



Romeo and Juliet

by

William Shakespeare

Abridged for the Shakespeare Schools Festival

by

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30 MINUTE VERSION

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LIST OF ROLES

Prince Escalus PRINCE OF VERONA

Paris A YOUNG COUNT

Montague HEAD OF THE HOUSE OF MONTAGUE Capulet

HEAD OF THE HOUSE OF CAPULET Romeo MONTAGUE'S

SON

Mercutio KINSMAN TO THE PRINCE, FRIEND TO ROMEO Benvolio

NEPHEW TO MONTAGUE, FRIEND TO ROMEO Tybalt NEPHEW TO

LADY CAPULET

Juliet DAUGHTER TO CAPULET

Nurse to Juliet

Lady Montague WIFE TO MONTAGUE

Lady Capulet WIFE TO CAPULET

Friar Lawrence OF THE FRANCISCAN ORDER, FRIEND TO ROMEO Friar

John OF THE FRANCISCAN ORDER

Balthazar SERVANT TO ROMEO
CAPULET

Sampson & Gregory
SERVANTS TO

Abraham SERVANT TO MONTAGUE An Apothecary

Citizens, Revellers
And Others

PROLOGUE

CHORUS Two households both alike in dignity, In fair Verona
 where we lay our scene
 From ancient grudge, break to new mutiny,
 Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean:
 From forth the fatal loins of these two foes,
 A pair of star crossed lovers take their life:
 Whose misadventured piteous overthrows,
 Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.

SCENE 1

A street

ENTER SAMPSON and GREGORY of the house of Capulet, in conversation.

GREGORY Here come two of the house of Montague.

ENTER two other servingmen, ABRAHAM and BALTHAZAR

SAMPSON I will bite my thumb at them, which is disgrace to them if they bear it.
[He bites his thumb¹]

ABRAHAM Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

SAMPSON I do bite my thumb, sir.

ABRAHAM Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

SAMPSON [*to GREGORY*] Is the law of our side if I say ay? GREGORY

No.

SAMPSON No sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but I bite my thumb, sir.

ABRAHAM You lie.

SAMPSON Draw if you be men.

They FIGHT. ENTER BENVOLIO²

BENVOLIO Part, fools. Put up your swords, you know not what you do.

¹ - An insult the equivalent of or worse than 'the middle finger'. Done in clear view of the Montagues. ² A name meaning 'goodwill' the opposite of Malvolio, from Twelfth Night.

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ENTER TYBALT

TYBALT [*To BENVOLIO*] What, art thou drawn amongst these hartless hinds?³
Turn thee Benvolio, look upon thy death.

BENVOLIO I do but keep the peace.

TYBALT What, drawn,⁴ and talk of peace? I hate the word As I hate hell,
all Montagues, and thee.

They FIGHT

ENTER three or four CITIZENS who attempt to BREAK UP the men

ENTER old CAPULET, and LADY CAPULET

CAPULET What noise is this? Give me my long sword, ho! Old
Montague is come!

ENTER old MONTAGUE and LADY MONTAGUE opposite

MONTAGUE [*Spying CAPULET*] Thou villain Capulet: [*to LADY MONTAGUE who holds him back*]
Hold me not, let me go.

LADY MONTAGUE Thou shall not stir one foot to seek a foe.

The couples remain either side of the stage, the women holding their husbands back either by force, argument or childish with-holding of weapons. The SERVANTS, BENVOLIO and TYBALT remain in combat with the CITIZENS, centre stage

ENTER PRINCE ESCALUS

PRINCE What ho, you men, you beasts
Throw your mistempered weapons to the ground.

The stage falls still

Three civil brawls bred of an airy word,⁵
By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,
Have thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets.
If ever you disturb our streets again,
Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.

³ Benvolio is interfering in a brawl between mere servants, Tybalt wishes to point this out. ⁴ Benvolio has *drawn* his weapon and yet he talks about peace. ⁵ A small and petty remark

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On pain of death, all men depart.

EXIT all but BENVOLIO. ENTER ROMEO

BENVOLIO Good morrow, cousin.

ROMEO Is the day so young? Ay me, sad hours seem long.

BENVOLIO What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours? ROMEO Not having that which, having, makes them short.⁶ BENVOLIO In love?

ROMEO Out.

BENVOLIO Of love?

