged with the dearest morsel of the earth,  
Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,  
And, in despite, I'll cram thee with more food!

*[He opens the tomb]*

PARIS *[Coming forward]*

Stop thy unhallowed toil, vile Montague!  
Condemned villain, I do apprehend thee:  
Obey, and go with me; for thou must die.

ROMEO

I must indeed; and therefore came I hither.  
Good gentle youth, tempt not a desperate man;  
Fly hence, and leave me: think upon these gone;  
Let them affright thee. I beseech thee, youth!

PARIS

I do defy thy conjurations,  
And apprehend thee for a felon here.

ROMEO

Wilt thou provoke me? then have at thee, boy!  
*[They fight]*

PAGE

O Lord, they fight! I will go call the watch.

PARIS

O, I am slain! If thou be merciful,  
Open the tomb, lay me with Juliet.  
*[He dies]*

ROMEO

In faith, I will. Let me peruse this face.  
Mercutio's kinsman, noble County Paris!  
I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave;  
A grave? O no! a lantern, slaughtered youth,  
For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes  
This vault a feasting presence full of light.  
O my love! my wife!  
Death, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath,  
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:  
Thou art not conquered; beauty's ensign yet  
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,  
And death's pale flag is not advanced there.  
Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet?  
O, what more favor can I do to thee,  
Than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain  
To sunder his that was thine enemy?

Forgive me, cousin! Ah, dear Juliet,  
Why art thou yet so fair? shall I believe  
That unsubstantial death is amorous,  
And that the lean abhorred monster keeps  
Thee here in dark to be his paramour?  
For fear of that, I still will stay with thee;  
And never from this palace of dim night  
Depart again: here, here will I remain  
With worms that are thy chamber-maids; O, here  
Will I set up my everlasting rest,  
And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars  
From this world-wearied flesh. Eyes, look your last!  
Arms, take your last embrace! and, lips, O you  
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss  
A dateless bargain to engrossing death!  
Come, bitter conduct, come, unsavory guide!  
Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on  
The dashing rocks thy sea-sick weary bark!  
Here's to my love!

*[Drinks]*

O true apothecary!

Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die.

*[He contorts and dies. The drug is quick, but not pleasant. Enter FRIAR LAWRENCE, with a lantern, crowbar, and shovel. Balthasar reappears.]*

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Who's there?

BALTHASAR

A friend, and one that knows you well.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Bliss be upon you! Tell me, good my friend,  
What torch is yond, that vainly lends his light  
To grubs and eyeless skulls? as I discern,  
It burneth in the Capel's monument.

BALTHASAR

It doth so, holy sir; and there's my master,  
One that you love.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Who is it?

BALTHASAR

Romeo.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Romeo!

Alack, alack, what blood is this, which stains  
The stony entrance of this sepulchre?

*[He enters the tomb and immediately sees signs of terrible danger. He examines Romeo's body, checking his eyelids and recoiling at what he sees.]*

Romeo! O, pale! Who else? what, Paris too?

And steeped in blood? The lady stirs.

*[JULIET wakes]*

JULIET

O comfortable friar! where is my lord?

I do remember well where I should be,

And there I am. Where is my Romeo?

*[A frightening noise]*

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Lady, come from that nest  
Of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep:  
A greater power than we can contradict  
Hath thwarted our intents. Come, come away.  
Thy husband in thy bosom there lies dead;  
And Paris too. Come, go, good Juliet,  
*[The noise, again]*  
I dare no longer stay.

JULIET

Go, get thee hence, for I will not away.  
*[FRIAR LAWRENCE runs out of the tomb and exits.]*  
What's here? a cup, closed in my true love's hand?  
Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end:  
O churl! drunk all, and left no friendly drop  
To help me after? I will kiss thy lips;  
Haply some poison yet doth hang on them,  
To make me die with a restorative.  
*[She kisses him, sucking the poison from his lips]*  
Thy lips are warm.

FIRST SEARCHER [AS NIGHT'S WATCH]

*[Within]* Lead, boy: which way?

JULIET

Yea, noise? then I'll be brief. O happy dagger!  
*[She snatches ROMEO's dagger]*

This is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die.

*[She stabs herself. She bleeds in gushes all over everything. Stumbling, stabbing, her blood gets all over the*

*other bodies—Tybalt, Paris, Romeo are all covered in her blood. She falls on ROMEO's body and dies. The FIRST SEARCHER, hooded, enters with the PAGE of Paris.]*

PAGE

This is the place; there, where the torch doth burn.

