

Romeo and Jules

A One Act Play

By

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Description: A Play about star crossed lovers set in modern time. Romeo (the son of lesbians) and Jules (the child of Evangelical Christians) meet in geometry class. Afterwards, Jules shares his secret. Her legal name is Juliet, and his mother does not know he's a boy. They fall in love quickly, giving Jules the courage to tell his mother the truth. It goes horribly wrong, and Jules prepares to commit suicide, but Romeo comes to his rescue

Cast of Characters:

Romeo: Athletically gifted renaissance man with many skills. He has two mothers who have taught him to be accepting of everyone.

Jules: A transgender male who grew up in an evangelical Christian household. Excellent at mathematics but has depression related to gender dysphoria and bullying. Has a defeated attitude at the beginning of the play, but gains strength from Romeo's love.

Teacher (Mr. Green): Geometry teacher who has harmful classroom policies

Mrs. White: Evangelical Christian who believes gender is determined by God at birth, and love should only be between a man and a woman. She has been bombarded with propaganda by her church for so long she has an overwhelming fear of the LGBTQ+ community, sex outside of wedlock and vices. She keeps Jules in a bubble.

Characters referenced but never seen

Romeo's mothers (One is named Traci): Lesbians who have been together for over 20 years and have raised Romeo as a couple since birth. Have suffered a great deal of societal discrimination.

Jules Father: Religious, but not a zealot like his wife. Is overpowered and overruled by her in family decisions.

Classmates: Two classmates of Jules who bullied him in honors Geometry.

Scene 1: Geometry

(A teacher stands stage right in front of a board if it's in the budget and stage left has two desks that are side by side. Romeo is sitting at the desk further from the audience. He is wearing a letterman's jacket, and his elbow is on the desk, and he is holding his head up looking listless. Perspective is tilted slightly with the teacher more toward the front of the stage so the audience can see each desk)

Teacher: So as you can see, because these angles are corresponding, their measures must be equal. If you do a little algebra, you get $x = 23$. Any questions?

Romeo: (raising his hand) When are we ever going to use this?

Teacher: On the next test. Any other questions?

(Romeo raises his hand)

Teacher: Any questions about this problem?

(Romeo puts his hand down)

(Jules enters from stage left holding a piece of paper that has his schedule on it. He is wearing a ball cap hiding long hair and a baggy zipper down hoody)

Jules: Excuse me, I was just transferred to this class.

Teacher: Students, look at the next problem while I handle some bureaucracy. (turning to Jules, and taking his schedule) Juliet White is it, please take the empty seat next to Romeo.

Jules: Can I talk to you privately before I take my seat?

Teacher: OK. (stepping to the side) Is there a problem?

Jules: I'm not a girl. I would appreciate it if you called me Jules and please use he/him pronouns when referring to me.

Teacher: I'm sorry, I have a strict policy of referring to students by their legal name only. All this gender silliness is

too complicated for me, so I treat every student the same. No nicknames, no changing names on a whim, just what is on your school records.

Jules: Aren't there rules against doing that?

Teacher: Not in this state. Have a seat.

(Jules slouches and looks at the ground and walks to his seat exhibiting a sense of defeat. He sits down and Romeo turns to him)

Romeo: Hi, I'm Romeo, don't think I've ever seen you around.

Jules: I'm Jules. I think this is the first class we have ever had together. I've seen you around though. I've also read about all your escapades on the Football field, and the home run you hit in the state championship game.

Romeo: Guess my reputation precedes itself. Just don't believe all the rumors. I only lettered in four sports.

Jules: I thought there were only three seasons.

Romeo: I quit wrestling after my freshman year to join the bowling team. The coach and I didn't see eye to eye.

Teacher: OK, let's focus and get back on track.

(Romeo goes back to his listless stare, Jules stares at him longingly)

Teacher: OK Anyone want to take a shot at this problem before I demonstrate how to solve it?

(Jules slowly raises his hand, very tentatively)

Teacher: Are you sure you want to try this one Juliet? I would hate for you to be embarrassed on your first day in class. I've rarely had a girl solve a problem this challenging.

Jules: (sighing heavily, putting his hand down, and speaks tentatively) The two lines are parallel and cut by a transversal. The two angles marked x squared minus 10 and $23x$

minus 20 are consecutive interior angles, so they must be supplementary. That gives us the equation $x^2 - 10x + 23x - 20 = 180$. If you put it in the standard form for a quadratic equation, you get $x^2 + 23x - 210 = 0$. That factors to $(x + 30)(x - 7) = 0$. Since x can't equal negative 30, it must equal 7, which means the angles are 39 degrees and 141 degrees.

