

GOUNOD

ROMEO AND JULIET

English Version by Donald Pippin

Cast of Characters

THE CAPULET SIDE:

Lord and Lady Capulet
Juliet, their lovely young daughter
Gertrude, her nanny
Tybalt, her fiery cousin
Count Paris, an eligible bachelor
Gregorio, an attendant

THE MONTAGUE SIDE:

Romeo
Mercutio, his best friend
Stephano, Romeo's page
Benvolio, an attendant

Friar Lawrence, Juliet's counselor
The Duke (or Prince) of Verona

PROLOGUE,

Sung by the entire cast

**Two households, none so noble in all of Verona,
Montagues here, Capulets there,
Bitter foes, waging war
That swallows generations,
While on the streets the blood of youth is smeared.**

**Yet from the steaming cauldron
A gleam of light appears:
Juliet opens her eyes
And Romeo falls in love.
Not for them is the iron grip of ancient grudges;
The call of life is strong and clear.**

**Love ill-fated! Undone by their elders!
Joy that is all too brief**

**They'll pay for with their lives.
The war between the grieving parents
Will be resolved at last in tears.**

ACT 1

Scene: the ballroom of the Capulet palace.

CHORUS

**Torches are lighted!
Wildly excited,
Here we're invited
For dancing all night.**

**Music now calling;
Down with forestalling!
Couples are falling
In love at first sight.**

TENORS & BASSES

**Dare you ask
Can love be for real?
Hid by a mask,
What fire I feel!**

**Dazzling hour!
Beauty in flower
Meekly I cower,
Blinded by light.**

**All fulfilling,
O so thrilling
Were she but willing
To heed my plight.**

LADIES

**Night of revels!
Lights are low.
Dashing devils
Follow in tow.**

**Ah, that gender! Tough or tender,
All come snapping for the bait.
Be they handsome, strong as Samson,
We're of a mind to make them wait.**

TYBALT

**Well met, my good friend!
Paris, just what do you think of our happy host?**

PARIS

**I think he is not short of money.
Look around; he's spared no expense.**

TYBALT

**Honoring his fairest of flowers,
Sparkling like the fresh morning dew.
Soon, they say, she'll belong to you.**

PARIS

**Though till now my heart has lain dormant,
Maybe now's the time for a leap
To rouse me from my drowsy sleep.**

TYBALT

**Hear it from the wise:
Rise and claim the prize!
Seize the moment. On demand! Here she comes,
Hand in hand, escorted by her father.**

CAPULET, *entering with his daughter Juliet*

**To all my trusted friends my doors are open wide:
A warm and lively get-together.
Delighted you could come
To grace my humble home.
Celebrate my daughter's day of birth,
The darling child I love above all else on earth.
Humor a fond father bursting with pride.
My Juliet, my one and only,
My playful child I foresee as a bride.**

TENORS & BASSES

**Ah, what a beauty! Fairest of flowers!
I could spend blissful happy hours
Overcome by the spark in her eyes.**

LADIES

**Ah, what a beauty! Lovely as Venus!
Though I might mention just between us,
My own charms let's not minimize.**

TUTTI

Ah, what a beauty! What a beauty!

JULIET

**Here I am! Starry eyed!
Wide awake, happy to breathe the air.
Laughter and song bring us together.
Made for joy, verve and zest,
All I've got I would share:
Nights of wonder and surprises,
Days of warmth and fair weather.**

**Flavors still left untasted;
Till now my life's been wasted.
But like a bird that leaves the nest,
I mean to soar on high.**

CAPULET

**Come on! After wine
We dance ... steady, steady ...
For those first in line,
All eager and ready,
Come along! Our fiddlers are waiting.**

**Roughs and rowdies we'll not allow,
Nor grumblers that glower
As if 'twere a duty.
Make way then for beauty,
For springtime in flower.
To bullies and brawlers
I tell them, "Not now."**

**If you sit it out,
Choosing not to dance,
Word will get about
That you have ripped your pants.**

**If you still refuse,
It will soon be said,
Aside from worn-out shoes
Your legs are made of lead.**

**From May to December,
Now long in the tooth,
How well I remember
The follies of youth.**

Then seldom quite sober
Though bursting with glee,
Those heydays long over,
It's bedtime for me.

Now weary and jaded,
How time slips away!
Sweet flowers of May,
All too soon you have faded.
Again, after wine we dance, *etc.*

CHORUS

Roughs and rowdies we'll not allow,
Nor grumblers that glower
As if 'twere a duty.
Make way then for beauty,
For springtime in flower.
To bullies and brawlers
We tell them, "Not now." (*exeunt*)

The Montague cohort has inveigled its way into the ball, knowing full well that they would be highly unwelcome if identified.

MERCUTIO

At last, free of the noisy crowd!
Alone with friends, let's all agree to drop the mask.

ROMEO

No, no! I must not be seen.
Why stir the fire?
I'm known here as *persona non grata*.
Let's leave the house at once;
It may get even hotter.

MERCUTIO

Bah! These Capulets are made to be defied!
Only a coward has to hide.
Are we not man enough to make a stand together?

OTHERS

Ha! We can show our stuff by standing tough together.

ROMEO

But I Insist at least
We abstain from the feast.

MERCUTIO

Why starve?

ROMEO (*mysteriously*)

I may be dreaming ...

