

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Copyright Protection. This play (the “Play”) is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, and the Berne Convention.

Reservation of Rights. All rights to this Play are strictly reserved, including, without limitation, professional and amateur stage performance rights; motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video, and sound recording rights; rights to all other forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction now known or yet to be invented, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, photocopying, and information storage and retrieval systems; and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

Performance Licensing and Royalty Payments. Amateur and stock performance rights to this Play are controlled exclusively by Playscripts, Inc. (“Playscripts”). No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this Play without obtaining advance written permission from Playscripts. Required royalty fees for performing this Play are specified online at the Playscripts website (www.playscripts.com). Such royalty fees may be subject to change without notice. Although this book may have been obtained for a particular licensed performance, such performance rights, if any, are not transferable. Required royalties must be paid every time the Play is performed before any audience, whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. All licensing requests and inquiries concerning amateur and stock performance rights should be addressed to Playscripts (see contact information on opposite page).

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to Playscripts, as well; such inquiries will be communicated to the author and the author's agent, as applicable.

Restriction of Alterations. There shall be no deletions, alterations, or changes of any kind made to the Play, including the changing of character gender, the cutting of dialogue, or the alteration of objectionable language, unless directly authorized by Playscripts. The title of the Play shall not be altered.

Author Credit. Any individual or group receiving permission to produce this Play is required to give credit to the author as the sole and exclusive author of the Play. This obligation applies to the title page of every program distributed in connection with performances of the Play, and in any instance that the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing, or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. The name of the author must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and of a font size at least 50% as large as the largest letter used in the title of the Play. No person, firm, or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the author. The name of the author may not be abbreviated or otherwise altered from the form in which it appears in this Play.

Publisher Attribution. All programs, advertisements, and other printed material distributed or published in connection with the amateur or stock production of the Play shall include the following notice:

**Produced by special arrangement with Playscripts, Inc.
(www.playscripts.com)**

Prohibition of Unauthorized Copying. Any unauthorized copying of this book or excerpts from this book is strictly forbidden by law. Except as otherwise permitted by applicable law, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including, without limitation, photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Playscripts.

Statement of Non-affiliation. This Play may include references to brand names and trademarks owned by third parties, and may include references to public figures. Playscripts is not necessarily affiliated with these public figures, or with the owners of such trademarks and brand names. Such references are included solely for parody, political comment, or other permitted purposes.

Permissions for Sound Recordings and Musical Works. This Play may contain directions calling for the performance of a portion, or all, of a musical work, or performance of a sound recording of a musical work. Playscripts has not obtained permissions to perform such works. The producer of this Play is advised to obtain such permissions, if required in the context of the production. The producer is directed to the websites of the U.S. Copyright Office (www.copyright.gov), ASCAP (www.ascap.com), BMI (www.bmi.com), and NMPA (www.nmpa.org) for further information on the need to obtain permissions, and on procedures for obtaining such permissions.

The Rules in Brief

- 1) Do NOT perform this Play without obtaining prior permission from Playscripts, and without paying the required royalty.
- 2) Do NOT photocopy, scan, or otherwise duplicate any part of this book.
- 3) Do NOT alter the text of the Play, change a character's gender, delete any dialogue, or alter any objectionable language, unless explicitly authorized by Playscripts.
- 4) DO provide the required credit to the author and the required attribution to Playscripts in all programs and promotional literature associated with any performance of this Play.

For more details on these and other rules, see the opposite page.

Copyright Basics

This Play is protected by United States and international copyright law. These laws ensure that playwrights are rewarded for creating new and vital dramatic work, and protect them against theft and abuse of their work.

A play is a piece of property, fully owned by the playwright, just like a house or car. You must obtain permission to use this property, and must pay a royalty fee for the privilege—*whether or not you charge an admission fee*. Playscripts collects these required payments on behalf of the author.

Anyone who violates an author's copyright is liable as a copyright infringer under United States and international law. Playscripts and the author are entitled to institute legal action for any such infringement, which can subject the infringer to actual damages, statutory damages, and attorneys' fees. A court may impose statutory damages of up to \$150,000 for willful copyright infringements. U.S. copyright law also provides for possible criminal sanctions. Visit the website of the U.S. Copyright Office (www.copyright.gov) for more information.

THE BOTTOM LINE: If you break copyright law, you are robbing a playwright and opening yourself to expensive legal action. Follow the rules, and when in doubt, ask us.

Playscripts, Inc.
325 W. 38th Street, Suite 305
New York, NY 10018

Phone: 1-866-NEW-PLAY (639-7529)
Email: info@playscripts.com
Web: www.playscripts.com

*For my friends who shared their notes
and for my family who shares their love.*

Cast of Characters

JAMIE, the theatre expert. A romantic at heart.

SCOTT, Jamie's boyfriend. Sarcastic and skeptical.

RACHEL, fun and friendly. Willing to do anything for her friends.

FRANK, Rachel's boyfriend. Playfully dramatic but easily frightened.

DAWN, pragmatic and tough. Not afraid to speak her mind.

STEVE, Dawn's boyfriend. Always looking to get a laugh.

CHRISTY, sweet and kind. Very patient with Brad.

BRAD, Christy's boyfriend. Dimwitted but determined.

TARA, attractive and arrogant. Likes to be the center of attention.

JUSTIN, Tara's boyfriend. A nice guy stuck in a bad relationship.

KATE, the only non-theatre member. Shy, sincere, and in love with Justin.

BEN, a newcomer to the drama department. Intelligent but slightly bookish.

WENDY, a bit "different." Enjoys the darker side of life: Halloween, ghosts, etc.

Setting

A stage in a high school theatre on Halloween night.

Production Notes

The Costume Rack may be as simple or as elaborate as you wish. The audience needs to see 15–30 costumes hanging from the rack. Since the costumes are covered with garment bags, it doesn't matter what outfits truly hang underneath.

If you are able to find a suitable costume, the actor may remove the garment bag sometime during the show. If no costume is available, substitute something of similar shape and keep the costume covered throughout the performance.

Whenever possible, accessories should be attached to the outside of the garment bags (a crown for *The Frog Prince*, a boa for the *Guys and Dolls* dress, etc.). To add variety, additional garment bags may be decorated with a variety of scarves, hats, and masks.

Costumes essential to the production:

The white dress that Kate wears

The richly colored Juliet dress that Kate carries in the garment bag

The Romeo hat

Costumes mentioned but not essential:

The Frog Prince

Cinderella

Male costume from *Guys and Dolls*

Female costume from *Guys and Dolls*

Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz*

Scarecrow from *The Wizard of Oz*

Male costume from *Grease*

Female costume from *Grease*

Romeo costume

Garment bags may be found at any dry cleaners. Large garbage bags will work as well.

The Spin-the-Bottle game should be played with the bottle being placed on the ground slightly upstage of the large prop box. When the cast gathers in a semi circle, the box fills in the downstage gap and conceals the bottle from the audience. The bottle should be spun for real so the actors may react together when it stops on the “selected” person.

Acknowledgments

The debut production of *Juliet's Ghost* was performed October 29, 2004 by Discovery Middle School in Orlando, Florida. The play was directed by the author with the assistance of Mara Burger and Danielle Maki. The original cast was as follows:

JAMIE	Josie Rigali
SCOTT.....	Kevin Palombi
RACHEL.....	Shamieka Seburn
FRANK	Michael Parson
CHRISTY	Madison Flory
BRAD	Josh McRae
DAWN.....	Aimee Londergan
STEVE	Alexander Ruiz
TARA	Christine Torres
JUSTIN.....	Josh McDonald
KATE.....	Amanda Tritinger
BEN	CJ Willard
WENDY	Stephanie Kern

JULIET'S GHOST

**AN ORIGINAL COMEDY ABOUT
SHAKESPEARE, SPIN-THE-BOTTLE,
AND OTHER SCARY THINGS**

by Ken Preuss

(It is Halloween night. A stage sits in darkness. There is no set other than a few randomly placed tables and chairs. A ladder stands to the far right. Several boxes are scattered about. A curtain parts up right. JAMIE enters quietly yet confidently. SCOTT and RACHEL follow behind her. FRANK enters a bit more tentatively.)

JAMIE. There. I did it. I told you I could get us in here.

SCOTT. *(To FRANK as he points toward JAMIE.)* She's amazing.

FRANK. She's also a criminal.

RACHEL. Borrowing costumes for a Halloween party is not a crime.

FRANK. Breaking into the school to get them *is*.

JAMIE. I didn't break in. I have a key. *(Moves off left.)*

FRANK. *(Calls after her.)* Maybe you can use it to get us out of jail.

SCOTT. Lighten up. *(JAMIE switches on the stage lights. The stage gets brighter. SCOTT smiles as if FRANK has done it himself.)* Wow! Nice work.

JAMIE. *(Returning.)* Everyone will have to come in the same way we did. *(Points off left.)* The other door is chained up.

FRANK. If anyone finds out we snuck in here, *we're* going to be the ones chained up.

RACHEL. Stop being so dramatic.

FRANK. I'm an actor on a stage under a spotlight. I'm supposed to be dramatic.

JAMIE. You're supposed to be quiet. *(She drags a large box marked "props" down right.)*

RACHEL. Go peek and see if anyone else is here yet.

FRANK. Who'd you guys invite anyway?

JAMIE. Everyone who's going to the party. Drama kids, mostly.

RACHEL. And Kate.

FRANK. Kate?

RACHEL. What's wrong with Kate?

FRANK. Nothing. I like Kate. I've just never seen her in the theatre before. (*Heads upstage.*)

SCOTT. Kate doesn't seem like the type who'd be interested in going to a costume party.

RACHEL. She's not.

SCOTT. Then why'd you invite her?

RACHEL. She's interested in a *guy* who's going to the costume party.

SCOTT. She's got a date?