FIRST SEARCHER [AS NIGHT'S WATCH]

The ground is bloody; search about the churchyard:  
Pitiful sight! here lies the county slain,  
And Juliet bleeding, warm, and newly dead,  
Who here hath lain these two days buried.  
Go, tell the prince: run to the Capulets:  
Raise up the Montagues:

*[The PAGE runs out calling for help. The SECOND SEARCHER, hooded, enters with BALTHASAR and FRIAR LAWRENCE]*

SECOND SEARCHER [AS NIGHT'S WATCH]

Here's Romeo's man; I found him in the churchyard.

FIRST SEARCHER [AS NIGHT'S WATCH]

Hold him in safety, till the prince come hither.

SECOND SEARCHER [AS NIGHT'S WATCH]

Here is a friar, that trembles, sighs and weeps:  
I took this mattock and this spade from him,  
As he was coming from this churchyard side.

FIRST SEARCHER [AS NIGHT'S WATCH]

A great suspicion: stay the friar too.

*[PRINCE ESCALUS enters, followed by LORD and LADY CAPULET and the PAGE]*

PRINCE

What misadventure is so early up,  
That calls our person from our morning's rest?

CAPULET

What should it be, that they so shriek abroad?

LADY CAPULET

The people in the street cry Romeo,  
Some Juliet, and some Paris; and all run,  
With open outcry toward our monument.

PRINCE

What fear is this which startles in our ears?

FIRST SEARCHER [AS NIGHT'S WATCH]

Sovereign, here lies the County Paris slain;  
And Romeo dead; and Juliet, dead before,  
Warm and new killed.

SECOND SEARCHER [AS NIGHT'S WATCH]

Here is a friar, and slaughtered Romeo's man;  
With instruments upon them, fit to open  
These dead men's tombs.

CAPULET

O heavens! O wife, look how our daughter bleeds!

LADY CAPULET

Juliet!

*[She embraces her dead daughter.  
Enter LORD MONTAGUE.]*

PRINCE  
Come, Montague—

MONTAGUE  
--My wife is dead to-night;  
Grief of my son's exile hath stopped her breath:  
What further woe conspires against mine age?

PRINCE  
Look, and thou shalt see.

MONTAGUE  
O thou untaught! what manners is in this?  
To press before thy father to a grave?

PRINCE  
Bring forth the parties of suspicion.  
*[Friar Lawrence is brought forward. He is clearly fearful  
of the blood and bodies.]*  
Say at once what thou dost know in this.

FRIAR LAWRENCE  
I will be brief...  
Romeo, there dead, was husband to that Juliet;  
And she, there dead, that Romeo's faithful wife:  
I married them; and their stol'n marriage-day  
Was Tybalt's dooms-day, whose untimely death  
Banished the new-made bridegroom from the city.  
To rid her from a second marriage *[indicating Paris]*  
I gave to her a sleeping potion;

That wrought on her the form of death: meantime  
I writ to Romeo, that he should hither come  
To help to take her from her borrowed grave.  
But he which bore my letter, Friar John,  
Was stayed by Searchers, and so yesternight  
Returned my letter back.

PRINCE

Where's Romeo's man? what can he say in this?

BALTHASAR

I brought my master news of Juliet's death;  
And then in post he came from Mantua.  
This letter he early bid me give his father.

PRINCE *[Taking the letter]*

This letter doth make good the friar's words,  
Their course of love, the tidings of her death:  
That he did buy a poison, and therewithal  
Came to this vault to die, and lie with Juliet.  
Where be these enemies? Capulet! Montague!  
See, what a scourge is laid upon your hate!

CAPULET

O brother Montague, give me thy hand...

*[Capulet and Montague take hands. All are weeping, embracing. Dawn begins to break.]*

PRINCE ESCALUS

A glooming peace this morning with it brings;  
The sun, for sorrow, will not show his head:

Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things;  
Some shall be pardoned, and some punished:  
For never was a story of more woe  
Than this of Juliet and—

*[PRINCE ESCALUS is cut off as a re-animated JULIET attacks him, biting out his vocal chords. He doesn't finish his speech. The assembled group is paralyzed with shock, watching as JULIET savages ESCALUS. He gasps and gurgles. JULIET spins around to face the others.]*

JULIET  
Mother?