MERCUTIO (*mock terror*)

Ye gods! Then head for the hills!
Naughty Queen Mab, calling on you!

ROMEO

Queen who?

MERCUTIO



Mab, the queen of fond il- lu- sions, who spies on dream-ers,
More elusive, more capricious
Than the wind rustling by.
Darting through the night,
Onward, swift in flight,
Pausing briefly, then away!

Her coach that goes faster than light
While racing through the timeless ether
Is made of a hazelnut shell,
Its harnesses stitched with rays of the moon,
Cushions sewed of grasshopper wings
Deftly blended with web of spider
Adorned with dew from daffodils.
And pulling the reins a diligent gnat.
The whip, certified cricket bone, carved with care,
Goaded on a team of sleek meadow mice.
As they gallop through the air,
Sleeping men, beware!

From a listing vast in number
She goes calling on those that slumber.
The husband will dream of future freedom;
Callow youth embraces romance.
At her approach the spry coquette
Envisions new ways to cast a glance.
The tart will renew her battle with time,
The poet review his struggle for rhyme.

For the miser absorbed in his gold,
She unfolds a vision of wealth untold.
Long confined and sprawled on the floor,
The prisoner spots an open door.
In repose, the soldier goes to battle;
Cannons thunder and sabers rattle.
Smiling while his sweetie pours champagne
To hail the valiant hero,
Too soon, with a jolt, he'll awaken from dreaming,
Startled, and seeming somewhat shaken,
For this, if he's not much mistaken,
Isn't just the dream of a kiss. Ah!
Mab, the queen of fond illusions, *etc.*

ROMEO

Enough of your fantastical tales!
I can tell when I'm taunted.
And I know in whose house I'm unwanted.
Here I'm foe, not friend;
I'll go, and there's an end.

MERCUTIO (*bantering*)

Don't deny it! I know what galls you.
Your lovely Rosaline you fear will not be present.
Brace up, O tortured heart!
Here you'll see a dozen others
Just as pretty, just as pleasant. Stay!

ROMEO (*on beholding Juliet*)

Ah! See there!

MERCUTIO

What about?

ROMEO

Radiant, celestial beauty!
A star that kindles the night.

MERCUTIO

I see other stars shining bright
As they now emerge from the corners.

ROMEO (*passionately*)

What a prize! A gift from the gods.
A sudden burst of light has opened up my eyes.
For never till tonight

Have I seen utter beauty.
Have I loved till now? Surely not!

MERCUTIO

So, Queen Rosaline will reign no longer.
This demotion we foresaw.

OTHERS

This demotion we foresaw.
What conclusion can we draw?
Brief was her dominion,
Gone when just begun.
Frankly, in my opinion,
Love is not much fun.

JULIET

Be quick and tell me!
Nanny, please! You were saying ...

NURSE

I am all out of breath.
(teasing) Is it me you should ask,
Or a certain young man named Paris?

JULIET *(carelessly)*

Oh, him!

NURSE

He is a pearl, they say,
The husband made for you.

JULIET

Ha, ha! Am I to spend my youth
Dreaming of marriage?

NURSE

Good gracious me!
I was just your age when I got married.

JULIET

No, no! How many times must I hear the same song?
Young and light-hearted,
O may my springtime be sweet and long!



I sing from dawn till dark,
My tone bright and clear.

Some day, near the prime,
When spring turns to fall,
Wedding bells will chime
And I'll then heed the call.

But now, free as a lark, *etc.*

Here I enjoy sweet youth in flower
Before it fades away.
Comes the hour age takes over;
Where are the buds of May?
Time flies, leaves fall,
Hopes go astray. But now, *etc.*

Far from the cold of winter,
Here I lazily doze in the sun,
Charmed by the scent of roses,
By the world around, and my life just begun.

Love comes later
When riper and sweeter.
When spring has turned to fall,
I'll heed love's call.
Heaven knows when,
I'll heed love's call.

ROMEO

Who *is* that captivating child?

GREGORIO

Do you not know? Darling Nanny!

NURSE

Who, me?

GRGORIO

Pardon me, charming lady.
You are called from below
To watch over the kitchen.

NURSE (*loftily*)

In need, I'm the one!

JULIET

Go!

ROMEO (*to Juliet*)

O stay! Don't run away.



Your hand so slender mine so unworthy profanes even with a touch.

Pausing to wonder,
Fearful of blunder,
So clumsy, dare I approach?
Peerless perfection calls for protection
From the hands that go astray
Though if offended, it can be amended
With a kiss without delay.

JULIET

Hold on a second!
When love has beckoned,
How can I be sure of you?
Wise saints and sages down through the ages,
Warn of lovers turned untrue.

Words, O so charming, softly disarming,
Caution tells me to dismiss.
I'm told to resist when you insist
On a kiss without delay.

ROMEO

But saints have lips as well;
I assume they come in handy.

JULIET

But to pray, nothing more!

ROMEO

Oh, how can they ignore
The voice recommending
Usage far more humane?

JULIET

To the vows of a liar
Enkindled by desire,
Unswerving I remain.

ROMEO

Hear me confirm my vow,

Thus to spare you the burden
Of a blush upon your brow.

JULIET
Help! My defenses are falling.
If it be a sin, I'm to blame.

ROMEO
To ease your trepidation,
I alone will make the claim.

