

# Romeo and Juliet

by William Shakespeare

(Adapted book. Upper-Intermediate level)

## CHAPTER ONE

### The Feud

"I will not fight," said Sampson, "but nobody should insult me if we see any Montagues, they had better be quiet."

"Or what?" asked Gregory.

"I'll kill them all."

"All?" Gregory stopped walking and looked at his friend.

"Every one of them." said Sampson. "If they are Montagues, then I'll fight them if they say something to me."

They began to walk on toward the square.

"What if one of the Montagues' dogs barks at you?" Gregory asked jokingly.

"Then I'd fight with it."

"What about women?"

This time Sampson stopped, as if to think about the question. "It's all the same. If they are Montagues, they are my enemies. And they will know I'm angry. "

"So you'd fight with the women?"

"I didn't say that." Sampson explained. "I said they'd know I'm angry. I'd fight with the men. After beating them, I would be kind to the women."

"You mean you'd charm them? Once the Montague men were gone?"

"Yes. I guess so."

"But that's not really showing them that you're angry. Unless you think charming the women is the same as fighting the men."

"Isn't it?" Sampson answered. "Either way, it's about showing the Montagues who's the boss I'll beat the men with swords, the women with smiles and pretty words. It's all the same."

"I wish it were the same," said Gregory, seeing two servants from the Montague family approaching from across the square. "Then you could just smile and say kind things to these two and be satisfied."

Sampson watched the two men strut through the square. "I can think of nothing kind to say."

The two men began to walk toward Sampson and Gregory, looking at them with angry eyes. They were making nasty remarks among themselves about Sampson and Gregory.

Gregory gave an unnatural smile as the two passed by. Sampson did the same, but he could not hold in his hatred.

As soon as the men passed, he stuck out his middle finger and went. "AARRRRRRR!"

The men stopped and turned. "Are you giving us the finger, sir?" said one of them.

"Uh." Sampson whispered to Gregory, "is the law on our side if I say 'yes'?"

"No."

"Then, no." stated Sampson.

"But I saw you stick out your finger," said the man named Abraham.

"And I heard you make a noise," said the other named Balthasar.

"Then I stuck out my finger, sir." said Sampson innocently, "and I made a noise. What about it?"

"That's just like a man from the Capulet family, isn't it?" said the other man. "Making rude gestures to honest people. And then too cowardly to confess to it."

"Just like a Capulet," agreed Abraham. "Cowards. Every one of them."

"There's no reason to call anyone a coward," said Gregory.

"I'll show you who's a coward!" said Sampson. As he grabbed his knife, he accidentally pushed Gregory into Abraham.

"You saw that, Balthasar? He attacked me," shouted Abraham.

It was too late to keep the peace.

All four men wrestled in the street. A crowd gathered and began shouting and cheering.

Benvolio, Old Montague's nephew, heard the fighting. He didn't really like the feud between his family and the Capulets. He knew that all this hatred would only result in death, and death in more hatred. But he knew the only way to stop the fighting was to jump between the angry men. Therefore, he drew his sword and ran toward the four men fighting in the square.

"Peace! Put your weapons away!" Benvolio shouted, as he pulled the men off each other.

A tall man walked forward. He pulled out his sword and touched the point.

It was Tybalt, Capulet's nephew, an arrogant man of thirty. He was very arrogant, but he was also the best swordsman in Verona.

"Tybalt," said Benvolio. "Put your sword away. I'm trying to keep the peace Please help me."

"Peace? You stand there with your sword in your hand talking of peace?" Tybalt spoke with a twisted smile.

Benvolio barely had time to defend himself before Tybalt lunged at him.

The crowd cheered again. "Kill the Montagues!" yelled some. "Kill the Capulets!" others yelled. "Kill them all!" yelled more.

"Kill the Capulets?" murmured an old man who was walking out of a nearby church.

It was Capulet, holding on to his young wife's arm, "Give me my sword!"

"Sword?" his wife scolded. "You need a cane, not a sword."

"I know it's Capulet!" Another old man hobbled across the square. It was Montague. "Lead me over to him." he said.

"How can you fight? You can barely walk!" said Lady Montague.

Then the crowd went silent as some horses neared. Escalus, the Prince of Verona, and his soldiers rode toward them. He circled Tybalt and Benvolio. The onlookers hurried off.

"Rebels!" roared the prince. "Throw your weapons to the ground!"

Tybalt and Benvolio did as the prince commanded.

"Now," Escalus said, "where are the people responsible? I'm talking about the two older men, Capulet and Montague." He searched the streets and found the two old men. "You, Capulet, and you, Montague, stand in front of me!"

