

WOULD A MCRIB, BY ANY OTHER NAME, NOT TASTE AS SWEET?

Written by

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Based on "Romeo and Juliette" by William Shakespeare

FADE IN:

INT. NONDESCRIPT STUDIO OFFICE - DAY

At a table reading, PAUL and MEGAN sit adjacent to one another, scripts in hand. MENDEL looks on. The room is filled with excited executives and onlookers.

MENDEL

(To the audience)

Quiet please, quiet! Hello, and welcome to the first cast read-through of "Romeo and Juliet", sponsored by the McDonald's corporation and Burger King, LLC., and directed by me, Mendel Washington. On my left is Paul Guinness, who will be playing Romeo, and the lovely lady to my right is Megan Warburton, our Juliet. Agin, this will be our first read-through, so ...

(To the actors)

You've both read the script?

MEGAN

I skimmed it.

PAUL

I read Macbeth in high school!

MENDEL

Perfect, okay. Let's get started.

Mendel plops himself into the seat between PAUL and MEGAN.

MENDEL (CONT'D)

Alright, act two, scene two. So, from your line, Paul?

PAUL

Ahem.

PAUL rises from his seat dramatically. He speaks royally.

PAUL (CONT'D)

But wait, what's that light in the window over there? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun. Rise up, beautiful sun, and kill the jealous moon.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

Likewise, head over to McDonalds for their early bird breakfast sandwiches, now only \$4.99 The moon is already sick and pale with grief because you, Juliet, her maid, are more beautiful than she. Shine, thou does, like the light heating the fries sweetly in the evening. Oh, there's my lady! Oh, it is my love. Oh, I wish she knew how much I love her. If her eyes were in the night sky, they would shine so brightly through space that birds would start singing, thinking her light was the light of day. If her skin were a McNugget, it'd have the crispiest, yet softest texture.

PAUL sits. The room is stunned. MEGAN seems dazzled.

MEGAN

Oh my.

MENDEL

(Unfazed)

Stay on script, please.

MEGAN

(Reading from script)

Ay me!

PAUL

She speaks! Oh, speak again, bright angel. Her voice sparkles like the crackling of static on the drive-thru monitor on a cold winter's night. You are as glorious as an angel tonight. You shine above me, like an ice cream machine from heaven who makes mortal men fall on their backs to look up at the counter, watching employees carefully craft a Shamrock Shake.

MEGAN

(Unsure)

Oh, Romeo, Romeo, why do you have to work at McDonald's? Forget about your wages and quit. Or else, if you won't change your name, just swear you love me and I'll...stop working at...Burger King...

PAUL

I trust your words. Just call me your love, and I will take a new job. From now on I shall never serve thy arches of gold.

MEGAN

Who are you? Why do you hide in the darkness and listen to my corporate thoughts?

PAUL

'Tis I, your dearest Romeo!

MEGAN

Tell me, how did you get in here? And why did you come? The play place walls are high, and it's hard to climb over them. If my boss knows you're here, he'll kill you because of who you are.

PAUL

I flew over these walls with the light wings of love, and to check out the great value of the new jalapeño chicken fries. An automatic door can't keep love out. Whatever a man in love can possibly do, his love will make him try to do it. Therefore your boss is no obstacle.

MEGAN

(To Mendel)

I'm sorry, what's my motivation in this scene, exactly?

MENDEL

A paycheck, now read the lines.

MEGAN

(Reluctantly)

I'd give anything to keep him from seeing you here. Who told you how to get to my palace of employment?

PAUL

Love showed me the way. Also, with thy app of Uber Eats, finding great restaurants is just a tap away!

MEGAN

Be true, Romeo. Do you love me? I know you'll say "yes," and I'll believe you. But if you swear you love me, you might turn out to be lying. Oh Romeo, if you really love me, say it truly. Or if you think it's too easy and quick to win my heart, I'll frown and play hard-to-get, as long as that will make you try to win me, but otherwise I wouldn't act that way for anything. In truth, handsome Romeo, I like you too much, as I like the spicy chicken junior. I'll prove myself more faithful than other girls. You overheard me talking about the love in my heart when I didn't know you were there. So excuse me, and do not assume that because you made me love you so easily my love isn't serious, unless, again, we're talking about the spicy chicken junior...which is only 390 calories...and now comes in a value meal.

PAUL

I swear by...by thy work schedule posted near the hand washing sink!

MEGAN

Don't swear by the schedule. Every week its position shifts, and our supervisor doesn't even let us know until Friday which is really annoying but I digress. I don't want you to turn out to be that inconsistent too.

(To Mendel)

Are you sure William Shakespeare would've used "really annoying"?

MENDEL

Megan, please. You're going to take Paul out of character.

PAUL

(To Mendel)

Oh no, Mendel, I'm in the zone. I'm in this scene.

(Back in character)

What shall I swear by, my sweet?

MEGAN

Swear to the reliable, like the Happy Meal, which always provides a healthy and nutritious meal alongside a smile to children. Ah, why must thou be a McDonald's employee? Would a McRib, by any other name, not taste as sweet?

PAUL

Thou brains are as pronounced as thy beauty, my angel. Yet the night is cruel, and thy time is running short. I bid thee a night as sweet as thou cini-minis.

MEGAN

Sleep softly, my prince. When it comes to our time together ...

Megan furrows her brow at the script. She looks to Mendel.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

No.

MENDEL

Say the line, Megan!

Megan inhales, raises the script to read.

MEGAN

When it comes to our time together...I'm lovin' it.

The room erupts into applause. Megan gives an unamused frown.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END