

Free Scene – Shakespeare Unbound (2F)

ALIESHA (15) – American high school student

JULIET (14) – yes, *that* Juliet from *Romeo and Juliet*

(JULIET emerges from The Complete Works of Shakespeare book. She approaches ALIESHA who is having a very bad day. Shakespeare's characters keep emerging from her book.)

JULIET

Why dost thou weep?

ALIESHA

You wouldn't understand. (Beat.) Not another one! I'm doomed for sure! They'll lock me up and throw away the key!

JULIET

Who would do such a thing to thee?

ALIESHA

My parents. You know – the grown-ups with absolute control over your lives – Mom and Dad.

JULIET

I see.

ALIESHA

You do?

JULIET

'tis the duty of a daughter to obey her mother and father. Ah me! It is a woeful thing.

ALIESHA

It sure is a woeful thing. You know what? You're pretty cool. I mean, you're the first character I've been able to talk to. You are a character, aren't you?

JULIET

So it is written. And what may you be?

ALIESHA

Just a teenage kid. I guess I should introduce myself. I'm Aliesha.

(ALIESHA holds out her hand and Juliet looks at it, not knowing what to do.)

But hey, what's in a name, right?

JULIET

(JULIET holds out her hand.)

Right. I'm Juliet Capulet.

(They shake hands.)

ALIESHA

I figured. I'm getting better at this. Where's Romeo?

JULIET

Ah, Romeo! Gentle Romeo! My only love sprung from my only hate! Too early seen unknown and known too late!

ALIESHA

Stop! You're lapsing back into that iambic pentameter stuff and I can't follow you.

JULIET

A thousand apologies. What was the question?

ALIESHA

Where is Romeo? I think he'd be cool to meet.

JULIET

Oh no, Romeo's glance is as warm as the sun's – never cool.

ALIESHA

No, I didn't mean ... oh, never mind. I just wanted to know where he is. I thought you two were always together.

JULIET

By Jove's good fortune, he did not land in the large basket as I did.

ALIESHA

Oh! I mustn't have town out any of his pages.

JULIET

What meanest thou?

ALIESHA

It's a long story. And I'd really like to sit here and talk to you about parents and boyfriends and all of that. But, I really need to go through the garbage.

JULIET

Garbage?

ALIESHA

Yeah, you know, trash, refuse, rubbish ... dost thou know “garbage?”

JULIET

Ay, garbage! I’ll help thee.

ALIESHA

You will?

JULIET

To speak sad brown and truth, I’ve never had a friend.

ALIESHA

Never?

JULIET

Nay, a nurse who raised me from a babe, and my own dear Romeo. But never a young maiden such as you.

ALIESHA

That’s kind of sad. I don’t know what I’d do without my friends. I mean – who else do you complain about your parents to? And, you know, talk to ... about ... like everything?

JULIET

Complain about parents? There’s such a coil!

ALIESHA

Do your parents give you a hard time?

JULIET

Indeed. They arranged a marriage for me. To the nobleman Paris. And were amazed when I was not thankful. They bade me to be not proud and my mother wished me married to my grave!

ALIESHA

That’s awful! And I thought my parents were a pain. My mom and dad don’t want me married for at least another ten years!

JULIET

Would that mine were such. My father called me a disobedient wretch! Baggage! He would have thrown me out of my home to starve ere I disobeyed him.

ALIESHA

And your mother?

JULIET

My mother has done with me.

ALIESHA

Your life is not a walk in the park, is it?

JULIET

What speakest thou?

ALIESHA

I was just thinking that you have *real* problems, and that all the things I complain about – my parents, my brother, school, you know – aren't really all that bad. But of course you're a character from a tragedy, so you're expected to have a few difficulties.

JULIET

Thou are kind. I like thee.

ALIESHA

And I like thee, too. Thou aren't so hard to understand either.

JULIET

My tutor bade me study hard. I was quick with other tongues.

ALIESHA

I bet you were pretty smart. Come to think of it, if Romeo had stayed put and listened to you, none of the bad stuff would have happened.

JULIET

What meanest thou?

ALIESHA

If I remember your story correctly, *you* had everything worked out. Today, Romeo would have gotten the message in time. I mean, a phone would have been very helpful to you.

JULIET

Phone?

ALIESHA

Yeah. Or e-mail if you guys had computers.

JULIET

e-mail? Computers?

ALIESHA

Of course there would be no tragedy then and the world would be deprived of one of the greatest love stories of all time. And that would be a tragedy.

JULIET

Thy words are hard to understand.

ALIESHA

And thy words make my brain cloud over. But I think we understand each other.

JULIET

Indeed, I swear we do.