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*Dramatic Publishing*

# **Romeo and Juliet—Together (and Alive!) at Last**

A Middle-school Romantic Farce in Two Acts

by

SANDRA FENICHEL ASHER

Adapted from the Book

By AVI



**Dramatic Publishing**

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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ROMEO AND JULIET—TOGETHER (AND ALIVE!) AT LAST

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For Joe Lauderdale,  
with thanks for the Pool Noodles  
and so much more

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ROMEO AND JULIET TOGETHER (AND ALIVE!) AT LAST was given its premiere production by the Laguna Playhouse Youth Theatre in Laguna Beach, CA, October 17-26, 2003. The production was directed by Joe Lauderdale, with the following cast:

PETE SALTZ/ROMEO.....	Trevor Evans
ED SITROW.....	Justin Klinchuch
ANABELL STACKPOOLE/JULIET.....	Amanda Ward
RONALD RADOSH/BENVOLIO.....	Nick Mirman
TOM HAYS/FRIAR LAWRENCE.....	Bamdad Miradi
LUCY NEBLET.....	Valerie Sullivan
PRISCILLA BLACK/NURSE.....	Perris Weiland
ALBERT HAMILTON/TYBALT.....	Jared Wigdor
MR. SULLIVAN.....	Cory W. Casoni
MRS. BACON.....	April Morgan
JIM SONDESTROM.....	Kevin Short
CINDY HUBER/PARTY PERSON.....	Taryn Dicterow
MARY DAVID/PARTY PERSON.....	Lauren Call
MARGARET FITZSIMMONS.....	Noelle Armstrong
JESSIE BOLIN.....	Hallie Mayer
SAM PETTRY/MERCUTIO.....	Sean Kelly
MARKS/PARTY PERSON.....	Kendra Whitfield
ELISCUE/PARTY PERSON.....	Matthew Stoner
PARKS/PARTY PERSON.....	Nicole Dyer
AMY JEFFERSON/LADY CAPULET.....	Nina Pedrad
BARISH/CAPULET.....	Travis Amman
MILES/PARTY PERSON.....	Jordan Sandfer
DUBOIS/BALTHAZAR.....	Catharine Bishop
BETSY HAYS.....	Kendra Klinchuch

Scenic Design: Tim Mueller  
Lighting Design: Donna Ruzika  
Costume Design: Dwight Richard Odle  
Sound Design: Dave Edwards  
Fight Director: Todd Loweth

This script was further refined and developed through productions directed by Linda L.

Brown for the University of Utah Youth Theatre in Salt Lake City, Utah, on February 2 - 6, 2004, and by Tom Ballmer, for Stebens Children's Theatre, Mason City, IA, February 11 - 15, 2004. The playwright is grateful to the Children's Theatre Foundation of America for the grant to Stebens Children's Theatre that enabled her to travel to Mason City for rehearsals and performances, and would also like to thank Gayle Sergel Brown of Dramatic Publishing Company and Amie Brockway of the Open Eye Theater, Margaretville, NY, for their early encouragement and feedback on the script.

## ROMEO AND JULIET TOGETHER (AND ALIVE!) AT LAST

Characters: 14m, 12w, 9 m or w; extras, if desired (Doublecasting: 9m, 9w, 6 m or w)

