

The Aftermath

*the real story of Verona's
most famous couple*



a ten-minute play

Gordon Blitz

Lights come up. In a mediator's office. A young man (R) and a young woman (J) are sitting in chairs facing a desk where an older man (Saul Prince) is sitting.

SAUL

I've spoken to your lawyers and they decided that it might be better for the three of us to meet. As a mediator, I've done this before and it can iron out issues more easily.

R

I just want to get this over with so I can get on with my life.

J

It's the same old thing. Always rushing.

SAUL

Let's get down to business. I know how difficult divorce can be. Sometimes it's a good idea to focus on the good things about your relationship. It makes the process less contentious. I'd like to get some background. How did you guys meet?

R

It was a dance. It was in the school gym. You were so impressed with my dance moves.

R gets up and starts dancing.

J

Sit down. You're embarrassing us. What are you talking about? That's not it at all. It was a masked ball in Verona.

R

Oh, yeah; that's right. It was your family, the Capulets, giving a party.

J

And you crashed the event. Montagues are mostly hoodlums, Mr. Prince. And you were so crazy. I couldn't believe how you found where I lived and

tried to climb up to my balcony. You could have killed yourself.

R

Well, I did fall. Sprained my ankle.

J

You were so romantic then. Everything you said that night was like poetry.

R

I was smitten.

J

I'll never forget when you said, '*See how she leans her cheek upon her hand; O, that I were a glove upon that hand, That I might touch that cheek!*'

R

Didn't I end up giving you a glove that night?

J

No, it was a handkerchief. And it had the name Desdemona on it. You never told me who that was. An ex-girlfriend?

R

Of course I told you. It was my sister. Before she died, she told me that I should give it to my first love.

J

Oh, that's right. So sad that she got strangled by her jealous husband.

SAUL

This is getting way too syrupy for me. You guys got married soon after you met. Were you pregnant, J?

J

No! We didn't have sex until after we got married. We were so young.

R

Tell me about it! And then you faked your death.

J

I had no choice. My parents would never let me marry a Jet. And, besides, we had a suicide pact.

R

You're confused. I'm a Montague, and you're a Capulet, although I wondered why your parents always called you Maria instead of J.

J

And *you* couldn't make up your mind whether you were a Jet or a Montague; in love with a Shark or a Capulet.

SAUL

I want you to get back to this discussion. What is this thing about a suicide?

R

You mean you don't know what happened?

SAUL

Well, it must have been *attempted* suicide, otherwise you wouldn't be here.

J

We almost didn't make it. It was this whole miscommunication thing. It was right after we got married. We hadn't even gone on a honeymoon.

R

I really thought she was dead. Sleeping so soundly after what she drank, and even when I shook her, she didn't wake up. I was distraught. That's why I fell off the wagon and finished off what she left in the vial.

J

So that's an excuse to overdose? You told me you'd been in rehab and attended meetings. I was hysterical when I woke up. And I thought the same thing. That you were dead. And why did you leave a knife near you?

R

It's a pocket knife. I always carry it with me. It's good protection. I didn't expect you to stab yourself with it.

R takes the knife out of his pocket.

SAUL

Hey! No weapons in this office. I'll have to take that away from you.

SAUL snatches the knife away from R. R starts to cry.

J

Oh, you're such a crybaby. It's like that knife is a childhood's blanket.

SAUL

I'll give it back to you at the end of this meeting.

SAUL holds the knife near J.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Did you really stab yourself with this?

J

Yes. Luckily I didn't hit an artery. And that's not even the same knife you left. That one was more like a dagger. I'm glad I had a tetanus shot because there was rust on the blade. And it was so eerie both of us in the hospital. They had to pump your stomach and stitch me up.

R

What a way to start a marriage. It was a bad sign. We should have gotten it annulled right then and there.

SAUL

Boy! You've been carrying around a lot of baggage.

R

Oh, it gets worse. Our parents disowned us. We had to drop out of school and start working.

J

I ended up being the social secretary for King John and King Lear. It paid well, but they were

J

so demanding. Thank goodness, I quit before Lear had those issues with his daughters.

R

And I had my hands full being the assistant to Lady MacBeth. Such a germophobe. Constantly washing her hands.

SAUL

But you've done well for yourselves. I've been going over the property to be divided. The castles alone are immense.

R

Yes, we lucked out. Somehow, we ended up inheriting from all of those royals. So many of them died young.

J

We had a good work ethic.

SAUL

And you never had children. I mean, it's a good thing you don't have to fight for custody or visitation rights. J, were you barren?

J

No! We just didn't want to bring kids into this world. Think about all the dysfunctional families we had to deal with. So many ended up dead from poisoning. It was such a scandal when Hamlet died along with his girlfriend's entire family; Ophelia, her father, Polonius and her brother, Laertes. And don't forget there was also King Claudius and Queen Gertrude. It was just awful!

R

Mr. Prince, can't we just wrap this up. I don't see why we need to go through all of these histories .

SAUL

But I like the histories. Think about the drama, betrayals, failures, big wars, little skirmishes and political intrigue.

J

You've been watching too many movies. Look, let's just divide up our possessions. I've made a list.

R

I have my own list.

J

I can just imagine what *you* listed. If it's swords, daggers, suits of armor, and candles, I don't care. You can have them.

R

Let me guess. You want all the crowns and all the goblets.

J

And don't forget the breastplates.

R

Heaven forbid someone should touch your breasts!

SAUL

Okay. Let's be civil.

J

Oh please. Do you mean, *where civil blood makes civil hands unclean?*

SAUL

You know maybe I'm missing something, but I'm trying to understand why you want a divorce.

R

I'm afraid she's going to kill me. She keeps waking me up by talking in her sleep and saying, '*Take him and cut him out in little stars.*'

J

You're taking it out of context. Afterwards, I said, '*And he will make the face of heaven so fine that all the world will be in love with night.*'

R

I just don't trust you anymore. Can't we just leave it at, *Parting is such sweet sorrow?*

SAUL

Okay. I think I understand where you're coming from. Now there are a few more things to hash out.

J

Yes. Who is going to get the royalties from *West Side Story*?

R

I want the original Broadway production and original film. You can have the Steven Spielberg remake.

J

That's so unfair. Why should I get stuck with the remake? It wasn't even a hit.

R

You said yourself that it's better; that the originals are outdated. You kept telling me that you didn't like Natalie Wood, and especially how they dubbed her voice.

J

Okay. I don't want to fight with you. As long as I get the dramas. Baz Luhrmann's version with Leonardo Di Caprio. Now that's a real man!

R

That is so hurtful. You don't hold a candle to Olivia Hussey in that Franco Zeffirelli movie.

SAUL

Did you ever wonder why J is alive at the end of the musical?

R

It just follows the stereotype that women outlive men.

SAUL

Did you know I sued the *West Side Story* producers? They left me out. The Prince is one of the most important characters. I have the most famous line, '*For never was a story of more woe; Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.*'

J

You're kidding me, right? Big deal! You aren't integral to the plot. So that line rhymes. Who cares?

J

It doesn't come close to, *That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.*

R

That doesn't even make sense. Mine is more evocative and much more poetic, *But soft, what light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.*

SAUL

I don't think we're going to settle this. Why don't we ask the audience? We'll say our lines and based on the response we'll decide who is the winner.

R

What does the winner get?

J

And how did *you* get included in this?

SAUL

Whoever gets the most applause gets a million Crypto currency.

J

What's *that*?

SAUL

It's the latest thing. And it's just as incomprehensible as Iambic Pentameter!

R & J stare at Saul in total confusion.

Blackout.

THE END