& Juliet

By Timothy X. Troy

A drama in two acts



10 Page Dialogue Sample

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Synopsis:

Following an environmental crisis, two citizen classes inhabit the Great Lakes Basin: ‘Arids’ who occupy the recently exposed lakebed, and Old Shores who protect the fresh water supply. Juliet falls for a New Shore pirate broadcaster who defies her widowed father, a police detective whose job is to protect the endangered natural resources. *Radio & Juliet* re-imagines Shakespeare’s themes in a cautionary tale with shades of George Orwell, amid the workings of an elusive crime spree only Juliet can solve.

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A drama in two acts. One Setting - Interior. 2 women. 1 man. 53 pages. Each act runs about 50 minutes each.

Setting: A Friday in April. Living room of a 1930’s Arts & Crafts home in a midwestern city on the Great Lakes. Front door entrance – steps or hallway to the bedrooms, doorway to kitchen. Generous bay windows with bench seating overlooking the front porch. A couch, a comfy chair, a coffee table, book shelves, landline telephone. The room features an old-time vacuum tube radio (a Philco, perhaps) with a glowing dial. Next to it, a chest big enough to store blankets, etc.

Act One:

Scene one: early morning before school and work

Scene two: late afternoon into dusk.

Act Two:

Near midnight.

Characters:

**Juliet Vernon** – 19 years old. A few weeks away from her adulthood initiation ritual called “The Scoring.”

**Gene Vernon**– her father 55-ish, a widower. Investigator for the local police force.

**Viola Kelly** – Female. 25 years old, a Special Agent of the Great Lakes Area District (GLAD) - a special administrative region of the Great Lakes states and Canadian provinces.

Radio Voices:

**Monty** – a New Shore revolutionary

Radio Announcer

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Act One - Scene 1:

*(The lights reveal the glow of the radio playing big band era music before we establish a grey dawn through the front window. A floor or side table lamp illuminates Juliet dressed in a bathrobe sitting on the couch, her hair wrapped in a towel, scratching away at last-minute math homework before school.)*

Radio Broadcast

This is Don Jacobs with your Friday morning satellite weather forecast. Expect rapidly falling temps as our friends from Canada send us a blast of arctic air. Rain will turn to snow by evening. Expect 4 to 6 inches overnight. Inland temps will drop over 30 degrees between now and midnight. New Shore territories will see overnight wind-chills dip as low as 5-10. Winter’s not done with us yet! Tune in throughout the day for updates from the Lakes District weather bureau. Back to morning oldies from your friends at WXGL Broadcasting Network – your source for news, weather, and the music your parents loved.

*(A Les Paul and Mary Ford ballad continues under. Enter Gene Vernon in a bathrobe and slippers.)*

Gene

Or the music your grandparents loved in your case.

Juliet

Something about modern music on an old radio doesn’t fit.

Gene

It charms me that you’re so fond of that antique.

Juliet

I like it. I need to finish this.

Gene

(*Retrieving the morning paper from the front porch*. *He puts it on the window seat. Considers her for a moment.)* You done in the bathroom?

Juliet

Yep.

Gene

I’m running a good hot bath before the day gets cold.

Juliet

Soapy suds.

Gene

Watch the time.

Juliet

I know.

Gene

Did you eat?

Juliet

(anticipating the questions) Yes, I ate.

Gene

Don’t be fooled by the warm weather.

Juliet

I’ll wear a hat … (sotto voce) even though is messes up my hair.

Gene

How’s your certification prep? Studying going well?

Juliet

That’s why I need to finish, Papa.

Gene

We need to find someone to help you with math. If you want it. I’m not saying you can’t do it yourself. I know you can.

Juliet

It’ll be fine.

Gene

I wouldn’t know.

Juliet

I know. Done. When do I meet your new partner?

Gene

Maybe today. I don’t remember if we’re meeting …

Juliet

Will she call?

Gene

…. or I’m getting picked up. You’ll meet her soon. I’m not hiding her.

Juliet

And how’s it going?

Gene

She’s a young pup. Seems more reasonable than most of them.

Juliet

What does that mean?

Gene

You know. I’m not saying anything bad, just … no, I retract that. She gets what we’re doing. Sometimes … little misunderstandings. Nothing important. It’s amazing how using the same words, doesn’t always mean you’re speaking the same language. They’re so different. How can that be?

Juliet

We’re here, and they are over there.

Gene

As usual, your wisdom belies your age. Bring a warm coat today.

Juliet

I know how to get dressed.

Gene

(*Playfully*.) Wear a warm coat and boots. Do it, or I’ll box your ears, you!

Juliet

Oh, Poppy, you’re so arcane. I fixed your lunch.

*(Gene exits. Juliet double-checks her homework until she is sure Gene is in the tub. She rushes to the radio and tunes through static looking for a particular spot on the dial. A voice comes through. It’s a low power, amateur, mobile pirate broadcast. She turns down the volume and sits at the window seat with her ear near the speaker.)*

Monty

… water distribution early today. This storm may lock us in for a day or two. New Shore authorities ask for your cooperation. People have asked me for news about the crews preparing the paddies near the escarpment. Our low power buddy, Sinclair, was shut down a couple days ago, so he relay is interrupted. We’ll let you know when he’s on the air again. I have Mandy right here. She’s monitoring off-dial. Mandy says “hi.” Uh, OK, … Mandy says to say “hi” to our Old Shore friends, thanks for the opening last week. Kisses to the cute brunette! Mandy! You’re insatiable!

Monty (cont.)

