

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME

by Allison

The annual Winterfest production for the tunnel dwellers was being discussed at breakfast in the dining chamber. Jamie, Rebecca, Brooke, and Michael were seen clustered together with various books from Father's library.

"What about Romeo and Juliet?" Jamie suggested after several other plays were offered then dismissed.

"Just who did you have in mind to play the leads?" Michael teased.

"Do you think we could convince Vincent and Catherine to play the leads? They would be perfect for the roles," Brooke commented, getting caught up in the idea.

"You're right, Brooke, I can't see any of us doing justice to the roles and we've all seen how the tunnels light up whenever Vincent and Catherine are together," Rebecca stated with a sigh.

"Convincing Vincent to take the lead hopefully won't be too difficult. Maybe we should talk to Catherine first. If we can convince her, then we can get her to talk to Vincent for us," Jamie chimed in. "I'm supposed to meet her at her apartment tonight anyway so I will ask her to be our Juliet."

"Okay, you go talk to Catherine, tell her she and Vincent are our only choice for the roles and we won't take no for an answer." Michael told Jamie, getting to his feet and picking up the books. "Once you get her okay, then we can work on Vincent. Besides, Devin's coming home for a visit, isn't he? We'll just get him to help us convince Vincent as well."

Jamie knocked on Catherine's apartment door precisely at 6 pm. She stood nervously in front of her door, shuffling from side to side with her feet and looking around. Catherine told her to meet her at her apartment. She heard the elevator doors opening behind her and as she turned, she caught sight of Catherine coming out of the elevator.

"Jamie, I'm so sorry, I thought I would be home before you got here."

"It's okay, Catherine, I only arrived a few minutes ago myself so don't worry about it," Jamie reassured her as she reached to help Catherine with her briefcase and bag of groceries.

Catherine smiled and produced her keys and unlocked the front door and ushered her guest in

ahead of her. She pointed toward the kitchen and Jamie took the bag there as Catherine dumped her briefcase and purse on one of the dinky couches by the front door.

"The stuff I have for you is in my bedroom. I haven't eaten yet, would you like to join me?" Catherine asked as she put the groceries away after following Jamie into the kitchen.

"Yeah, I'd like that and it will give me a chance to ask you something."

"You know you can ask me anything, Jamie. If I can help you, you know I will," Catherine smiled, as she grasped Jamie's shoulder. "Why don't you have a seat on the couch and I'll order us a pizza, if that's okay with you?"

Jamie returned to the living room as Catherine placed the order for the pizza to be delivered. Once accomplished, she grabbed two sodas from the fridge and gave one to Jamie as she sat opposite her. "Now, what is it you wanted to ask me?"

"Ummm, you know the annual Winterfest play that we put on every year...this year we decided to do Romeo and Juliet."

"That's wonderful, Jamie, I'm sure everyone will love your interpretation of Juliet. Did you want me to play the nurse or your mother perhaps?" Catherine questioned.

"No, Cathy, we were hoping to get you to play Juliet and Vincent to play Romeo. You two were the only choices we wanted for the roles."

"I'm flattered, Jamie, but shouldn't someone younger play Juliet's role?"

"Cathy, we can't think of two other people who could bring the roles to life like you and Vincent can. We don't want anyone else to do it. Please?"

"Have you discussed this with Vincent yet?"

"No, we wanted to get you convinced first, then we thought to tackle Vincent. Please say you'll do it, please?" Jamie entreated her to yield.

"Well, if you are that set on having me play Juliet's role, how could I refuse?" Catherine smiled at her companion.

"You want **me** to play Romeo?" Vincent asked in surprise, after Michael and Brooke came up to him after his literature class.

"Yes, **you**, Vincent, we want you and we've asked Catherine to play Juliet. There was no one else we wanted for the roles," Michael explained.

"Please Vincent, please say yes? You and Catherine both bring such depth to the characters every time you read to us. You would bring such a magical quality to the role," Brooke added.

"What did Catherine say when you asked her," Vincent wondered aloud, certain she would be embarrassed by the suggestion.

"She said, 'Well, if you are that set on having me play Juliet's role, how could I refuse? She was just concerned about your reaction if we asked you. She didn't want us to pressure you into saying yes,'" Michael offered.

'She is willing to play Juliet with all it entails,' Vincent thought to himself. 'She says she's willing to live our dream whenever I'm ready, whenever I am willing to move through my fears. I am willing to play this role with her. I will no longer allow my fears to keep us apart.'

Aloud Vincent said, "Yes, if that is your wish, I will play Romeo to Catherine's Juliet."

Brooke squealed in delight. "Thank you Vincent, thank you," she breathed as she hugged him. Michael hugged Vincent as well. "Thank you," he whispered.