(Romeo looks at Jules with an impressed look on his face)

Teacher: (looking puzzled looking where the board is or would be) Wait, that's an x^2 ? Guess that problem was harder than I thought. I think you're right, but I'll have to double check with the solution manual.

(bell rings, and Romeo and Jules walk out of class).

(blackout)

Scene 2: Bench

(Jules walks onto stage and sits on a bench and puts a backpack on his lap. As he begins to speak, Romeo enters from the opposite side behind the bench so Jules cannot see him)

Jules: O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?

Romeo: Behind you.

Jules: (jumps startled, then becomes embarrassed) Oh my god, I can't believe you heard that. I'm so embarrassed (covers his face with his hands).

Romeo: Don't be, you're not the first person to say that line around me. It's a hazard of the name my moms chose for me. Mind if I join you?

Jules: (tentatively) Sure.

Romeo: Your last name is White, right? I think one of my moms almost got into a fight with your mom at a PTA meeting last year.

Jules: Yeah, we don't quite see eye to eye on a lot of things. My mom proposed a set of criteria for banning books from the school library...

Romeo: (laughing) and my mom used the criteria to show the bible would have to be banned.

Jules: Yep. Wish my mom would stop trying to push her religious beliefs onto other people.

Romeo: So, I heard Mr. Green hassling you about your name.

Jules: I'm used to it. Only a few people know I'm really a guy. The transition hasn't gone well.

Romeo: That's a shame. People can be so ignorant. I have to say, I was impressed by your answer in class today. Never seen Mr. Green speechless before. Why aren't you in the honors Geometry class?

Jules: (hesitantly) Well I have been in honors math all the way back to middle school, but I had to leave the honors class and transfer to informal geometry.

Romeo: Why would you do that, you're going to be bored senseless.

Jules: I was being bullied in my other class. A few of the students were calling me fag, saying I'm a transvestite and should see a psychiatrist because of my affliction, kept asking me what's in my pants and telling me I'm not a guy if I can't pee standing up. They would block the boy's bathroom between classes and kept spraying me with perfume in the hallway.

Romeo: Wow! Some people can be monumental jerks.

Jules: You're telling me. I went to the principal, but instead of reprimanding them, he changed my schedule.

Romeo: That doesn't seem fair.

Jules: Well, it was either accept a schedule change or have a meeting with everyone's parents. My mom still doesn't know.

Romeo: That's a tough secret to keep. She is your mom. I'm sure she would understand if you told her the truth about yourself. My parents love me unconditionally, there is nothing I could ever do or say that would change that.

Jules: I've never felt that way in my house. My dad tries, but my mom goes overboard with everything. She wouldn't let me go on the class trip to Washington D.C. because boys and girls were allowed to stay on the same floor of the hotel. She won't even let us have cough medicine in the house because it contains alcohol. The one time I tried to go to soccer camp instead of summer bible classes. She grounded me for a month and took away my phone.

Romeo: That's intense. The worst I ever got was 5 hours of community service for sneaking into an R rated movie.

Jules: Could you imagine what my mom would do if I told her I am really a boy?

Romeo: Well there's only one way to find out. Someday you're going to have to be honest with her.

Jules: I know you're right, but I'll never be able to build up enough courage to stand up to my mom.

Romeo: never say never.

Jules: (looking at her watch) I better get going, she doesn't like it when I'm late.

Romeo: Can I walk you home?

Jules: Sure.

(They both get up, Jules puts a backpack over his shoulder and they start walking around the stage).

Romeo: So why were you reciting Shakespeare earlier?

Jules: Damn! I was hoping you would have forgotten about that. Isn't it obvious?

Romeo: Isn't what obvious?

Jules: You can't tell me you're oblivious to the fact that half the school has a crush on you. You look like Adonis, you sang lead in the musical, and you got three poems published in the school literary review.

Romeo: (shrugging it off) I'm just padding my resume a bit for when I apply to college. (affectionately teasing) So does this mean you like me?

Jules: I wish it was storming right now. Being struck by a bolt of lightning would get me out of this conversation.

Romeo: (laughing) I'll take that as a yes. Would it make you feel better if I told you I followed you to that bench so I could ask you out.

Jules: ME? You could date any girl in the school, and a good chunk of the guys.