RACHEL. (*Smiling:*) Not yet.

SCOTT. So she's going to try to hook up with someone tonight?

RACHEL. It's a little more romantic than that.

JAMIE. (*Grabs a scrapbook from the box and sets it on a table.*) It's Ben, isn't it?

RACHEL. Why would you say that?

JAMIE. He's the only single guy in the theatre.

RACHEL. I never said the guy she likes is single.

SCOTT. (*Amused:*) Kate's going to try to steal someone's boyfriend?

RACHEL. She's not going to steal him. She's going to...win him over. Show him that she's the one he was meant to be with.

JAMIE. (*Eager:*) Who is it?

RACHEL. I promised Kate I wouldn't tell anyone who it is.

SCOTT. Then tell us who it's *not*. We already know it's not Ben. Is it Steve?

RACHEL. No.

JAMIE. Is it Brad?

RACHEL. No.

FRANK. (*Moving downstage:*) Is it Justin?

RACHEL. (*Shoots him a look, then turns to the others.*) No comment.

SCOTT. She thinks she's going to get Justin to take her to the party?

RACHEL. It could happen.

SCOTT. Justin's with Tara. Maybe you've seen them. The popular couple...usually attached at the lips.

RACHEL. (*Sighs.*) You think she has a chance?

FRANK. (*Playfully:*) Sure. I can see Justin confessing his love right now. (*Deepens his voice as if acting in a soap opera:*) My darling, Kate. I know we've never been alone together...or ever even talked...in fact, I wasn't aware you existed until Rachel pointed you out. But the moment I saw you, I knew. I knew the way...Romeo knew about Juliet...the way Anthony knew about Cleopatra...the way Homer knew about Marge. (*KATE enters. She stands silently behind FRANK, listening.*) I know I'm with Tara. She's...popular. She's...pretty. She's...perfect. But you're...*you*. (*Drops to one knee.*) Come with me to the party. Our matching costumes will show everyone that our hearts have been joined...forever. Kiss me, Kate. Make me the happiest man in the world.

KATE. Sorry. You're not my type. (*Crosses to RACHEL.*)

FRANK. (*Standing up, trying to save face.*) I...I was just...acting!

RACHEL. (*Laughing at FRANK:*) Acting like a goofball.

KATE. Why was he doing that?

RACHEL. He *always* acts like a goofball.

KATE. Why was he saying that stuff about me and Justin? (*A beat.*) You told them!

RACHEL. (*Quickly:*) They tricked me.

KATE. (*Turns away.*) I'm leaving.

RACHEL. I'm sorry! (*Runs to stop her.*) They're the only people I told.

KATE. They're the only people here.

RACHEL. Well, they can help. (*Turns.*) Right, Frank?

FRANK. (*Moving back to the door:*) Right! (*A beat.*) What are we helping with?

RACHEL. (*To all:*) We're not going to tell anyone that Kate likes Justin. We're just going to hint that Justin might be better off with someone other than Tara.

KATE. Let's just forget about this.

RACHEL. You've got to make a move sooner or later.

KATE. I vote for later.

RACHEL. You've been in love with Justin for five years.

KATE. And he's never noticed me.

RACHEL. He will tonight. And once he does, he'll realize you're meant to be together.

KATE. I hope you're right.

RACHEL. I am. Will you stay?

KATE. For a while, I guess. (*Looking around:*) But, you know how this place gives me the creeps.

SCOTT. (*Laughs.*) Don't tell me you believe the stories about this place being haunted?

JAMIE. (*Reassuring her:*) Those are just stupid rumors.

FRANK. Trust us. There's nothing to be afraid of.

(BRAD jumps through the curtain cackling madly. FRANK screams and scrambles away. CHRISTY, STEVE, and DAWN step in.)

BRAD. (*Seeking a response:*) Come on, man! That was funny!

STEVE. That was stupid.

BRAD. It's Halloween night. I'm allowed to be stupid.

STEVE. It's Halloween night. You're supposed to be something *different* than you are the other 364 days of the year.

DAWN. (*Laughs and puts her arm around STEVE.*) Good one.

BRAD. (*To CHRISTY, puzzled:*) I don't get it.

CHRISTY. (*Pats his back tenderly.*) Love ya, anyways.

(The foursome cross toward the others. FRANK collapses on the box to catch his breath.)

JAMIE. You guys didn't park out back did you?

STEVE. We hid the car way out in the woods like you told us to.

DAWN. (*With a playful push:*) If you were gentlemen, you would have dropped us off first.

STEVE. If we were gentlemen, we would have rented costumes instead of stealing them.

BRAD. (*Looking at FRANK:*) I think I killed him.

FRANK. (*Standing slowly:*) You nearly gave me a heart attack.

STEVE. Don't die. If the cops show up and we have to run, I don't want to carry your body.

KATE. (*Stepping up:*) Can we talk about something other than death?

DAWN. Kate? We didn't notice you.

KATE. No problem.

CHRISTY. Are you going to the party?

RACHEL. She's...thinking about it.

CHRISTY. (*Excited:*) We've been thinking about it all week! (*To JAMIE:*) So where are these matching costumes you told us about?

JAMIE. (*Points to an up left curtain:*) Back there. I put them on a special rack. (*To SCOTT:*) Why don't you boys go and bring them out?

BRAD. *(Pulls a long wig from the box and quickly puts it on. He adopts a woman's voice:)* You boys be careful. Mind you don't hurt yourself. Bring me back something pretty.

SCOTT. That was pathetic.

FRANK. Now we know why he works backstage.

BRAD. *(Smiling:)* Do I look like a girl?

STEVE. Only when you play football.

(BRAD throws the wig at STEVE. He takes it and heads upstage.)

SCOTT. *(To BRAD:)* We'll get the costumes. See if there's anything we can use in the box.

(SCOTT, STEVE, and FRANK exit through the up left curtain. BRAD begins rummaging through the box.)

DAWN. *(To JAMIE:)* So how do we figure out who gets what?

JAMIE. *(Hands her the scrapbook:)* I found this scrapbook. It's got pictures of every play the school's ever done. Pick out something you like.

DAWN. *(Opens it and points:)* I'll take this guy in the pinstripe suit.

CHRISTY. She meant pick a costume.

DAWN. I was kidding. They took this picture like 30 years ago. That guy's old enough to be my dad.

JAMIE. *(Peeking over:)* That guy *is* my dad.

DAWN. What?

JAMIE. That's a picture of my father. He was in *Chicago*.

BRAD. *(Looks over, confused:)* If he was in Chicago, he wouldn't have gone to this school.

(No one seems to understand his comment except CHRISTY. She moves to BRAD and puts her hand on his shoulder.)

CHRISTY. *(Slowly:)* He was in *Chicago: The Musical*.

BRAD. *(A beat then a smile:)* Right! *(To JAMIE:)* I thought you meant *Chicago: The state*.

JAMIE. *(Stares at BRAD a beat, then turns to the others:)* Do any of you have relatives who did plays?

(DAWN and CHRISTY shake their heads. KATE turns away, uncomfortably. JAMIE notices.)

RACHEL. *(Changing the subject:)* Here come the guys!

(The boys return, rolling a rack of hanging costumes. Though they are concealed in garment bags, various accessories like hats or scarves are pinned to the outsides or wrapped around the hangers. There is a single sheet of paper on the front of each bag containing the name of the costume within. They park the rack stage left.)

FRANK. *(As if a peddler:)* Costumes! Costumes! Get'em while they're hot!

BRAD. *(Crossing left:)* They're all covered up. How are we supposed to tell what they are?

SCOTT. *(Lifting a garment bag:)* Pick a bag and read the little sign.

STEVE. Or in your case, have someone read it to you.

(Everyone turns his or her attention to the costume rack. KATE moves quietly to the abandoned scrapbook and begins looking through it.)

BRAD. *(Grabs a costume and reads the sign:)* "The Frog Prince." *(Looks at it again and frowns:)* Looks like Scott's claimed this one already.

SCOTT. What are you talking about?

BRAD. *(Hands him the costume:)* You wrote your name on the sign.

SCOTT. *(Looks, then nods in recognition:)* I wrote this three years ago. *(Points to the paper:)* We sign these things when we try on costumes so the director knows everything fits.

JAMIE. *(To SCOTT:)* Why don't you wear that again tonight? *(Looks for a costume:)* You can be the prince and I can be... *(Smiles as she finds it) ...Cinderella!*

STEVE. *(Holds the wig out to BRAD:)* Put this on again. You can be the ugly stepsister.

FRANK. (*Holds up two costumes:*) Hey Rachel. I was thinking we could do *Guys and Dolls*.

STEVE. And which one would you be?

FRANK. Which do you think?

(STEVE holds the wig out to FRANK. FRANK laughs it off and brings the two costumes toward RACHEL. CHRISTY and DAWN move left, joining their boyfriends at the costume rack.)

CHRISTY. Do you think Tara will be mad if we pick out costumes before she gets here?

RACHEL. (*Notices KATE sitting alone. Jumps at the opening:*) Speaking of Tara being mad...did anyone notice how she's been treating Justin lately?

(RACHEL grimaces at her awkward segue. KATE, who has been lost in the scrapbook, snaps out of it, and crosses toward her.)

KATE. What are you saying?

RACHEL. (*Quieting KATE with a look:*) I was just mentioning that Justin and Tara don't seem to be getting along very well.

CHRISTY. They *were* going at it pretty heavily at lunch today.

BRAD. They were going at it pretty heavily in the hall this morning, too. (*Wraps his arms around himself, mimicking a make-out session.*)

CHRISTY. I meant that they were fighting.

DAWN. They don't fight. Tara yells and Justin listens.

JAMIE. I don't know why Justin stays with her. She treats him terribly.

STEVE. Yeah, but she kisses him great!

