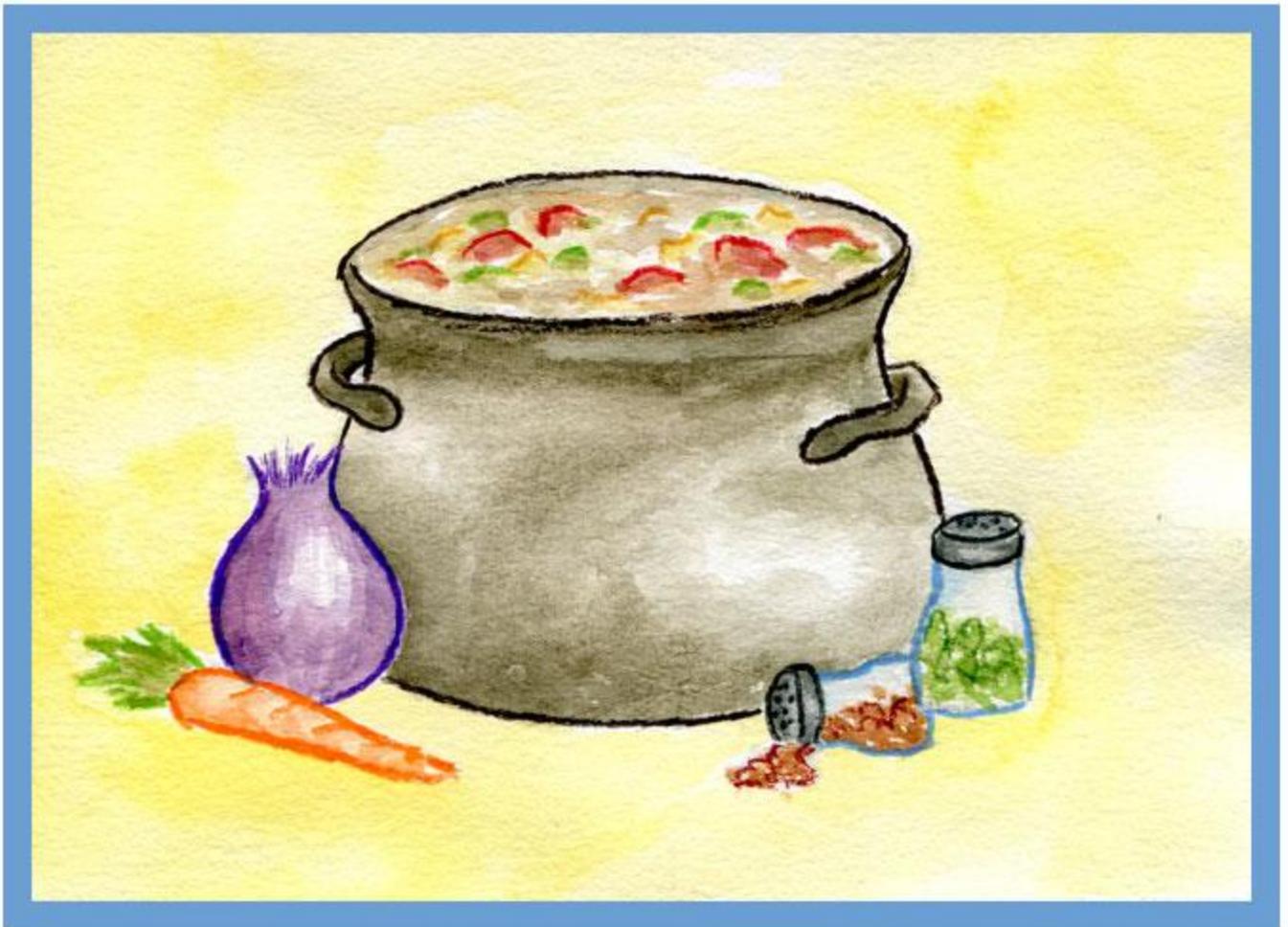


MUCH ADO ABOUT SOUP



BY ALEXI ALFIERI

MUCH ADO ABOUT SOUP

A SHAKESPEAREAN SPOOF

WRITTEN BY ALEXI ALFIERI

CAST

LARGE ROLES

GRANNY NUTMEG (F)	<i>Snippy, slightly scattered narrator and cook</i>
ROSEMARY (F)	<i>Lovesick heroine</i>
POTATO (M)	<i>Lovesick hero</i>
CABBAGE (M)	<i>Ringleader of the Villainous Vegetables</i>