The two old men came forward.

"You are leaders in this city and are supposed to be moral. But instead of teaching the people how to be noble, you force them to participate in your pointless feud. Well,

I've been patient for too long." He drew his sword. "If your feud ever disturbs the streets again, you both will pay for it with your lives! Do you understand?"

They both nodded.

When Montague's people returned to their palace. Lady Montague spoke to Benvolio,

"My Romeo wasn't in this fight, was he?"

"No." said Benvolio.

"If Romeo wasn't with you, then where is he?"

"The last time I saw him, madam, was this morning. He was lying on the garden wall, and he looked so sad."

"Oh, my poor Romeo." Lady Montague clasped her hands. "Do you know why?"

"No, madam. I went over to him, but he ran away."

"I also have seen him in the garden looking sad. I've asked him why, but he said nothing to me." Lady Montague smiled sadly.

As they reached the palace, a young man stepped out of the rose bushes.

"There's Romeo, now, madam," said Benvolio. "Should I talk to him again?"

"Please." said Lady Montague. She patted Benvolio's wrist and left with her husband.

"Good morning, cousin," said Benvolio.

"Is it still morning?" said Romeo, tossing a stone into the fountain.

"It is only nine o'clock."

"Sad hours pass slowly." Romeo threw another stone.

"Why do the hours seem so long?"

"I don't have anything to make them short."

"You mean love," said Benvolio happily. "I thought you might be in love!"

Romeo threw more stones into the fountain. "Out!"

Benvolio wasn't sure what he meant. Was he telling him to go? "I don't understand. Romeo."

"Out," he repeated. "I'm not in love, but out of love. The one I love does not love me, therefore I'm out of love."

Benvolio slightly chuckled at what he thought was a joke, but Romeo had not been joking.

"Don't laugh at me!" he stared at Benvolio.

"No, no," Benvolio said. "It's just that. . ."

Romeo raised his hand. "Forgive me," he said. "I haven't slept in a day because I've been thinking so much." Then he noticed the blood on Benvolio's face. "I didn't even notice that you have been injured."

"It's nothing," said Benvolio. "Just the usual fight with the Capulets."

"I should have been with you. Maybe I couldn't help, but perhaps one of the Capulets would have stabbed me and put me out of my misery."

"You aren't serious."

But something in Romeo's eyes said he was.

"I hate to see you like this."

"Hate!" Romeo yelled, grabbing Benvolio. "Hate to see me in love? Then you hate me!" He shook his cousin. "Maybe you would rather see me in hate? Is that it? Montagues love to hate, fight, and kill. But whether we love to hate or love to love doesn't matter. It's all the same passion, and it will kill us all the same."

Benvolio didn't like what Romeo had said. After all, he had risked his life to stop a fight earlier. But he knew that Romeo was right and that the problem with the family was because of excessive passion. He also knew that Romeo possessed that same passion. He wanted to help his cousin.

"Can you tell me who it is that you love?"

"A woman," he mumbled.

"Yes," said Benvolio, "Who?"

"Rosaline," said Romeo.

"Rosaline?" Benvolio brightened. "Things may be alright. I know she will be at a party in the Capulet's house tonight."



"In the Capulet's house? My father's enemy? I cannot enter the Capulet's house. I will surely be killed. Although, that may not be so bad."

"Cousin," said Benvolio "Mercutio, one of our friends, is invited to the party. We can go with him. We will wear masks, so no one will recognize us."

Romeo looked up happily.

"Not ready to die yet, eh?" Benvolio was glad to see Romeo look a little happier. "But I warn you: there will be so many pretty girls there that you will forget about Rosaline."

"Oh. Benvolio. There is no one more beautiful than her. And I would not want another."

"Believe what you want," said Benvolio. "Just get ready for the party."

Capulet, drinking some cool water, leaned back in his chair. "I'm glad that Montague has to follow the same rules as me. Both of us will die if either of us breaks the peace." He laughed. "Break the peace! That's funny!"

"Why?" asked Capulet's kinsman, Paris.

"Because the two of us are too old to break the peace. Old men like us should be able to stay out of a fight."

"That's true, sir, but what about your young kinsmen? They don't always think clearly when they are angry."

"Yes," said Capulet, "the young think with their hearts and not their heads. But they will listen to their elders."

"Let's hope so," said Paris. "You both are such gentlemen. I can't believe this quarrel has continued for so long."

"Truly, and I think I've even forgotten how it started." Capulet laughed again.