Romeo: Meh. Everyone I've ever dated has been so boring. You walked into a new class and hit one out of the park on your first swing. No fear whatsoever.

Jules: Numbers are easy, it's people that I struggle with.

Romeo: See, we're a perfect fit. You handle the numbers and I'll handle the people.

Jules: Sounds like a match made in heaven. (both laugh) So what's it like having two moms?

Romeo: Complicated. When I was born, the state would only allow my biological mother's name on my birth certificate. Then the state wouldn't let mom adopt me, so for most of grade school I had to call her Traci instead of mom when she came to school. Seems like I always have to explain my family dynamic. That's a lot to put on a kid.

Jules: Why does everything have to be so difficult?

Romeo: You're preaching to the choir. If two people love each other, nothing else should matter...except age. Don't want any creeps trying to manipulate the system.

Jules: I concur on both of those points.

Romeo: I can't complain too much though, I had a great childhood. It was never boring. I got to give both of them away when they were finally able to get married. I walked down the aisle with Mom, ran back up and escorted Ma to the alter.

Jules:. That's so sweet. I can just imagine you in a little tux.

Romeo: If you play your cards right, you might get to see me in a tux sooner than later. There is a dance coming up

Jules: Be careful, I might call your bluff.

Romeo: If you think I'm bluffing, then call. I'm all in.

Jules: (laughing) You're too much. You told in class today that you quit the wrestling team because of something with your coach. Didn't you go to state last year?

Romeo: I finished third in the regional tournament. Coach figured I would have won the state championship for my weight class before I graduated.

Jules: Then why quit?

Romeo: During conditionals this year, Coach found out one of my teammates was gay and cut him. I turned in my uniform the next day and walked away.

Jules: Wow! I've never had anyone stand up for me like that before.

Romeo: Give me time. I'll stand up for you any time, any place.

Jules: Ok, that is the sweetest thing anyone has ever said to me. (pause) Are you punking me? If this is an elaborate prank, I swear I will give up on humanity.

Romeo: (placing his hand over his letter) I swear on my letterman jacket, I am honest and trustworthy. Everything I have said to you has come from the heart.

Jules: Guess I'll just have to take a leap of faith and trust you. Please don't make me regret it.

Romeo: Looks like you could use some TLC to restore your confidence in people.

Jules: Can't argue with that. My faith in humanity is on life support.

Romeo: Well then, CHALLENGE ACCEPTED! Let me put my number in your phone so I can be available at your beck and call if ever your faith in humanity starts to flatline and needs CPR.

Jules: (Laughing) You are too good to be true.

(Jules hands Romeo his phone and Romeo puts his number in it and hands it back)

Jules: We are almost at my house. Can you hold my bag so I can change?

Romeo: Don't change! I like you just the way you are.

Jules: Ha Ha.

(Jules hands Romeo his bag, then takes off his hat revealing long hair, and finally takes off his hoody revealing a feminine top. He shoves both in the bag and they walk on)

Jules: You still like me now that I don't look like a boy?

Romeo: I don't care about what's on the outside, I like you for what's on the inside.

Jules: Like bones and veins and muscles?

Romeo: (Laughing) No, like a sense of humor, a caring heart and a kickass brain.

Jules: Seems to me that my schedule change may have been destiny at work. I ditched my bullies and found you.

(They lean in to kiss but just before they can...)

Mrs. White: (from off stage) JULIET! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOUR DOING?

Jules: I got to go.

Romeo: Text me.

Jules: Ok. Thanks for walking me home.

Romeo: anything for a damsel in distress!

(Jules laughs, then walks off stage right and Romeo walks off stage left.)

(blackout)

Scene 3: The White House

(scenery is optional at the discretion of the producers)

Mrs. White: (begins angry) What were you doing with that boy?

Jules: He was just walking me home.

Mrs. White: I don't want you associating with those kinds of people.

Jules: You don't want me hanging out with Romeo just because he has two moms?

Mrs. Write: I don't want them trying to groom you.

Jules: I promise I won't let them brush my hair or give me a manicure.

Mrs. White: Don't get smart with me young lady, you know exactly what I mean. I don't want them trying to convince you that their lifestyle is a perfectly valid choice instead of a deviant, unnatural way of life.

Jules: Who says it's deviant?

Mrs. White: God! Our pastor! The Bible!

Jules: Where in the bible does it say that?