ROMEO Out of her favour where I am in love. BENVOLIO

Alas.

ROMEO [*seeing the destruction of the fight*]

Ay me what fray was here?
Yet tell me not, for I have heard it all.

BEVOLIO Tell me, in sadness, who is that you love? ROMEO In sadness, cousin, I do love a woman. BENVOLIO I aimed so near when I supposed you loved. ROMEO A right good markman! And she's fair⁷ I love. BENVOLIO A right fair mark, fair coz⁸, is soonest hit.

ROMEO. Well in that hit you miss;; she'll not be hit With Cupid's arrow...

BENVOLIO [*giving it up*] Then be ruled by me, forget to think of her. ROMEO

O, teach me how I should forget to think.

BENVOLIO By giving liberty unto thine eyes:
Examine other beauties

⁶ - Not having the thing which makes them seem short.

⁷ Pretty, not necessarily blonde... ⁸ coz – term of companionship, short for cousin.

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ROMEO Farewell, thou canst not teach me to forget. *EXIT*

BENVOLIO and ROMEO

SCENE 2

Outside

The House of

Capulet

CAPULET and PARIS in conversation

CAPULET ...'tis not so hard I think.
For men so old as we to keep the peace.

PARIS Of honourable reckoning are you both, And pity 'tis
you lived at odds so long.⁹
But now my lord what say you to my suit?

CAPULET My child is yet a stranger in the world, She hath not seen
the change of fourteen years.

PARIS Younger than she are happy mothers made.

CAPULET And too soon marred are those so early made. [*taking him
close – offering an alternative*]
Such delight among fresh female buds shall you this night
Inherit at my house. Come, go with me.¹⁰

EXIT CAPULET and PARIS
ENTER BENVOLIO and ROMEO in conversation

BENVOLIO Why Romeo, art thou mad?

ROMEO Not mad, but bound more than a madman is: Shut up in
prison, kept without my food,
Whipped and tormented and - good e'en¹¹, good fellow.

ENTER SERVANT

SERVANT Good e'en. My master is the great rich Capulet, and if you be
not of the house of Montagues I pray come and crush a

cup of wine. Rest you merry.

***SERVANT hands BENVOLIO an invitation. EXIT
SERVANT***

ROMEO I'll go along.

⁹ - Paris wishes to marry Juliet, there is a certain amount of 'sucking up' to Capulet here.

¹⁰ Capulet suggests Paris attend the party tonight and examine other beauties to see if he
can't find someone he prefers to Juliet. ¹¹ E'en - afternoon

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EXIT ROMEO and BENVOLIO

SCENE 3

Capulet's House

ENTER LADY CAPULET and NURSE

NURSE Juliet!

ENTER JULIET

JULIET How now, who calls?

NURSE Your mother. JULIET Madam, I am here, what is
your will?

LADY CAPULET Tell me, daughter Juliet,
How stands your disposition to be married?

JULIET It is an honour that I dream not of.

LADY CAPULET Well, think of marriage now.
The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.
This night you shall behold him at our feast.

NURSE Madam, the guests are come.

LADY CAPULET We follow thee.

NURSE Go, girl, seek happy nights to happy days. ***EXIT NURSE***

and LADY CAPULET

SCENE 4

A street

***ENTER ROMEO, BENVOLIO, MERCUTIO and
REVELLERS***

MERCUTIO Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.

ROMEO Not I, believe me. You have dancing shoes With nimble soles, I have a soul of lead.

BENVOLIO Come, knock and enter.¹²

ROMEO But 'tis no wit to go.¹³

¹² The party at Capulet's ¹³ It is not wise to go.

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MERCUTIO Why, may one ask?

ROMEO I dreamt a dream tonight.

MERCUTIO And so did I.

ROMEO And what was yours?

MERCUTIO That dreamers often lie

BENVOLIO [*hurrying them along*] Supper is done, and we shall come too late.

ROMEO I fear too early: for my mind misgives Some consequence
yet hanging in the stars
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
With this night's revels.

EXIT all

SCENE 5

Capulet's House

The room is crowded, the people dance and drink. ROMEO and JULIET wind up dancing together before PARIS spins her away. ROMEO stands downstage awestruck and following her movements. He stops a passing servant.

ROMEO What lady's that?

SERVANT I know not, sir.

