



Eddie McPherson

Inspired by William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*

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ROMEO AND JULIET OUT WEST

FARCE. The laughs never end in this wacky Wild West version of *Romeo and Juliet*. Romeo Earp crashes the Oakley's Harvest Festival, and it's love at first sight when he spies Juliet Oakley. The only problem is that the Oakleys and Earps are sworn enemies. How will Juliet tell her dad that she's fallen in love with a boy he hates worse than burnt cornbread *and* ward off Deputy Martin who already has his sights set on marrying up with her? To make matters worse, Romeo accidentally kills Juliet's cousin and is banished from Possum Trot. Still wantin' to marry her sweet, brave, murderin' Romeo, Juliet drinks from a bottle labeled "Almost Poison" despite Preacher Lawrence's advice: "If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop diggin'."

Performance Time: Approximately 60-75 minutes.

CHARACTERS

(5 M, 4 F, 19 flexible, opt. extras)
(With doubling: 5 M, 4 F, 15 flexible)

- ROMEO:** Mr. and Mrs. Earp's son; male.
- MR. EARP** (Montague): Romeo's daddy and the patriarch of the Earp family; male.
- MRS. EARP** (Lady Montague): Romeo's mama and Mr. Earp's wife; female.
- DANIEL/DAISY** (Benvolio): Romeo's cousin and friend; flexible.
- STEPHEN/SUSANNA** (Mercutio): Romeo's friend; flexible.
- SAM/SUSANNAH** (Balthasar): Romeo's friend and an employee of Mr. Earp; flexible.
- ABRAHAM/ABIGAIL** (Abraham): Romeo's friend; flexible.
- JULIET:** Mr. and Mrs. Oakley's only daughter; female.
- NANNY** (Nurse): Juliet's nanny; female.
- MR. OAKLEY** (Capulet): Juliet's daddy and the patriarch of the Oakley family; male.
- MRS. OAKLEY** (Lady Capulet): Juliet's mama and Mr. Oakley's wife; female.
- ILLITERATE RANCH HAND:** Ranch Hand who works for the Oakleys and is illiterate; flexible.
- RANCH HAND:** Works for the Oakleys and likes being onstage; flexible.
- SAMPSON/STELLA** (Sampson): One of Mr. Oakley's hired hands; flexible.
- GRACE/GREG** (Gregory): Another hired hand of Mr. Oakley's; flexible.
- BRUTUS** (Tybalt): Juliet's cousin on her mother's side; male.
- BARD 1:** Narrator; flexible.
- BARD 2:** Narrator; flexible.
- PREACHER LAWRENCE** (Friar Lawrence): The preacher of the local church; friends with both Romeo and Juliet; flexible.

SISTER MARY/BROTHER MICHAH (Friar John): A member of Preacher Lawrence's church; flexible.
DEPUTY MARTIN (Paris): Deputy in Possum Trot who wishes to marry Juliet; male.
MARSHAL (Prince Escalus): Marshal of Possum Trot; flexible.
OFFICER 1, 2: Officers who work for the Marshal; flexible.
DOCTOR (Apothecary): A poor mountain doctor in Bullet County; flexible.
GUEST 1, 2: Guests at the Harvest Festival; flexible.
MULE: Wears a mule mask/costume; non-speaking; flexible.
EXTRAS (opt.): As Ranch Hands, Harvest Festival Guests, and Brutus's Friends.

OPTIONS FOR DOUBLING

RANCH HAND/ILLITERATE RANCH HAND (flexible)
MULE/SAM (flexible)
GUEST 1/OFFICER 1 (flexible)
GUEST 2/OFFICER 2 (flexible)

COSTUMES

Characters wear stereotypical western clothing.

SETTING

Town of Possum Trot.

SET

Possum Trot. Can be performed on a bare stage using 4-5 wooden chairs as set pieces that are brought on and off or simply rearranged to represent set pieces. An old wooden fence stretches across the upstage wall with a few cacti here and there. Hay bales and cacti cutouts may be placed about the playing area.