We know there are so many Old Shore kids, healthy and smart, building a new tomorrow. Returning America to the Americans. To flow is our destiny: The birthright of our homeland. We cannot let a generation grow up behind fences. And we’ll resist, and keep getting in the way: ‘Til we make the bastards see. (*Juliet echoes this with a signifying gesture like a salute. We see a figure on the porch through the sheer curtains.*)

Yours truly and Mandy will be heading up to Old Shore tonight, with two missions. We’re going to try to take out the distribution station at Bradford, during the shift change. Then we’re going to find that Howard Avenue valve and “let it flow.”

(*Gene’s voice from upstairs.)*

Gene

Jules! Towel’s on the floor!

Juliet

Sorry!

Monty (cont.)

Ugh ... yes Mandy’s right – thanks to the young people for the tip about that shift change. Then we’ll head to the Drop Zone to meet with those wonderful pre-scores, the beautiful young people, the pride of tomorrow.

We’re going off-dial tonight with a special message for our Old Shore allies. Oh, boy – we gotta go. It’s getting hot. Allies, we’ll be off-dial ‘til this time on Monday.

*(She salutes. A knock at the front door. Juliet is startled.)*

Follow the pattern to find us tonight. This land is your land. Out.

*(The sound of tires peeling from the radio as Juliet quickly turns the tuner to the oldies station. Juliet turns off the radio and rushes to the door. She comes back in with Viola Kelly.)*

Juliet

He’ll be right down. He didn’t remember if you were coming, or you were meeting.

Viola

Fresh news.

Juliet

*(Suddenly self-conscious about being undressed.)* I need to get ready for school. Last-minute homework. Coffee?

Viola

Just a glass of water. Shall I get it?

Juliet

I got it. Sit. (*She goes to the kitchen*.)

Viola

(*Examines the room – bookshelves, etc. Looks at the radio*.) This is a relic!

Juliet

*(Off.)* It was my grandparents’. It’s fun.

Viola

What a thing. It’s so … I don’t know ... substantial. It’s furniture! Surprised you can still get parts for it. May I?

Juliet

*(Nervous. Suddenly appears at the door with a glass of water*.) No … uh … sure. Here you go.

Viola

(*Viola leaves the radio*.) Thanks. Your dad and I have to go to a breech they found last night. Sorry, to uh … you know … morning routine … getting ready for school … Ah … I can wait … you know, in the car.

Juliet

You will not.

Viola

Thanks. I’ll wait in the kitchen

Juliet

Why? Relax. Dad will be down a few minutes. There’s the paper. He’s in the tub.

Viola

Sorry … I really didn’t mean to … I didn’t think … ugh. I should have called ahead. I think we said I’d pick him up. Anyway … it’s good to finally meet you.

Juliet

(*Closes her robe tighter*.) I’m … ah … just a little … naked here… (*she giggles*). And I need to get ready. (*Back into the kitchen*.)

Viola

Take a bath. Loofah. Smell like lavender.

Juliet

(*Off*) Rub-a-dub.

Viola

Two gals in a tub.

Juliet

(*Peeks*.) What’s that? *(Disappears again.)*

Viola

Luxurious baths: the privilege of the Old Shore. I wouldn’t give it up for anything. Long showers, too. I even have a fish tank. I like to watch the fish swim. Do they ever sleep? I even like washing dishes now. Sometimes I drink straight out of the tap, just ‘cause I can. Get all bent over sideways like a cat.

(*She demonstrates, with funny sounds*. *Juliet returns*.)

Juliet

It’ll be cold down there today.

Viola

Heck, yeah. And that whole thing of boiling water to cook noodles, then using the same water to wash up. Using it again to rinse vegetables, washing clothes with it, and finally water the plants.

Juliet

You grew up there, didn’t you?

Viola

How many times can you use the same water!? It’s exhausting.

Juliet

It’s not fair, you know.

Viola

I suppose it isn’t.

Juliet

How long have you been up here … before you partnered with my Dad.

Viola

Just a few weeks. Training. A tour. Out with some other squads. I like it.

Juliet

That’s good.

Viola

The New Shore. You know the deal. It’s a pain, but isn’t torture.

Juliet

Dad talks about that, how they moved you all East … to here. It would be so easy for him to tell me things that he shouldn’t, so he avoids the subject all together. I guess that will change, soon. You know … with graduation, the Scoring party, registering to vote, suddenly being grown up … blah, blah.

Viola

So, what are your plans ... after your scoring? Newshies don’t really do that. It always sounds like fun. Your dad’s been very welcoming. With this new set up. Some of the older guys, they don’t quite understand the arrangement, but your dad ... well … I don’t have to tell you what a great guy he is.

Juliet

Got your lunch, Papa! I know. He likes you. I’m sure I will, too

Viola

Sounds swell. Take me somewhere … sometime, if you want. Where young people go. I really don’t know this town … that way.

Juliet

And you grew up ... just over there. (*She points east toward the window*). Doesn’t seem right. You wouldn’t want to hang out with silly pre-scores. I gotta go. Dad’s on his way. (*She puts two lunch bags on the coffee table*.)

*(A beep from Viola’s walkie-talkie takes her attention. She puts it up to her ear. We don’t hear the other speaker. Juliet stops to listen before she exits.)*

Viola

Agent Kelly. Over. (*Listens*) Right. I didn’t know it was that close to Howard. Right. Good work. I’m at his house. We still have Bradford to check out. That’s Detective Vernon’s decision. He’ll contact you. Over. (*She puts the radio away, notices Juliet listening. To Juliet*.) It’s a breech thing. (*Back to the dispatcher*.) Vernon and I … to Bradford … one or the other ... yes, by lunch. Yes, we will. Out.

Juliet

Can’t blame them for trying.

Viola

It’s not a perfect arrangement. I’d be the expert in the room on that topic. But we must uphold the integrity of the Basin.

Juliet

(*with her*) … the integrity of the Basin. Of course. My Dad’s just here.