The rehearsals started in earnest after the couple agreed and Vincent and Catherine were surprised at the details the tunnel theatre group had shown in setting this play in motion. They had watched each others rehearse the various opening scenes the characters were involved in. As Vincent and Catherine nervously awaited the party scene, they knew that this scene was where Romeo first saw Juliet and he sneaked a kiss from her. Vincent knew this would be the first 'real' kiss between Catherine and himself. He'd wanted to kiss Catherine for a long time and finally it was going to happen, even only in the guise of a play.

"Places everyone," Jamie said as she clapped her hands for everyone's attention. Since the play title was Jamie's idea, the casting committee elected her to direct the play. With Vincent's silent support in the background, Jamie knew they would put on the best play Winterfest had ever seen. "Let's take it from where Mercutio and Romeo are talking before the party with the line '*Peace, good Mercutio, peace!*' "

As the cast found their places, Catherine placed a gentle kiss on Vincent's cheek. "For luck," she whispered as she drew back. Vincent gave her a small smile and walked over to Pascal who was waiting for him with the other cast members for this scene.

(Vincent) Romeo:

"Peace, good Mercutio, peace! Thou talks of nothing."

(Pascal) Mercutio:

"True. I talk of dreams...which are the children of an idle brain...begot of nothing but vain fantasy...which is as thin of substance as the air, and more inconstant then the wind...who woos even now the frozen bosom of the north...and being angered, puffs away from

thence...turning his side to the dewdropping south..."

'Father has often expressed that our dream is a tragic mistake and can never be, telling Catherine that we should part so that I can remain safe. Also telling me she would never fit into our society Below, that the world above means too much for her.'

(Kipper) Benvolio:

"This wind you talk of blows us from ourselves...Supper is done, and we shall come too late."

Romeo:

"I fear too early; for my mind misgives some...consequence, yet hanging in the stars...shall bitterly begin his fearful date with this night's revels...and expire the term of a despised life...closed in my breast, by some vile forfeit of untimely death...but he that hath the steerage of my course...direct my sail! On, lusty gentlemen!"

'Romeo expressed his feelings that something terrible will happen, that he is going to this party because he is in the hands of fate. With my decision made, I will not let anything happen to spoil the happiness Catherine and I want together and I will love Catherine as she deserves to be loved.'

"Wow, I knew Vincent would be good for the role of Romeo but, my God, he is brilliant," Michael whispered in Brooke's ear, as they watched the rehearsal. *(Watch 'Everything Is Everything' to hear Father and Vincent recite these lines)*

"I couldn't agree more," Brooke acknowledged with a nod of her head. She noticed Father making his way silently over to where she and Michael were standing, and the others move about and then retire to one side as the party scene was set up.

"Michael, Brooke," Father acknowledged as he reached them. "How is the rehearsal going? Did I miss much?"

"Not really, Father. You're just in time for the first meeting between Romeo and Juliet," Michael explained, as he pointed out what the crew was setting up.

"Here, Father, take my chair and make yourself comfortable," Brooke offered, as she pulled the chair behind her closer so Father could sit down.

"Thank you, my dear." Father settled himself comfortably in the chair and watched as everyone gathered for the next scene. Brooke and Michael settled down in their chairs and the room fell silent as Vincent and Pascal entered the party. All eyes turned to Kanin(Tybalt) as he recited his lines as Vincent wandered around the room.

A hush came over everyone as Vincent turned and looked into Catherine's eyes for the first time. "You can definitely feel the electricity between them," Rebecca whispered to Pascal, as Vincent and Catherine slowly moved toward the center of the chamber.

Vincent (Romeo)

"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."

'Catherine once said 'These hands are beautiful. These are MY hands'. I must believe that this is what she wants of me. Her emotions at times have felt as though she would welcome my kiss. Now is the time to find out.'

Catherine (Juliet)

"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.

'Will Vincent actually go through with this rehearsal in front of Father and everyone else and kiss me? Or will his fears come between us again?'

Romeo:

"Have not saints' lips, and holy palmers too?"

Juliet:

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

Romeo:

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

*'I will no longer allow my fear to rule my life. I love Catherine and I know she loves me. As long as she is by my side, there is **NOTHING** I cannot overcome, with her love to guide me.'*

Juliet:

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

Romeo:

"Then move not while my prayer's effect I take. Thus from my lips, by thine my sin is purged."

Vincent leaned down and gently caressed Catherine's lips. Catherine's eyes slowly fluttered open and she was at a loss for words for a moment. She looked totally dazed by the kiss.

"Catherine..." Vincent whispered. The bond was alive with a flurry of colliding emotions, hers--his. Vincent closed his eyes to try and clear his head.