PROPS

Pitchfork	Carrot
Oversized slingshot	2 Plastic toy knives
Homemade bow and arrow	Long red piece of cloth
Boxing gloves, opt.	Hat, for Daniel
2 Toy rifles/shotguns	Small bottle labeled "Almost Poison"
Pajamas with clowns on them, for Mr. Oakley	Small bottled labeled "Poison"
Lantern	Play script
2 Toy stick horses (may be handmade)	Handkerchiefs, for Bard 1, 2
Freddy Krueger mask (or another mask), for Romeo	Large box of Tide laundry detergent
Mask, for Stephen	Cane, for Doctor
Mask, for Daniel	Credit card
Punchbowl (opt.) and glasses or paper cups	Letter
Small bottle of breath spray	Tombstones (cardboard cutouts)
Large bottle of breath spray	Bouquet of flowers
"Censored" sign	Whistle
Hairbrush	Flashlight
Paper for list	Cardboard cutout of orange sun
Cactus cutout	
Flashlight	

SPECIAL EFFECTS

“Home on the Range” or another suitable song
Bluegrass music
Upbeat bluegrass music
Hallelujah Chorus
Theme from *Rocky* or another suitable song
Theme song from *A Fistful of Dollars* or other cowboy music
Sad western music like “Farewell to Cheyenne” or another
suitable song
Thunder

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**“LORD HAVE MERCY ON MY SOUL,
I HAVE FALLEN IN LOVE
WITH THE BOY
MY DADDY HATES WORSE
THAN BURNT CORNBREAD.”**

—JULIET

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(Before the curtain. Bard 1, 2 enter.)

BARD 1: *(To audience.)* This here little story takes place on some good ranchin' country called Possum Trot located in the Old West...wherever the heck that is.

BARD 2: *(To audience.)* Two families livin' high on the hog have been a-feudin' for as long as anybody can recollect.

BARD 1: *(To audience.)* Oh, and we hope the western clichés ain't overdone. But I might as well tell you right now the play is full of 'em.

BARD 2: *(To audience.)* Anyway, here's their story. I mean, here's their story...y'all.

(AT RISE: "Home on the Range" plays as lights come up. The stage is bare except for a fence that stretches across the upstage wall and a few cacti sitting here and there. These simply represent the Old West and may remain onstage throughout. Wooden chairs are brought on and off or simply rearranged to represent set pieces. Sampson, carrying an oversized slingshot, and Greg, carrying a pitchfork, enter one side of the stage.)

BARD 1: *(To audience.)* Two rough-lookin' ranch hands wearin' cowboy hats and belongin' to the Oakley family walk down a road carryin' pitchforks and oversized slingshots.

BARD 2: *(To audience.)* And they look like they might be lookin' for mischief.

SAMPSON: Them Earp boys are askin' for a heap of trouble!

GREG: They best watch out, 'cause I'm good with a pitchfork.

Ouch! Just stuck myself with my pitchfork.

SAMPSON: Yonder comes two of them Earp cowpokes now!

BARD 1: *(To audience.)* Abraham and Sam, two friends of Romeo Earp, walk up with their lips packed with tobacco

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'cause that's how we picture cowboys. [Note: No use of chewing tobacco is required. Actors may stuff their lips with cotton etc.]

(Abraham, carrying a bow and arrow, and Sam, wearing boxing gloves, enter the opposite side of the stage.)

GREG: Hey, Abraham, did your mama let you out of the house all by yourself?

BARD 2: *(To audience.)* In these parts, nobody gets away with talkin' about a man's mama.

ABRAHAM: What did you say about my mama?

GREG: Your mama's so fat—

ABRAHAM: Watch it, you scoundrel!

GREG: She has to iron her pants on the driveway.

ABRAHAM: That does it! I'm ready to fight!

SAMPSON: Draw your weapons!

ABRAHAM: Can't!

SAMPSON: Why not?

ABRAHAM: Ain't got no pencils!