MEDIUM ROLES

GINGER (F)	<i>Sarcastic sister of Rosemary</i>
GARLIC (M)	<i>Sarcastic friend of Potato</i>
ONION (M)	<i>Sensitive brother of Potato</i>

SMALL ROLES

THYME (F)	<i>Thoughtful sister of Rosemary</i>
SAFFRON (F)	<i>Exotic sister of Rosemary</i>
RADISH (F/M)	<i>Agreeable Villainous Vegetable</i>
TURNIP (F/M)	<i>Agreeable Villainous Vegetable</i>
MUSHROOM (F/M)	<i>Hopeless Villainous Vegetable</i>

SYNOPSIS

Much Ado About Soup tells the story of Rosemary, a woman in love with her garden, the language of Shakespeare, and a fellow named Potato. Although they've never met, Potato is in love with Rosemary as well, even though his friend, Garlic, scoffs at this because he's never been in love himself. Rosemary confesses her love of Potato to her three sisters (Ginger, Thyme, and Saffron) and later, she tells Potato's brother, Onion. Four villainous vegetables (Cabbage, Turnip, Radish, and Mushroom) all appear from behind a hedge where they have been eavesdropping to create a misunderstanding between the two lovers. In the meantime, the narrator, Granny Nutmeg, does her best to guide the audience along, but is frustrated trying to explain the plot and make a batch of homemade chicken noodle soup at the same time. Thankfully, in the end, all the spices and vegetables that truly belong together fall for one another, and the soup of love is served.

SETTING

A lovely garden with a mixture of plants, trees, flowers, and a high hedge

CAST

12 performers, but flexible (see Production Notes)

5 Female, 4 Male, 3 Female or Male

PLAYING TIME

Approximately 45 minutes

SCENE 1

GRANNY NUTMEG, CABBAGE, TURNIP, RADISH, MUSHROOM,
ROSEMARY, GINGER, THYME, AND SAFFRON

(Granny Nutmeg enters stage right wearing an apron with a large pocket and holding a wooden spoon.)

GRANNY NUTMEG: *(In a granny-like voice)* Well, good evening, everyone. I'm Granny Nutmeg, and I'll be your narrator tonight. They want me to help you out with the plot now and then, but let's make one thing clear. I can't stick around for every scene! No siree! I'm in the middle of making a pot of my homemade chicken soup, and if you didn't already know, there's an awful lot of chopping and peeling and stirring when it comes to soup. That means you're on your own when I'm back in the kitchen, so I suggest you pay attention! Now let me see, I've forgotten how this whole thing gets started. *(Pauses to remember)* Let me check my notes. *(Rummages in apron pocket and begins to pull out various small kitchen tools)* No, that's my mincer...oh, I'm going to need that peeler...well, I'll be a diced onion, there's my strawberry huller! *(Looks back up at audience)* Now what was I looking for? Oh, never mind! I suppose you better just meet the Spice Sisters. Their names are Rosemary, Ginger, Thyme, and Saffron. *(Speaking to side stage left)* You girls can come on stage now, one at a time! Let the audience get a good look at you. *(Rosemary enters stage left and begins to happily pick flowers in the garden.)* Now that's Rosemary, she's the oldest sister, and there's one thing you'll notice right off about her. She's in love. That's right. She just adores flowers and trees and rocks and slugs. If it lives in a garden, she's head over heels for it. *(Ginger enters stage left with arms crossed, and stands, looking bored.)* Now, Ginger is the next one, and she's not in love with anything. How sisters can be so different, I'll never know. *(Thyme enters stage left, walking and reading a book.)* Then there's Thyme, she's the real thoughtful one—always reading and considering things. *(Saffron enters stage left with a light step, dressed in exotic scarves and bangles.)* And finally, there's Saffron. She's the baby of the family and sort of follows her own recipe, if you know what I mean. Oh my cooked carrots! *(Shaking finger at the audience)* I can't believe you kept me out here this long! I told you I had soup on the stove! *(Quickly exits stage right)*

ROSEMARY: *(With her arms full of flowers and coming to stand by her sisters, talking dramatically)* To be or not to be, that is the question!

