

ROMEO KHUMALO AND JULIET NAIDOO

A Musical Tragic-Comedy

Written By Jen Bryson Moorcroft

Based on *Romeo and Juliet* By William Shakespeare

(Please note that the script remains the property of the writer and may not be used without her written permission.)

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Romeo Khumalo: Romeo is sixteen, intelligent and sensitive. He is the romantic, emotional and feisty son of Khumalo and Lady Khumalo, the owners of a popular East London shebeen. He occasionally works in their shebeen, when he is not being a terror to the streets of East London with his gang, or snogging his hot girlfriend, Rosaline.

Juliet Naidoo: The pretty and innocent thirteen year old daughter of Indian businessman Mr. Naidoo and his wife Mrs. Naidoo, she is definitely more than just a pretty face and shows great courage as the play progresses.

Ben: Ben is Romeo's best friend and his right hand man, supportive and peaceful. Although full of bravado, he is actually a bit of a coward.

Merc: Romeo and Ben's other best friend and groupie. He is imaginative, witty and a drama queen, to say the least. He is very daring, trendy and overprotective towards Romeo. (Can be performed as a drag queen)

Priest: This fast-thinking charismatic clergyman comes to Romeo's rescue, or so he thinks.

Tybalt: Tybalt is a superhero gone wrong. He is Juliet's cousin and usually comes across as pompous, aggressive and looking for a fight.

Paris: Rich, Indian businessman Paris is a bit of a flop. He seems to be oblivious to the fact that the rest of the Naidoo family thinks he is rather dull, despite his good looks and wealth.

Mrs. Naidoo: Mrs. Naidoo is a highly-strung socialite who enjoys entertaining guests and can't wait to get her daughter off the shelf.

Mr. Naidoo: The respected owner of the Hemmingways Casino, Mr. Naidoo seems more interested in his business deals than the happiness of his own daughter and he doesn't seem to understand what is best for her.

Mr. Khumalo and Mrs. Khumalo: Romeo's parents have a successful shebeen which is threatened when Hemmingways Mall opens to the public. They are the enemies of the Naidoos.

The Nurse: The nurse is an old lady, rather ugly-looking, sentimental and vulgar.

Mayor of East London: He is benevolent, impartial and fair. He wants to maintain public peace at all costs.

2 female friends of Juliet (*only needed in scene 1*)

The hag (*only needed in scene 13*)

Rosaline (*voice-over*)

****Note for casting – the Khumalo family is Xhosa and the Naidoo family is Indian. The actor doesn't have to belong to this race/culture as long as the family differences are suggested through accent, clothing and acting. The Nurse can be very comically portrayed as a colourful Cape Coloured-type character.***

SCENE 1: THE BEACH – INTRO + SUMMER NIGHTS

(Narrator enters and sings to melody of American pie):

Narrator (sung): A long, long time ago

In fair East London

Lived two households – the Naidooos and Khumalos...

They fought over a big shebeen

They didn't grant their kids a dream

They thought they would protect them for a while...

From forth this fatal fued, it took

Two star-crossed lovers from Shakespeare's book

Their love incites their parent rage

We follow their story on our stage

I can't remember if I cried

When I thought of Romeo at Juliet's side

We hope it touches you deep inside,

In our musical tonight...

(Narrator exits. Chorus comes on stage dressed in beach clothes with beach props to back of stage. Front of stage consists of two groups: Romeo, Ben and Merc in one and Juliet and two friends in the other group.)

Friend: Hi Juliet, what have you been with doing with yourself all summer?

Juliet (uncomfortable): I can't really say...

Friend: Were you attending extra Maths classes?

Juliet: No, although I should have. But actually, I met a boy...

Friend: Oh, was it arranged by your parents?

Juliet: No, that's totally gross. Anyway, all the guys my parents know are boring businessmen looking for mail-order brides. This guy, he was sort of different...and exciting.

(On the other side of the stage the dialogue continues)

Ben: Hey Romeo, why haven't you been cruising with us anymore?

Romeo: I spent a lot of time at Nahoon beach.

Merc: We were deprived of your exquisite presence...

Romeo: You fool, I met a girl...

Ben: No fair, you always meet all the hot girls...

Romeo: This girl was different, she was sort of special.

Ben: So, does she have a sister? ***(Romeo shakes his head at Ben)***

Merc and Ben: Tell us more, Romeo!

Friend *(to Juliet)*: Does he like to flash his cash, or is he a cheapskate?

Ben *(to Romeo)*: Does she like expensive restaurants, or is she a cheap date?

<p><u>SUMMER NIGHTS:</u> Duet between Romeo and Juliet with Ben, Merc and friend and with backup from chorus.</p>
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BLACKOUT