Paris laughed with him, but he wanted to change the subject. "Have you thought about my request?"

"Your request? I had almost forgotten," said Capulet.

"Are you opposed to the marriage?" asked Paris.

"No," answered Capulet, "though I'm not really for it either. You are a fine young man, but Juliet is so young. Give her two more years."

"Many ladies younger than her are already mothers." Paris gently objected.

"Because they married too soon!" snapped Capulet. But he knew that Paris was right. His wife was Juliet's age when they married. But Capulet wasn't ready to see his only daughter get married. However, there was no reason why she shouldn't get married. After all, she couldn't stay his little girl forever.

"I think I have upset you," said Paris. "You are her father, and you know what is best for her."

"Wait," said Capulet.

Paris stopped.

"I will agree to the marriage," said Capulet. "But the final decision is hers. Come to the party tonight. If she agrees to marry you, then you will have my blessing."

"Thank you. I will!" cried Paris, as he walked out of the room.

Alone, Capulet looked out the window. He imagined Juliet falling in love, just as he had done. Then he went to sleep.

## CHAPTER TWO

# Love at First Sight

"Nurse!" called Lady Capulet. "Coming, madam," yelled the nurse as she ran down the stairs.

"Where's my daughter?" demanded Lady Capulet.

"Where are you, Juliet!" the nurse shouted up the stairs.

Juliet appeared at the top of the stairs. Her long, black hair looked beautiful.

"Now," began Lady Capulet, "you are old enough to get married. So tell me, Juliet, how would you like to be married?"

Juliet thought the question was awkward. She didn't want to defy her mother, so she chose her words carefully. "I've always dreamed of getting married," she said politely. "But I'm still too young to think of marriage."

Lady Capulet knew this would be difficult, so she spoke directly. "I will be brief. The brave Paris wants to marry you. What do you think, Juliet?" spoke Lady Capulet. "He will be at the party tonight. Take a good look at him before you answer."

"I will look," replied Juliet

Lady Capulet couldn't tell if Juliet was happy and wondered if she could love Paris.

"Come on, come on!" yelled Mercutio to Romeo and Benvolio. "We're going to be late."

"I thought a man in love could fly here on Cupid's wings." Mercutio laughed.

"You're wrong. Mercutio." Romeo said. "Love is burdensome, so a lover's feet are slow."

"Does that mean you can't dance tonight?" Mercutio asked. "If I was in love, I would dance."

"Well, we don't have time to talk. We are already late. I'm sure we've missed dinner, and we'll miss the dance if we don't hurry," said Benvolio.

"It's okay if we are late," said Romeo. "I fear tonight will be a disaster"

"Okay," said Mercutio. "We'd better hurry then. I don't want to keep a man in love from his disaster!"

They hurried down the street and arrived at a gate. Just beyond was a large hall, and they could hear the sounds of music and laughter.

"Let's put on our disguises," said Mercutio. "Otherwise, the doorman will not let us enter since we are Montagues."

The three entered the party wearing masks. Mercutio and Benvolio joined the dance while Romeo walked among the crowd of people. He was hoping to see his beloved Rosaline.

But Romeo saw someone else. She seemed like a picture. She moved effortlessly, as if she was floating on air. She was so beautiful. She was like an angel.

"She is so beautiful that she makes the stars shine bright," Romeo mumbled to himself

He walked as if in a trance. "Was I really in love before now?" he asked himself. "No," he answered aloud. "No, I have never really seen beauty before tonight."

He lifted his mask, hoping the lady would his face. She did.

"What's the matter?" asked Paris, as Juliet stopped dancing

"Nothing," she answered. "Something is in my eye."

They continued dancing, but Juliet couldn't stop looking at the person she had just seen.

Neither could her cousin.

"A Montague!" Tybalt said angrily. "He comes to our party masked. To make fun of us!"

"What's the matter?" asked Capulet, as he walked over to Tybalt.

"Uncle," said Tybalt, pointing to Romeo, "he is a Montague."

Capulet looked. "It's young Romeo."

"Romeo!" shouted Tybalt.

"Calm down, nephew," said Capulet. "Leave him alone. He appears to be a gentleman. Be patient, and don't think about him."

"Too late," replied Tybalt.

Capulet didn't like that Tybalt was being rude, but he tried to reason with him.

"It's what I want," he said. "Please respect my wishes, and be happy. Sad people don't belong at parties."

"Sad people belong at parties when an enemy is a guest. I cannot tolerate him."

"You will tolerate him!" Capulet scolded.