BOTH
Not you but me and me alone.

ROMEO
Who comes?

JULIET
My fiery cousin Tybalt.

ROMEO
O no! Then you are ...

JULIET
The daughter of your host, Capulet.

ROMEO
(Lord!)

TYBALT (*enters*)
Forgive me, cousin. My friends will soon desert the party
If you ignore them by running off.
Come along! Come along!
(*softly*) How come this fine gallant
So quickly dons the mask
The moment I appear?

JULIET
How should I know?

TYBALT
One could say he avoids me.

ROMEO (*exiting*)
God be with you, signor.

TYBALT

**Ah! Too well I know the sound of that voice I abhor!
Of course! Romeo!**

JULIET (*with alarm*)

(Romeo?)

TYBALT

**It's him or me! A prank costing him his life.
I will kill the imposter! (*exit*)**

JULIET (*alone*)

**Oh, that cursed name!
Too early seen unknown, and known too late.
My only love, sprung from my only hate.
All is lost! If we be torn apart,
A dank grave is destined to be my bridal bed.**

(Tybalt returns with Paris)

TYBALT

There he is! There he is!

PARIS

Meaning who?

TYBALT

Romeo!

PARIS

Romeo? (*the two exit*)

ROMEO (*who has also reappeared*)

**The name I was born with
They would label a crime.
Sheer despair Sheer despair!
Capulet is her father,
Yet I love her!**

MERCUTIO

**A clash! I ought to have known.
Tybalt grimly watches and glowers,
Showing storm on the way.**

TYBALT

(For this I've been waiting!)

CAPULET (*entering*)

**What! Taking leave so soon?
Why the hurry? Stay a while.
Half an hour at least
We've a banquet soon on the table
And you all are welcome to the feast.**

TYBALT

**(For the moment I'll be patient.
He'll pay for his bold transgression.
We are joined in mortal strife;
One will answer with his life.)**

MERCUTIO (*to Romeo*)

**Under observation, be silent
Until the firestorm is over.
No, not the time to waste your breath
When the stakes are life or death.**

CAPULET

**On to dancing after feasting!
Pardon this old man for boasting.
Flaming youth in days of yore,
We could sweep the ballroom floor.**

CHORUS

**On to dancing after feasting!
Only one thing we're requesting:
Give the younger crowd its due;
We are just as wild as you.
Gladly we will carry on,
Dancing till the break of dawn.
We protest! We are just as wild as you.**

{TYBALT

**Damn! He's absconded!
So who will find him
And confront the mangy dog with a challenge?**

CAPULET

**Hold on! I'll not tolerate a scandal.
Understand? Nothing gained by brawling.
Flow of blood is all we need!
Letting bygones be bygones,
I'll not allow you to proceed.**

Ay last, after wine, we dance, *etc.*

CHORUS

Roughs and rowdies we'll not allow, *etc.* }

ACT II

The garden under Juliet's window.

ROMEO

O night! In your shadows conceal me
From hostile eyes.

MERCUTIO (*from without*)

Romeo! Romeo!

ROMEO

Ah, Mercutio. I know the sound.
Prone to laughter,
They jest at scars that never felt a wound.

CHORUS (*offstage*)

Romeo concealed in shadows,
Soldiers on, rash but in control.
High walls are no deterrent
While forging onward toward the goal.
Fearless and rash, yet in control,
He forges onward toward the goal.

ROMEO

In love! In love, ah!
Fed by fire, a new life has started.
Wonder to behold! Is it dawn breaking in
From that open window?
But soft! It is the east,
And Juliet is the sun.

Star of the morn, a- rise! As the moon, wan and wan- ing,
Grows pale and sick with envy
Her face more fair by far.
Star of the morn, arise!
Chaste, celestial star!

Am I dreaming?
She unfastens the buckle
Binding streams of lustrous hair,
Sheer silk, soft and loosely falling.
My love, so near me ...
Has my prayer been heard?
In a whisper she is speaking,
Or was it only a sigh?
But her eyes send me a message
And my heart sends a reply.

Star of the morn, arise!
As the moon, wan and waning,
Grows pale and sick with envy
Her face more fair by far.
Star of the morn, arise!
Chaste, celestial star!
Comes the dawn and the dark disappears.
Sun, arise! Light the sky!

JULIET,

appearing on the balcony, where she leans in melancholy mood.

Why, O why this wall of hate?
Hate so blind, so unfounded!
O Romeo! What's in a name?
You are yourself.
Deny your father, refuse the name
That stands between us,
Or my own kin I'll disown.

ROMEO

Your own kin? You'd go so far?
Ah! Smooth over the doubts of a heart overcome!

JULIET

Who has listened,
Overhearing my secrets cast into the night?

ROMEO

In mortal dread, I dare not tell you who I am.

JULIET

Are you not Romeo?

ROMEO

How can I go on living
If the name so despised
Is to drive you away?
For your love, let me be rechristened;
Give me another title,
Nevermore a Montague.

JULIET

The soft woven veil of night conceals my face;
Otherwise, a maiden blush would color my cheek.
I cannot withdraw the candor,
The tender words that came from the heart.
Goodbye to coy pretense:
Do you love me?
Tell me truly, but if you make a vow,
Swear not by the moon
That changes by the moment, forever inconstant,
And smiles, or so 'tis said, on the lies told by lovers.