ROMEO O she doth teach the torches to burn bright. Did my heart
love till now? Forswear it, sight.
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.
[*He moves to follow her*]

TYBALT [*who has been standing behind ROMEO*] This, by his
voice, should be a Montague.
Now, by the stock and honour of my kin,

To strike him dead I hold it not a sin.

CAPULET Why, how now, kinsman, wherefore storm you so?

TYBALT Uncle, this is a Montague, our foe:
A villain that is hither come in spite
To scorn at our solemnity this night.

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CAPULET Young Romeo is it?
Content thee, gentle coz, let him alone.

TYBALT I'll not endure him.

CAPULET He shall be endured. Am I the master here or you? Go to. TYBALT

Why, uncle, 'tis a shame.

EXIT TYBALT

ROMEO [*Taking JULIET by the hand*]
If I profane with my unworhiest hand
This shrine, the gentle fine¹⁴ is this:
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

JULIET Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much, Which
mannerly devotion shows in this;
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

ROMEO Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too? JULIET Ay,
lips that they must use in prayer.

ROMEO O then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do! They pray.¹⁵

THEY KISS

JULIET You kiss by the book.

NURSE Madam, your mother craves a word with you. ***EXIT JULIET***

ROMEO What is her mother?

NURSE Her mother is the lady of the house.

EXIT NURSE

ROMEO [*Staring after her*] Is she a Capulet?

BENVOLIO [*Catching ROMEO by the arm*] Away, be gone; the sport is at the best.

-¹⁴ The punishment for touching Juliet's hand is to kiss it.¹⁵ Romeo compares hands held together in prayer and lips held together when kissing. It would be illustrative to the audience if the couple held hands palm to palm.

9

ROMEO Ay, so I fear; the more is my unrest.

CAPULET [*Addressing the entire room*]

I thank you all; I thank you honest gentlemen, goodnight.
By my fay, it waxes late.

The REVELLERS begin to disperse. ENTER JULIET and NURSE

JULIET Come hither, Nurse. What is yond gentleman?

NURSE His name is Romeo, and a Montague,
The only son of your great enemy.

JULIET My only love sprung from my only hate. Too early seen
unknown, and known too late.

EXIT all

SCENE 6

**Outside the walls of
the House of Capulet**

ROMEO hides. ENTER BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO

BENVOLIO Romeo! My cousin, Romeo! Romeo! He ran this way and leapt this
orchard wall.

[giving up]

Come,
Blind is his love, and best befits the dark.

MERCUTIO If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark.

BENVOLIO Go then, for 'tis in vain
To seek him here that means not to be found.

EXIT MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO

SCENE 7

Capulet's Orchard

ROMEO hides

ROMEO He jests at scars that never felt a wound. But soft, what light

through yonder window breaks?
It is the east and Juliet is the sun!
It is my lady, O, it is my love!
O, that she knew she were!

JULIET appears at her balcony

10

JULIET Ay me!

ROMEO She speaks.

O, speak again bright angel!

JULIET O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?¹⁶ Deny thy father
and refuse thy name.
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

ROMEO Shall I hear more, or speak at this?

JULIET 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
O, be some other name.
What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other word would smell as sweet.
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called.
Romeo, doff thy name,
And for that name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

ROMEO [*emerging from his hiding place*]
I take thee at thy word.
Call me but love, and henceforth I never will be Romeo.

JULIET [**shocked**] Art thou not a Montague?
How cam'st thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?

ROMEO With love's light wings did I o'erperch these walls. JULIET If any of
my kinsmen find thee here they will murder thee.

ROMEO I have night's cloak to hide me from their eyes, And but
thou love me, let them find me here.¹⁷
My life were better ended by their hate
Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love.

JULIET Dost thou love me? O gentle Romeo,
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully.

ROMEO Lady by yonder blessed moon I vow.

JULIET O swear not by the moon,

ROMEO What shall I swear by?

¹⁶ - 'Wherefore' in this context means 'why'. She is asking why the man she loves must be Romeo, the Montague.

¹⁷ Unless you love me, let them find me, I'd rather die than live without your love.

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JULIET Do not swear at all. Or if thou wilt

NURSE (*calling from within*) Madam!

JULIET Anon good nurse!

Three words good Romeo, and goodnight indeed.
If that thy bent of love be honourable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow,
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay,
And follow thee my lord throughout the world.