"Oh, yes," Catherine shook her head to clear it. "The line... ummmm?"

Juliet:

"Then have my lips the sin that they have took?" She touched her lips in awe.

Vincent hesitated a moment or two before responding.

Romeo:

"Sin from my lips? O trespass sweetly urged! Give me my sin again!"

Gently, shyly, Vincent pressed his lips to Catherine's again. As they slowly parted, you could actually see the love between them in their eyes, their movements. Vincent also looked a little dazed by the second kiss between them.

"Cut!" Jamie yelled, "That's enough for today."

"Vincent...Catherine..." Father began as the scene ended with Jamie's announcement, "You were both breathtaking."

"Thank you, Father," Catherine whispered breathlessly, as Vincent led her over to where Father and the others were seated. Vincent could feel the slight trembling in Catherine's shoulders as he held her close.

"Attention everyone, we'll rehearse the balcony scene tomorrow," Jamie announced once she was sure she could be heard over the din.

"Vincent, the way you tenderly kissed Catherine, you took my breath away," Brooke exclaimed. Michael just stood there with a goofy grin on his face. A slight blush rose on Vincent's face at Brooke's words.

"Father, I am going to escort Catherine home. I will return later."

"No rush Vincent, but don't forget Mouse wanted to talk to you about the new project. Catherine, I am looking forward to watching your next rehearsal," Father stated with a twinkle in his eye and a sly grin.

"Thank you Father, for everything." Catherine kissed him on the cheek, then turned to leave with Vincent. As they slowly strolled towards her basement, Catherine was remembering how gentle Vincent was when he kissed her.

Vincent, too, was remembering and building his courage to kiss her before she went above. When they reached her sub-basement, Catherine hugged Vincent close.

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

Vincent responded with, "Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast." He lowered his head and gently pressed his lips to hers. They drew apart, still marvelling at the new experience. The bond was alive between them, a gentle hum fluttering throughout his senses.

"Until tomorrow, Catherine," Vincent whispered. Catherine couldn't say anything, only nodded her head then turned and made her way Above. Vincent returned to the home tunnels where he and Mouse talked long into the night about the new water project.

Once in a while, Vincent found his mind wandering back to the rehearsal and kissing Catherine. When he and Mouse were finished, Vincent changed into his nightshirt and after a long while fell into a peaceful sleep, filled with dreams of himself and Catherine having to redo the kiss from their first meeting in the play over and over again, to the delight of the other cast members.

To practice the balcony scene, everyone gathered in Father's study and Jamie directed Catherine to the upper level. Kanin and Cullen moved Father's oak desk and chair off to the side, so he could have a ring-side seat and give Vincent some room to move around during the scene. Mary took a seat next to Father as the actors took their places. Bishop, Father's friend and a former archbishop for Manhattan, came in and sat next to Mary.

"Did I miss anything?" he whispered to Mary.

"No, you're just in time. They're about to start."

Vincent noticed Bishop and came over to say hello. He placed a hand on Bishop's shoulder and whispered in his ear. "May I speak to you in private after the rehearsal?"

"Certainly, my boy, certainly," Bishop patted his arm in friendly concern. Vincent nodded and went back to the bottom of the staircase and awaited his cue.

"Catherine, we're ready when you are," Jamie called from the far side of the room. Catherine slowly walked to the railing and looked out over the chamber, trying to imagine she was looking out over a star-filled sky and the garden below her balcony.

Romeo:

"He jests at scars that never felt a wound." Vincent turned his head upward as he heard Catherine's footfalls approach the railing. He softly gasped as his eyes beheld her. "But soft, what light through yonder window breaks? Oh, it is my lady! O, it is my love! O, that she knew she were!" Catherine looked as though she was going to say something. "She speaks, yet she says nothing. What of that? Her eye discourses, I will answer it. I am too bold. 'Tis not to me she speaks. Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven, having some business, do entreat her eyes to twinkle in their spheres till they return. See how she leans her cheek upon her hand? O, that I were a glove upon that hand, that I might touch that cheek."

Juliet:

"Ay me!"

Romeo:

"She speaks. O, speak again, bright angel."

Juliet:

"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."

'I have often wondered if I would be strong enough to give up everything for our dream.'
Catherine reminded herself that she has told Vincent countless times she would, but when the time came she wondered... *'Could I actually do it? Yes, for Vincent I **would** give up my life Above in a heartbeat, no regrets, no change of heart. Vincent is all that matters.'*

Romeo:

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

Juliet:

"Tis but thy name that is my enemy. Thou art thyself though not a Montague. What is Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot, nor arm, nor face, nor any other part belonging to a man. Oh, be some other name. That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called. Retain that dear perfection which he owes without that title. Romeo, doff thy name, and for that name, which is no part of thee, take all myself."