*[LADY CAPULET shrieks and chaos erupts. JULIET stumbles towards her mother, who staggers backwards, tripping on her skirts.]*

JULIET  
Mother? Mother?

*[LORD CAPULET tries to pull his wife out of danger. FRIAR LAWRENCE is on high alert, in a defensive pose. BALTHASAR stays with him, as does Paris's PAGE. With a nod to each other, the SEARCHERS melt into the background.]*

LADY CAPULET  
Juliet, what hast thou done?

FRIAR LAWRENCE  
Touch her not, Lady! A curse is in her blood—

CAPULET

How dare you say that of a Capulet?

MONTAGUE

Was this the family with whom I thought  
To make a peace? What worm is in the trunk  
If thus the branches be so bitten?

*[He snatches up Escalus' fallen crown]*

I'll save the Prince's crown, if not the Prince...

CAPULET

What, Montague, think you to make a claim  
Now that the Prince and Paris are no more?  
Give me that crown—

*[Capulet and Montague struggle, fighting over the crown]*

FRIAR LAWRENCE

My Lady—Lady! No!

*[JULIET has caught up to her mother and bites her. LADY CAPULET screams bloody murder. ROMEO sits up.]*

ROMEO

Juliet?

*[Panic. ROMEO looks around, puzzled. He shakes his head as though trying to get water out of his ear. He sees BALTHASAR.]*

ROMEO

Balthasar. I'm hungry.

CAPULET

You see, old hypocrite! T'was your own son  
That spread infection to my darling daughter—

MONTAGUE

Your darling daughter has just bitten off  
Your wife's left little finger. It was she  
Who bit my son!

CAPULET

You liar! Reprobate!

FRIAR LAWRENCE

You fools! Have you no eyes? Look to the tomb!

*[ROMEO, still groggy, hasn't gotten up yet. But PARIS and TYBALT are rising. A fierce light glows in PARIS' eyes.]*

PARIS

I'll eat you all, you bastards. No one asked  
If Paris had his own plans for his life!

*[MONTAGUE and CAPULET flee offstage, still fighting over the crown as PARIS moves to pursue them.]*

FIRST SEARCHER and SECOND SEARCHER

Halt!

*[The SEARCHERS leap out of hiding, throwing off their Watch cloaks to reveal themselves: Two women, each carrying a white wand. They are dressed for fighting the undead: leather, buckles, high boots, bristling with weaponry. A comic book nerd's dream.]*

FIRST SEARCHER

You! Revenant! Eat this!

*[She takes a running attack at PARIS, and stabs him through the head. He falls down dead.]*

FRIAR LAWRENCE

The Searchers of the Town! The Lord be praised!

*[He huddles BALTHASAR and the PAGE back out of the way of the Searchers. The FIRST SEARCHER approaches PARIS and gives him a kick.]*

SECOND SEARCHER

Dead?

FIRST SEARCHER

Of course.

SECOND SEARCHER

For certain?

FIRST SEARCHER

And for sure.

SECOND SEARCHER

What next?

FIRST SEARCHER

The Prince is stirring.

SECOND SEARCHER

Sounds like fun.

*[ESCALUS, his throat mauled by JULIET, is rising. The SECOND SEARCHER pivots lightly towards him and salutes, mockingly.]*

SECOND SEARCHER

Prince Escalus! Your throat is hanging out.

*[She stabs him through the head with her white wand. Meanwhile, the FIRST SEARCHER is taking stock of TYBALT and ROMEO. TYBALT is less befuddled than ROMEO, but where ROMEO seems to have something wrong with his balance, TYBALT is more distracted by things around him. He's admiring the flowers on his tomb, the velvet of his doublet, the way the gloomy morning light moves along the wall of the crypt, the feel of the cold stone. Reawakened, his artistic, beauty-loving soul, repressed in life, is waking up too. The FIRST SEARCHER is not impressed. The SECOND SEARCHER comes to her side.]*

FIRST SEARCHER

Finished?

SECOND SEARCHER

Easy. I never liked him much.

FIRST SEARCHER

Bit of a ponce, I always thought. What's here?

SECOND SEARCHER

Slow wakers. *[a laugh]* We should call the trainees in. You want the Prince of Cats?

FIRST SEARCHER

Why not? And you?

SECOND SEARCHER

I'll do for Romeo.