Tybalt turned his back on his uncle

"How can you turn your back on me?" shouted Capulet, grabbing Tybalt and spinning him around. "I'm the master here, and I said to leave him alone."

"It's terrible," muttered Tybalt.

"It is, but you're being childish," said Capulet.

"Childish? I'm thirty years old," answered Tybalt.

"Will you be a man if you cause trouble with my guests?"

Their voices became loud. The musicians stopped playing and the guests stopped dancing.

"Excuse me, my lady," said Paris to Juliet. "If I'm to be your husband, what your family does affects me. I had better see what the problem is."

"Of course," answered Juliet, but she didn't even hear what he said. It was good that he was leaving, though.

Capulet noticed that they were being too loud.

"There's nothing to be concerned about. Please continue dancing and having fun," he declared. Then he pinched Tybalt's cheek and told him to go and dance.

Tybalt pretended that it was nothing. He bowed to his uncle and walked away bitterly.

On the dance floor, Juliet heard a whisper in her ear. "The dancing is starting," it said. "But follow me."

"Where to?" She turned and saw Romeo. Even with a mask on, he was the most handsome man she had ever seen.

She followed him to a private spot. Romeo removed his mask and took Juliet's hand.

"Your hands are gentle," he said. "You are like an angel, and I would like to give you a tender kiss."

Juliet fell excited as the blood rushed to her head, but she kept calm. "Angels have wings and often fly away," she said. Then she gently laced her fingers through his and held his hands tightly.

Romeo shivered. The sensation of her touch was amazing. He wanted to kiss her more than ever, but she hadn't given him permission.

"Don't angels have lips?" he said as he stroked her hand.

"Yes," she said. She knew Romeo wanted to kiss her, and she warned him to. But she didn't want to be too bold. Juliet knew it wasn't proper for a young lady to tell a stranger to kiss her. But his touch was so gentle, so strong, and so warm that she could almost imagine what his lips would feel



like. How could she get him to kiss her? Romeo was waiting for an answer. Juliet turned her eyes away because she was afraid he would know how she felt.

"I guess your lips don't desire a kiss," he said as he began to release her hand.

But Juliet wouldn't let go. She moved Romeo's hand to her heart.

Romeo felt Juliet's heart pounding. She looked so amazing that he felt like he would melt away if their lips touched. Yet Romeo couldn't believe what he did next.

He kissed her.

"Madam!" yelled the nurse, pushing her way toward them. "Madam, your father and Paris are looking for you."

Juliet stepped away, still staring at Romeo.

Romeo put his mask back on. "Who is her father?"

The nurse recognized Romeo. "This is Juliet and her father is the owner of this house."

"She is a Capulet?" said Romeo.

"As you are a ..."

"A bachelor!" interrupted Benvolio. "Come," he whispered. "We've been discovered. We have to leave before there is trouble."

"There is already trouble," said Romeo.

"Who ... who was that gentleman?" asked Juliet.

"The most handsome man I've ever seen," answered the nurse.

"Is he married?" asked Juliet.

"No, but he might as well be."

Juliet stared at the nurse. "What do you mean?"

"His name is Romeo Montague. The only son of your great enemy."

"Of course, he would have to be a Montague," said Juliet.

She didn't explain but thought deeply of Romeo. She knew right then that her whole world had just changed. She could no longer live in her old world, the one without Romeo. That Romeo was her enemy only made her feelings stronger. She knew at that moment that the world, and not her love, would have to change. It was simple.

"So," she said, "my only love has come from my only hate."

"What's this? Love?" whispered the nurse. "My baby girl is in love?"

"Juliet!" came a call in the distance. It was Paris or her father. Juliet didn't care.

"Tell them I've gone to bed."

## CHAPTER THREE

# The Secret Wedding

Romeo was thinking strange thoughts. He couldn't go home. He needed to see Juliet again, but he could not go to her house. Yet there was nowhere else to go.

He walked in the night back to the house of his father's enemy. He climbed the garden wall and waited. He crouched in the bushes.

In an upper room, lit by a single candle, was the shadow of a woman.

"What light is in the window," whispered Romeo.

The door slowly opened, and Juliet stepped onto the balcony.

"It is my angel," gasped Romeo, "Oh, it is my love! Oh, if only she knew how much I loved her."

Juliet carried a candle and set it on the balcony. She looked into the darkness, and her lips moved.

"She speaks," whispered Romeo.

Then she spoke. "Ah, me!"

"Oh, speak again, my angel," said Romeo softly.

He could see her breathing. He wanted to run to her, climb up the balcony, and hold her. But he feared that once she knew his name, she would hate him.