Mrs. White: (calms down and says with an air of selfrighteousness) Leviticus 18:22 "Man shall not lie with man, for it is an abomination"

Jules: Would you mind reading that verse from grandma's bible?

Mrs. White: (a bit frustrated) Fine if you doubt my memory. Let's see, Leviticus... chapter 18...verse 22 "Man shall not lie with young boys as he does with women, for it is an abomination".

Jules: See, that is about pedophiles not homosexuals.

Mrs. White: (dismissively) It's just a different translation. It doesn't matter anyway. The age of those involved is irrelevant. Men should not be with men!

Jules: But his parents are women, so it is ok. Right?

(Mrs. White slaps Jules across the cheek)

Mrs. White: (yelling angrily) DON'T YOU DARE TALK BACK TO ME! YOU HAVE NEVER ACTED LIKE THIS BEFORE.

Jules: It's amazing what kind and loving words can do to your self-esteem.

Mrs. White: So, I was right! He is trying to turn you against me. Why would you defend people that are going to burn in hell for their ungodly acts?

Jules: He isn't trying to turn me against you, he just wants me to be the person I want to be.

Mrs. White: The only person you should be is a devoutly religious, God fearing, chaste young lady.

Jules: Well, I guess I am one of those four.

Mrs. White: (Panicking) Did that boy touch you? Did he take your innocence? If he forced himself on you, we need to report it to the police!

Jules: He was nothing but a perfect gentleman.

Mrs. White: (Confused) If not that, then what? I have raised you your entire life to be devoted to the teaching of the church.

Jules: Yeah, I started doubting religion when I found out Deacon Ron had molested a boy at his previous church and they transferred him to ours without reporting it...then put him in charge of the youth group.

Mrs. White: He prayed for forgiveness and was accepted back into God's loving grace. Those people won't even admit their actions are hedonistic. (anger returns) God's Wrath will be unleashed on the wicked who do not repent.

Jules: What about God's love? Didn't Jesus want us to, "Love thy neighbor".

Mrs. White: Well Jesus didn't have neighbors that were reprobates. I just don't know why you would defend people like that.

Jules: Well mom, I guess you didn't get the hint. I'm not devoutly religious, I don't fear God and I'm chaste...what's left?

Mrs. White: (panicking) Are you not not acting like a lady? Are you smoking? Drinking? Did someone give you drugs?

Jules: No mom, I'm not a girl. I have never felt like my body matched who I am on the inside. This is who I am. (takes out the hat out of the backpack, tucks hair underneath it and puts on the hoodie) I don't want to be your daughter Juliet anymore. I want you to know who I really am. I'm your son, Jules.

(a look of fear comes over Mrs. Whites face and she begins to panic)

Mrs. White: (Crying, looking to the sky, hands folded in prayer) Dear Lord, I beseech you to help me in my hour of need. Satan is trying to claim the soul of my daughter! Please show her your righteous path. Cleanse her of these sinful thoughts

Jules: (Looking up, hands folded in prayer) Dear lord, I'm good. Would you mind calming my mother down? Love you man! (gives God a thumbs up, peace symbol or other warm gesture)

Mrs. White: God does not listen to blasphemers. That boy did this to you.

Jules: I've been this way long before I met Romeo. He just gave me the courage to be who I've always wanted to be.

Mrs. White: I gave birth to you! I will decide who you should be. We are going to church to pray this evil out of you!

Jules: Mom, you can't pray the gay away, or erase the fact that I'm really a boy.

Mrs. White: God made you a girl in my womb. Nothing will ever change that fact!

Jules: This is who I am, why can't you just accept me?

Mrs. White: Because it's my job to protect you. Those people have turned you against me, your faith, your womanhood and your God. I will not stand for this. I don't care if I have to send you away to live with your aunt in Maine, you will never see that boy again.

Jules: YOU CAN'T DO THAT TO ME! I LOVE HIM!

Mrs. White: you're too young to know what love is. Him and his deviant family have twisted your mind against me. I hate anyone that goes against God's will.

Jules: Well mom, be careful who you hate. It might be someone you love.

(Jules storms Off the stage)

Mrs. White: Don't walk away from me when I'm talking to you young lady!