*[At the sound of his name, JULIET's head wrenches up from where she's been nibbling at LADY CAPULET. She wheels around and sees the SEARCHERS advancing on TYBALT and ROMEO. She launches herself towards them, throwing the SECOND SEARCHER across the crypt, knocking her unconscious, and ferociously shoving the FIRST SEARCHER aside. ROMEO and TYBALT seem to understand that they should do something, but they're not sure what. JULIET crouches over ROMEO.]*

JULIET

You'll not touch him! I'll tear you joint by joint!

FIRST SEARCHER

You'll try.

ROMEO [musing]

"I'll tear you joint by joint"...why should  
Those words ring so familiar in mine ears?

*[BALTHASAR startles. FRIAR LAWRENCE pulls at him urgently, whispering:]*

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Balthasar—come quick. We must leave now.

BALTHASAR

But Friar—he said those very words to me.  
Can he remember? Is he still Romeo?

FRIAR LAWRENCE

He's dead and so are we if we remain.  
Come! Come! We'll parse this later, Balthasar.

*[FRIAR LAWRENCE, BALTHASAR, and PAGE run off, leaving the FIRST SEARCHER alone with the risen dead and her unconscious partner.]*

JULIET

Romeo! Tybalt! Wake and save yourselves!  
Or help me bite a way out of the tomb!

ROMEO *[rising, breaking through the fog]*  
Breakfast?

TYBALT

Breakfast?

LADY CAPULET *[sitting up]*

Breakfast?

FIRST SEARCHER

*Puttana madre.*

*[All four revenants move to attack. The FIRST SEARCHER grabs the SECOND SEARCHER—slinging her over a shoulder, if possible, and escapes. BLACKOUT.]*

**ACT II, SCENE 1**

Friar Lawrence's cell

*[Enter FRIAR LAWRENCE, BALTHASAR, and the PAGE, out of breath and terrified. The FRIAR finds a lamp and lights it.]*

BALTHASAR

What happened? Friar, what happened at the tomb?

PAGE

The dead came back to life, Sir Balthasar!  
My lord was dead, but then he rose, and walked,  
And gaped his jaws wide like a ravening dog  
And said that he would eat us! Eat our flesh!

BALTHASAR

Calm thyself, boy. The Friar will make all clear.

PAGE

And Juliet that Paris was to wed  
Bit out the life of Escalus the Prince,  
And ate her mother after! Romeo  
And Tybalt fiended up from certain death  
Where they lay patiently upon their tombs  
As if they had but slept a good night's sleep—  
If corpses rise and walk, and eat us too,  
All hope is lost! There's nothing we can do!

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Boy. Be still. Hysteria is your foe--  
Not corpses, though they rise, and walk, and eat.

PAGE

But 'tis the plague! 'Tis come from Mantua  
Where sorcerers that scorn the laws of heaven  
Work fiendish evil on the people there.  
They breed diseases—

*[FRIAR LAWRENCE slaps the PAGE, who goes quiet]*

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Silence! I must think.

*[He searches through piles of books and papers.]*

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Balthasar, you said that Romeo  
Spoke certain words to you before  
He died and then returned again therefrom.

BALTHASAR

He said he'd tear me limb from limb if I  
Should pry into his secret business further.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

A less than friendly saying. Said he this  
With any tremors in the voice or body?

BALTHASAR

No Father, but his whole corporal self  
Bespoke a fierce determination—  
Like one who goes to battle, or to death.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

No trembling. Hmmm. Well did he then complain  
Of headache, fever, chills or other such?

BALTHASAR

No Friar.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Did he perspire overmuch?

Did his whole forehead bead with sweating drops?

BALTHASAR

We rode hard through the night, from Mantua;  
I fear we both had sweated through our shirts.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

And his complexion, was it pale, or greenish?

BALTHASAR

Pale, yes, he was—but then the light was dim—  
I think not green, though, father friar.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Not green,

Fine, not green. Was his breathing shallow then?  
His heartbeat, fast?

BALTHASAR

Why no. Why ask you this?

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Was there a bite or mark you could discern  
Upon his person, anywhere at all?

BALTHASAR

There were no bites, good sir, that I could see.  
We came in haste from Mantua, only stopping

To write that hasty letter to his father  
And snatch up a small vial that he'd purchased  
From an apothecary thereabouts--

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Oh Gods.

An apothecary, say you?

BALTHASAR

Yes, sir,

A wizened, mean old man, a beggar, sir,  
That scarce could walk, and whistled when he laughed  
Like kettles on the flame.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Apothecary.