Dearest Romeo, tell me in simple words, "I love you",
And I'll believe it.
Entrusting all my life to you,
I shall be yours!
Can you, from the depths of your heart,
Say the same to me?
Despite the reckless words overheard in the dark,
Please regard me not as weak and wanton.
Blame the phantoms of night
For the truth I revealed
When I poured out my secret.

ROMEO (*with fire*)

Here I kneel unto God
And declare I am yours.

JULIET

But listen, and hush!
They're coming ... Dearest, lie low!

{TENORS, BASSES & GREGORIO

The page! Now gone!
So what can we do?
The devil come take him,
In hell let him stew.

The servant came snooping,
Waiting for his master.
Too afraid to stay,
The bird got away.
Home with feathers drooping.
What has he to say?
Making up a tale:
Valor on display!
That liar! That coward!
That sparrow empowered!
The page! *Etc.*
Have courage! Go catch him!
Yes! But who?}

NURSE

Who is this all about?

GREGORIO

A page from the Montague side.
Master and servant while trespassing here
Just insulted the Capulet honor and pride.

NURSE

Merciful God!

GREGORIO

No, worse and worsen ...
Brazen as you please,
A Montague with rowdies
Storm the party uninvited.

NURSE

They wouldn't dare!

GREGORIO

Hoodlums at best.

OTHERS (*bantering*)

Your beauty and allure
Drew them here in despair.

NURSE

A bunch of rowdies you say were sighted?
Watch me take them on by myself,
Disgrace! Disgrace! Disgrace! Disgrace!

Oh, you can rest assured
I'll put them in their place.

{GREGORIO

On your own?

OTHERS

Single handed, you'll mow them down!
So good night, fair *femme fatale*;
Do your duty, what's to lose?
With your grace, charm and beauty,
You'll confound those proud Montagues.

NURSE

Ever blest be the rod whose blow will wreak revenge,
Landing on these rubes.

JULIET

My darling Nanny!

NURSE

My precious angel! Up so late, not in bed?
You'll catch your death of cold.

JULIET

Waiting for you.

NURSE *with severity*)

Inside!

JULIET *(a bit petulantly)*

Why must you scold?

After glancing around, she reenters the pavilion, followed by Nanny. Romeo reappears. }

ROMEO

O night of rapture! I implore you,
Let me remain in this magical dream.
I fear on waking up
To face the cruel, cold reality of day.

JULIET

You must go!

ROMEO

My Beloved!

JULIET

One more word, then good night.
Tomorrow I will send out to find you.
(with solemnity) By all that is holy,
If still you truly love me.
Tell me so, name the day,
Give the time and the place.
There in the sight of God,
Forever blest, we shall be married.
Then you and you alone
I'll honor and adore.
To you I'll render my life entire,
My devotion, my dedication,
Freely forgoing all apart from you.

Yet, ... if on reflection,
Your love for me
Was no more than a dream,
I hereby order you:
By this starry night of splendor,
Never see me again. Turn around and go.
Leave me to dwell upon my sorrow
And shed the tears that will forever flow.

ROMEO

Ah! I swear again, I adore you!
As dawn follows night,
By tomorrow you'll be mine.
The sun will rise, the light will shine.
My queen, command me.
With all my heart I'll serve you,
Ever adoring and devoted.
My love is boundless as the ocean,
Constant as the stars in the sky.
(Nanny calls from offstage)

JULIET

Nanny's calling.

ROMEO

Ah! Not yet!

JULIET

Go! I tremble if we are seen together.
(another call) I'm coming!

ROMEO

Don't go away! No, no! I heard no one at all.

JULIET

But soft ... but soft ... speak softer yet.

ROMEO

**Stay just a moment longer.
Please, just a moment longer!
Come, love! Take my hand, putting yours in mine.**

JULIET

**Love, here you are in danger,
Your very life in danger.
Leave, let go of my hand, taking yours from mine.**

ALTERNATELY

Good night! Good night! Goodbye! Good bye!

BOTH

**Parting in such sweet sorrow, nearly over,
Could it but last until tomorrow hails the dawn!
I want to stay and say goodbye until the dawn.
Till break of day ...**

BOTH

Parting in such sweet sorrow, *etc.*

JULIET

Adieu! A thousand times!

ROMEO

**Go, and and dream of joy to follow.
With a smile go to sleep
As you dream of tomorrow.
Hear me say softly in your ear,
"Trust that my love is true,
And all will be right."
May the breezes of night
Convey my kiss to you.**

ACT 111

The cell of Friar Laurence.

ROMEO

Good morning, blessed father. God be with you.

FRIAR

How now? The dawn now barely breaking
And you are wide awake.
What has brought you here to my cell?
A matter of the heart, I'll wager.

ROMEO

You are close to the mark, wise father! I'm in love!

FRIAR

In love? For heartless Rosaline still pining?

ROMEO

That name out of the past
I barely can recall.
Eyes brighter far
Have opened mine to new horizons.
Who could return from paradise
To the darkness of a cave?
Who could love Rosaline
After gazing on Juliet?

FRIAR

What! Juliet Capulet? *(Juliet enters with Nurse)*

ROMEO

Ah, behold!

JULIET

My beloved!

ROMEO

My soul called out to yours.
I behold, and right away turn speechless.