(blackout)

Scene 4: The Text

(Jules walks on stage and sits on the same bench from scene two, takes out his phone and starts typing)

Jules: (Solemnly, with a sense of defeat and holding back tears) My dearest Romeo, I know we just met today, but you touched my heart like no other person I have ever met. Your kind words gave me the strength to finally stand up to my mother, but I realize now there is no point in pretending any more. Whenever I look in a mirror, I see a face that is not the true me. I have been told since birth to act like a girl, but all I have ever wanted to do was be the boy I know I am. The turmoil in my soul is tearing me apart. My mother, my church, the kids at school and even teachers have shown me that society will never accept the person I am. I leave behind nothing but pain and suffering. You are the only bright spot I have ever found in this life. Had I found you sooner, maybe I would be strong enough to go on, but it's too late for me. I almost wish I had never met you because of the sorrow my death may bring to you, but for once in my life I'm going to be selfishly grateful that I met my soulmate before giving up on this cruel world. I know it is crazy to say this after a few hours together, but I truly love you with all my heart. I'm sorry I can't bear going on. It breaks my heart that I will never see our love grow into something truly beautiful that could have shielded me from all the hate in this world. At least I now have a special place that will give me a warm feeling in my final moments. Remember me fondly. Jules.

(Jules hits send on his phone, puts his phone in one pocket and pulls out a medicine bottle and stares at it for 10-15 seconds)

Jules: To be or not to be, I guess I know the answer to that question. O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?

Romeo: (Gasping for breath) Here!

Jules: (wiping tears from her eyes) ROMEO! Why did you come here?

Romeo: To keep you from making a horrible mistake. I couldn't stop thinking about you, so I went for a walk. When I read your text, I ran here as fast as I could.

Jules: I didn't expect you to read that until it was all over.

Romeo: What are those? (pointing at the bottle)

Jules: Sleeping pills. I got them from my dad's medicine cabinet. I checked online. I have enough pills in here to let me pass peacefully.

Romeo: (starting to panic) But you have so much to offer to the world.

Jules: I'm sorry, I just don't see a point in living if I can't be the person I want to be.

Romeo: I want you to be that person. If the people in your life don't like who you are, find new people! No one else is going to live your life, so no one has the right to tell you how to live it.

Jules: But my mom threatened to send me away. It's not like I can get a new mom.

Romeo: I have two, you can have my spare.

Jules: Wouldn't that make us brother and sister.

Romeo: (looking serious) OK, I didn't think that through very well. (Jules starts giggling) Wait, is that a smile I see on your face?

Jules: I wish I would have met you sooner.

Romeo: Well, better late than never. There are plenty of things to live for.

Jules: Like what? The only reason I can come up with is you.

Romeo: OK that's one. There are plenty of people like you out there in this world. Every one of them felt as alone as you did until they found someone to accept them. Search them out. Make those people your new family.

Jules: You make it sound so easy. Fighting everything I've ever been taught is an overwhelming burden.

Romeo: Well, you don't have to fight this battle alone anymore. I've got your back.

Jules: (looking lovingly at Romeo) What did I do to deserve someone as caring as you?

Romeo: Fate put us together for a reason. I don't want you to give up on life. There is so much you could do.

Jules: Like what?

Romeo: Well, it looks like my purpose in life was to save you. Let's start by finding you a purpose.

Jules: Any suggestions?

Romeo: How about working to undo the damage people like your mom have done to this world.

Jules: How could I possibly do that?

Romeo (pause for a moment) I know, you could push the "Gay Agenda".

Jules: (Puzzled) What's that?

Romeo: Telling as many kids as you can "its OK to be different, please don't kill yourself."

Jules: I'm glad I got that message before I did something drastic.

Romeo: I'm glad my Baseball Coach had me doing wind sprints all season so I could get here in time.

Jules: Can one person actually make a difference in this world?

Romeo: I did tonight. Who knows how many people you can help if you put your mind to it.

Jules: But what do I do about my mom?

Romeo: I told you I'll Give you my mom.

Jules: How is that going to help me?

Romeo: She is an attorney for the ACLU. She could prove mental abuse and get you emancipated with one arm tied behind her back,

and I'm pretty sure I can talk her into giving you the friends and family discount...she can't say no to her little boy.

Jules: Little?

Romeo: What can I say about moms, I will always be the tiny little rugrat she rocked to sleep in her arms.

Jules: Aw. Maybe if I ask her nicely, she'll show me some baby pictures.

Romeo: Note to self: hide the bear skin rug photos. (they both laugh) How about we go get a milkshake and plan out how to create an LGBTQ+ group at school.

Jules: I could go for a triple chocolate milkshake. I'm in.

Romeo: I love you Jules.

Jules: And I love you, Romeo

(optional kiss, then they walk off stage holding hands).

(blackout)