

I Feel Fine
By Claudia Haas
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CAST 3: (3 female)

ANYA (female), mid-teens; playing Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*

MARIE (female), mid-teens; understudy to ANYA and an extra in the play

MAISIE (female), ANYA'S friend; stage manager

PLACE: Backstage of a high school theatre

TIME: During a production of *Romeo and Juliet*

COSTUMES: Fairly modern – you can have fun but we're not going the full "Renaissance" route

SYNOPSIS: ANYA is playing Juliet. MARIE believes she was born to play Juliet and won't let ANYA or anyone forget it. Genre: theatrical back-stabbing play.

(Lights up backstage. ANYA is in a nightgown getting ready for her potion scene. She is breathing methodically and mumbling to herself as she gets into character. MARIE is nearby.)

MARIE

That balcony scene? It wasn't your best.

ANYA

Shh. I'm prepping.

MARIE

You were too breathy.

ANYA

Don't give me notes. Only the director can give me notes.

MARIE

I'm just saying – as someone who knows the role inside and out – as someone who has prepped to be Juliet her entire life – as someone who was born to play Juliet – you might want to might want to take it easy on the breathing.

ANYA

As someone who actually got cast in the role – get lost.

MARIE

I'm just trying to help.

ANYA

Maybe if you came to one understudy rehearsal, you would know the director's vision and how we worked out every moment onstage.

MARIE

It's all wrong.

ANYA

Says the under-rehearsed understudy.

MARIE

P-LEASE. I could go on now and be the most amazing Juliet any audience has ever seen. It's a shame that they are being deprived of my interpretation. Some of them may hate Shakespeare because they saw you as Juliet.

ANYA

The scene change is almost done. I need to concentrate.

(MAISIE enters.)

MAISIE

Do you have the potion?

ANYA

In this vessel with the pestle.

MARIE

Such a waste having Juliet mix her own poison.

ANYA

Not at all. It gives Juliet more time to think about what she's doing.

MARIE

I would use the chalice from the palace. And drop the poison into the wine. That would be a true poisonous brew.

MAISIE

You don't have an entrance until the end. You can go.

ANYA

I was just giving Anya some pointers.

MAISIE

Go!

ANYA

Wait! I'm feeling faint. Did you put something else in my vessel? It smells odd ... it smells ...

(ANYA passes out.)

MAISIE

ANYA! The bed's in place. You have to get on.

ANYA

I ... cannot. I cannot stand.

MAISIE

What did you do?

MARIE

Nothing! I was just giving her some pointers. She was fine.

ANYA

I'm ... not ... fine.

(And ANYA'S out cold.)

MAISIE

I hate doing this – but you have to go on.

MARIE

What?

MAISIE

You're the understudy, right?

MARIE

But I can't. I don't have a costume.

MAISIE

Let's get it off Anya.

MARIE

How?

(THEY struggle and finally ANYA helps them by yanking off her nightgown herself and then passing out again. MAISIE throws the nightgown over MARIE.)

MAISIE

Get on that bed! I need to make an announcement. Excuse me.

(MAISIE pushes MARIE on and then speak into her headphones ... or something.)

MAISIE (cont'd)

The part of Juliet in the potion scene will be played by Marie Mendel. All is fine. We think. Just a slight change in plans.

(OFFSTAGE we hear a bit of MARIE doing the potion scene.)

MARIE

Shall I be married to Paris tomorrow morning? No, no. Is that a dagger I see before me? No, no. To be or not be? That is the answer. Out potion, out I say! All the world's a stage.....

(ANYA sits up.)

ANYA

How's she doing?

MAISIE

ANYA!

ANYA

Tell me. How's she doing out there?

MAISIE

She's totally. bombing. (Beat.) How are *you* doing?

ANYA

Me? Oh, I feel fine.

(And ANY has a big smile as we go to blackout.)

END OF PLAY