My old apprentice, now I see your hand  
And in its work the evil that you've done.  
My boys, this is no mild and passing plague  
That threatens our sweet town, and sweeter souls:  
I should have known the agent, and the cause  
When Juliet first sat up in the tomb.  
*[to the PAGE]* Your fear is well-placed, son. Now quickly,  
come!  
Take you these books, and Balthasar, that lamp.

PAGE

Why should I carry books? What's going on?

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Boy! We have no time for chit-chat! Pick them up!

BALTHASAR

Friar, please, you must not hide from us  
The secrets that you seem to know! Tell us  
What happened to my friend and to his love?  
And to her mother and the Prince and Count!

FRIAR LAWRENCE

There is no time, the pestilence will spread  
Unless we nip it in the bud, and cut it off.  
It may already be too late to stop it—  
*[they look at him, insistent]*  
I'll sum it up, in brief: this is a scourge,  
Created by a man that I once taught  
He studied drugs I would not teach him of;  
The last I knew he sailed into the West,  
In search of evil plants and deadly spells,  
But now I fear that he has come back home,  
And Romeo fall'n victim to his wares.  
Th'infection spreads through bites and through the blood  
I think—though this is speculation—  
*[the glass of a windowpane shatters at the side wall.  
Moaning is heard and filthy hands push through the  
frame]*

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Oh god, 'tis starting. Quick! Stand back, you fool!

*[BALTHASAR pulls out a short sword and slices off one of the hands. We hear a blood-curdling scream and the other hand retreats. BALTHASAR thinks for a split second, then stabs out the window in the direction of the unseen creature's head. He stabs hard. The noise stops. With a rough yank, BALTHASAR pulls his sword back into the room. There is a dripping piece of brain stuck on it.]*

BALTHASAR

...Good my lords. I've brained him.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

So it would seem you have. Now touch it not!

*[he puts the brain sample into a small container]*

A quick sword is a fine weapon, sir, when

Wall and windowframe assist the bearer.

Do not now fool yourself, to think these wights

Will always be so easy to destroy.

*[looking out the window]*

It was a good stab, howsoe'er. Well...placed.

BALTHASAR

Thanks, Friar. You think the Apothecary

Of Mantua is the maker of this terror?

FRIAR LAWRENCE

I fear he is.

BALTHASAR

It spreads by bites, you think?

FRIAR LAWRENCE

I fear it does. But it begins with drugs

Poisons foully mixed, that kill the brain—

Administered with terrible intent.

Shhh!

*[A guttural moaning is heard outside. The FRIAR blows out the lamp and the three crouch in tense silence as more shambling figures move slowly past the window. After they have passed, BALTHASAR looks out cautiously.]*

BALTHASAR

...I don't see any more, for now.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

I thought him gone forever, when he left:  
But now I see the evil in his nature  
Has triumphed o'er the good. I'll study this:  
It will take precious time, but if I can  
Detect in it a poisonous residue,  
I can find out a way to fight this plague.

BALTHASAR

I've seen his shop in Mantua. Would he not  
Have kept a book, or records of his potions,  
Some clue to speed us? In two hours I can  
Be there and back again. I'll search his papers,  
Steal what evidence I can—

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Balthasar:

Do it. You'll find us in my laboratory.  
Ride swift, and may god bless and ride with thee.  
*[To the Page]* Now quickly, gather up these necessaries  
And haste we in our several directions.  
If you see more of these creatures, stab quick:  
Through the brainpan seems the surest way.  
And Balthasar—

BALTHASAR

My lord?

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Don't let them bite you.

*[They exit]*

## ACT II, SCENE 2

The Capulet tomb in the graveyard

ROMEO

Juliet?

JULIET

Romeo?

BOTH

I had thought thee dead.

JULIET

Thou wert dead, good my lord, I saw thy corpse:  
Thou drankest deadly poison and dropped down  
Upon my tomb.

ROMEO

Thy tomb where thou laidst dead!  
I saw thee, Juliet—thou wast dead first.  
I drank the poison that I might join thee.

JULIET

I was not dead, but only sleeping dead.

ROMEO

Well sleeping dead looked dead enough to me.  
I would you'd told me of your plan to play  
This ghostly farce before I killed myself,  
My love, for grief at your dear loss.

JULIET

You might have had a bit more patience, love,

Before you oh-so-swiftly offed yourself.  
But five more minutes, I had been alive,  
With you, and not at all stabbed through the heart.