NURSE Madam!

JULIET By and by, I come!

Tomorrow will I send.

ROMEO So thrive my soul

JULIET A thousand times good night.

EXIT JULIET

ROMEO Love goes toward love, as schoolboys from their books, But love from
love, toward school with heavy looks.

SCENE 8

**Friar Lawrence's
Cell**

FRIAR LAWRENCE in his cell

ENTER ROMEO

ROMEO Good morrow father!

FRIAR LAWRENCE [*startled*] Benedicite!

Our Romeo hath not been in bed tonight.
God pardon sin, wast thou with Rosaline?

ROMEO With Rosaline, my ghostly¹⁸ father? No. I have forgot that

name, and that name's woe.

FRIAR LAWRENCE That's my good son;; but be plain, where hast thou
been then?

ROMEO Then plainly know my heart's dear love is set On the fair
daughter of rich Capulet.
We met, we wooed, we made exchange of vow,
I'll tell thee as we pass;; but this I pray,

-¹⁸ Spiritual rather than supernatural

12

That thou consent to marry us today.

FRIAR LAWRENCE Holy Saint Francis!

ROMEO I pray thee chide me not.

FRIAR LAWRENCE Come,
In one respect I'll thy assistant be;;
For this alliance may so happy prove
To turn your households' rancour to pure love.¹⁹

EXIT both

SCENE 9

A street

ENTER MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO

MERCUTIO Where the devil should this Romeo be? Came he
not home tonight?

BENVOLIO Not to his father's. I spoke with his man. ***ENTER ROMEO. The***

two turn their backs on him

ROMEO Good morrow to you both. What counterfeit did I give you? MERCUTIO

The slip, sir, the slip.

ROMEO Pardon, good Mercutio; my business was great.

MERCUTIO [*Noting Romeo's good mood*]
Why, is not this better now than groaning for love?

[ENTER NURSE]

God ye good den²⁰, fair gentlewoman.

NURSE Gentlemen, can any of you tell me where I may find the young Romeo?

ROMEO I can tell you; I am the youngest of that name. NURSE If you be
he, sir, I desire some confidence with you. ROMEO [*to MERCUTIO*] I will
follow you.

MERCUTIO Farewell ancient lady.

-¹⁹ I will help you for one reason; your marriage may reconcile your feuding families.²⁰ Good
afternoon.

13

EXIT MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO

NURSE First let me tell ye, if ye should lead her in a fool's paradise, as they
say, it were a very gross kind of behaviour, truly it
were an ill thing

ROMEO I protest unto thee –

Bid her to come to shrift this afternoon,
And there she shall at Friar Lawrence's cell
Be shrived²¹ and married.

NURSE She shall be there.

EXIT both

SCENE 10

Capulet's house.

JULIET awaits her nurse

ENTER NURSE

JULIET O honey nurse, what news?

NURSE I am a-weary, give me leave a while.

JULIET Come, I pray thee, speak.

NURSE Do you not see that I am out of breath?

JULIET How art thou out of breath when thou hast breath To say to me
that thou art out of breath?
Is thy news good, or bad? Answer to that.

NURSE [*Giving in*] Your love says like an honest gentleman – Where is your
mother?

JULIET Where is my mother? How oddly thou repliest! Come, what
says Romeo?

NURSE Hie you hence to Friar Lawrence' cell.
There stays a husband to make you a wife!

EXIT JULIET and NURSE separately

SCENE 11

Friar Lawrence' Cell

²¹ Shrift was confession. Shriv'd meant the act of confession which was required before receiving the sacrament of marriage.

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ROMEO waits with FRIAR LAWRENCE in a single spotlight. JULIET ENTERS with NURSE by her side. JULIET joins ROMEO, they join hands and gaze into each other's eyes.

FRIAR LAWRENCE So smile the heavens upon this holy act That
after-hours with sorrow chide us not.

They kiss.

EXIT all

SCENE 12

A street

ENTER BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO

BENVOLIO I pray you, good Mercutio, let's retire;
The day is hot, the Capels²² are abroad,
And if we meet we shall not 'scape a brawl,
By my head, here come the Capulets.

MERCUTIO By my heel, I care not.

ENTER TYBALT and others

TYBALT Gentlemen, good even: a word with one of you.

MERCUTIO And but one word with one of us? Couple it with something; make it a
word and a blow.