### *The South Orange River Middle School Eighth Graders*

PETE SALTZ, a disheveled poet, in love with Anabell, but too shy to look at her  
ED SITROW, Pete's best friend, determined to bring Pete and Anabell together  
ANABELL STACKPOOLE, a bookworm, in love with Pete, but too shy to speak to him  
\*RADOSH, Ed's friend, sensible, plays Benvolio in Act II  
TOM HAYS, Ed's friend, given to weird hairdos, plays Friar in Act II  
LUCY NEBLET, the prettiest girl in the class, runs music in Act II  
PRISCILLA BLACK, Anabell's best friend, plays Nurse in Act II  
ALBERT HAMILTON, bully, good-looking -- and a pyromaniac; plays Tybalt in Act II  
\* SONDSTROM, Hamilton's sidekick, works lights backstage in Act II  
CINDY HUBER, an admirer of Hamilton and one of the Party People  
MARY DAVIS, an admirer of Hamilton and one of the Party People  
\* SAM PETTRY, Ed's friend, very laid-back, builds set and plays Mercutio in Act II  
\* FITZSIMMONS, in charge of make-up; one of the Party People  
JESSIE BOLIN, bright clothes, lots of rattling jewelry, designs costumes for play  
\* MARKS, a friend of Hamilton, one of the Party People  
\* ELISCUE, friend of Hamilton, one of the Party People  
AMY JEFFERSON, scheduled to play Lady Capulet in Act II, but gets sick  
\* BARISH, builds set, plays Capulet in Act II  
\* DUBOIS, builds set, plays Balthasar in Act II and on of the Party People  
\* PARKS, "Chorus" in Act II and one of the Party People  
\* MILES, handles props in Act II and one of the Party People  
(\* may be played by male or female actors)

### *Others*

MR. SULLIVAN, S.O.R. Middle School principal, upbeat, slow to anger  
MRS. BACON, language arts teacher, wears flowery dresses, enthusiastic, likeable  
BETSY HAYS, 6th grader, Tom's little sister, has a crush on Ed, really needs her glasses

### *Dream Players (may be doublecast from above, as follows)*

\* CHORUS/PARKS  
JULIET/ANABELL  
LADY CAPULET/AMY  
NURSE/PRISCILLA  
CAPULET/BARISH  
ROMEO/PETE  
\* BENVOLIO/RADOSH  
TYBALT/HAMILTON  
FRIAR LAWRENCE/HAYS  
\* MERCUTIO/PETTRY  
\* BALTHAZAR/DUBOIS  
PARTY PEOPLE (may be in both acts, with Act II a parody of their Act I perfection)

Time: The present.

Place: In and around South Orange River Middle School. All first act locations can be indicated by area staging and simple set pieces. The beginning of the second act may be played in front of the curtain, which then opens to reveal the S.O.R. assembly room stage with portions of the right and left wing areas visible and flats borrowed from the seventh graders' production of "Washington Crossing the Delaware," depicting evergreen trees and log cabins. All scenes should flow into one another, with transitions marked by music and lighting changes.

Summary: The road to farce is paved with good intentions. Eighth-graders Pete Saltz and Anabell Stackpoole are in love, but terribly shy. Classmates Ed Sitrow, Lucy Neblet, and others decide to stage a performance of ROMEO AND JULIET to bring the two together. Lack of expertise, only two weeks of rehearsal, and a classmate's villainy threaten their production every step of the way. But love triumphs in spite of everything -- or maybe because of it.

Playing time: about 90 minutes

ACT I  
Scene 1

Time: Before school.

Place: Mrs. Bacon's Language Arts Classroom

At RISE: MUSIC. LIGHTS come up on Mrs. Bacon's desk at center and three classroom chairs and desks right of center. A wooden stand holds a large dictionary left of center. PETE enters left and lumbers across stage, wearing a backpack, nibbling a bagel, and lost in thought. Half of his shirttail hangs out; his pants are beltless and in constant need of hitching up. He stops, looks around as if not sure where he is, runs his hand through his uncombed hair, then continues forward and takes a seat at far right. Holding the bagel in his teeth, he takes a notebook and pencil out of his backpack and begins scribbling feverishly, occasionally brushing crumbs off his work. ED enters and sees him. MUSIC fades.

ED

Hey, Saltz!

(No response.)

What gives? You're never early for class. Mrs. Bacon isn't even here yet.

(takes off his backpack and sits in the center seat, next to PETE. ED tries to see what PETE's writing, but PETE hides it with his bagel hand and goes on scribbling.)

Homework?

PETE



Mind your own business.

ED

Are you mad at me?

PETE

No.

ED

Then what's up?

PETE

You wouldn't understand.