Catherine could feel how heartbroken Juliet was at this point in time, the lines told her that Juliet loved Romeo but she wished he was from another family so that she could love him freely and openly.

Romeo:

"I take thee at thy word. Call me but love and I'll be new baptized. Henceforth I never will be Romeo."

Juliet:

"What man art thou that thus bescreened by night, so stumblest on my council?"

Romeo:

"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. Had I it written, I would tear the word."

Juliet:

"My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words of thy tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound. Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?"

Romeo:

"Neither fair maid, if either thee dislike."

Juliet:

"How comes thou hither, tell me, and wherefore? The orchard walls are high and hard to climb. And the place death, considering who thou art. If any of my kinsmen find thee here."

'Vincent takes the same risks as Romeo does when he comes to see me. The authorities would cage him like Professor Hughes did, take away his freedom if he were caught Above,

yet he risks it all just to be with me. I will no longer put him at risk, my life is Below with him now.'

Romeo:

"With love's light wings did I o'erperch these walls. For stony limits cannot hold love out, and what love can do, that dares love attempt. Therefore thy kinsman are no stop to me."

Vincent knows the world above will not stop him from being with Catherine. *'That I would risk my life and my freedom itself to be with her. I would go anywhere, do anything, as Romeo said, 'It cannot countervale the exchange of joy one short minute gives me in her sight.'*

Juliet:

"Shhhhh. If they do see thee, they will murder thee."

Romeo:

"I have night's cloak to hide me from their eyes. And but thou love me, let them find me here. My life were better ended by their hate than death prorogued, wanting of thy love."

Juliet:

"Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say 'aye'. And I will take thy word. Yet, if thou swear'st, thou mayst prove false. At lovers' perjuries, they say Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo, if thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully. Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won, I'll frown and be perverse and say thee nay, so thou wilt woo, but else, not for the world. In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond. And therefore thou mayst think my havior light..."

Romeo:

"No."

Juliet:

"But trust me, gentleman. I'll prove more true than those more cunning to be strange."

Vincent slowly made his way up the stairs, until he reached the upper level to where Catherine was. Never taking his eyes off hers, he slowly made his way to her side.

Juliet:

"I should have been more strange, I must confess. But that thou overheard'st, ere I was ware, my true love passion. Therefore pardon me, but not impute this yielding to light love which the dark night has so discovered."

Romeo:

"Lady, by yonder blessed moon, I swear..."

Juliet:

"O, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon, that monthly changes in her circled orb. Lest that thy love prove likewise variable."

Father whispered to Mary, "My God, they are really quite good, aren't they? You can really feel what they're feeling."

"You're right, Father. You can feel the love they feel in the words," Mary agreed.

Romeo:

"What shall I swear by?"

Juliet:

"Do not swear at all. Or if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self, which is the god of my idolatry, and I'll believe thee."

Romeo:

"If my heart's dear love, I swear...Oh Juliet..." Vincent took Catherine in his arms and kissed her. Slowly he deepened the kiss and the world around them faded away as the kiss continued. Slowly they broke apart.

Juliet:

"Sweet goodnight, this bud of love by summer's ripening breath may prove a beautiful flower when next we meet."

Tenderly Catherine kissed Vincent. "Good night, good night, sweet repose and rest, come to my heart as that within my breast." Catherine kissed Vincent's hand and started walking away.

Romeo:

"O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?"

Juliet:

"What satisfaction canst thou have tonight?"

Romeo:

"The exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine."

Juliet:

"Ahhh. I gave thee mine before thou didst request it and yet I would I were to give again." Catherine stretched out her hand toward Vincent.

Romeo:

"Wouldst thou withdraw it? For what purpose, love?" Vincent entwined his hand with Catherine's.

Juliet:

"But to be frank and give it thee again."

Vincent pulled Catherine into his embrace and kissed her passionately. Catherine tore her mouth away and gasped. "And yet I wish but for the thing I have. My bounty is boundless as

the sea, my love as deep, the more I give to thee, the more I have, for both are infinite."

(Olivia) Nurse:

"Juliet?"

The audience turned at once to the sound of the new voice, so mesmerized as they were by the performance they were watching.

Juliet:

"Anon good nurse. Sweet Montague...be true..." Vincent attempts to kiss her. Catherine accepted Vincent's kisses, but kept pulling away cause of the nurses' call.

Nurse:

"Madam!"

Juliet:

"Stay but a little, I shall come again."

Nurse:

"Madam? Lady Juliet?" Catherine walked back to the far side of the upper level. Vincent started walking down the stairs.