DAWN. (*Shoots STEVE a look:*) How do you know how she kisses him?

STEVE. I sit by them on the bus! It's hard to miss the lips.

DAWN. If you don't stop watching her, you're going to miss *these* lips.

RACHEL. I really think Justin deserves someone nicer. (*Glaring at FRANK:*) Don't you, Frank?

FRANK. Me? (*Remembering he is supposed to help:*) Yeah. If only we had a nice girl to set Justin up with. Someone like...

(*KATE shakes her head, nervous that FRANK will say her name. WENDY enters behind FRANK. KATE leaps at the chance to distract him.*)

KATE. Wendy!

FRANK. (*Unaware of WENDY's entrance, assumes it is a suggestion:*) Wendy? Weird Wendy? She's a little creepy don't you think? I mean, she played a witch in *Into the Woods*. She played a witch in *The Crucible*. She played a witch in *Macbeth*. Does anybody see a pattern here?

WENDY. (*Leaning in to his ear:*) I do.

FRANK. Ahhh! (*He jumps away, startled, then mumbles to himself:*) I gotta stop talking with my back to the door.

WENDY. (*Crosses center:*) Breaking into the school? I hope you're doing something exciting.

JAMIE. We're picking out costumes for the party. You're just in time.

WENDY. Just in time to stop you.

CHRISTY. You don't think it'll be fun?

WENDY. Boys and girls in little corresponding outfits? It's all very cute, but it's definitely not my style.

STEVE. In other words, she couldn't get a date.

WENDY. I could've gotten a date. I chose not to.

DAWN. Why are you here then?

WENDY. It's Halloween night. I thought we might do something scary. Don't any of you know the history of this theatre? The horrible accident? The unexplained sightings? There's a good chance we're not here alone. (*Slow and spooky:*) I bet if we wanted to...we could contact someone on the other side.

BRAD. You mean...the gym?

CHRISTY. She wants to talk to the dead.

STEVE. We've got a little time before the party! Why don't you conjure up a couple flesh-eating zombies to keep us entertained?

WENDY. Zombies don't eat flesh. They eat *brains*.

STEVE. *(To BRAD:)* Well, we don't have to worry about them attacking you.

BRAD. I don't even understand what a zombie is anyway.

CHRISTY. Zombies are the undead.

WENDY. *Vampires* are the undead. Zombies are the *living* dead.

SCOTT. I thought ghosts were the living dead.

WENDY. No. Ghosts are dead people who come back.

KATE. *(To RACHEL:)* I think I'm going to go.

WENDY. *(Overhearing:)* Why? Are you afraid?

KATE. No. *(Embarrassed by the attention:)* I just don't like talking about this kind of stuff.

RACHEL. *(Noticing KATE's uneasiness:)* We *did* get a little off subject. *(Elbows FRANK:)* Right, Frank?

FRANK. Right! We were talking about getting Justin to break up with Tara.

WENDY. We'd have a better chance of contacting the dead. *(She moves to the prop box and looks through it:)* Justin's going to stay with Tara a long time.

KATE. Why do you say that?

WENDY. *(Pulls out a plastic skull and looks into its face:)* I can see it in his eyes.

KATE. Love?

WENDY. Fear! If Justin tries to get rid of Tara, he'll end up like this. *(Holds the skull toward KATE.)*

KATE. (*Turns away dejectedly:*) She's right.

RACHEL. (*Refusing to back down:*) I really think they're on the verge of breaking up.

WENDY. It's not going to happen. (*Sets the skull back and pulls out a toy sword.*)

RACHEL. (*With growing frustration:*) They've been fighting all year.

WENDY. They've been together since the ninth grade.

RACHEL. (*Emphatically:*) Kate's been in love with him since the sixth!

(*RACHEL cringes and turns to KATE. KATE grabs the sword and hands it to RACHEL.*)

KATE. Just run me through now. Put me out of my misery.

WENDY. (*Eyes widening:*) So, Kate's in love with Justin.

CHRISTY. Good choice!

DAWN. (*Sarcastically:*) Good luck.

WENDY. And I was afraid tonight was going to be boring.

CHRISTY. (*To KATE:*) I think you'd be good for Justin.

DAWN. All you have to do is find a way to get rid of Tara.

JAMIE. (*Crossing to the prop box:*) Oooh! I've got just the thing. (*Removes an old, glass bottle.*)

WENDY. (*Smiling deviously:*) Poison?

JAMIE. It's not poison. It's a love potion. From *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. (*She crosses left. Everyone follows. She smiles as she opens the bottle:*) If we get Tara to drink this, she'll fall in love with someone else.

DAWN. (*Sniffs the contents and winces:*) This stuff has been sitting around for years. If she drinks it, it'll probably kill her.

WENDY. Either way, Justin would be single.

KATE. I don't want Tara hurt.

RACHEL. I *do* like the idea of getting her to fall for someone else.

JAMIE. (*Sighs.*) If only we had a single guy to fix her up with.

(*BEN enters. He is a bit awkward and dressed in an outdated sweater. He stops right to look at the costumes that FRANK and RACHEL have set on a table.*)

JAMIE. Ben!

BEN. I'm not too late am I?

JAMIE. (*To BEN:*) You're right on time. (*To all:*) There's our single guy.

DAWN. That was quite a coincidence.

WENDY. That was *destiny*.

DAWN. I don't believe in destiny.

WENDY. Weird stuff happens all the time. Either you believe it, or you don't.

CHRISTY. (*To BRAD:*) Go talk to him.

BRAD. Why?

CHRISTY. We hardly know him. Find out something interesting about his life. Something we can use to impress Tara. (*Turns to the others as he goes:*) You think this'll work?

FRANK. We just sent a dumb guy to find out something interesting about a boring guy. I'd say, no.

RACHEL. Go help him then. (*Pushes him toward BEN.*)

DAWN. (*To STEVE.*) Do you think Ben might be interested in Tara?

STEVE. Are you kidding? Tara's the best-looking girl in the school... (*Realizes he is making DAWN angry. Changes midstream:*) is what *Ben* will probably say...when I mention it to him...which I'm going to do right now...if you'll excuse me. (*He hurries right.*)

SCOTT. There's no way Tara's going to fall for Ben.

RACHEL. Why not?

SCOTT. He's a science geek.

JAMIE. He used to be a science geek. He's been hanging out in drama all year.

SCOTT. So, now he's a *drama* geek. Look at him!

DAWN. He's...intellectual.

SCOTT. He dresses like an old man.

CHRISTY. He's...mature.

SCOTT. He's got a hairstyle from the 50s!

WENDY. He's retro!

SCOTT. He's hopeless.

KATE. He's our only hope.

(The girls heads right. SCOTT shakes his head and follows.)

RACHEL. *(Hopefully as she reaches the boys:)* So...are you guys talking about anything *interesting*?

STEVE. *(Rolling his eyes and smiling with false excitement:)* Ben here was just telling us how he's third generation.

BEN. *(Cheerfully recapping his story:)* My mother went here before me. Her father went here before her.

JAMIE. *(Trying to use this information:)* Did they do drama? We found an old scrapbook.

BEN. Mom never did. I know that for a fact. Grandpa steered her away from it. Wanted her to be more serious, I suppose. I was never into drama myself until recently.

WENDY. What happened?

BEN. I don't really know. I came into the year ready to focus on grades as usual and I just ended up here.

BRAD. *(Trying to be helpful:)* You probably made a wrong turn on the way to the science lab. I get lost in these hallways all the time.

BEN. *(Stares at BRAD for a beat then turns back to the others:)* Something just sort of drew me to the theatre. I don't know what it was.

RACHEL. Maybe it was a girl! *(Eyes WENDY for support.)*

WENDY. She's right. Maybe you're supposed to meet your...destiny.

BEN. You think?

CHRISTY. Sure! She could walk in the room any minute.

DAWN. (*Gestures to JAMIE that they need to get rid of his ugly sweater:*) Why don't we get Ben into some kind of costume?

BEN. (*Taking his sweater off:*) I was thinking I might get something from *Oklahoma*.

BRAD. That's a long way to go for a costume. You should just try something from the rack over there.

(*BEN stares at him unsure how to respond. CHRISTY steps in again.*)

CHRISTY. He means *Oklahoma: The Musical*.

BRAD. (*A beat then a smile:*) Right. (*To BEN:*) I thought you meant *Oklahoma: The Country*.

JAMIE. Anyway. (*She puts the bottle into the box and takes Ben's sweater:*) Let's see what size you wear. (*Looks at the collar and pauses.*) Why does your tag say M.C.?

BEN. Those are my initials. My mother wrote them in there. She doesn't want anyone to take my sweater by mistake.

SCOTT. No one would take it on *purpose*.

JAMIE. (*Gives SCOTT a look. Turns to BEN:*) M.C.? Your last name's Connor, right?

BEN. Right.

JAMIE. What's the M for?

BEN. (*Slightly evasive:*) My *first* name.

JAMIE. Your first name's not Ben?

BEN. Actually, it's...Marvin.

SCOTT. (*Stifling a laugh:*) Marvin?

BEN. Yeah. I don't really like it, though. It makes people think I'm a geek.

SCOTT. *(Still laughing:)* You wouldn't want anybody to think that.

FRANK. How do you get Ben out of Marvin?

BEN. I use my middle name. *(Smiling:)* My grandfather gave me the idea.

STEVE. Right after he gave him the sweater.

KATE. We're happy to call you Ben if you want us to.

JAMIE. Now, why don't we find you a costume that makes you look really cool?

TARA. *(Entering and overhearing the previous line:)* Better find him one that covers up his face.

KATE. *(To RACHEL:)* It's Tara!

WENDY. *(Angered:)* Do you always start insulting people the moment you walk in a room?

TARA. *(Coolly:)* Sometimes I start in the parking lot, but it's just so much more fun in person.

BRAD. Where's Justin?