ED

What wouldn't I understand?

PETE

Nothing.

ED

How can I not understand nothing? Do you understand?

PETE

No.

ED

So give me a try.

(PETE considers it, but shakes his head "no.")

Hey, I'm your best friend, remember?"

PETE

(a deep sigh, and then -- )

What do you think of Anabell Stackpoole?

ED

(surprised)

Stackpoole?

PETE

Yeah. Anabell Stackpoole.

ED

What about her?

PETE

I . . . like her.

Really? ED  
(PETE nods, looking a bit ill.)  
Since when?  
PETE  
(thinks it over, and then -- )  
Two days ago.  
ED  
What happened two days ago?  
PETE  
It . . .  
ED  
It?  
PETE  
. . . just happened.  
ED  
Does she like you?  
PETE  
She doesn't even notice me.  
ED  
Have you tried talking to her?  
PETE  
(aghast)  
No!  
ED  
Want me to talk to her?  
PETE  
NO!  
ED  
Okay, okay! So what are you going to do about it?  
PETE  
(shrugs, then -- )  
I wrote a poem.

(hands ED the poem he's been writing)

ED

(reading, dramatically)

There once was a fair beauty named Anabell --

PETE

Not so loud!

ED

(in a mock whisper)

For whom Pete Saltz, truly, in love fell.

But when he offered his heart,

She jumped up with a start,

And said, "I have to go now because I just  
heard the end-of-class-bell.

(ED considers this a minute. Unnoticed by the boys,  
ANABELL enters left, her nose buried in a book, a historical  
romance. Meanwhile, the truth dawns on ED.)

Saltz! You're in love!

PETE

(Gives ED a woeful look, then quickly buries  
his face in the notebook. In a terrified whimper -- )

She's here.

ED

Who's here?

(PETE turns away and points back over his head as  
ANABELL, still absorbed in her book, takes the empty  
seat beside ED. ED speaks to PETE with exaggerated secrecy.)

Ooooooh. Stackpoole.

(PETE puts his hand down and hunches over his notebook.)

If you like her so much, why don't you talk to her?

PETE

(mumbling)

I'm busy.

ED

(rolls his eyes and turns toward ANABELL,  
appraising her for a moment and then -- )

That book -- is it any good?

ANABELL

(ANABELL nervously looks at him, looks  
at her book, looks at him again, then speaks

in a tiny, timid voice.)  
Yes.

ED  
You read a lot, don't you?

ANABELL  
(warming, just a bit)  
Yes.

ED  
(tilting his head toward PETE)  
So does Saltz here.  
(A flicker of interest in ANABELL'S eyes, followed quickly by acute shyness. She buries her nose in her book and ignores ED, who looks from her to the similarly unavailable PETE and back again a time or two, tapping his fingers on his desk. Then, to audience -- )

What is "love"? Real love. I'm not sure I know.  
(ANABELL and PETE shoot him twin looks of alarm and dive back into their books. Unaware of their reaction, absorbed in his own curiosity, he stands up, crosses to the dictionary, flips pages in search of "love," and begins reading.)

"Love: The attraction, desire, or affection felt for a person who arouses delight . . .  
(As he reads, HAYS and RADOSH enter left. Except where otherwise indicated, ANABELL and PETE are unaware of the others' conversation, but very aware that there is nothing but empty space between them. Now and then, they can't resist a peek in each other's direction, but absolutely avoid eye contact.)

RADOSH  
How's it going, Sitrow?

ED  
Hey, Radosh. How ya doin', Hays?

HAYS  
What's up?

ED  
You're not going to believe this -- Saltz is in love.

(THEY stare at him in amazement.)

Really? RADOSH

Really. ED

With someone? HAYS

Of course, with someone. ED

Who? RADOSH

Anabell Stackpoole. ED

(a surprised yelp)  
Stackpoole? HAYS

(ANABELL and PETE glance up at this.  
As ANABELL quickly turns away, she and  
PETE almost look at one another,  
but immediately take refuge in their books.)