JULIET

Good friar, my husband I've chosen.
You know my heart that patiently you've guided.
Sharing his love, myself I render

If on this day you'll make us man and wife.

FRIAR

Though I risk reigniting the wrath of your elders,
I'm prepared to face the furor.
May centuries of hate that tears apart your houses
Give way to the power of love.

ROMEO (*to nurse*)

Stand guard at the door. (*exit nurse*)

FRIAR

To heal the rift of ages
And sanctify this wedding,
May God above watch and approve.
Humbly kneel ... (*slowly*) Humbly kneel.

Thou who made man in thine own image,
And from his flesh and from his blood
Created woman,
And being done, united them in holy marriage
Looking down from heaven above,
Purify and hallow their love.
Although immature and impatient,
Long may they sail on quiet waters,
With heaven's light to point the way.

ROMEO & JULIET

O Lord, true to our vows, we will serve and obey.

FRIAR

O Lord, hear my fervent prayer:
May she remain a humble servant
On a voyage of lasting delight.
Ever may virtue be her beacon,
And her trust in Thee never shaken,
Still strong in the darkest of nights.

ROMEO & JULIET

O Lord,, be our guide, holding the light.

FRIAR

And may they live to see
Their many children laughing with glee.
And then their children's children, too.

ROMEO & JULIET

We pledge to greet each day with love reborn anew.

FRIAR

Bless the lovers here newly plighted,
In marriage to be soon united,
This bond no hand can erase.

ROMEO & JULIET

O Lord, on our love, deign to bestow Thy grace.

FRIAR

Romeo, do you take Juliet to be your wife?

ROMEO

Yes, my father.

FRIAR

And Romeo you take for your husband?

JULIET

Yes, my father.

FRIAR

In His name, who knows the human heart,
You now are one forevermore.

QUARTET

JULIET, ROMEO, FRIAR & NURSE
O sacred hour! Sheer joy unbounded!
Heaven's host, looking on,
Heard our {your} vows, hear our {your} prayer.
Welcome the dawn!
Hurdles surmounted,
Love has won over time-worn hate.
O happy day!
Elders confounded, life goes on!
Love has won! Life goes on!
Love has paved the way"
Heaven heard our prayer.

A public square in front of the palace of the Capulets.

STEPHANO

All night I've searched all over for my master.

Could he have crept inside
Where the fair daughter lies?
(with arrogance) A pretty joke on these foes we despise?
Careless watchdogs, beware!
You are courting disaster.



Dain-ty dove, cap-tive in a cage, born to yield and o- bey.

But with vultures that rage around her
Will she leave? Will she stay?

Tiny dove, you wisely cringe and cower
Lest the vultures pounce and devour.
With claws too long and sharp.
Flee from these birds that feed on fear;
They deserve not a single tear.
But who am I to carp?

So, keep your dove well guarded,
Never on display.
You may be outsmarted
As she flies away.

Lo, behold! Meet the tempting lover –
Clearly no bird of prey.
Near the nest he proceeds to hover,
Working up the nerve to say:
“You’re the soulmate for whom I’ve waited:
For each other we were created,
So marry me today.
Life together you’ll find enchanting.
Raging vultures notwithstanding,
We’ll be happy come what may.”

So, keep your dove well guarded, *etc.*
Keep your dove well guarded,
Or you’ll be outsmarted
As she flies away.

Aha! So here they come!

GREGORIO

What is this young rascal doing?
I can’t stand his billing and cooing.

STEPHANO

So you don't like my song?
I am right, you are wrong.

GREGORIO

Now I know! He's the one
That nosy fellow on the run. *incognito*.

TENORS & BASSES

Brash as ever! A trouble-maker.

STEPHANO

Keep your dove well guarded,
Never on display.
You may be outsmarted
As she flies away.

GREGORIO

A spy, an agitator!
Our own turf he's now invading
To pester and annoy us
With his serenading.

STEPHANO

Music is so joyous!

GREGORIO

You've gone too far ... (*to his friends*)
In a flash, with a blow,
We could have some fun
Smashing your old guitar. Come along!

STEPHANO

If it's broken, I've got a sword
On which I perform a fiercer song.

GREGORIO

Not alone! Your kind of music
Calls for a duet, not a solo.

STEPHANO

En garde! You'll learn a thing or two.

GREGORIO

I warn you!

TENORS & BASSES

Let us see how the two follow through.
Now engaging ... O ye gods!
Both are raging.
Who will bet on the odds?
Spunky child, he's back for more.
Both are waging holy war.
Falling down, but soon rebounding.
Certified maniacs! Not inclined to relax.

MERCUTIO (*entering*)

Ganging up on a child. For shame!
But what you might expect from these Capulets.
(*Tybalt enters*) Like master, like cur.

TYBALT (*insolently*)

You are prompt when it comes to words,
Some would say.

MERCUTIO

Just as prompt with my blade!

TYBALT

That I would like to see.

MERCUTIO

That wish I can fulfill.

ROMEO (*entering*)

Break it off!

MERCUTIO

Stay away!