GINGER: *(Scowling)* There she goes again.

THYME: *(Matter-of-factly)* Hamlet, Act Three, Scene One—I'm fairly sure.

SAFFRON: *(Playing dreamily with her scarf)* Has anyone seen my beaded slippers?

ROSEMARY: *(Gesturing about her)* I haven't seen them in the garden, my dear Saffron.

GINGER: (*Sarcastic*) And you know Rosemary spends day and night in here, so they're definitely not hiding in the shrubbery. (*Gestures behind her to the hedge.*)

(*Cabbage, Turnip, Radish, and Mushroom pop up their heads from behind the hedge, look at each other questioningly. They shrug their shoulders and duck back down. The Spice Sisters remain facing the audience, not seeing them.*)

THYME: Well, if I may correct you, Ginger, I don't believe slippers would actually hide. They're inanimate objects.

SAFFRON: (*Indignant*) I beg your pardon. Those slippers are quite full of personality...like me. (*Smiles sweetly.*)

GINGER: (*Sarcastic*) You're full of something.

ROSEMARY: Quiet, please, my gentle sisters, for I have a silent truth to tell you.

GINGER: Oh, please, Rosemary. Would you just speak English for once?

THYME: But that is English.

GINGER: Oh, Thyme, you know what I mean. She's always talking as if she's in the middle of some Shakespearean play. I tell you, it wears on my last nerve.

ROSEMARY: I beg your forgiveness, gentle sister. I did forget thy sensitive nature.

GINGER: (*Scowls and rolls her eyes*) You see what I mean?

THYME: Go ahead, Rosemary. What is your silent truth?

SAFFRON: (*Tapping Thyme on the shoulder and stage whispering*) What is a "silent truth"?

THYME: (*Stage whispers back*) It's a secret.

SAFFRON: (*Squeals excitedly*) Ooooh! Secrets! I love secrets!

ROSEMARY: Oh, my beloved kinswomen, how I have kept this truth unspoken for so long, I will never know. But I shall tell you here and now, that I (*sighs dramatically*) am in love.

GINGER: With the worms in the tomato patch? Ya, we know.

ROSEMARY: Oh no! I do not speak of the lovely things of this garden. I speak of a gentleman.

SAFFRON: *(Looking excited)* Really?

ROSEMARY: Oh yes!

GINGER: *(Frowning)* What's his name?

SAFFRON: Yes, what's his name?!

ROSEMARY: It is...*(dramatic pause)*...Potato!

GINGER: *(With no expression)* Potato.

THYME: *(Interested)* Potato?

SAFFRON: *(Grimacing)* Potato?!

ROSEMARY: Oh, yes, my dear sisters. Mark my words as you would the stars in the sky, I am in love with...*(sighs dramatically once more)* Potato.

GINGER: Puh-tah-toe?

ROSEMARY: Po-tay-toe.

GINGER: You say, po-tay-toe. I say puh-tah-to.

ROSEMARY: Potato. Most certainly.

GINGER: Oh brother. I say you just call the whole thing off...

ROSEMARY: You scoff, my dear sister, but I already know you are indeed cynical when it comes to matters of the heart.

GINGER: *(Darkly)* That's because love stinks.

(Villainous Vegetables all quickly rise from behind the hedge, silently cheer, and then duck down again. The Spice Sisters stay facing the audience and don't appear to see them.)

ROSEMARY: Oh, but it does not, lovely Ginger! The fragrance of love is sweeter than the scent of a summer's day.

GINGER: *(Scowling)* Oh brother. I feel a sonnet coming on.

ROSEMARY: And my beloved Potato is so...

GINGER: Lumpy?

THYME: Solid?

SAFFRON: Bland?