TYBALT You shall find me apt enough to that, sir. Mercutio,
thou consortest with Romeo.

MERCUTIO Consort?²³ What, dost that make us minstrels?

ENTER ROMEO now secretly married and therefore related to the Capulets.

TYBALT Well, peace be with you, sir, here comes my man. Romeo! The

love I bear thee can afford
No better term than this: thou art a villain.

ROMEO Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee Doth much excuse such a
greeting: villain am I none.

TYBALT Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries thou hast done me.

ROMEO I do protest I never injured thee.

-²² Capulets ²³ To consort is to associate with. A consort is a group of musicians – Mercutio puns
on the word to argue with Tybalt.

15

And so, good Capulet, which name I tender
As dearly as mine own, be satisfied.

MERCUTIO O calm, dishonourable, vile submission! [*He
draws*]

Tybalt, you rat catcher²⁴, will you walk?

TYBALT What wouldst thou have with me?

MERCUTIO Good King of Cats, nothing but one of your nine lives. TYBALT
I am for you. [*He draws*]

ROMEO Gentle Mercutio -

*They fight. MERCUTIO is the better swordsman,
TYBALT is struggling to keep up.*

ROMEO Tybalt! Mercutio! The Prince expressly hath Forbid this.
Hold, Tybalt! Good Mercutio!

TYBALT under ROMEO's arm wounds MERCUTIO

BENVOLIO Art thou hurt?

MERCUTIO Ay, ay, a scratch, a scratch. Marry, 'tis enough.

ROMEO Courage man, the hurt cannot be much.

MERCUTIO 'Twill serve. Ask for me tomorrow and you shall find me a grave man.
A plague o' both your houses.
A plague o' both your houses.

MERCUTIO dies

BENVOLIO Here comes Tybalt.

ROMEO Alive, in triumph, and Mercutio slain.

Tybalt, Mercutio's soul
Is but a little way above our heads,
Staying for thine to keep him company.
Either thou, or I, or both, must go with him.²⁵

TYBALT Thou, wretched boy, shalt with him hence.

They FIGHT. ROMEO kills TYBALT

²⁴ Tybalt is known as 'the Prince of Cats'. Mercutio reduces this name to a catcher of vermin and nothing else.

²⁵ Mercutio's soul has not yet left the earth, he waits for yours to keep him company. Either yours or mine, or both must go with him – i.e. either you, I or both of us die.

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BENVOLIO Romeo, away, be gone. The prince will doom thee to death. Hence, be gone, away!

ROMEO O, I am fortune's fool.

EXIT ROMEO. ENTER PRINCE, MONTAGUE, CAPULET, their wives and others.

PRINCE Where are the vile beginners of this fray?

BENVOLIO There lies the man, slain by young Romeo, That slew thy kinsman, brave Mercutio.

LADY CAPULET Tybalt, my cousin, O my brother's child!
O, the blood is spilled
Of my dear kinsman. Prince, as thou art true,
For blood of ours, shed blood of Montague.

BENVOLIO Romeo spoke him fair.
Tybalt, deaf to peace, tilts at bold Mercutio's breast.
Romeo, he cries aloud
And 'twixt them rushes; underneath whose arm
Tybalt hit the life of stout Mercutio.

LADY CAPULET He is a kinsman to the Montague.
Affection makes him false. He speaks not true.
I beg for Justice, which thou, Prince, must give.
Romeo slew Tybalt, Romeo must not live.

PRINCE For that offence
Immediately we do exile him hence.
Let Romeo hence in haste,
Else, when he is found, that hour will be his last.

EXIT all

SCENE 13

Juliet's bedroom

JULIET awaits news from her nurse

JULIET Come, gentle night, give me my Romeo. O, I have
bought the mansion of a love
But not yet possessed it, and though I am sold,
Not yet enjoyed. So tedious is this day!

ENTER NURSE

Now, Nurse, what news?

17

NURSE We are undone, lady, we are undone. Alack the day, he's
gone, he's killed, he's dead.

JULIET What devil art thou, that dost torment me thus? Hath Romeo
slain himself?

NURSE Tybalt is gone, and Romeo banished. Romeo that
killed him, he is banished.

JULIET O God! Did Romeo's hand shed Tybalt's blood? O serpent
heart, hid with a flowering face!
Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?
O that deceit should dwell in such a gorgeous palace!