TARA. Parking the car so I didn't have to walk.

CHRISTY. *(Stares at BRAD:)* He's a gentleman.

DAWN. *(Slugs STEVE hard on the shoulder:)* Why can't you be a gentleman?

STEVE. *(Rubbing his arm and backing away:)* Why can't you be a gentle woman?

TARA. So you guys picked out costumes without me?

JAMIE. Just a couple of us. There are plenty left.

(TARA crosses towards the rack. The girls follow. RACHEL rushes ahead of them and grabs a costume just before they reach it.)

RACHEL. This one's for Kate.

TARA. *(Watches RACHEL then looks to the girls:)* Why would Kate need a costume?

CHRISTY. She's thinking about going to the party.

TARA. *(Scoffs:)* Who's she going with?

CHRISTY. She doesn't exactly have a date yet.

TARA. The only date she'll have tonight is the one she puts at the top of her diary. "October 31st. Home alone. *Again.*"

(TARA laughs at her own joke and begins looking through the costumes. RACHEL crosses to KATE who is standing right with WENDY.)

RACHEL. *(Holds the costume toward KATE:)* Here.

KATE. *(Looks at it. Shakes her head:)* I can't take this.

RACHEL. If you don't, Tara will.

KATE. I'm not going to need it. I'm going home.

WENDY. What about the plan?

KATE. It's not going to work.

WENDY. *(Grabs the costume and puts it into KATE's hands:)* Take it with you, in case you change your mind.

(KATE sighs and turns to exit. JUSTIN enters at the same moment.)

KATE. Justin!

JUSTIN. *(To KATE:)* You leaving already?

KATE. *(Nearly speechless:)* I...uh...

JUSTIN. *(Points to the bag:)* I guess you picked out a costume.

KATE. *(Looks at it then back to him:)* Yeah...but...

JUSTIN. I'll see you at the party then.

KATE. Well...I'm...

(JUSTIN smiles and crosses away. RACHEL greets KATE excitedly.)

RACHEL. Did you hear that? He wants to see you at the party.

KATE. *(Simply:)* He didn't say he *wants* to see me. He said he *would* see me.

RACHEL. Well, *make* him want to see you.

KATE. *(Sighs:)* I'll think about it. *(Turns and heads out.)*

WENDY. *(Calling after her:)* We'll be here another half hour if you decide to come back.

(KATE exits. RACHEL and WENDY stay right. JUSTIN moves center and greets the boys.)

JUSTIN. Sorry I'm late.

STEVE. *(Rubbing his arm:)* Not as sorry as *I* am.

JUSTIN. What's that supposed to mean?

STEVE. If you weren't so busy being a gentleman, I'd still have feeling in my arm.

JUSTIN. *(Confused:)* When was I a gentleman?

SCOTT. When you dropped Tara off out front.

JUSTIN. Tara *told me* to drop her off. I only went along with it for safety reasons.

BRAD. You thought she might get hurt?

JUSTIN. I thought *I* might get hurt. *(Glances over to see if she's listening:)* She said she'd kill me if I made her go through the woods.

FRANK. And you always do what she says?

JUSTIN. It's not like she bosses me around.

TARA. *(Impatiently from across the room.)* Justin! The Keys!

JUSTIN. *(Runs to TARA without missing a beat:)* Sorry. *(Hands her a set of keys then returns to the boys. WENDY and RACHEL have joined them.)*

FRANK. *(To JUSTIN:)* So...you were telling us how Tara doesn't boss you around...

JUSTIN. *(Shrugs.)* It's not as bad as it looks.

WENDY. *(To RACHEL but loud enough for JUSTIN to hear:)* It's worse.

BEN. *(To JUSTIN:)* Why'd you have to give her your keys?

JUSTIN. Those were *her* keys. We took her car.

WENDY. They *always* take her car. *(Heads toward the rack. Pulls BEN with her.)*

JUSTIN. My car's a little run down. She doesn't like to ride in it. It's no big deal.

RACHEL. You have a girlfriend who refuses to ride in your car?

JUSTIN. *(Sighs.)* I guess.

RACHEL. You should get a new one.

JUSTIN. A new car?

RACHEL. *(Shakes her head.)* A new girlfriend.

(RACHEL moves toward the rack. BEN waits while WENDY purposely gets in TARA's way.)

TARA. *(Losing her patience:)* Can I help you?

WENDY. Just trying to find a costume.

TARA. Shouldn't you be trying to find a *date*? This is not the kind of party you want to go to alone.

WENDY. It's not the kind of party I want to go to at all.

TARA. Then why are you here?

BEN. She's just helping me find a costume.

TARA. *(To WENDY:)* Awww. He's your little pet project is he? *(To BEN:)* You should be honored Ben. The last time I saw Wendy with a pet project, she was taking care of a rat.

WENDY. For your information, my rat died.

CHRISTY. *(Saddened:)* Really? What happened?

WENDY. *(Slowly as she stares into TARA's eyes:)* I fed him to my snake.

(TARA turns away, partly in disgust, partly in fear. WENDY smiles, getting the reaction she hoped for. RACHEL pulls a costume from the rack.)

RACHEL. Yes! This is perfect!

BEN. What?

RACHEL. I found you a costume. *(Hands it to him.)* What do you think?

BEN. *(Reads the sign on the bag:)* Romeo? *(Ponders a moment.)* I've never really seen myself as a Romeo.

TARA. And you never will. *(Snatches the bag and steps toward JUSTIN.)* I think Justin will be wearing this one.

JUSTIN. Ben had it first. He can wear it if he wants.

TARA. *(To BEN:)* You don't want to wear it, do you?

BEN. I might...

TARA. Well, I'll dry clean it for you after the party. *(Brings it to JUSTIN.)*

JUSTIN. *(Quietly:)* You can't just take his costume.

TARA. *(A little angered:)* We're *all* taking costumes. That's what we're here for. *(Calming and smiling sweetly:)* We did the balcony scene in class. Think how good we would have looked in these. *(She hands him the Romeo hat.)* Be Romeo. I'll be Juliet. It'll be perfect for us.

(TARA leaves the costume and turns for the rack. BEN steps in front of her.)

BEN. You realize they don't live happily ever after, right?

TARA. What?

BEN. It's a tragedy. The play. Juliet kills herself at the end.

TARA. If *you* were Romeo, Juliet would kill herself at the beginning.

(TARA and BEN glare at each other for a moment.)

DAWN. *(Frames BEN and TARA with her hands. To CHRISTY:)* They're going to be a perfect couple. I sense a real love connection already.

(TARA returns to the rack. JUSTIN holds up the hat, offering it silently to BEN. BEN waves it off and heads upstage. He sits dejectedly near a box of books, eventually thumbing through a large volume of Shakespeare plays.)

TARA. *(To the girls:)* Justin's ready. Let's get the rest of the costumes and go.

CHRISTY. I may have found mine. *(Holds up a costume and calls out to BRAD:)* Think I'd look good as Dorothy from *Wizard of Oz*?

BRAD. You'd look great! Do they have the scarecrow?

CHRISTY. *(Holds up another costume:)* Right here.

BRAD. Yes!

STEVE. *(Mock excitement:)* Now, he can finally get a brain! *(Calling to DAWN:)* Find anything for us?

DAWN. *(Holds up two costumes:)* A couple of outfits from *Grease*.

BRAD. *(As in "Animal House":)* Toga! Toga!

DAWN. *(Correcting him:)* A poodle skirt and a leather jacket.

BRAD. *(Scrunches his face, confused:)* They wore that stuff in Greece?

CHRISTY. *(Crossing over to help him out:)* She means *Grease: The Musical*.

BRAD. *(A beat then a smile:)* Right. *(To DAWN:)* I thought you meant, Greece...

DAWN. *(Guessing his incorrect answer:)* ...the continent?

BRAD. Right!

SCOTT. Is everyone set then?

TARA. *(Reaching the end of the rack:)* No! *(Frustrated:)* I can't find the stupid Juliet costume!

JAMIE. It's probably still in the back.

TARA. Well, I'm going to look for it.

WENDY. (*Stepping in front of her:*) If I were you, I wouldn't go back there.

TARA. If I were you, I wouldn't go anywhere.

WENDY. (*Steps aside:*) Fine. Look for the costume. (*As TARA goes:*) Just watch out for the ghost.

JUSTIN. What ghost?

WENDY. Juliet's. (*Over her shoulder to TARA:*) She may be looking for the costume, too.

JUSTIN. What do you mean?

TARA. (*Returning:*) What does it matter?

JUSTIN. It sounds interesting.

TARA. It sounds ridiculous.

JUSTIN. Why?

TARA. First: Juliet wasn't real. She was a character in a play. Second: Even if she had been real, she'd be buried in Verona, Italy. Third! And this is a biggie...even if she wanted to rise from the dead and travel from Italy to some rinky-dink American high school, she wouldn't be able to because there are no such things as ghosts.

BEN. (*Crossing down. Reading from the Shakespeare book:*) "There are more things in heaven and earth, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

TARA. What's that?

JAMIE. (*Smiling at BEN:*) It's a quote from *Hamlet*.

TARA. What's it supposed to mean?

JUSTIN. Just because you've never seen something, doesn't mean it doesn't exist.

TARA. Whose side are you on?

JUSTIN. I'm not on anyone's side. I just think you should keep your mind open.

TARA. Well, I think you should keep your mouth shut.

BEN. *(To WENDY as he sets the book on a table:)* What do you know about this ghost?

WENDY. Quite a bit. I'd be happy to tell you guys the story. *(Looks to TARA.)* That is, if you're not scared.

JUSTIN. Why would we be scared?

WENDY. Because it happened right here...in this theatre...on Halloween night.

JUSTIN. *(To BEN:)* Sounds cool.

BEN. Go on. Tell us.