ED  
Keep it down! Do you have any idea how hard it is to be in love?

RADOSH  
You hear about it all the time on TV --

HAYS  
And in songs.

ED  
That stuff doesn't count. Listen to this.  
(reading from dictionary)

"Love: The attraction, desire, or affection felt for a person who arouses delight, or admiration, or elicits tenderness, sympathetic interest, or benevolence; devoted affection, as 'a mother's love for her child.'" You have to do all of that, all at once!

(regarding the dictionary again)  
"Benevolence." "Sympathetic interest." No wonder I've never been in love. I don't even know what half these things mean.

RADOSH

Me, neither.

HAYS

Good thing we're going to school.

ED

It takes a whole lot of energy to be in love.

RADOSH

Not to mention guts.

ED

Yeah, and there sits my best friend, sunk in a pit of "sympathetic interest." He needs help.

(THEY gaze across the room at ANABELL and PETE.  
PETE takes out a peanut butter cookie and begins munching  
on it while he writes.)

HAYS

(after a beat)

You know, they don't look like they're in love.

ED

Saltz is.

HAYS

What about Stackpoole? Is she in love with him?

ED

I'm not sure.

RADOSH

Maybe before we offer any help, you should find out.

HAYS

You could ask her.

ED

No way!

RADOSH

Then ask Lucy Neblet.

ED

(visibly uncomfortable with this suggestion)

What?

RADOSH

Lucy Neblet. If there's anything like that going on in this class, Neblet would know.

HAYS

He's right. Ask Lucy Neblet.

ED

Yeah, but --

RADOSH

What?

ED

(moves away, avoiding their gaze)

It's one thing to talk about love with guys. With girls, it's harder.

RADOSH

Do you want to help Saltz or don't you?

ED

Sure I do, but . . . Lucy Neblet?

HAYS

What's wrong with Lucy Neblet?

ED

Nothing.

(a beat, then, to audience, plaintively -- )

That's the problem.

(ED freezes, contemplating that realization. RADOSH and HAYS freeze, looking at him quizzically. PETE and ANABELL freeze, not looking at one another. MUSIC. BLACKOUT. End of Scene 1.)

## Scene 2

Time: Later that day

Place: In front of LUCY'S locker

At Rise: MUSIC. As LIGHTS come up, LUCY enters and opens her locker. She primps in front of a mirror hanging inside the door. ED enters, hesitantly approaching her. MUSIC fades.

LUCY

(with a last pat to her already perfect hair)  
Something the matter, Ed?

ED

Um . . . uh . . . it's . . . about Saltz.

LUCY

(giving him her undivided attention,  
which unnerves him even more)

Yes?

ED

The thing is . . . he . . . sort of . . . likes . . . someone.

LUCY

(with a resigned sigh)

Is it me?

ED

No.

LUCY

(surprised, but intrigued)

Who?

ED

Stackpoole.

LUCY

Anabell?

ED

(nods)

Yeah. Do you . . . uh . . . have any idea how she feels about him?

LUCY

Well . . . Mary did say that Susan told her that she heard Priscilla tell Jessie that she might  
--

ED

She did?

LUCY

(nods, then --)

But I didn't believe it.

ED



Why not?

LUCY

I didn't think Anabell was interested in that sort of thing.

ED

Guess she doesn't talk about it much.

LUCY

Not to me.

ED

To anyone?

LUCY

Maybe to Priscilla. Anabell's very quiet.

ED

I don't think she and Saltz know what to do about this love stuff.

LUCY

Maybe we should help them.

ED

That's what I was thinking!

LUCY

But how?

ED

(warming to it, with LUCY on his side)

Well, I do have this one idea: Remember how Mrs. Bacon told us *Romeo and Juliet* was the greatest love story ever written?

LUCY

Uh-huh. Only nobody in our class agreed with her.

ED

Right. But she said we'd understand it better if we could see it on stage.

LUCY

So?

ED

So why not put the play on? We could get Saltz to be Romeo --