Romeo:

"O blessed, blessed night, O I am afreared being in night, all this is but a dream. Too flattering sweet to be substantial!"

Catherine returned to the top of the staircase and Vincent returned to her side.

Juliet:

"Three words, dear Romeo, and goodnight indeed. If that thy bent of love be honorable..."

Romeo:

"Yes."

Juliet:

"Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow by one that I'll procure to come to thee. Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite, and all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay, and follow thee, my lord, throughout the world."

Nurse:

"Madam?"

Juliet:

"I come anon, but if meanest not well, I do beseech thee..."

Nurse:

"Lady Juliet?"

Juliet:

"By and by I come...to cease thy suit and leave me to my grief. Tomorrow will I send."

Romeo:

"O so thrive my soul..."

Juliet:

"A thousand times goodnight." Catherine kissed Vincent's hand as he started to leave. Vincent slowly descended the stairs. "Romeo..." Vincent turned back to look at her. "At what o'clock shall I send to thee?"

Romeo:

"At the hour of nine."

Juliet:

"I will not fail. O, tis twenty years till then." Vincent again started down the stairs. "Romeo?" Vincent looked over his shoulder at her then turned back to return. "I have forgot why I did call thee back."

Romeo:

"Let me stand here 'till thou remember it."

Juliet:

"I shall forget, to have thee still stand there, remembering how I love thy company."

Romeo:

"And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget, forgetting any other home but this."

Juliet:

"Ahhh." Catherine held out her arms and Vincent willingly came back up the stairs and took her in his arms and kissed her again. "Goodnight, goodnight. Parting is such sweet sorrow, that I shall say goodnight till it be morrow."

They reluctantly let go of each other's hand as Vincent climbed back down the stairs again, fingertips stretching till they finally part and as Vincent reached the bottom of the stairs, he and Catherine kept their hands raised as they both backed away, giving a gesturing kiss of farewell.

Thunderous applause greeted them at the end of the scene. Amid cheers of "Bravo", Catherine made her way slowly down the stairs as Vincent returned to the staircase, taking her hand in his as she lighted the floor of the chamber. Tears glistened in her eyes as she bowed her head in acknowledgement.

"Lets break for lunch and then reassemble back here," Jamie requested. The women clustered

around Catherine and that gave Vincent time to seek out Bishop.

"What is it you wanted to talk to me about, Vincent?" Bishop asked as Vincent drew him to the desk, away from everyone so no one could hear their conversation.

"Would you marry us...**actually** marry us during the wedding scene?" Vincent finally managed to ask.

"Marry you?! You're serious, aren't you?"

"More than anything in my life."

"Of course I will, if that is what you and Catherine want," Bishop said as he shook Vincent's hand. "Then I need to rehearse my lines as Friar Lawrence even more, especially for the wedding scene. Does Father or any of the others know?"

"No, I haven't even asked Catherine yet. I plan on explaining it to her after the play itself."

"Surprise her is more like it, I would think," Bishop laughed. The joy in his voice made Vincent even more confident of his decision.

"Then you'll keep this between us?"

"My dear boy, no one will hear anything from me."

Vincent and Bishop both noticed Catherine drawing near to where they were both talking.

"Bishop, may I speak with you, please?"

"Certainly, dear child...Vincent, we'll talk later." As Vincent went to speak with Jamie, Bishop asked, "What can I do for you?"

"Would you marry us, **actually** marry us during the wedding scene?" Catherine whispered, her head bowed.

"Marry you? Catherine, I would be honored to marry you and Vincent whenever you wish. Does he know you want to do this?" Bishop asked in mock surprise, due to the previous conversation with Vincent.

"No," Catherine asked shyly. "I thought I would explain it to him after the play."

"Surprise him is more like it," Bishop laughed. *'It's a joy to see these two people finally get the happy life they deserve. What a wonderful surprise for everyone once the play is over with.'*

"I love Vincent with everything that I am, we belong together and I want this more than anything in the world. Please, Bishop?"

"Then as my character says, '*For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone. Let holy church incorporate two in one.*' " He smiled to himself with joy in being allowed to join these two special people in Holy Matrimony.

Winterfest finally arrived and everyone was nervously preparing for the night's entertainment. Vincent nervously paced the stage, confident with his decision but also regretting not telling Devin ahead of time what he had planned, and Catherine was also nervous about the special arrangement she made with Bishop. She hoped Vincent wouldn't walk off stage when Bishop puts their names into the wedding vows along with Romeo and Juliet.

Devin walked out onto the makeshift stage they built in the Great Hall for the performance and the crowd quieted as he took his place center stage.