(The rest of the crowd encourages WENDY to proceed. They settle in to listen. TARA crosses her arms impatiently, upset about the delay, but unwilling to proceed to the back room alone. WENDY begins, capturing everyone's attention with her dramatic delivery. They listen intently with only TARA showing any signs of disbelief.)

WENDY. It was 50 years ago. The first year the school was open. The drama department was planning on presenting *Romeo and Juliet*. They began rehearsing, but the girl who'd been cast as Juliet turned out to be really shy. Every time they got to the part where she was supposed to kiss Romeo, she blushed and backed away. Turns out she had never kissed a boy before.

JAMIE. Why didn't the director just kick her out?

WENDY. He was tempted to, but the girl was perfect for the role. She promised the director that she would kiss Romeo on opening night. She convinced him that having a real first kiss live on stage would be...almost like magic.

BEN. *(To JUSTIN:)* I can't imagine getting kissed in front of an audience.

SCOTT. I can't imagine you getting kissed at all.

RACHEL. Shhh. We're almost to the scary part.

SCOTT. We just talked about Ben being kissed. It doesn't get much scarier than that.

CHRISTY. So what happened? Did the girl ever get her kiss?

WENDY. She never got the chance. Opening night arrived. The cast was in their costumes. The audience was in their seats. But the curtain never opened.

BRAD. That stupid thing gets stuck all the time. You have to grab those ropes and... *(Starts to gesture but realizes he has interrupted the story.)* Sorry.

DAWN. Why didn't it open?

WENDY. The girl playing Juliet never showed up.

DAWN. She chickened out?

WENDY. That's what everyone thought...at first. The director made a speech and canceled the performance. The cast was furious. No one believed she could do such a thing. Then they heard about the accident.

FRANK. What accident?

WENDY. It was only October, but it was unusually cold. The girl had been driving herself to the theatre and lost control on the icy bridge. They found her car in the river.

(Everyone is silent. WENDY crosses left, captivating her audience. STEVE, unseen by the others, grabs the Romeo hat off the table and slips behind the upstage curtain.)

WENDY. If you look through that scrapbook, you'll see that in 50 years, they've never attempted to do *Romeo and Juliet* again. Teachers say it's out of respect, but students say it's out of fear. Rumor has it, that every October, the ghost of Juliet returns, wandering the stage, waiting for her Romeo, wanting desperately to share that first kiss that never was. If you listen carefully, you can almost hear her voice whispering softly...slowly...sadly... "Romeo...Romeo..."

STEVE. *(Bursting out suddenly:)* Someone call me?

(Everyone jumps, startled. STEVE laughs.)

BEN. That was sad.

BRAD. *(Referring to Steve's stunt:)* I thought it was sort of funny.

JUSTIN. He's talking about the story.

TARA. *(To everyone:)* That's all it was. A story.

BEN. Sounds like it could have happened.

WENDY. Weird stuff happens all the time. Either you believe it, or you don't.

TARA. Well, I don't.

JAMIE. Maybe, you should. *(Everyone turns to see her holding the scrapbook.)* There's an article in here about the accident. *(Searching for details:)* Her name was Katharine Hawthorn. There's a picture of her.

DAWN. *(Looking:)* She looks like Kate.

CHRISTY. *(Looking:)* She really does. *(To all:)* Don't you think that's creepy?

TARA. I think anyone who looks like Kate is creepy.

RACHEL. *(Crosses over and looks:)* Oh my gosh! *(With great seriousness:)* I think I know who that girl was.

FRANK. Who?

RACHEL. I...I promised I would never say anything.

FRANK. Promised who?

RACHEL. Kate. *(She sighs, afraid she has said too much. The others coax her to continue until she is unable to hold back.)* I was at her house once...for her grandmother's birthday. When her grandmother cut the cake, she set a piece to the side and never touched it. Kate told me that it was a tradition: that her grandmother did this in memory of her twin sister. Her twin sister who died back in high school...in a car accident...on the bridge. *(Moving back slowly and pointing at the picture:)* The sister's name was Katharine.

(There is a moment of silence as Rachel's story sinks in.)

JAMIE. You're saying Kate's related to this girl?

RACHEL. She was named after her.

CHRISTY. It's weird how much they look alike.

DAWN. Some family members just resemble each other.

BEN. I look a lot like my grandfather.

STEVE. Brad looks a lot like his dog.

BRAD. Hey!

STEVE. I'm sorry. *(A beat.)* I didn't mean to insult your dog.

SCOTT. If that was Kate's grandmother's twin? That would make her Kate's...

RACHEL. Great aunt.

WENDY. *(Sadly:)* That's why she got so weird when I talked about contacting the dead.

FRANK. Now if we could only figure out how *you* got so weird.

WENDY. *(A sudden inspiration:)* You know what? I think we should try it.

FRANK. Try what?

WENDY. Talking to the ghost. I mean, we know who she is, right?

JAMIE. *(Excited by the idea:)* Maybe we can give her some kind of message for Kate!

FRANK. *(A bit frightened:)* You guys aren't serious. Are you?

WENDY. *(To all:)* When are we going to get a chance like this? It's Halloween night. It's fifty years since the tragedy. It's the perfect time.

TARA. It's a *waste* of time.

JUSTIN. I think it's a good idea.

BEN. How do we get the ghost to show up?

WENDY. We get her to come back for her kiss.

JAMIE. *(Jumping on the idea:)* All we have to do is act out some of the play! *(She puts the scrapbook into the prop box then drags it left. She*

points to the ladder, sending SCOTT to retrieve it.) We can use the ladder as a balcony. *(Grabs the Romeo hat and turns to the boys.)* We just need somebody to be Romeo.

FRANK. *(Nervously:)* I wouldn't feel safe up on a balcony with a ghost.

JAMIE. It's a sixteen-year-old girl in search of a kiss, not some psycho murderer.

SCOTT. *(Sliding the ladder center:)* He's afraid he might faint and fall to his death.

FRANK. *(To SCOTT:)* I don't see you volunteering. What are you afraid of?

SCOTT. I'm afraid the ghost will fall in love with me. *(To all:)* I mean, I could do the scene, but if I kissed her, I'd break her heart.

STEVE. If I kissed her, Dawn would break my arm.

JAMIE. What about you, Ben? You want to give it a shot?

(BEN raises a finger as if to say something. TARA scoffs.)

TARA. He can't get a girl at this school to kiss him. You really think a ghost is going to return from the past to do it?

JAMIE. No one really has to kiss anyone. We just need someone to stand under the balcony and say the lines until the ghost shows up.

BRAD. *I'll do it. (He dons the Romeo hat and kneels in front of the ladder.)*

JAMIE. *(Surprised:)* You know the lines?

BRAD. It's a classic play. *Everyone* knows the lines. *(Looks up, extends an arm, clears his throat, and speaks with great seriousness:)* Rupunzel. Rupunzel. Let down your hair!

(Some laugh. Some groan. BRAD looks confused. JAMIE grabs the hat back.)

JAMIE. *(Holding it to JUSTIN:)* Looks like it's up to you. You're the only guy left.

JUSTIN. I *have* done the scene before.

JAMIE. Then do it again. Tara *wanted* you to be Romeo tonight.

JUSTIN. (*Intrigued. Looks to TARA.*) What do you think?

TARA. (*Sees everyone awaiting her response. Waits a beat.*) I think you should do it.

JUSTIN. (*Surprised.*) Really?

TARA. Sure. I'll do it with you.

JUSTIN. What?

TARA. Everyone loved it when we did the scene in class. We'll just do it again out here.

JAMIE. We only need a Romeo.

TARA. Well, you're getting a Juliet, too.

WENDY. *The ghost* is supposed to be Juliet. That's the whole point. Katharine's not going to come back for her kiss if she sees another Juliet in her place.

TARA. (*Shakes her head slowly.*) Wendy. Wendy. You know so little about love. (*She takes the hat and places it on JUSTIN's head. She smiles sweetly and looks him in the eye.*) Just like we did in class, okay? (*She moves to the ladder.*)

WENDY. (*To TARA.*) You're just going to make the ghost upset.

TARA. I'm *going* to make her *jealous*. If the ghost wants her Romeo, she can show up and stop me. If she doesn't get the kiss, *I* will. (*She begins climbing.*)

JUSTIN. (*To the boys.*) Do you think it'll be bad if Tara does the scene?

SCOTT. I saw her do the scene in class. It was pretty bad then.

JUSTIN. You don't think the ghost will attack her or anything, do you?

FRANK. No. (*A beat.*) But you can always hope.

(TARA positions herself near the top of the ladder, clears her throat, and gestures for everyone to move out of the acting area.)

CHRISTY. *(Crossing left:)* We better give her some space.

DAWN. *(Following her:)* I'd rather give her a shove.

STEVE. *(To BRAD as they move left:)* Bradley, my boy, you are about to see something far beyond your powers of comprehension.

BRAD. A ghost?

STEVE. *(Shaking his head:)* A scene from Shakespeare.

(JUSTIN positions himself behind the prop box as if it were the bushes below Juliet's balcony. He takes a breath and begins the scene. His performance is strong and heartfelt.)

JUSTIN.

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?

It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

Arise fair sun and kill the envious moon.

It is my lady. It is my love! O, that she knew she were!

She speaks yet she says nothing: what of that?

BRAD. *(Thinking JUSTIN has asked a question:)* Maybe she forgot her lines.

TARA. *(Yelling:)* I don't have any lines yet, you idiot!

BRAD. Right.

JUSTIN.

See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!

(TARA clutches the ladder still fuming at BRAD. JUSTIN repeats the line as a hint:)

See, how she leans her *cheek* upon her *hand*.

(TARA finally catches on and strikes the proper pose. JUSTIN continues:)

O, that I were a glove upon that hand.

That I might touch that cheek!