SAMPSON: You did *not* just go there!

ABRAHAM: What you goin' to do about it?

BARD 1: *(To audience.)* Anyway...Daniel Earp, Romeo's cousin, comes a-runnin' 'round the bend and moves to them with a raised shotgun.

(Daniel runs on, holding his shotgun over his head.)

DANIEL: Break it up, you polecats!

BARD 2: *(To audience.)* Brutus Oakley comes a-runnin' from the other direction.

(Brutus runs on in the opposite direction holding his gun above his head.)

BRUTUS: Hey, Daniel Earp, turn around, you skunk, you're about to meet your maker!

BARD 2: *(To audience.)* A nasty fight breaks out.

(Bluegrass music plays as a funny fight scene takes place. Other Ranch Hands can join them, optional.)

EARPS: Down with the nasty Oakleys!

OAKLEYS: Down with the filthy Earps!

BARD 1: *(To audience.)* 'Bout that time, Mr. Oakley hisself walks up still wearin' his pajamas.

(Wearing pajamas covered with clowns, Mr. Oakley enters and poses like Superman.)

BARD 2: *(To audience.)* Along with his wife who is holdin' a lantern.

(Mrs. Oakley enters and holds her lantern up in the air.)

MR. OAKLEY: *(Moving CS.)* What in tarnation is all this noise out here?

MRS. OAKLEY: All you boys have done lost your ever-lovin' minds!

BARD 2: *(To audience.)* Mr. Earp comes ridin' up on his horsey— *(Realizes.)* I mean, *horse*.

BARD 1: *(To audience.)* Sharin' the saddle with his wife.

(Mr. Earp and Mrs. Earp enter riding a toy stick horse.)

MR. OAKLEY: *(Pointing.)* Here comes loudmouth Earp.

MRS. OAKLEY: *(To Mr. Oakley.)* You just keep yourself calm, mister.

BARD 1: *(To audience.)* Mr. Earp jumps off his horse. *(Mr. Earp jumps off his horse.)* And the horse runs away in fear.

(Note: A stagehand pulls the "horse" offstage with fishing wire.)

MR. EARP: What you up to, Oakley? You snake in the grass!

BARD 2: *(To audience.)* Mrs. Earp tries to hold her husband back.

MR. EARP: *(To Mrs. Earp.)* Let me go, you heifer!

MRS. EARP: *(Hands on hips.)* Who you callin' a heifer?! Take another step, and I'll slap a knot on your head and dare it to rise!

BARD 1: *(To audience.)* Mr. Earp breaks loose from his heifer— *(Realizes.)* Uh, wife.

BARD 2: *(To audience.)* Another brawl breaks out.

(Bluegrass music plays as another funny fight scene takes place.)

EARPS: Down with the nasty Oakleys!

OAKLEYS: Down with the filthy Earps!

BARD 2: *(To audience.)* The Marshal runs up with a couple of his officers. *(Marshal and Officer 1, 2 enter and run across the stage and out the other side. Shouts their way.)* Over here!
(Marshal and Officer 1, 2 run back on and approach the Mob.)

MARSHAL: *(To Mob.)* Settle down here!

BARD 1: *(To audience.)* He shoots his gun into the air!

MARSHAL: *(Pointing his gun straight up.)* Bang!

BARD 1: *(To audience.)* Sorry about the cheap sound effects, but we didn't have a lot of money for this play.

(Mob is frozen in mid-action.)

MARSHAL: *(To Mob.)* Are you all hard of hearin'? Put down them thar weapons!

BARD 2: *(To audience.)* The fightin' stops, sudden-like.

(Still frozen, each actor drops his/her weapon.)

MARSHAL: *(To Mob.)* This is the third time y'all have disturbed the peace. I want ever'body to go home before I pull out my handcuffs! Git!

BARD 1: *(To audience.)* And ever'body did git.

BARD 2: *(To audience.)* They gitted faster than anybody had ever saw.

(Everyone unfreezes, picks up his/her weapon and runs offstage, screaming.)