Devin (Prince):

"Two households, both alike in dignity, in fair Verona, where we lay our scene. From ancient grudge break to new mutiny, where civil blood makes civil hands unclean. From forth the fatal loins of these two foes, a pair of star-crossed lovers take their life; whose misadventured piteous overthrows, do with their death bury their parents' strife."

The play progressed quite smoothly through the various scenes. Everyone was expecting some mischief from Mouse as was usually the case during Winterfest but nothing so far which was a pleasant surprise. Finally Vincent and Olivia recited their lines to have Juliet go to Friar Lawrence's cell. The wedding scene....

Friar Lawrence:

"So smile the heavens upon this holy act, that afterhours with sorrow chide us not!"

Romeo:

"Amen, amen! But come what sorrow can, It cannot countervale the exchange of joy that one short minute gives me in her sight."

Friar Lawrence:

"These violent delights have violent ends and in their triumph die, like fire and powder. Which, as they kiss, consume. The sweetest honey is loathsome in his own..." He tapped Vincent's cheek affectionately. "...deliciousness, and in the taste confounds the appetite. Therefore love moderately, long love doth so. Ah, here come the lady.."

Catherine entered the stage,

Friar Lawrence:

"O, so light a foot will ne'er wear out the everlasting flint."

Vincent caught Catherine up in his arms and kissed her. Bishop separated them. Catherine

knelt at Bishop's feet and grasped his hand. Bishop attempted to keep Vincent behind him as he glanced down at Catherine.

Juliet:

"Good even to my ghostly confessor."

Friar Lawrence:

"Romeo shall thank thee, daughter, for us both. Ahhhh..." He tapped Vincent's hand as he made to kiss Catherine again. He helped Catherine to her feet and they started walking towards the middle of the stage, one on either side of him.

Romeo:

"Ah, Juliet, if the measure of thy joy be heaped like mine, and that thy skill be more to blazen it, then sweetened with thy breath this neighbor air,"

Juliet:

"They are but beggars that can count their worth; but my true love has grown to such excess, I cannot sum up sum of half my wealth."

Friar Lawrence:

"Come, go with me, and we'll make short work. For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone. Till holy church incorporate two in one." He made both of them kneel while he got the things he needed. Turning back, "Do you Romeo..." He whispered "Vincent" under his breath..."Take thee Juliet..." He whispered "Catherine," only loud enough for the two of them to hear. They looked at each other, "to be thy wedded wife?"

Romeo:

"I wilt."

Vincent gave a nod of his head to acknowledge Bishop's question as well. He could see the tears glistening in Catherine's eyes after he gave his answer.

Friar Lawrence:

"Do you Juliet...?" Again repeated their names in turn..."take Romeo to be thy wedded husband?"

Juliet:

"I wilt."

Catherine shyly nodded as well and she could see the joy in Vincent's eyes at her answer as well.

Friar Lawrence:

"Then in the eyes of God..."then he whispered, "and in the face of this company..." Then aloud again, "I pronounce you joined forever and always." Vincent turned and took Catherine in his arms and gently kissed her.

Once the wedding scene was over, Vincent and Catherine hurried off stage while the stage crew set up for the next scene.

"Did Bishop do what I think he just did?" They both said at once, staring into each others' eyes with joy.

"I wanted to surprise you," Vincent tried to explain.

"I wanted to surprise you as well," Catherine wanted to say more but instead they just embraced and kissed passionately. Suddenly Vincent felt a tap on his shoulder.

"Sorry to interrupt, little bro, but I think the others are waiting for you," Devin said with a smirk, pointing toward the stage. Vincent hurried to join the others on stage, while Catherine tried to compose herself. "Wow, if that's any indication of things to come, I can't wait till you two really do get married," Devin said jokingly to Catherine.

"We just did," she confessed.

Devin stood there with a wide grin on his face. "Hot damned bonus!" he said as he pulled Catherine into a hug.

They heard raised voices coming from the stage. "Devin, I think that's your cue," Catherine said with a small smile.

Devin hurried on stage and the play continued on and throughout the various scenes you could feel the tension building toward the final scene. It certainly didn't help matters when Juliet's burial platform started to rotate for no reason just as they were about to place Catherine on it.

"Mouse, I swear, if this thing flies off its base, there will be hell to pay," Cullen whispered under his breath.

"Switch on side, didn't touch, honest. Thought it would be good for audience to see." Mouse tried to explain.

"Then who did?" Cullen glowered as Mouse went to the table to turn the switch off. Suddenly Arthur came crawling out from underneath and scurried off stage.

"Arthur!" Mouse hissed as he found the switch. Slowly the table stopped spinning and they were able to place Catherine gently on the platform.

As the candles were dimmed around the burial platform, Eric slowly walked across the stage to where Vincent was sitting on its far edge, gazing out over the audience.