TARA. *(Affecting a voice that is high-pitched and over-dramatic:)*

O Romeo, Romeo! *wherefore* art thou Romeo? *(Gestures like a sailor searching for land.)*

BEN. (*Waves his hand to stop the scene.*) I'm sorry, but I have to correct something.

JAMIE. (*To BEN.*) She's reciting that line wrong, right?

TARA. (*Instantly offended.*) I'm reciting the lines perfectly, thank you.

JUSTIN. Actually, you're not.

TARA. (*Growing angrier.*) What are you talking about?

JUSTIN. (*Tentatively.*) I was going to tell you when we were rehearsing for class, but...

TARA. You thought it would be better to embarrass me in front of all these people?

JUSTIN. No. I...

TARA. (*Impatiently.*) What's the problem then?

(*JUSTIN is afraid to answer. JAMIE steps in.*)

JAMIE. When Juliet says "Wherefore art thou," she's not looking for Romeo. She's wondering why he has that particular name. "Wherefore art thou" doesn't mean, "Where are you." "Wherefore art thou" means, "Why are you."

TARA. "Wherefore art thou" ruining my scene?

JAMIE. I'm just trying to help. If you don't say the lines right, the ghost isn't going to recognize the play.

TARA. If you don't stay out of this, you're not going to recognize your face! (*JAMIE backs away. BEN holds his position as if he still has something to say. TARA turns on him.*) Don't make me come down there!

(*BEN throws his arms up and walks away.*)

DAWN. (*To CHRISTY.*) It's nice to see Juliet so sweet and romantic, isn't it?

TARA. (*Regains composure and turns on the charm:*)

O Romeo, Romeo! *wherefore* art thou Romeo?

Deny thy father and refuse thy name;

Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,

And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

JUSTIN. (*Aside:*)

Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

BRAD. (*Thinks JUSTIN is addressing him again:*) If you've got lines, go ahead and say them.

CHRISTY. That is his line.

BRAD. Right.

TARA.

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;

O, be some other name!

What's in a name? that which we call a rose

By any other name would smell as sweet.

JUSTIN. (*Crossing to the ladder:*)

By a name I know not how to tell thee who I am:

My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,

Because it is an enemy to thee;

TARA.

My ears have not yet drunk...

BRAD. Wait a second! How can ears drink?

DAWN. It's poetry.

BRAD. It doesn't sound like poetry.

STEVE. It would if you'd stop interrupting.

TARA. (*Gives BRAD an evil eye then begins again:*)

My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words

Of that tongue's utterance, Yet I know the sound:

Art thou not Romeo and a Montague?

JUSTIN.

Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.

TARA.

How camest thou hither? Tell me and *wherefore?* (*Stares at those who had interrupted her.*)

JUSTIN. (*Climbing up to her:*)

With love's light wings did I o'er-perch these walls;
For stony limits cannot hold love out,
And what love can do that dares love attempt.

(*JUSTIN and TARA lean in to kiss. RACHEL and WENDY react.*)

WENDY. (*Pushing RACHEL toward the ladder:*) They're going to kiss.

RACHEL. (*Loudly:*) Juliet!

TARA. (*Turns toward RACHEL:*) What?

JUSTIN. (*Looking for the ghost:*) Where?

RACHEL. (*To TARA:*) I was being the nurse. (*To all:*) This is the part of the scene where Juliet's nurse interrupts.

FRANK. (*Not realizing what RACHEL is doing:*) Doesn't she interrupt a little later?

(*RACHEL shuts him up with a look. JAMIE steps forward.*)

JAMIE. We can't stop now. Just go with it!

TARA. (*Turns to JUSTIN. Speaks her lines quickly without any enthusiasm:*)

I hear some noise within; dear love, adieu.
Stay but a little, I will come again.

(*TARA climbs down the ladder. We see her in a heated argument with RACHEL. JUSTIN crosses the opposite way, doing his best to continue in character.*)

JUSTIN.

O blessed, blessed night! I am afeard. Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.

(*He moves to the ladder and finds it deserted. He waits, watching TARA argue with RACHEL. He finally grows weary.*)

JUSTIN. Yo!

TARA. *(Realizes she has missed her cue. Hurries up the ladder:)*
Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.
If that thy bent of love be honourable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow.

BRAD. That was more than three words.

TARA. *(Ignoring him:)*
At what o'clock to-morrow shall I send to thee?

JUSTIN.
By the hour of nine.

TARA.
It is twenty years til then.

(They lean to kiss again. WENDY elbows RACHEL.)

RACHEL. Madam!

TARA. *(Stops just before the kiss, breaking character:)* In a minute,
Nurse!

(Turns back to JUSTIN, staring romantically.)

Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow,
That I shall say good night till it be morrow.

(She leans in for the kiss. JUSTIN leans to kiss her, but stops suddenly.)

JUSTIN. This isn't working. *(Climbs down the ladder.)*

TARA. We didn't kiss yet!

JUSTIN. It doesn't matter if we kiss or not.

TARA. What do you mean it doesn't matter?

JUSTIN. We said the lines. The ghost didn't show up.

TARA. *(Climbing down:)* You didn't really think it would work?

JUSTIN. I hoped it would. *(Sighs.)* Did we do the scene wrong?

BEN. No. You did the *wrong* scene. *(BEN moves toward JUSTIN:)* I tried to tell you guys earlier.

JUSTIN. Tell us what?

BEN. The ghost is supposed to come back to get her first kiss, right?

JUSTIN. Yeah?

BEN. Well, Romeo and Juliet don't share their first kiss on the balcony. They share their first kiss at the masquerade party.

JAMIE. He's right! *(Gestures to SCOTT to move the ladder.)* We had them act out the wrong scene!

SCOTT. *(Moving the ladder right:)* We? I think it was you.

WENDY. That's probably why it didn't work.

CHRISTY. Should we do the party scene, then?

BRAD. What's the party scene?

JAMIE. *(Picking up the Shakespeare book:)* Juliet's dad throws a party. Romeo sneaks in. They meet. They flirt. They kiss.

SCOTT. None of us know that scene.

BEN. I know it.

SCOTT. How?

BEN. I've studied the play.

SCOTT. *(Skeptically:)* So, what happens?

BEN. Romeo spies Juliet from across the room and is amazed by her beauty. *(BEN moves toward the girls. TARA turns away. BEN takes WENDY's hand.)* He grabs her hand, but he's afraid he's done it too roughly, so he kisses it. *(He pauses, thinking about kissing WENDY's hand.)*

STEVE. *(Interrupting BEN's thought:)* You're saying he goes like this? *(He grabs DAWN's hand.)* Hey baby! Oh! I'm sorry! Did I hurt you? *(Deepens his voice to sound smooth:)* Let me make you feel better. *(He bends and kisses her hand repeatedly. She stops him by popping him on the top of his head.)*

JAMIE. He does it a little more poetic than that. *(Reads from the text:)*
If I profane with my unwortheiest hand
This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this.

BEN. *(Finishes the line from memory:)*

My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand,
to smooth that rough touch with a gentle kiss.

(BEN looks at WENDY's hand again. BRAD stops him.)

BRAD. The guy calls his lips “two blushing pilgrims?”

BEN. He's saying that he would travel anywhere to kiss her.

JAMIE. I bet if we did the party scene, we could get Katharine to travel here.

TARA. *(To JAMIE:)* Give me the book. Justin and I will read it out.

WENDY. Ben knows the lines. Why can't he be Romeo?

TARA. We're trying to bring the ghost back not scare it away forever.

WENDY. You and Justin had your shot. We need to find two actors who have chemistry.

RACHEL. Frank and I have chemistry.

DAWN. Steve and I have chemistry.

CHRISTY. Brad and I have chemistry.

BRAD. *(To CHRISTY as if embarrassed:)* I don't have chemistry. I have *biology*.

STEVE. *(To BRAD:)* Next time you dissect frogs, keep a few brains for yourself.

JAMIE. *(Taking control:)* Wendy's right. If we're going to do the scene, we shouldn't use a couple that's already a couple. We don't want the chemistry to seem too rehearsed. We need to generate that feeling of a real first kiss.

SCOTT. How are we supposed to do that?

JAMIE. *(At the prop box:)* With this. *(She holds up the love potion bottle.)*

SCOTT. The love potion?

FRANK. No one's going to drink that.

JAMIE. We're not going to drink it. We're going to *spin* it.

FRANK. Spin the Bottle?

TARA. That's a little immature, isn't it?

CHRISTY. I think it sounds like fun.

DAWN. Wait a second. Most of us are already couples. We can't just sit around kissing other people.

STEVE. Can we *stand* around kissing other people? (*DAWN gives him a shove.*)

JAMIE. (*Explaining her idea:*) The only people who are going to kiss are Romeo and Juliet. We're just going to use the bottle to decide who gets to play the parts. Everyone who wants a chance to be Romeo or Juliet...and is willing to share a real first kiss during the scene...gather around.

(People eye their significant others and slowly begin to gather around the box.)

BRAD. I'll sit out. I don't really know anything about Shakespeare.

SCOTT. (*To BEN:*) You should sit out, too. You don't really know anything about kissing.

BEN. (*BEN gives him a dirty look then turns to JAMIE:*) How does it work?

SCOTT. (*As if BEN were asking about kissing:*) First you pucker your lips, then you bring them toward the lips of a girl...

BEN. (*Clarifying his question:*) How does the *game* work?

JAMIE. Someone will spin the bottle. Since it's a love potion bottle, it'll point to the perfect partner. If the two people are not an existing couple, they'll do the scene...ending with a true first kiss.

WENDY. ...and hopefully a ghost.

STEVE. (*Anxiously:*) Okay. We get it. (*Pointing to the bottle:*) Let's get this thing rolling.

BRAD. (*From outside the circle:*) It's not supposed to roll. It's supposed to spin.