NURSE Will you speak well of him that killed your cousin?

JULIET Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband? Tybalt is dead
and Romeo – banished.
That 'banished', that one word 'banished'
Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts.

O find him, give this ring to my true knight
And bid him come to take his last farewell.

EXIT NURSE

EXIT JULIET

SCENE 14

Friar Lawrence' Cell

FRIAR LAWRENCE and ROMEO

FRIAR LAWRENCE Affliction is enamoured of thy parts
And thou art wedded to calamity.

ROMEO [*Grief stricken*]

Banishment! Be merciful, say 'death'.
For exile hath more terror in his look,
Much more than death. Do not say 'banishment'.

FRIAR LAWRENCE This is dear mercy and thou seest it not.

ROMEO 'Tis torture and not mercy. Heaven is here Where Juliet lives,
and every unworthy thing,
Live here in heaven and may look on her,
But Romeo may not.

KNOCKING

FRIAR LAWRENCE Good Romeo, hide thyself.

18

More knocking

Who knocks so hard? Whence came you, what's your will?

NURSE I come from Lady Juliet.

FRIAR LAWRENCE Welcome then.

ENTER NURSE

ROMEO Where is she? And how doth she? And what says My concealed
lady to our cancelled love?

NURSE O, she says nothing, sir, but weeps and weeps. But here, sir, a
ring she bid me give you.
Hie you, make haste, for it grows very late.

EXIT NURSE

ROMEO How well my comfort is revived by this.

FRIAR LAWRENCE Sojourn in Mantua. I'll find out your
man, And he shall signify from time to
time
Every good hap to you that chances here.
Give me thy hand. 'Tis late. Farewell. Good night.

ROMEO Farewell.

EXIT ROMEO
EXIT FRIAR LAWRENCE

SCENE 15
Capulet's House

PARIS and CAPULET in discussion

PARIS These times of woe afford no time to woo.²⁶ Madam goodnight.
Commend me to your daughter.

CAPULET Sir Paris, I will make a desperate tender Of my child's
love. I think she will be ruled
In all respects by me; nay, more, I doubt it not.
Wife, bid her, on Thursday, tell her,
She shall be married to this noble earl.

EXIT both

SCENE 16
Juliet's Bedroom

²⁶ - This time of grief has no place for trying to win Juliet.

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ROMEO and JULIET together

Sfx. BIRDSONG

JULIET Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day. It was the
nightingale and not the lark.

ROMEO It was the lark, the herald of the morn. I must be gone
and live, or stay and die.

JULIET Yond light is not daylight, I know it, I. Thou need'st
not be gone.

ROMEO Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death. I have
more care to stay than will to go.
Come death, and welcome. Juliet wills it so.
How is't, my soul? Let's talk. It is not day.

JULIET It is, it is. Hie hence, begone, away.
O, now be gone, more light and light it grows.

ENTER NURSE hurriedly

NURSE Madam! Your Lady mother is coming to your chamber. JULIET Then,
window, let day in and let life out.²⁷ ROMEO Farewell, farewell. One kiss and

I'll descend.

JULIET Art thou gone so? Love, lord, ay husband, friend. O, think'st
thou we shall ever meet again?

ROMEO I doubt it not.

ROMEO moves to leave and does not hear the following

JULIET O God, I have an ill-divining soul!
Methinks I see thee, now thou art so low,
As one dead in the bottom of a tomb.

ROMEO [*Turning*] Adieu, adieu.

ENTER LADY CAPULET

LADY CAPULET Why, how now, Juliet?

JULIET Madam, I am not well.

-²⁷ Romeo leaves through the window; there is no life without Romeo.

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LADY CAPULET Evermore weeping for your cousin's death?
Well, well, thou hast a careful father, child;
One who, to put thee from thy heaviness
Hath sorted out a sudden day of joy.

JULIET Madam, in happy time. What day is that?

LADY CAPULET Marry, my child, early next Thursday morn The gallant Paris
shall happily make thee a joyful bride.

JULIET He shall not make me a joyful bride! I pray you, tell my
lord and father, madam,
I will not marry yet. And when I do, I swear
It shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate,
Rather than Paris.

LADY CAPULET [*shocked*]
Tell him so yourself,
And see how he will take it at your hands.