Romeo:

"Balthesar! How fares my Juliet? For nothing can be ill, if she be well. How fares my lady?"

Eric slowly backed away, shaking his head, saying with a sob.

Eric (Balthasar):

"She's dead, my lord. She's dead. Her body sleeps in Capal's monument. I saw her laid low in her kindred's vault."

Vincent backed away, shock and grief etched on his face. An involuntary growl sounded and Vincent's heart pounded in his chest as he heard Eric's lines, knowing how he would feel if he heard this type of news regarding Catherine. Vincent knew his life would be over, that he couldn't live without Catherine by his side.

'Those words you read to me echo in my mind when I...stood forlorn, knowing my heart's best treasure was no more, that neither time nor years unborn could, to my sight, that heavenly face restore'. Remembering the sight of Catherine after she freed him from Professor Hughes' cage.

Romeo:

"Then I defy you stars!"

'I saw my life without you, Catherine and it was a loss I could not survive.'

Vincent and Eric raced off stage and up the staircase to the second level of the Great Hall. Vincent and Eric returned seconds later to a corner of the stage.

Romeo:

"Live and be prosperous. Farewell, good fellow."

Eric left and Vincent went to Catherine's burial platform. Vincent's throat constricted as he gazed on Catherine's pale form in the dim candlelight. One of the tunnel children came and relit the candles one by one, illuminating Vincent and Catherine.

"Juliet. O my love...my wife. (caressing her arms) Death that hath sucked the honey of thy breath, hath had no power yet upon thy beauty. Thou art not conquered...beauty's ensign yet is crimson in thy lips (caressed her lips) and in thy cheeks (gently stroked her cheek with one clawed fingertip) Death's pale flag is not advanced there. (glanced at Kanin) Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet? (walked over to him) What more favor can I do to thee, then with that hand that cut thy youth in twain to sunder his that was thine enemy? (Vincent placed his hand on Kanin's) Forgive me, cousin. (returned to Catherine's side)

"Ah dear Juliet, why are thou yet so fair? Shall I believe that unsubstantial death is amorous, and that the lean abhorred monster keeps thee here in dark to be his paramour? For fear of that, I still will stay with thee. Never from this palace of dim night depart again. Here, here will I remain, with worms that are thy chambermaids. Oh God."

Vincent backed away, sobbing and clutching his heart, agony etched on his face at the thought of never seeing Catherine again echoing in his mind as he thought of all the times he nearly

lost her through violence.

"Eyes, look your last. Arms, take your last embrace. And lips, O you the doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss a dateless bargain to engrossing death." (Vincent kissed Catherine and started sobbing and clutching her tightly)

Catherine could hear the agony in Vincent's voice. She wanted so much to stop the play at this very moment, to reach up and clutch Vincent to her chest and whisper that she was all right, that she would never leave him. "Vincent?" she whispered in his ear as his head caressed her cheek.

"Catherine...I'm all right...I think." Vincent whispered back as he rose to look at her, tears glistening in his blue eyes as he beheld her. He noticed Catherine opened her eyes slightly so she could see him and gave a small smile in reassurance. Vincent slowly backed away and stood at the foot of the platform.

Romeo:

"Here's to my love." Vincent stumbled over this line as he said it, tears running freely down his cheeks, his throat choking him while the words ran in his ears. The vision of blood running over his fingers after Catherine was shot before his eyes.(pulled a vial from a hidden pocket, drunk from it and shortly had an immediate reaction to what he drunk. Walked up the side to where he could reach Catherine's hand) "Thus with a kiss (kissed hand) I die." (Vincent crumpled to the floor of the stage)

Amid the gasps from the audience and a slight murmuring of voices, Bishop slowly entered from the far end of the stage, a look of fear on his face, stepped forward to see Catherine still on the burial platform, Michael and Vincent lying lifeless on the floor next to her.

Friar Lawrence:

"Romeo, pale. (brushed hair away from Vincent's face) Oh, what an unkind hour is guilty of this lamentable chance?"

Bishop rose to look at Catherine as she started to awaken.

Juliet:

"Ohhh!" (saw Bishop) O comfortable friar, where is my lord? I do remember well where I should be, and there I am. Where is my Romeo?"

Friar Lawrence:

"I hear some noise." (helped Catherine to sit up and off the platform)

Juliet:

"Oh, where is my Romeo?"

Friar Lawrence:

"Oh lady, come from this nest of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep. A greater power than

we can contradict hath thwarted out intents. Come, come along, the watch is coming." (started pulling Catherine away from platform, trying to prevent her from seeing Vincent lying on the floor)

Juliet:

"Where is my Romeo?"

