

GROW UP, JULIET

A short comedy by
Rex McGregor

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

JULIET, teenage girl.

FRIAR LAURENCE, etc., played by a teenage girl.

TYBALT, teenage boy or adult man.

ROMEO, teenage boy.

SETTING

Capulet family crypt, Verona.

TIME

Medieval or Elizabethan period, chosen by the costume designer.

(A crypt. Tybalt's coffin has a sword on the lid. ROMEO lies "dead" at the foot of Juliet's bier. JULIET is weeping over Romeo's body. She finds his empty poison bottle, holds it above her mouth, shakes it and casts it aside in frustration. Then she kisses Romeo to get some poison and licks her lips. There is a huge racket backstage, as if a pile of stuff has fallen over. Juliet is so startled she drops out of character.)

JULIET: What the—! *(Resuming her character:)* "Yea, noise? Then I'll be brief. O happy dagger!" *(Snatching Romeo's dagger:)* "This is thy sheath..."

(She stabs herself in the chest, but is surprised when the blade slides back into the handle.)

"This is thy sheath..."

(She tries again, with the same result. She repeatedly tests the spring against the palm of her hand.)

Intractable retractability!

(FRIAR LAURENCE appears. The actress playing him speaks in a deep voice. Optionally, she wears a beard.)

LAURENCE: Ingenious device. From Sicily.
They like to have their little jests down there,
Where villainy is done with comic flair.
Verona could learn much from these our betters.
Sicilians have such fun with their vendettas.

JULIET: Thou'rt not surprised this dagger doth not hit?

LAURENCE: Forsooth, my dear, 'twas I that planted it.

JULIET: What, holy father? Hast thou lost thy mind?
To trick a poor girl thus is most unkind.

LAURENCE: Be these the thanks I get? Were't not for me,
Thou'dst done thyself a nasty injury.

(Juliet puts the dagger down and assumes a declamatory tragic manner.)

JULIET: I wish to die. Hence, leave me on my own.

LAURENCE: Youth suicide the Church cannot condone.

JULIET: I am already old in widowhood,
And weep more tears than any widow could.
In this wide world I'll offer any stakes
No softer heart in fonder widow breaks.

LAURENCE: A pretty pride, this boasting of thy grief.

JULIET: I'll mourn in silence then.

LAURENCE: That's a relief.

JULIET: No funeral mask or sad, pathetic mute
With moistened eye and quiv'ring lip to boot
Did e'er express such quiet sorrow yet
As dumbstruck Juliet's wordless woe.

LAURENCE: I'll bet.

JULIET: No buttoned lip of taciturn mortician,
No tongueless victim of the Inquisition,
No laryngitic mummer's dumb charade
Can match my unvoiced—

LAURENCE: Enough! Thy point thou hast conveyed.

JULIET: No—

LAURENCE: Sweetheart, let me get a word in please.

JULIET: How now? Thou "sweetheartst" me?

LAURENCE: I do but tease.

JULIET: Familiarity from Friar Laurence?
Such brazenness decorum never warrants.
Did I not know thee better, I might doubt

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Thou art a friar.

LAURENCE: Well, half the secret's out.
Best hear the rest. Thy precious Friar Laurence
Hath blood in's veins. Hot blood that flows in torrents!
Yea, though I fear 'twill fill thee with abhorrence,
He is a man, thy wretched Friar Laurence.

JULIET: (*Backing away:*) Don't touch me!

LAURENCE: Come, thou hast no need to fear.

(Juliet grabs the dagger and threatens Laurence with it.)

JULIET: Nay, that must thou, vile lech'rous fiend!

LAURENCE: Oh dear.

JULIET: In my defense I am prepared to kill.

LAURENCE: Hast thou forgot? That blade's retractable.

*(Juliet throws the dagger away and scampers behind the coffin.
She grabs the sword.)*

JULIET: O even happier sword! This is thy sheath.

*(She makes various attempts to stab herself in the chest, but the
sword is too long.)*

LAURENCE: List, would'st not like to see what lies beneath
This heavy, rough and rather itchy habit?

(Juliet threatens Laurence with the sword.)

JULIET: Nay, strip not naked, fornicating rabbit!

*(Laurence removes his habit, revealing a colorful costume with
tights, prominent codpiece and sword. The actress switches
character, becoming MERCUTIO – optionally, removing her
beard, leaving a moustache.)*

MERCUTIO: Hey, nonny nunny nanny ninny nee.

Lo, I'm Mercutio!

(He performs a series of extravagant bows. Juliet gapes in disbelief. Mercutio is disappointed with her reaction.)

Hast not heard of me?

JULIET: I've only ever heard of one Mercutio.
He wouldn't show the liveliness that you show,
For he is dead.

MERCUTIO: As thou canst see, I live.
What's more, I am thy distant relative.
My aunt's a Capulet. And, strange to tell,
I'm kinsman to the Montagues as well.
Despite the awkwardness your feud arouses,
I'm friend to all. A cuz of both your houses.

JULIET: Mercutio died. By noble Tybalt slain.

MERCUTIO: In troth, we lied. Permit me to explain.
I drank this potion, which made me appear
To be a pallid corpse as cold as —

JULIET: Look here,
I know about the potion.