MR. EARP: Much obliged, Marshal.

MR. OAKLY: Yeah, Marshal, much obliged.

MR. EARP: *(Nose to nose with Mr. Oakley.)* I said it first.

MR. OAKLY: Oh, yeah?

MR. EARP: Yeah!

MARSHAL: Fellas, I'm warnin' you...

MRS. OAKLY: *(Grabs Mr. Oakley's arm and starts to pull him off.)* Come on, dummy.

MR. OAKLY: *(Shaking his fist as he is being pulled offstage, shouts.)* I'm warnin' you, Earp. I'm warnin' yooooooooou!

(Mr. and Mrs. Oakley exit.)

MARSHAL: Ever'body back to bed!

(Marshal hitches his britches and exits the stage like a cowboy from a bad western movie followed by Officer 1, 2, who walk in the same fashion.)

MR. EARP: Daniel, who started all that thar ruckus?

DANIEL: Ain't sure. They was already fightin' when I got there.

MRS. EARP: At least Romeo wasn't involved. *(Looks around.)* Have you seen him lately?

DANIEL: I saw him down by the creek lookin' sadder than a cow with no teeth.

MRS. EARP: Ever' day he comes home and locks hisself up in his room tighter than a girdle on grandma.

BARD 1: *(To audience.)* 'Bout that time, Romeo hisself walked up lookin' lower than a snake's belly in a wagon rut.

BARD 2: *(To audience.)* We warned y'all about the clichés. Sorry.

(With his head bowed low and his shoulders drooping, Romeo enters, walking without picking up his feet.)

MR. EARP: There's Romeo now.

DANIEL: I'll find out what's botherin' him.

MR. EARP: Don't count on it. Let's go, dear. I'll call the horsey. Bessie, come!

(Someone offstage pitches the stick horse to Mr. Earp and he catches it. Mr. Earp and Mrs. Earp climb aboard the stick horse and "ride" offstage. Daniel crosses to Romeo.)

DANIEL: Mornin', Cousin Romeo.

ROMEO: Morin'. *(Heavy sigh.)*

DANIEL: Why you so down in the mouth?

ROMEO: 'Cause I've tried sweet-talkin' this girl and winkin' at her like this... *(Winks.)* ...but all she'll say to me is... *(In a girl's voice.)* ..."I ain't never gettin' married, Romeo."

DANIEL: You do a good girl.

ROMEO: Thanks.

DANIEL: Don't fret none 'cause these parts are swarmin' with females.

ROMEO: Ain't none as pretty as *my* gal, though. I'm goin' now. Bye.

(Romeo exits in the same fashion he entered. Daniel turns to the audience.)

DANIEL: *(To himself.)* I'll get through to that knucklehead or die tryin'.

ROMEO: *(Sticks his head back in.)* I heard that.

DANIEL: Sorry.

(Romeo disappears. Daniel drops his head and exits opposite. Four or five chairs are brought on and lined up. Deputy Martin and Mr. and Mrs. Oakley enter and stand behind the chairs.)

BARD 2: *(To audience.)* We take you now to the patio of the Grime's home.

BARD 1: *(To audience.)* Where Deputy Martin is speakin' with Mr. and Mrs. Oakley.

DEPUTY MARTIN: *(To Bards, indicating chairs.)* Wait a minute. *This* is the patio?

BARD 1: It's not the scenery that makes a good play...it's the story.

DEPUTY MARTIN: Whatever. Mr. Oakley, Mrs. Oakley, I'm just goin' to come right out and say it. I want to marry up with your Juliet.

MR. OAKLEY: But she just turned 18.

DEPUTY MARTIN: That's my point. She ain't gettin' any younger.

MR. OAKLEY: Maybe wait a few years.

MRS. OAKLEY: Dear, I think it will be okay. He's not all that handsome, but he has a steady job.

DEPUTY MARTIN: *(Offended.)* Some say I'm a hunk.

[END OF FREEVIEW]