TYBALT

Stay away! You are sent here by Satan!
(*ironically to Mercutio*) Please allow,
Please allow me to show off my skill, just for you!
(*to Romeo*) *En garde*, vile Montague!
You have a sword. Unsheathe it!
So, daring to defile our time-honored house,
Last night you entered uninvited.
For that intrusion you must pay.
Stealthily, you took advantage
Of shy and sheltered Juliet
With honeyed words and facile tongue,

**But there is only one word I need to describe you:
That word is coward!**

ROMEO, (*with dignity*)
Enough! Little do you know me.
Recently all has changed.
Now I've good reason to love you as a friend.
Let's call a truce;
Our long quarrel must end,
For I am not a coward. You'll see.

TYBALT
More honeyed words in the hope
Of obtaining my pardon? Never!

ROMEO
Sir, I have never wronged either you or yours.
Our season of rancor is gone.

MERCUTIO
So meek! You should bow your head in shame.
O Romeo! Can this be you?
All right then ... But if you will not stand up for honor,
Turn it over to me:
I will give him his due.

ROMEO
Mercutio, please! Hold on, I implore you!

MERCUTIO
I will not hear you insulted
When my sword is on hand,
To arms! Draw if you dare!

TYBALT
I am prepared.

ROMEO
Listen to me!

MERCUTIO
No! I will fight!

TENORS & BASSES
Weapons are drawn. Go on, go on!

MONTAGUES

**Capulets! Capulets! Breed of vipers!
Capulets! Capulets! House of horror!
With their cries of alarm
They are all out to harm.
With their cries of alarm
Bent on harm.
You infernal powers, rise up!
Subdue that ruthless arm.**

CAPULETS

**Montagues! Montagues! Breed of monsters!
Montagues! Montagues! House of horror!
With their cries of alarm
They are all out to harm.
With their cries of alarm
Bent on harm.
You infernal powers, rise up!
Subdue that ruthless arm.**

ROMEO

**Hatred! Source of despair and horror!
Can nothing quell that will to harm?
That will to harm mid despair and alarm.**

(The duel begins; Mercutio falls wounded)

MERCUTIO

Ah! A strike!

ROMEO

A strike!

MERCUTIO

**May a plague fall on both your houses!
O why did you have to interfere?**

ROMEO

**O fate! Harsh and remorseless!
(to others) Lend him a hand.**

MERCUTIO

Help me away. *(they bear him off, dying)*

ROMEO

Slain by a brute, and my own fault!

To hell with grov'ling!
His blood cries out for retribution,
From now on the only voice I obey.
O Tybalt! Here I see a coward.
That coward is you!

(They draw swords; Tybalt falls.) For you!

CAPULET *(entering)*
O God! Not Tybalt!

BENVOLIO *(to Romeo)*
He is mortally wounded.
Flee! Escape while you can!

ROMEO *(grief stricken)*
What have I done?
I go, cursed by my beloved!

BENVOLIO
You are dead if you stay.

ROMEO
A future worse than death
I see looming.

TYBALT,
(to Capulet, with his dying breath)
One final word. *(he whispers)*
Swear on your honor you will comply.

CAPULET
On my honor, I swear!
You can rely on that.

SOPRANOS, *entering, horrified*
Can it be? Can it be? Tybalt dead?
So young!

CAPULET, *to Tybalt*
Too soon to die ...

TUTTI
O day of tears! O day of grieving!
See the blades bathed in blood;
Feel the anger, still seething.

**For one and all
Death tolls the bell.
Long day of tears! Long day of grieving!
Lethal blades bathed in blood;
Helpless anger, still seething.
For one and all
Death tolls the bell.
For you as well.**

(The Prince of Verona enters)

The Prince! The Prince!

CAPULET

Avenge us!

BASSES

Avenge us!

CAPULET

**Young Tybalt, my nephew;
By Romeo was slain.**

ROMEO

**But he first slew my friend,
Mercutio, near and dear.
Only then did I fight,
And for that I will answer.**

TUTTI

We're calling for justice!

PRINCE

**Again! As always, blood!
May your hearts so enflamed
Never agree to calm down and turn the tables?
Never agree to call a truce and lay down arms?
Remember, I myself am tarnished by your squabbles.
(to Romeo) Our law decrees,
For the crime of killing you must die.
But since you did not start the fight,
Not death but exile.**

ROMEO

Exile!

PRINCE, to Montagues & Capulets

**And you, who explode on the least provocation,
Spreading havoc and fear in the streets of Verona,
I demand that you swear, both at home and abroad,
You will obey the laws of the prince and of God.**

ROMEO

**Ah! Day of tears, day of wrath, day of mourning!
My heart is broken, my life falls apart.
You come too late with your stern words of warning.
Your harsh decree caps a day cursed by fate;
Day born of rapture has turned into horror.
All that I live for has been torn from my heart.**

OTHERS

**O day of tears, day of wrath, day of mourning!
Laws have been broken, and lives fall apart.
Though come too late with the stern words of warning,
He comes to stifle the rampage of hate.
Days born of promise will turn into horror;
Still we cannot take the message to heart.**

PRINCE

**O day of tears, day of wrath, day of mourning!
Laws have been broken, and lives fall apart.
Though I'm too late with my stern words of warning,
I come to stifle the rampage of hate.
Days born of promise will turn into horror;
Till they at last take my message to heart.**

You must leave Verona this very night.

ROMEO

**Banished from her! Tonight! Tonight!
No! I may die, but I'll see her once more.**

OTHERS

For peace? No, no! For war!