ENTER CAPULET

Sir, she will none, she gives you thanks.
I would the fool were married to her grave.

CAPULET How? Will she none?

Is she not proud? Doth she not count her blest,
Unworthy as she is, that we have wrought
So worthy a gentleman to be her bridegroom?
Go with Paris to Saint Peter's Church,
Or I will drag thee on a hurdle thither.
Out, you baggage!

JULIET Hear me with patience but to speak a word.

CAPULET Hang thee, young baggage, disobedient wretch! Speak not,
reply not, do not answer me.

EXIT CAPULET

JULIET O, sweet my mother, cast me not away! Delay this
marriage for a month, a week,
Or, if you do not, make the bridal bed
In that dim monument where Tybalt lies.

EXIT LADY CAPULET without looking at JULIET

JULIET Alack, alack, that heaven should practise stratagems Upon so soft a
subject as myself.
What sayst thou?

21

NURSE Romeo is banished, and all the world to nothing. I think you are
happy in this second match,
For it excels your first; or, if it did not,
Your first is dead, or 'twere as good he were.

JULIET [*Pause*]

Go in, and tell my lady I am gone,
Having displeased my father, to Lawrence' cell,
To make confession and to be absolved.

NURSE Marry, I will, and 'tis wisely done.

EXIT NURSE

JULIET Ancient damnation! O most wicked fiend, I'll to the
Friar, to know his remedy.
If all else fail, myself have the power to die.

EXIT JULIET

SCENE 17

Friar Lawrence' Cell

PARIS and FRIAR LAWRENCE in conversation

PARIS ...Now do you know the reason of this haste

FRIAR LAWRENCE [**to himself**] I would I knew not why it should be slowed.²⁸
Look sir, here comes the lady towards my cell.

ENTER JULIET

PARIS Happily met, my lady and my wife.

JULIET That may be, sir, when I may be a wife. PARIS That may be,
must be, love, on Thursday next. JULIET What must be shall be.

FRIAR LAWRENCE That's a certain text. PARIS Come you to
make confession to this father?

JULIET To answer that, I should confess to you. [**to FRIAR LAWRENCE**] Are
you at leisure, holy father
now?

²⁸
- I wish I didn't know why the marriage has to be delayed!

22

FRIAR LAWRENCE My leisure serves me, pensive daughter now.
My lord, we must entreat the time alone.

PARIS Juliet, on Thursday early will I rouse ye. Till then, adieu,
and keep this holy kiss.

They kiss. EXIT PARIS

JULIET O shut the door,
God joined my heart and Romeo's, thou our hands;;
Give me some present counsel, I long to die
If what thou speak'st speak not of remedy.

FRIAR LAWRENCE I do spy a kind of hope.
If, rather than to marry County Paris,
Thou hast the strength of will to slay thyself,
Then it is likely thou wilt undertake
A thing like death to chide away this shame.

JULIET I will do it without fear or doubt.
To live an unstained wife to my sweet love.

FRIAR LAWRENCE Hold then. Go home, be merry, give consent To
marry Paris.
Let not thy nurse lie with thee in thy chamber.

Take thou this vial, being then in bed,
And this distilling liquor drink thou off;
When presently through all thy veins shall run
No pulse, no warmth.
The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade
And in this borrowed likeness of shrunk death
Thou shalt continue two and forty hours,
And then awake as from pleasant sleep.
Thou shalt be borne to that same ancient vault
Where all the kindred of the Capulets lie.
In the meantime, against thou shalt awake,
Shall Romeo by my letters know our drift
And hither shall he come.

JULIET Love, give me strength and strength shall help afford. Farewell, dear
father!

EXIT JULIET
EXIT FRIAR LAWRENCE

SCENE 18
Juliet's Bedroom

23

***LADY CAPULET and NURSE preparing JULIET for her
wedding day***

JULIET Gentle Nurse,
I pray thee, leave me to myself tonight.

LADY CAPULET Good night.
Get thee to bed, and rest, for thou hast need.

EXIT LADY CAPULET and NURSE

JULIET Farewell. God knows when we shall meet again. What if this
mixture do not work at all?
Shall I be married then tomorrow morning?
No, no, this shall forbid it. [*she lays down a knife*]
Romeo, I come! This I do drink to thee.