Catherine gasped as she saw Vincent lying on the floor, the shock and fear flooding through her. Even though she knew this was a play, the feelings were certainly real in her mind as too her reaction. Catherine also remembered the fear she felt going into that dark cave after Vincent and it shown in her wide green eyes as she beheld Vincent lying there.

Friar Lawrence:

"Come, go good Juliet."

Juliet:

"No."

Friar Lawrence:

"I dare no longer stay." (continued to try and pull Catherine away from platform)

Juliet:

"No."

Friar Lawrence:

"I dare no longer stay. Juliet! (backing away from her) I dare no longer stay! (turned and ran off stage) I dare no longer stay!"

Catherine knelt next to Vincent and reached her left hand out to clutch at his and found a bottle hidden within.

Juliet:

"What's here? Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end. (tried to drink from bottle and threw it across the stage when she found out it was empty) Oh churl! Drunk all and left no friendly drop to help me after. I will kiss thy lips, haply some poison yet doth hang on them to make me die with a restorative."

Catherine kissed Vincent deeply.

Juliet:

"Thy lips are warm." She started kissing his forehead, cheeks, neck, hands, sobbing at the same time.

Juliet:

"Oh no, no, no!"

Several women had tears softly running down their cheeks, several of the men dabbed handkerchiefs too as they witnessed Catherine's mournful cries as she knelt over Vincent's body. Father could see the agony and anguish on Catherine's face. He knew she would feel the same way if anything were to ever happen to Vincent. Earlier he felt as though his heart was being pulled out of his chest as he watched Vincent recite Romeo's final lines. Vincent's grief would be unbearable to him--this Father knew with certainty. Not a sound could be heard in the Great Hall, Father had tears in his eyes as he watched Mary stifle a sob as she clutched his hand beside him.

From off stage they heard a voice shout.

Man's voice:

"Lead boy, which way? Search about the courtyard. Go, some of you..."

Catherine reacted and jumped to her feet

Juliet:

"Yeah, noise? (Indistinct shouting heard off stage) No! (Spots dagger in Vincent's belt) Then I'll be brief, O happy dagger! This is thy sheath, there rust and let me die." (Stabs self and falls dead onto Vincent)

Again not a sound could be heard from anyone at this moment in time. The children came out and dimmed the candles so they could set up for the final scene. After a few moments, Devin and the other cast members returned to the stage carrying Vincent and Catherine on stretchers.

Prince:

"Where be these enemies? Capulet! Montague! (Parents step forward) See what a scourge is laid upon your hate, that heaven finds means to kill your joys with love. And I, for winking at your discords too, have lost a brace of kinsmen. All are punished. (Shouting) **All are punished.**"

The cast carried Vincent and Catherine off the stage leaving Devin the only one still standing in the middle of the stage.

Prince:

"A glooming peace this morning with it brings, the sun for sorrow will not show his head, for never was a story of more woe, than this of Juliet and her Romeo." Candles around the stage are dimmed and finally put out and the stage grew dark around Devin till he could not be seen any longer.

Thunderous applause and cheers of "Brava" resounded in the Great Hall as the actors returned to the middle of the stage and the candles relit. Bishop walked to the edge of the stage, raising his hands to try and quiet the happy throng. As the din died down, Bishop glanced at Vincent who bowed his head in approval, his arm protectively around Catherine.

"Can I have everyone's attention, please?" The roar quietly died down so everyone could hear. "I am happy to be the bearer of happy news. Not only were Romeo and Juliet joined in our little play, but Vincent and Catherine as well. May I present Mr. and Mrs..." As soon as the words left his lips, there rose such a roar as to rival the fans at Yankee Stadium during the World Series.

"Oh my God," Mary cried as she clutched Father's arm. "Did Bishop just say what I think he just said?" Mary softly wept into Father's shoulder, too overcome to say anything else.

"Yes, I believe he did," Father said with a touch of pride and wonder in his voice. *'Despite all my previous attempts to keep them apart, they managed the impossible and I am so grateful Catherine convinced Vincent he deserves her. I am so proud of them both.'*

Father waited with Mary as Vincent and Catherine came toward him. "Father...?" Catherine whispered.

Father opened his arms with joy and embraced them both. "I am so very happy for you both." He looked up and saw Devin come up quietly behind them. "Devin, did you...?"

"No Father, I found out right after the wedding scene. All I could do was say *'Hot damned bonus'* and hug Catherine before the next scene started," Devin explained as he put his arm around Vincent's shoulder.

Father beamed with amusement as Catherine blushed at Devin's comment. They had defied all the odds against them, including himself in the process, and made their dream come true. Vincent held Catherine tenderly in his arms, surrounded by the love of his family and friends, as they congratulated them on their marriage and hopes of a happy life.

END

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