ROSEMARY: *(With a starry expression)* Yes, all of those and so much more!

THYME: *(Smiling with interest)* Hmm, doesn't Potato have a brother named Onion?

ROSEMARY: That's right! And I have talked with Onion many times in the garden, and he tells me heroic tales of Potato every time we meet.

GINGER: *(Sarcastic)* What a tuber.

THYME: Yes, I'm certain I've seen Onion. He seems...*(pausing thoughtfully)*...the sensitive type.

SAFFRON: Potato? Onion? I can't think of two more boring names.

ROSEMARY: Oh, but what's in a name? A vegetable by any name would smell as sweet.

GINGER: *(Rolling eyes and throwing up hands in frustration)* I'm outta here.

(Ginger exits stage left, followed by Thyme, Saffron, and Rosemary.)

SCENE 2

GRANNY NUTMEG, CABBAGE, TURNIP, RADISH, MUSHROOM, POTATO, GARLIC, AND ONION

(Granny Nutmeg enters stage right holding a whisk.)

GRANNY NUTMEG: Well, lucky for you, my celery and carrots didn't burn to a crisp! So now I have just a minute to introduce the next scene. Clearly, you've figured out that Rosemary is the heroine of this play—anybody that soppily romantic and in love with a man named for a root vegetable has got to be. Now, I suppose you better meet her hero, Potato. He's going to enter in just a moment with his good friend, Garlic. Talk about opposites. Where Potato is plain, Garlic is fiery. You'll see what I mean. And then there's Onion, of course. Poor Onion...so sensitive with so many layers. He's bound to find a nice girl someday, though. Maybe I can set him up with...now, my blessed beets! Stop distracting me like this! I told you I only had a minute, for Pete's sake! I have to get back to my stirring! *(Exits stage right.)*

(Potato and Garlic enter stage right.)

POTATO: Well, rotten spuds! I don't see Rosemary anywhere, Garlic. I was really hoping I'd find her here in the garden. I know how much she loves all things with leaves or roots or stems.

GARLIC: I don't see how you would know that, Potato.

POTATO: Why wouldn't I know what my true love adores? The most intimate feelings of her heart?

GARLIC: Because you've never said one word to Rosemary.

POTATO: That's not true.

GARLIC: Would you be referring to the time you waved frantically at her from across the garden, gave a little squeak, and then darted away?

POTATO: *(Defensively)* I'll have you know that squeak was a "hello."

GARLIC: Well, I stand corrected then. You have said *one* word to her then.

POTATO: That's right. I have. And just because you've never been in love, Garlic, doesn't mean you need to have a bad attitude about it.

GARLIC: *(Scowling)* Well, love stinks.

(Villainous Vegetables all quickly rise from behind the hedge, silently cheer, and then duck down again. Potato and Garlic appear not to see them.)

POTATO: *(Seeming at a loss to make a point)* Well...you stink, Garlic!

GARLIC: *(Sniffing underarms)* You know, people keep telling me that, but I just don't smell anything.

POTATO: Olfactory fatigue.

GARLIC: What's that?

POTATO: Olfactory fatigue. It's when... *(Pausing to think)*

(Onion enters stage right.)

ONION: It's when your nose gets so used to one smell that it stops smelling it.

POTATO: Hello, brother!

GARLIC: Hello there, Onion! So how would you know about olfactory fatigue?

ONION: *(Sadly)* Because I suffer from it, too.

GARLIC: *(Teasingly)* You, Onion, suffering over something? What's new?

ONION: *(Defensive)* Hey, I can't help that I'm sensitive!

GARLIC: Onion, I have never known anybody to cry as much as you. Someone looks at you, you cry. Someone squeezes you, you cry. Someone draws a blade, you cry.

POTATO: *(Alarmed)* Has someone threatened you with a knife, Onion?

ONION: All the time! *(Bursts into tears)*

GARLIC: *(Unsympathetic)* Big deal. Try living in New Jersey with a bunch of Italians.

POTATO: Alright, Garlic, leave him alone. Onion, pull yourself together.

To Be Continued...this is a 10-page sample of the playscript