***She drinks and lies down as if sleeping. Lighting suggests
the passage of night and the break of morning. ENTER
NURSE who tries to rouse JULIET. Thinking her dead
she runs from the room. EXIT NURSE.***

Friar Lawrence' Cell

SCENE 19

[this can be played in a single downstage

spot to quicken the pace]

ENTER FRIAR JOHN holding a letter

FRIAR LAWRENCE in his cell

FRIAR JOHN I could not send it, nor get a messenger to bring it thee. Here it is
again -

FRIAR LAWRENCE O unhappy fortune.

The letter was of dear import and the neglecting of it
May do much danger.
Now must I to the monument alone.

EXIT both separately

SCENE 20

Mantua

ROMEO awaits news from Verona

ENTER BALTHAZAR

ROMEO News from Verona! How now Balthazar, Dost thou not bring
me letters from the Friar?
How doth my lady?
For nothing can be ill if she be well.

24

BALTHAZAR Then she is well and nothing can be ill. Her
body sleeps in Capel's monument.

ROMEO [***PAUSE***]

Is it e'en so? Then I defy you, stars!
I will hence tonight.

BALTHAZAR I do beseech you sir, have patience.

ROMEO Thou art deceived.

Hast thou no letters to me from the Friar?

BALTHAZAR No my good lord.

ROMEO Get thee gone. I'll be with thee straight. ***EXIT***

BALTHAZAR

Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee tonight.

Crossing the stage and banging on a door

What ho! Apothecary!

Come hither man. I see that thou art poor.
Hold, there is forty ducats. Let me have
A dram of poison.

APOTHECARY Such mortal drugs I have, but Mantua's law Is
death to any he that utters them.
My poverty, but not my will, consents.

ROMEO I pay thy poverty and not thy will.

EXIT both

SCENE 21

Capel's Monument

The tomb is eerie and dark, a place of death and ghosts. It is terrifying. JULIET lies as though dead. ENTER ROMEO

ROMEO O my love, my wife,
Death that hath sucked the honey of thy breath
Hath no power yet upon thy beauty.
Thou art not conquered. Beauty's ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
And death's pale flag is not advanced there.
Dear Juliet, why art thou yet so fair?
O here will I set up my everlasting rest.

25

Eyes, look your last!
Arms, take your last embrace! And lips,
Seal with a righteous kiss
A dateless bargain to engrossing Death!
[he kisses her]
Here's to my love ***[he drinks]*** O true apothecary,
Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die.

ROMEO falls. JULIET rises.

JULIET ***[seeing Romeo]*** Romeo!
What's here closed in my true love's hand?
Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end.
O churl! Drunk all, and left no friendly drop
To help me after? I will kiss thy lips.
Haply some poison yet doth hang on them.
[she kisses him]

Movement is heard outside the tomb

Yea noise? O happy dagger.

This is thy sheath. There rust, and let me die.

She stabs herself and falls
ENTER FRIAR LAWRENCE

FRIAR LAWRENCE Juliet!

He regards the scene with horror and stumbles out. EXIT
FRIAR LAWRENCE. Lighting suggests the passage of
time. ENTER FRIAR LAWRENCE and PRINCE

PRINCE What misadventure is so early up,
That calls our person from our morning rest?

ENTER CAPULET and LADY CAPULET

CAPULET What should it be, that is so shrieked abroad?

LADY CAPULET O the people in the street cry 'Romeo'
And some 'Juliet'...

They stare at the scene. ENTER MONTAGUE. FRIAR
LAWRENCE kneels and prays beside the bodies.

MONTAGUE Alas, my liege, my wife is dead tonight. Grief of my
son's exile hath stopped her breath.
What further woe conspires against mine age?
[*he sees ROMEO and JULIET and falls silent*]

26

PRINCE Where be these enemies? Capulet, Montague, See, what a
scourge is laid upon your hate,
That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love;
And I, for winking at your discords too,
Have lost a brace of kinsmen. All are punished.

CAPULET O brother Montague, give me thy hand.

MONTAGUE There shall no figure at such rate be set As that of
true and faithful Juliet.²⁹

CAPULET As rich shall Romeo's by his lady's lie, Poor
sacrifices of our enmity.

PRINCE For never was a story of more woe Than this of
Juliet and her Romeo.

THE END

-²⁹ Montague will build a statue in Juliet's honour that will not be rivalled.