(STEVE grimaces at BRAD's stupid remark. He grabs the bottle comically as if he were going to smash it over BRAD's head.)

JAMIE. *(Stops him.)* Since you're so anxious. Why don't you spin first?

(Hand still in the air, STEVE looks to DAWN unsure how to proceed.)

DAWN. Knock yourself out.

STEVE. I think I'll spin instead. *(Sets the bottle down upstage of the box. Looks at DAWN.)* If I end up with someone else, you're not going to be hurt are you?

DAWN. No. *(A beat. Then just as he is about to spin:)* You're going to be hurt.

(STEVE hesitates then spins. Everyone watches to see where it will stop. There is a big reaction as it lands on DAWN.)

CHRISTY. Dawn!

STEVE. *(Celebrating his own survival:)* Yes!

DAWN. We can't do the scene. We're already a couple.

CHRISTY. The bottle was just telling you that you're supposed to be together.

JAMIE. The love potion never lies! Pass it on to someone new.

STEVE. I pass to Justin. *(Hands him the bottle.)*

RACHEL. Let's see who *he's* supposed to be with.

TARA. He's supposed to be with *me*.

RACHEL. Let's see what the bottle says.

JUSTIN. *(Setting it down.)* Here goes.

(He spins. Everyone watches. There is confusion as it stops. Only TARA looks pleased.)

TARA. *(Smiling at RACHEL:)* Told you.

RACHEL. What are you talking about?

TARA. The bottle. It's pointing closest to me.

FRANK. It's pointing to the *curtain*.

TARA. Well, there's no one at the curtain.

(TARA turns and points. KATE enters at the same moment. She is wearing a simple, white dress. Her hair is pinned up in back.)

JAMIE. *(Startled:)* Kate!

WENDY. *(To RACHEL:)* She's back!

RACHEL. *(Excusing herself from the circle:)* I better explain what's going on.

BRAD. I wish someone would explain it to me.

(RACHEL hurries to KATE. We see her explaining things quietly as the others converse around the bottle.)

SCOTT. *(To JUSTIN:)* Looks like you found your Juliet.

JUSTIN. *(Staring across at KATE:)* Huh?

SCOTT. The bottle pointed to Kate. That makes her your scene partner.

JUSTIN. I guess you're right.

TARA. *(Refuting the claim:)* The bottle was pointing to the *curtain*.

STEVE. Kate came *through* the curtain.

TARA. We *all* came through the curtain. It's the only way in or out.

FRANK. Well, Kate came through it at the right time.

BEN. She's even dressed like Juliet.

TARA. It doesn't count! She wasn't even here when the bottle started spinning!

JUSTIN. *(In a slight daze, looking toward KATE:)* She was here when it stopped.

WENDY. It's destiny.

(RACHEL comes back to the crowd. KATE follows her slowly.)

RACHEL. I told Kate about the scene. She says she'll stand in for Juliet.

TARA. She doesn't even know the lines!

KATE. *(Quietly and confidently:)* I know them.

TARA. *(Realizes she can't win the argument.)* If she wants to do the scene; Fine. But she'll have to choose her scene partner just like everyone else. *(She holds the bottle out toward KATE. KATE reaches for it. TARA pulls it back and sets it on the ground.)*

KATE. What do I do?

RACHEL. Give it a spin. It's supposed to choose your perfect partner.

JAMIE. Who's playing?

FRANK. *(Seeing RACHEL shake her head.)* Umm...I'll sit this one out.

SCOTT. *(Getting a signal from JAMIE:)* I'm going to sit out, too.

STEVE. You guys are wimps. I'm in... *(DAWN clears her throat angrily. He turns and sees her glare.)* I'm in...love with Dawn...as the bottle already showed everyone...so I'm just going to sit over there. *(Crosses away.)*

TARA. *(Sarcastically:)* No one wants to be with Kate. This is so sad.

BEN. *(Stepping up to the bottle:)* I'm in.

TARA. And it keeps getting sadder.

JUSTIN. *(Getting fed up with Tara's attitude. Steps up:)* I'm in, too. *(To BEN:)* You don't mind, do you?

BEN. No.

TARA. *(To JUSTIN. Angrily:)* You're not even asking me?

JUSTIN. *(Speaking sharply to her for the first time:)* I'm asking you to be quiet. *(TARA steps back, surprised. JUSTIN extends a hand to BEN:)* May the best man win.

JAMIE. *(To all:)* Okay. It's going to be Justin or Ben. *(To KATE:)* Spin until it points right at one of them.

(KATE looks around for a moment, bends, and spins. Everyone watches as the bottle stops.)

WENDY. It's...Ben.

JUSTIN. *(To BEN, a bit saddened:)* You win.

(Everyone seems a bit perplexed; having hoped it would be JUSTIN. Without a word, KATE crosses center and poses as if ready to begin the scene. Everyone moves to give them space. JUSTIN takes a step toward TARA, changes his mind, and crosses toward the boys.)

JUSTIN. *(To BEN as he passes:)* Break a leg.

BRAD. *(To JUSTIN:)* Just because you didn't win, doesn't mean you have to threaten him!

CHRISTY. *(To BRAD:)* "Break a leg" is a good thing. He wished him *harm* so he would do *well*.

BRAD. Right! *(Smiles brightly.)* Hey, Ben! Drop dead! *(Flashes a friendly thumbs-up.)*

(CHRISTY leads BRAD away. BEN takes a deep breath and moves slowly toward KATE. He is tentative but relaxes into the role. KATE is confident from the start.)

BEN. *(Taking her hand:)*

If I profane with my unworhiest hand
This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this:
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

KATE. *(Pulling away playfully:)*

Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
Which mannerly devotion shows in this;
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

BEN.

Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

KATE.

Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

BEN.

O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do;
They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

(He places his palm flat against hers.)

KATE. *(Moving away slightly:)*

Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

BEN.

Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take. *(He moves toward her slowly, leans in, and kisses her softly.)* Thus...

(KATE reaches her hand to BEN's lips stopping him from reciting the rest of his line.)

KATE. *(As if finishing the line:)*

Thus, with a kiss, I die.

(KATE leans in and whispers something in BEN's ear. She pulls back, looking at him momentarily, her hand on his cheek, then backs away. BEN stands still as KATE turns and walks left. She moves swiftly and gracefully, until she disappears off stage.)

JAMIE. *(Stepping forward:)* "Thus with a kiss, I die"? What was that?

RACHEL. It's a line from the play, isn't it?

JAMIE. Yeah, but it's Romeo's line. And he says it at the end...when people actually die. It makes no sense to say it here.

TARA. I knew she'd mess up the scene.

CHRISTY. She was perfect up to that point.

DAWN. Where did she go anyway? She can't get out through there.

JAMIE. We better check on her.

(JAMIE and SCOTT exit left. The others move to BEN who has stood silently in place.)

FRANK. Look at him. *(Waves a hand in front of BEN's eyes but gets no response.)* That must have been some kiss.

BRAD. It looked pretty hot.

BEN. *(Shaking his head and speaking slowly:)* It was...cold.

FRANK. What are you talking about?

BEN. She was freezing. Her lips...her hands...they were like ice.

SCOTT. *(Returning with JAMIE:)* She's not back there.

STEVE. *(To BEN:)* Nice work. You made her run away.

SCOTT. She couldn't run away. The door's chained up.

CHRISTY. She has to be somewhere.

WENDY. She's *at home*.

DAWN. What are you talking about? She was just here.

WENDY. *(Almost to herself as if figuring it out:)* I don't think that was Kate. I think that was *Katharine*.

RACHEL. Katharine?

FRANK. The ghost?

WENDY. *(More confidently:)* "Thus with a kiss, I die"? Don't you get it? She came back...she got her kiss...now she can rest in peace.

(Everyone looks at each other for a moment. BRAD breaks the silence.)

BRAD. You're saying that was a real live ghost?

STEVE. *(Lightening the moment:)* If that were a *live* ghost, it wouldn't be *dead*. That would make it a *person*.

TARA. *(Not buying any of this:)* It was a person! It was *Kate!*

JAMIE. Kate's not in drama. How would she have known all those lines?

TARA. She's a bookworm. She probably read the play.

CHRISTY. Why was she freezing cold?

TARA. It's winter! She came in from outside.

DAWN. How'd she disappear into thin air?

TARA. *(Less confident, but unwilling to back down:)* She's...hiding... very, very, well.

RACHEL. Why would she be hiding?

TARA. She kissed Ben. She's probably embarrassed to show her face.

FRANK. *(To BEN:)* Did it feel like you were kissing a ghost?

BEN. I...I'm not sure?

FRANK. Well, did it feel like you were kissing a *girl*?

SCOTT. How would he know? He's never kissed a girl before.

STEVE. The ghost waited 50 years for a kiss. You'd think she would have chosen someone with a little more experience.

WENDY. That bottle didn't land on him by chance. The ghost chose Ben for a reason. *(To BEN:)* What did she whisper to you?

BEN. What?

WENDY. After the kiss. Katharine whispered something to you.

RACHEL. That's right. I saw that, too. What did she say?

BEN. *(Slowly remembering it:)* She said, "Tell William, I'm sorry."

FRANK. Who's William?

SCOTT. William Shakespeare?

WENDY. *(To BEN:)* Who do you know named William?

BEN. No one.

BRAD. *(Suddenly and dramatically:)* My dentist's name is William!

STEVE. *(Slow and sarcastic:)* That solves it. The ghost traveled from beyond the grave so Ben here could deliver a message to the man who cleans your teeth.

BRAD. *(Missing the sarcasm. Still trying to piece together the mystery:)* Yes. But *why*?

TARA. *(Impatiently:)* It was *Kate*, people! She was pretending to be the ghost so she could spook us out.

RACHEL. Kate left before Wendy even told the story. How would she know to pretend?

TARA. You told her what was going on when she came in in that white dress.