MERCUTIO: O, that's right.
I gave thee some to drink the other night.

JULIET: 'Twas Friar Laurence gave it me.

MERCUTIO: 'Twas I.
He lent me the disguise. Ay, he'll comply
With aught I ask. I said his blood be hot.
But, Juliet, *thy* delights do tempt him not.

JULIET: What care I for the friar's private life?
'Twas that kind man who made me Romeo's wife.

MERCUTIO: Alack-a-day, thy claim is far from true.

JULIET: You mean the man who wed us twain was you?

MERCUTIO: Well, I performed the ceremony, but I'm
No clergyman. Nor now, nor at the time.

JULIET: O monstrous! Thou hast plotted all of this
To steal poor Romeo's bride and Juliet's kiss!

(She clumsily attacks him with the sword. Mercutio draws his sword and casually parries each thrust.)

MERCUTIO: Tush, let me finish.

JULIET: Thou shalt not begin!

MERCUTIO: Be gentle.

JULIET: Never!

MERCUTIO: Fie, thou canst not win.

JULIET: If only noble Tybalt held this blade,
He would avenge the honour thou'st betrayed.

MERCUTIO: Dost call for Tybalt? — Tybalt! There's thy cue.

(Mercutio knocks on the coffin. The lid slides open. TYBALT sits up and steps out.)

JULIET: Alive?

TYBALT: I drank this potion —

JULIET: Not thou, too!
Dost recognize this villain?

TYBALT: One I hate.

MERCUTIO: Good morrow, cuz.

JULIET: *(Offering Tybalt the sword:)* Here, crack the prattler's
pate!

TYBALT: I scorn to lay a finger on a jade.

JULIET: Though he's effeminate, the man's no maid.

MERCUTIO: Not in the sense of virgin, no.

JULIET: (*To Tybalt:*) Dost hear?

TYBALT: (*Grumpily:*) I'm in the wench's power.

JULIET: Ah. 'Tis clear.

Like Friar Laurence, Tybalt too is smitten.

(*To Mercutio:*) And doth thy bidding, docile as a kitten.

TYBALT: I'd tear her limb from limb if I were free.

MERCUTIO: I thank thee for thy honest courtesy.

But, Juliet, we have toyed with thee too long.

JULIET: (*To Tybalt:*) Defend me!

TYBALT: Nay.

JULIET: Thou coward!

MERCUTIO: Tush, thou'rt wrong

To slander Tybalt. He but joined my game

To shield thy mother from a public shame.

TYBALT: Be silent, gossip!

MERCUTIO: (*To Juliet:*) Think how she did weep

And wail when Tybalt "died." Quite failed to keep

Her passion for her nephew under cover.

JULIET: (*To Tybalt:*) Doth he speak true? Art thou my mother's lover?

TYBALT: (*To Mercutio:*) I've played my part. Am I now free to go?

MERCUTIO: Nay, thou must stay to soothe poor Juliet's woe.

For she's about to suffer sore distress.

JULIET: My Romeo's dead. Thy violence hurts me less.

MERCUTIO: I push thee not. I pull thee from the cliff...
(*Nudging Romeo with his foot:*) Thy cue.

(*Romeo comes to life and stretches.*)

ROMEO: What joy to move! My neck's so stiff.

(*Juliet drops the sword on the ground.*)

JULIET: Alive? But, how? I tried thy pulse. No motion.
Thy lips expelled no breath.

ROMEO: I drank this potion.

JULIET: What care I how the miracle occurred?
My husband lives! My love! My world!

MERCUTIO: My word.

JULIET: My universe!

ROMEO: Nay, none of me is thine.
My faithful heart belongs to Rosaline.

(*Romeo gently lets down Mercutio's hair – and/or removes the moustache. The actress smiles and removes the codpiece, becoming ROSALINE. Romeo and Rosaline kiss.*)

JULIET: Foul treachery! My love doth love another?

ROMEO: Zounds, chide me not. I'm no worse than thy mother.

(*Tybalt furiously grabs his sword and threatens Romeo.*)

TYBALT: Base Montague! I'll send thy soul to hell!

ROSALINE: Peace, Tybalt! Sheathe thy weapon. Or I'll tell.

(*Tybalt struggles to control himself, then grudgingly puts up his sword and turns away with a frustrated huff.*)

JULIET: Is this the famous beauty Rosaline?
The one a hundred swains declare divine?
I see thou'rt but a cheap seducing Circe.

ROSALINE: Nay, thou'rt the hussy who deserves no mercy.
Last week I saw thee flirting at the ball.
Thou almost hadst my Romeo in thrall.

ROMEO: Until that evening thou wert cold and cruel.

ROSALINE: I fired up. Jealousy's a potent fuel.

ROMEO: Thanks, Juliet, for deliv'ring me my bride.

JULIET: Was I thy plaything, quickly cast aside?

(Romeo, tongue-tied, turns to Rosaline.)

ROSALINE: *(To Juliet:)* My darling boy's not good at repartee.
I had to prompt him 'neath thy balcony.

JULIET: What? That whole courtship? Was it all a ruse?

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