Romeo and Juliet

by

William Shakespeare

Abridged for the Shakespeare Schools Festival

by

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30 MINUTE VERSION

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“We are such stuff as dreams are made on.”

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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
Sampson & Gregory  SERVANTS TO CAPULET
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 thumb]

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 BENVOLIO

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.
ENTER TYBALT

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

BENVOLIO I do but keep the peace.

TYBALT What, drawn, 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, 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.

---

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

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

I’ll not endure him.

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

Why, uncle, ’tis a shame.

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

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.

Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

Ay, lips that they must use in prayer.

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

You kiss by the book.

Madam, your mother craves a word with you.

What is her mother?

Her mother is the lady of the house.

[Staring after her] Is she a Capulet?

[ 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.
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
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.
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 ghostly*18* 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*
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.
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 shrived 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. Shrived meant the act of confession which was required before receiving the sacrament of marriage.
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 Capels 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 e’en: 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? 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.
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 catcher\(^24\), 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
grade 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*

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\(^{24}\) 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.
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?
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.
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.
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.


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.
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?
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!
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 shall continue two and forty hours,
               And then awake as from pleasant sleep.
               Thou shall 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
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.

SCENE 19  
Friar Lawrence’ Cell  
[this can be played in a single downstage spot to quicken the pace]

FRIAR LAWRENCE in his cell

ENTER FRIAR JOHN holding a letter

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.
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.

DECLARE 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.

DECLARE 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.
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]
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.

O brother Montague, give me thy hand.

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

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

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.