RACHEL. I just told her we were acting out a scene from *Romeo and Juliet*.

TARA. Then she did the scene so she could get away with kissing Ben.

RACHEL. She wouldn't do that!

TARA. Why not?

RACHEL. Because she's in love with *Justin!*

TARA. (*Angry:*) What?

JUSTIN. (*Intrigued:*) What?

(KATE enters from the right looking just as she did at the start of the play. She holds the costume bag in her hands. The entire group turns and stares. KATE stops and stares back.)

KATE. What?

RACHEL. (*Approaching tentatively:*) Kate?

KATE. Yeah?

WENDY. (*Joining RACHEL at KATE's side.*) We...didn't expect you back.

KATE. I decided I wasn't going to the party. I wanted to return the costume in case someone else wanted to wear it. (*Notices the others' faces.*) Why is everyone staring at me?

RACHEL. It's...complicated.

TARA. (*Crossing toward them:*) It's not complicated at all! I've got the whole thing figured out. The three of you are trying to steal my boyfriend with this whole ghost story thing.

KATE. (*Confused by the accusation. Turns to RACHEL:*) What is she talking about?

TARA. (*To all:*) Look at her trying to act innocent. (*To KATE:*) You're not a good actress Kate. You proved that with your little make-out scene.

KATE. Make-out scene?

TARA. You were kissing Ben to try to make yourself more attractive to Justin. *(Points to JUSTIN and catches him staring at KATE. She slaps his shoulder to snap him out of it.)*

KATE. I wasn't kissing anyone. I just got here.

TARA. So that wasn't you dressed up like Juliet?

KATE. No.

TARA. What's this then? *(She snatches the costume bag from KATE's hands.)* Let's read the sign and find out. *(Reads it:)* "Juliet." What a coincidence!

KATE. I never even tried that on.

TARA. Maybe *I'll* wear it to the party then. Justin always says I look stunning in white. *(She rips the bag open and looks at the dress. It is a red, richly colored, old-fashioned design. The others react and begin whispering.)* What is this?

KATE. *(As if seeing it for the first time.)* I would guess it's the Juliet costume.

TARA. It's not what you wore before.

KATE. Before what?

TARA. *(Losing patience:)* When you were here before!

KATE. *(Points to her own outfit:)* I was wearing *this* before.

TARA. *(To the others, incredulously:)* Do you believe her?

JAMIE. Actually, we kind of do.

TARA. You're kidding?

DAWN. We're not.

CHRISTY. We don't think she is either.

TARA. They've got you all fooled, then. *(Points to WENDY, RACHEL, and KATE:)* The three of them are in on this together. They made the whole thing up. The tragic accident. The grandmother's twin. The two different dresses. *(Pulls the sign off of the bag and reads*

it.) “Katharine Hawthorn.” (To KATE, *coldly*.) Your dead aunt’s signature on the bottom of the sign. Nice touch. (*She crumbles it a bit and throws it to the ground.*)

WENDY. (*Bends down and takes a look at it:*) It’s Katharine’s signature. It’s a little faded, but it’s there.

(KATE turns quickly. WENDY steps away, leaving the paper on the floor.)

KATE. (*To RACHEL and WENDY. Emotions building:*) What’s going on? How does everybody know about my aunt?

RACHEL. (*Tentatively:*) We were...telling ghost stories.

KATE. And you told them about Katharine?

WENDY. *I brought it up. I didn’t know she was your aunt. We were just having some fun.*

KATE. (*Visibly hurt:*) It’s not fun when it’s someone from your own family.

BEN. (*Defending WENDY:*) Don’t be mad at Wendy. I was the one who made the contact.

KATE. Contact?

RACHEL. (*Slowly. Calming her down:*) We saw her. Katharine. She was here.

BEN. I did a scene from *Romeo and Juliet* with her.

KATE. (*Taken aback:*) What do you mean? What happened?

BEN. She showed up. We said the lines. We...kissed.

KATE. You kissed?

BEN. Yeah.

KATE. (*A hint of happiness:*) She got her kiss. My grandmother always said that would have been Katharine’s biggest regret.

BEN. What?

KATE. Never getting that first kiss.

BEN. But it wouldn't have been real. I mean, it was just a play, right?

KATE. Not to Katharine. Her Romeo was her first love. She was just too shy to do anything about it. (*Glances at JUSTIN then turns away.*)

BEN. (*After a beat:*) His name was William, wasn't it?

KATE. Huh?

BEN. Your aunt mentioned a William. She said, "Tell William, I'm sorry." I'm guessing that was her Romeo's first name.

KATE. (*Trying to remember:*) I think it was.

BEN. I just wish I knew why she told me.

WENDY. (*Crossing eagerly to BEN. Trying to help:*) This is obviously the reason you were pulled toward the theatre all year. You were supposed to be here to get that message.

BEN. (*Frustrated:*) I just don't know anyone named William.

KATE. (*Suddenly remembering:*) Wait a minute. I don't think William was his first name.

BEN. What do you mean?

KATE. (*Recalling Ben's comments about his own name:*) I think William was his *middle* name. He wanted people to call him that because his real name was something embarrassing. (*Trying to recall it:*) Ernie? Ernest?

WENDY. (*Moving to the Romeo costume and reading the sign:*) Irving?

KATE. Maybe.

BEN. My grandfather's name is Irving!

WENDY. (*Removing the sign:*) Irving Andrews?

BEN. Irving *William* Andrews.

WENDY. (*Smiling as she shows it to RACHEL:*) Guess whose signature is on the Romeo sign?

RACHEL. (*Reading the sign:*) Irving Andrews! (*Brings it to BEN.*) Your grandfather was Katharine's Romeo.

BEN. (*Shaking his head as he looks at it:*) He never told me he did plays.

FRANK. He was probably a little freaked out by what happened.

SCOTT. Now you know why he steered your mom away from the theatre.

STEVE. Everything's actually beginning to make sense.

BRAD. (*Deep in thought:*) If only we could figure out what all this has to do with my dentist...

CHRISTY. I think we've done enough for tonight.

DAWN. Why don't we get out of here.

JAMIE. Yeah. We should give Ben and Kate some time to sort this all out.

(DAWN, CHRISTY, STEVE, and BRAD move toward the exit.
KATE follows them.)

KATE. You guys can stay. I think I'm going to go home.

RACHEL. You're not going to the party?

KATE. I want to talk to my grandmother.

RACHEL. Are you going to tell her what happened?

KATE. I'm not sure yet. I just feel like I should spend some time with her.

WENDY. (*To BEN:*) Are you going to talk to your grandfather, too?

BEN. Eventually, I guess. I mean, he lives out of state.

WENDY. (*To KATE and BEN:*) The next time he comes to town, the two of you should get them together to talk.

TARA. (*Rolling her eyes and crossing center:*) I'd love to stay and share in this little "Oprah" moment, but I've got better plans. (*To JUSTIN:*) Grab your costume. Let's go.

JUSTIN. I don't need it.

TARA. You can't go to the party without a costume.

JUSTIN. *(Shrugging:)* I guess I'm not going then.

TARA. *(Adamantly:)* I have to go to this party!

JUSTIN. Then you'll have to go without me. *(Steps toward the exit.)*
I'm going home.

TARA. You can't.

JUSTIN. Why not?

TARA. You came here in my car.

JUSTIN. *(Confidently:)* I'll get a ride with Steve and Brad. *(Turns quickly:)* I can get a ride home with you guys, right?

STEVE. Actually, it's pretty crowded already... *(DAWN makes a fist)* but we'll just put Brad here in the trunk.

(JUSTIN looks to TARA and smiles. TARA turns away in a huff, crossing far left. JUSTIN moves to BEN to say good-bye.)

RACHEL. *(To KATE:)* I think they just broke up.

KATE. That doesn't mean he's interested in me.

RACHEL. He is. I swear.

KATE. *(Sighs yearningly.)* If he'd only give me some kind of sign.

(JUSTIN starts to exit. He picks the discarded Juliet sign off the floor, looks at it, and hands it to KATE.)

JUSTIN. I thought you might want to keep this. It has your aunt's signature on it and all.

KATE. *(Taking it:)* Thanks.

(JUSTIN lingers for a moment then heads for the exit. STEVE, DAWN, and CHRISTY gather their costumes and follow. BRAD stays, staring at the paper in KATE's hand.)

BRAD. *(To all, with a burst of energy, as if he has solved a mystery.)* He just gave her a sign!

RACHEL. He's right!

KATE. *(Calling quickly:)* Justin!

JUSTIN. *(Stops near the exit, then returns.)* Yeah?

KATE. I've got plenty of room. I mean, you can ride with me if you want. *(Catches her breath and smiles.)* I can give you a ride home.

JUSTIN. *(Smiling back:)* Umm...that would be great.

KATE. I have to warn you. My car's a little run down. I hope that's not a problem.

JUSTIN. Not at all.

(JUSTIN extends an arm like a gentleman. KATE and RACHEL share a smile. The crowd mumbles as JUSTIN and KATE exit together.)

CHRISTY. I can't believe he did that to Tara.

DAWN. I can't believe he didn't do it sooner.

BRAD. I guess I don't have to ride in the trunk.

STEVE. Guess again.

(BRAD, CHRISTY, STEVE, and DAWN exit.)

RACHEL. *(To FRANK, proudly:)* There you go. My plan worked.

FRANK. Part of it.

RACHEL. What do you mean?

FRANK. You got Kate together with Justin, but Tara never fell for Ben.

SCOTT. I told you that was never going to happen.

JAMIE. It still could.

WENDY. *(Sitting center holding the Romeo outfit:)* He's got a little Romeo in him after all.

(WENDY glances at BEN who has moved to the prop box. He pulls out the scrapbook and sets it on top. JAMIE sees WENDY watching BEN.)

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com