ACT IV

Scene: Juliet's bedchamber.

JULIET

Dear! Though I grieve, I forgive.
He's dead, you are alive.
It was his life or yours.
How can you doubt my choice?
Far from tears of dismay
Or a sigh of remorse,
He hated you so much ... and I love you!

ROMEO

Ah! Once again, say again those magic words.

JULIET

O Romeo, now my own!
My husband! Love of my life!

BOTH



Juliet. *m.*
Sweet hour of mys-ter-y! Fire that will ev-er burn.

Romeo. *pp.*
Sweet hour of mys-ter-y! Fire that will ev-er burn.

Tasting the zest of living
And holding you close, rejoice!
Charmed by your eyes while gazing,
I thrill to hear your tender voice.
I thrill to know that you are mine!

JULIET

My beloved! Are you sad?

ROMEO

O Juliet! Do you hear it?
'Tis the lark that already announces the dawn.

JULIET

No, no! It is not the dawn
Nor the lark that is calling
With its song so out of tune.
Stealing our few treasured hours.

'Tis the sweet nightingale as she sings to the moon.

ROMEO

Ah! 'Tis the lark, alas! that would tear us apart.
See the jealous rays of light
Faint on the far horizon,
And the stars, one by one departing.
Pale Aurora, roused from her slumbers in the East,
Awakens with a smile.

JULIET

No, no! Not the break of day!
Only the dim reflection
Cast by the watchful moon
On her tour through the night.
Stay longer! Stay longer!

ROMEO

Ah! Clashing swords with death, I'm staying!

JULIET

Ah! You were right, It is day.
Flee! You must depart, far from Verona.

ROMEO

No, no, no, it's far too soon.
Not the lark sternly calling,
But the sweet nightingale as she sings to the moon.

JULIET

No! 'Tis the lark, alas! heralding the break of day.
Go, my dearest!

ROMEO

Kiss me again and I'm gone,

JULIET

Ah, so painful! All is over!

ROMEO

Be patient. Though today we see naught but despair,
Later on, no doubt, when old and gray,
We'll look back and remember
This hour of joy and woe
That happened long ago.

JULIET

Although it breaks my heart,
In haste you must depart,
And leave no traces.
No time is left for long and sweet embraces.

BOTH

(same words, adjusted pronouns)

Although it breaks my heart,
In haste you/I must depart
And leave no traces.
No time is left for long and sweet embraces.
O cruel law that demands that we suffer!
But love alone now is all I can offer.

ROMEO

Adieu, my lovely Juliet!
Adieu, I'm yours alone!

JULIET

Adieu, I'm yours alone!

Romeo leaves.

JULIET

Farewell, my heart! Farewell, my soul!
Angels of heaven, I pray –
Watch over my beloved!

NURSE,

entering in great agitation

Are you alone? Ah! May heaven be praised!
Your new husband is gone, and here comes your father!

JULIET

Lord! Does he know?

NURSE

Oh! I should hope not.
Friar Lawrence here as well.

JULIET

The friar! God give me courage.

CAPULET

Dearest daughter! The pall of night is barely lifted.
Here you are, wide awake,

Your eyes already open.
Alas! Tybalt is dead, dear to both you and me.
But in seasons of grief
Life, of course, marches on.

Let joyful wedding bells
Drown out the cries of mourners.
A final wish is sacred,
So when Tybalt, as he died,
Then named the only man
He would want you to wed,
I promised.
So get ready to become a bride!

JULIET

But the man? Am I to know?

CAPULET

The cream of the crop! The young Count Paris!

JULIET

Oh!

FRIAR, *quietly*

Stay silent, and stay calm.

NURSE

Hold your tongue, and stay calm.

CAPULET

The altar is prepared
And Paris has my blessing.
The wedding bells will peal
And tomorrow is the day!
The ghost of Tybalt cries,
“Go wed, without delay!”
All’s settled, so dry the tears that flow so freely.
Last wishes of the dead,
Like commands from the Lord Almighty –
Laws that we ust honor as a sacred duty.
This we owe to the dead
That they may find long peace.

QUARTET:

JULIET

Romeo! Never fear. I still have one recourse.

NURSE

Dead and buried, dead and buried,
All should be allowed to sleep in peace.

CAPULET

This we owe to the dead
That they may sleep in peace.

FRIAR

What solution? What solution?
Though extreme, I can foresee but one recourse.

CAPULET

Stay, Friar Lawrence. Help my daughter learn not to grieve.
Friends and family arrive.
As host, I must receive. *(exit Capulet)*

JULIET

O help me, holy father! Or all is lost!
Scared, frantic, I concealed the source of my despair.
But you know well my secret.
So I plead, begging for support.
O tell me how to ward off the wrong forced upon me,
Advise me, father. O speak!
Or else I'm prepared to die.

FRIAR

So brave ... if death holds for you no terror ...

JULIET

No! None! I'd sooner die than live in desecration.

FRIAR

Swallow this stealthy potion.
Coursing straight to the heart,
On the instant, your body becomes cold and numb,
Pale as death, ominously stalking.
In your veins, like ice, the blood no longer flows,
And soon a mask of gray
Effaces from your cheek all remembrance of roses,

Your eyes now tightly closed, impersonating death.
In vain people in shock will wring their hands and whisper,
“Not even stirring! Not even breathing!”
While all join together in weeping.
Would that angels in heaven could reply:
“Only asleep ... Only asleep ... Only asleep ...”