ROMEO

Who stabbed you? Was it I? I don't think so.  
I rather think your own hand struck that blow.

JULIET

Because I saw you dead!

ROMEO

Well you died first!

*[They exclaim in frustration. A pause.]*

ROMEO

I'm sorry that I killed myself so soon.

JULIET

I'm sorry that I was not truly dead.  
They wanted me to marry Paris, though;  
And Friar said he'd tell you and the drug  
He gave me would wear off in time  
For you to take me off to Mantua.

ROMEO

I heard from Balthasar that you were dead  
And all I wanted was to be with you.

*[TYBALT is moved.]*

TYBALT

O! It is so beautiful!

*[ROMEO and JULIET look at each other. This is not the TYBALT they are used to.]*

JULIET

Tybalt? Cousin? Are you well?

TYBALT

Well I am dead, but that's not why I weep—

O heavens, O you two! 'Tis all too much!

I never knew you loved each other, truly,

I am a trifle overwhelmed. Forgive me.

*[he sobs, overcome. Romeo approaches him awkwardly]*

ROMEO

Ah, Tybalt, dear Tybalt, my cousin, now...

*[he looks to JULIET for reassurance; she nods encouragingly]*

This is perhaps not the best time to say it,

But I am very sorry that I killed you.

I was upset about Mercutio—

That's no excuse for murder; I know that—

But since we're family now, and, well, un-dead,

Can you forgive me, and a peace be made?

TYBALT

O, Romeo. In life

I was a killer, indiscriminate;

Quick to umbrage, quick to anger, so swift

To pour my rage in to the silver point

Of my quick-cutting sword. I hope,

Since in the book of Tybalt I am given

To turn another leaf, I shall not be

So swift to act in anger. Nor shall I

Stint forgiveness. Within my breast and in  
The world around me, I crave peace  
As does a newborn babe desire to breathe.  
I forgive you, Romeo, 'tis all bygones.  
I am the one who's sorry, to you both.  
In truth it was not me. Let us start fresh.  
*[he takes a deep cleansing breath]*  
Juliet, I must say, death becomes you!

JULIET *[flattered, a bit shy]*  
O, thank you Tybalt. You look...quite nice too.

*[TYBALT, having been dead a few days and then splattered with Juliet's blood, does not look exactly "quite nice," but let it go, let it go, he's turning over a new leaf.]*

TYBALT  
So! What are we to do, now that we're dead!  
Or is that what we are? I am not sure.

ROMEO  
I'm pretty sure I died. I drank the drug  
That old apothecary gave to me.

JULIET  
I know I died. *[she indicates the dagger in her heart]*  
This sort of thing  
Is usually rather permanent.

TYBALT  
Well kittens, what's to do? *[he gets a sudden thought]*  
Are we in heaven?

JULIET

No. We can't be. Where are all the angels?

ROMEO

I see an angel, here.

JULIET

O, Romeo. *[she blushes, as far as that's possible.]*

TYBALT

Stop it, you two, you'll make me cry again.

*[he gets another sudden idea]*

What if we're in...the other place?

*[They all look around, this time a bit frightened]*

JULIET

How would we know?

TYBALT

How could we know? *[gasping:]*

Oh go-o-od!

*[He has seen LADY CAPULET, who enters, gnawing on a dismembered body part. Something unexpected and gruesome...perhaps a knee. She has been doing some serious flesh eating since the morning's bloodbath. TYBALT's gasp breaks her concentration and she looks up at him.]*

LADY CAPULET

Oh, Tybalt! Are you hungry, darling boy?

*[She holds the joint out to him. He demurs.]*

Not hungry? Well, that's all the more for me!

I cannot tell you what a lovely thing  
It is to feast without restraint! I never  
was a glutton—Far from it!  
In fact, I'd sooner fast, and know for sure  
My girlish gowns would still fit as they did  
When I was married. Now I find, however,  
That vanity is boring. Better, far,  
To do the things that I would like to do.  
*[she takes a great big bite]*  
Oh, rapture. *[a steely, foxy light comes into her eyes]*  
Have you seen your father, Juliet?

JULIET

No, Mother...

LADY CAPULET

Well, I'll find him soon enough.  
Tybalt, eat! You need your nourishment.

*[She throws the joint to TYBALT, who shrieks and fumbles the bloody thing as LADY CAPULET heads off, licking her chops, smoothing her hair and straightening her bloody gown. TYBALT hurls the joint towards one of the other two, and a brief tossing game of \*I don't want it—you take it!\* erupts. This ends when JULIET, about to pass it on, hesitates, her appetite whetted. Tentatively, she sniffs it. She sniffs a second time.]*

JULIET

Would you now think me rude, if I should have  
The tiniest little bite? I find I'm not  
So disinclined as one might think I ought  
To be, to taste this juicy, bloody...knee?

ROMEO [*equally intrigued*]

Is it a knee? I've never had a knee!

Is that a tendon? I wonder how that tastes...

TYBALT [*queasy*]

Dear cousin, and dear...cousin, I'll...away.

I fear my stomach is not quite at ease

With your repast. Forgive me—I'll go walk.

The grounds are lovely, hereabouts. Enjoy...

*[They make one last offer of the joint, which he waves off]*

No. As my Lady Aunt says, more for you!

*[TYBALT heads off quickly among the tombs. ROMEO and JULIET begin feeding each other, in the most courtly, sweet, puppy-love style, pieces of the bloody leg in their hands.]*

ROMEO

My sweetling, would you like a little nibble?

JULIET

Why yes, my lord, a nibble would please me well.

ROMEO

Then you shall have one! Woe betide the man

Who dares deny my love her nibble!

JULIET

O!

'Tis ever so delicious. Love, would you

Enjoy a chewy little bite? From me,

To you?

ROMEO

O yes! But feed me little bites,  
And I am yours, and paradise is ours!

*[JULIET lovingly pulls a strip of flesh off the bone and sweetly feeds one end of it to ROMEO so that they have one end of it in each of their mouths, a la Lady and the Tramp. There they are, on either end of a meat strand, chewing their way towards each other, still holding the leg between them. They are close to kissing. TYBALT calls to them, entering]*

TYBALT

Cousins, Mercutio's tomb is empty! Oh.  
Ahem, excuse me! There's an empty tomb  
That housed Mercutio's corpse, but now  
He's gone.

*[The SEARCHERS re-appear]*

FIRST SEARCHER

You'll be gone soon enough, dead man.

SECOND SEARCHER *[pointing at TYBALT, ROMEO,  
and JULIET in order]*

Gone, goner, gonest. Quite a trio, sister.

TYBALT

You need not draw your weapons on us, ladies,  
We mean no harm—

FIRST SEARCHER

Can't say the same of us.

*[She attacks. TYBALT, still the King of Cats, evades her, but takes a blow on the arm]*

TYBALT

Ah! ...You. Tore. My. Sleeve.

*[TYBALT is not pleased. They fight. The SECOND SEARCHER squares off with ROMEO, who places JULIET behind him. They fight.]*

ROMEO

Why wave your weapon at me? I am not  
Your enemy.

SECOND SEARCHER

Sister, why are they talking?

FIRST SEARCHER

I know not—Ah!

*[TYBALT has disarmed her and presses his advantage. The SECOND SEARCHER runs to deflect a deadly blow. ROMEO turns quickly to JULIET]*

ROMEO

I'll draw them off.  
Get thee to safety while I rescue Tybalt.

JULIET

I will not leave thee. I can help. I'll fight.

ROMEO

My love I cannot watch you risk your life.

*[TYBALT's luck has turned and the two SEARCHERS are getting the better of him. He cries out.]*

ROMEO

Nor can I watch as he is killed again--  
To safety, go! Where you asked what's in a name—  
I'll find you there!

JULIET

My love—

ROMEO

I'll find you. Run!

*[JULIET turns and runs. ROMEO joins the fight, and he and TYBALT overpower the SEARCHERS long enough to make their escape and exit.]*

SECOND SEARCHER

Jesu Christe!

FIRST SEARCHER

I do not like it that they talked.  
Let's go. You follow them. I'll track the girl.  
*[She prepares to pursue JULIET]*

SECOND SEARCHER

Wait, sister—I don't know if we should fight them.  
These three are not at all the same as those  
We're sworn to kill.

FIRST SEARCHER

They're dead and risen, aren't they?

SECOND SEARCHER

Yes, but—

FIRST SEARCHER

Come on. They're getting away.

*[The SECOND SEARCHER exits. The FIRST SEARCHER watches her leave, then, instead of following JULIET, melts into the background]*

SCRIPT SAMPLE