But after one short day, body and soul are restored.
The fire that’s dwindled out now is bursting into flame.
Waking from a long, deep and dreamless sleep,
See your husband and myself
There with you, full of wonder,
Watching and waiting for the first signs of life.
Safely returned to the arms of your beloved,
Then you are off to find new life, new joy together.
Do you recoil?

JULIET

No, no! Unto your hands my life I’m entrusting.

FRIAR

Until then ...

JULIET, *decisively*

Until then! (*exit Friar*)

CAPULET (*entering*)

My daughter, yield to joy
Shared by the man who adores you.
Eternal are the vows that will bind you together.
Blest be the sacred hour
When two first find each other.
May the blessings of heaven pour upon this pair
And may seeds that their love has planted come to flower.

JULIET

My love, born out of hate,
Through winding ways has led
To a silent grave,
Soon to be my wedding bed.

CAPULET

Dear Juliet! Show me a smile!

JULIET

Ah! Give me your hand ... I am freezing ...

Getting darker and darker ...
Voices unknown are calling ...
Angels of death ... so near!
O father! Goodbye!

CAPULET

O my Juliet, my darling, ah! Dead!

OTHERS

Dead! Dead! Ah, so young!

ACT V

Two friars enter in great agitation.

FRIAR LAURENCE

Speak up! Did Romeo get my note?

FRIAR JOHN

His page, hunted down by the Capulets,
Came limping back, more dead than alive,
Barely able to stagger,
Too undone to deliver the message.
Here is your letter.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Oh, I fear the worst! We have no time to lose;
Come! Speed is of the essence.
And pray! Pray that we are not late.
A moment wasted could be fatal! *(exeunt)*

At the tomb.

ROMEO, entering

She's here! The tomb, so grim, so silent and austere!
Her abode ... No! No!
Such a dark, gloomy dungeon!
A sweeter home above I foresee
And there we'll roam the fields of paradise.

Ah! There she lies! My darling!
Asleep ... her face unveiled
I behold once again.
O beloved! O so young and tender!

And death, stealing the warm, living breath from your body,
Has left your beauty untouched.
Ah! So! Beauty that bids me join you,
And rejoice evermore
At home among the angels
As we smile on eternity.

Why keep her lovely as before –
O pale destroyer! –
If not to hasten me to leap into her arms?
Ah, there's no other way to the goal that I long for.
So the prey you pursue
Now meets you face to face.

Ah! Rapacious tomb, I defy you!
How can you frighten me
When there I'll lie with her?
O my dearest!
Share the last of our earthly embraces!
One more! One more final kiss before I die.
In death, now I follow!

(he drinks, then casts the vial to the ground. As he sinks gradually to the ground, Juliet begins to waken from her coma. She rises slowly and gazes about in bewilderment.)

JULIET

Where am I?

ROMEO

Is it magic? Am I dreaming?
I thought I heard her speak.
My hands begin to shake ...
Are there traces of color that brighten her cheek?
Her eyes begin to open ... She arises!

JULIET

(gently) Romeo!

ROMEO

God in heaven be praised!
You're alive! You're alive!
Juliet, awake and breathing!

JULIET

Soft! Whose voice do I hear,

Tender and sweet, so enchanting?

ROMEO

**Your own Romeo, my love!
By your side, overcome,
Trembling with joy and awe,
Who restores to your heart
Precious moments of bliss,
Our one night of rapture,
Our desire and our dreams.**

JULIET

Ah, my love!

ROMEO

Rise! Come! Let us away!

JULIET

Free at last!

BOTH

**Come! The world lies before us!
Free to live in peace,
To live in peace and joy, come!
Father of all, father of mercy,
Lord be praised! Lord be praised
For this gift of life!**

ROMEO

Why, O why are all of our kin so unfeeling?

JULIET

Later on they may learn.

ROMEO

**No tears, no entreaties, none!
None can melt their hearts of stone.
As the doors open wide – O my darling! –
To a lifetime of joy, I'm to die?**

JULIET

**To die? Fever has gone to your brain;
Excitement has brought on delirium!
Dearest, stay calm! You'll soon be yourself again.**

ROMEO

Too late! When I thought you were dead,

Then I drank lethal poison.

JULIET

Lethal poison? O dear God!

ROMEO



Yield not to pangs of sor- row, our dream too sweet to last,

But love's celestial fire
Will outlast our despair.
Solid walls tumble down,
And the stones turn to dust
As the souls that merely slumber
Toward light are borne aloft.

JULIET

Longer life turns into torture!

ROMEO

O Juliet, do you hear it?
'Tis the lark that already announces the dawn.
No, no! It is not the dawn
Nor the lark that is calling.
'Tis the sweet nightingale as she sings to the moon ...

JULIET

Thoughtless, cruel man! Leaving me here deserted.
Is there no poison left for me?
Ah! Now I see the way.
This knife is my salvation! *(stabs herself)*

ROMEO

Ah, what have you done!

JULIET

(tenderly) Love, I belong with you!
My heart full of joy overflowing,
Here enfolded in your arms ...
We die with a kiss ... together

BOTH

O Lord! O Lord! Receive our souls.

THE END