Juliet spoke again. "Oh, Romeo, Romeo, why are you, my sweet Romeo? Forget that you are a Montague. If not, just say you love me, and I'll no longer be a Capulet."

Romeo fell backward. Had he died? Was this heaven? He stood and looked. Juliet was still there.

"It is only your name that is my enemy," Juliet said. "What's a Montague? It's only a name. And a rose would smell just as sweet if it was given another name. Romeo, forget your name, and be only mine."

Romeo couldn't endure it anymore.

"I will be only yours!" he cried, coming forward. "Just be my love, and I will never be Romeo."

"Who's there?" said Juliet, stepping back.

"I don't know how to tell you who I am," said Romeo. "I hate my name because it is the name of your enemy."

"I haven't heard you speak much, but I know the sound. You are Romeo, and a Montague. How did you get here?" she demanded, "and why? The walls are high and hard to climb. And it's dangerous if anyone finds you here."

"It was because of love that I jumped over the walls. And a person can do anything for love."

Love! Romeo had said love. She wanted him to say it again, but she was afraid.

"I'm afraid someone will find you here."

"Let them find me," said Romeo "I would rather die here with you than live miserably without your love."

She closed her eyes and imagined him. "Do you love me?" she whispered.

"I love you more than words can say!" answered Romeo.

"Madam!" came a voice from within the house. It was the nurse.

Juliet's eyes opened wide. "A noise. Go, dear love!"

Romeo began to tiptoe away, but Juliet didn't want him to leave. "No, stay!"

Juliet leaned over the balcony. "What can I do to make you happy?"

"You can give me your heart, and I will give you mine."

"I gave it to you before you asked," Juliet smiled. "My love is boundless and as deep as the sea. The more I give to you the more I have."

"My lady!" shouted the nurse.

"In a minute!" yelled Juliet. Then, to Romeo, she said, "If your love is real and you want to marry me, please tell me."

"I do want to marry you," said Romeo.

"When?"

"Tomorrow," promised Romeo boldly. "I'll come myself."

"No," said Juliet, "it's too dangerous. I'll send my nurse. When will you be ready?"

"By ... by nine o'clock tomorrow."

"It will seem like twenty years till then," she said, "but I will endure it. Go now."

Romeo stepped away.

She blew a kiss. "Good night, good night. Parting is always sweet sorrow, but I will see you tomorrow."

He could almost feel her kiss touch his lips. "I will not sleep until then," he said, and then disappeared into the night.

Friar Lawrence was working in the garden. "Ahh!" he breathed in the smell of fresh flowers. "The earth is a wonderful thing," he thought. "It gives life to new flowers and trees."

He pulled a pair of scissors from his pocket and began to prune the flowers, humming as he worked.

"Good morning, Father," came an urgent voice.

Friar Lawrence turned and saw Romeo. "My boy," he said, "what are you doing up so early in the morning? I've never known a young man to wake up so early." He smiled warmly. "Or maybe you did not go to bed last night?"

"I didn't go to bed, but I got the sweetest rest anyway."

"Were you with Rosaline and resting without sleeping?" Friar Lawrence asked.

"Rosaline? I have forgotten all about her."

"That's good, my son, but then where were you?"

"Dancing with my enemy!" Romeo exclaimed. "That's where I forgot about Rosaline and learned what true love is."

Friar Lawrence rubbed his eyes.

"You're confusing me, Romeo." he said. "Speak directly."

"I love Capulet's daughter," said Romeo. "And she loves me. We've just met, but our love is everlasting. We have sworn to marry. You must marry us today."

"Marry you!" Friar Lawrence shook his head. "You cried for Rosaline only yesterday. Now you say you will marry another?"

"Didn't you scold me for loving Rosaline?"

"I scolded you for idolizing her."

"Didn't you tell me not to love her?"

"Yes, but not to fall in love again so quickly. You are too passionate."

"Don't we all live by passion?"

"We live by reason," insisted Friar Lawrence. "We die by our passions."

"Well then praise me for being reasonable. I now know you were right about Rosaline. I wasn't in love with her. But Juliet is perfect, and it's reasonable to love perfection, right? You must marry us."

Friar Lawrence looked out at the sunrise. He couldn't believe what he was hearing. How could he marry someone so young and naive? And without the parents' consent?

"Father?" asked Romeo impatiently.

The friar didn't answer. He continued thinking. Maybe a marriage would force peace between the fighting families.

"You have not persuaded me, Romeo," said Friar Lawrence at last, "but I will marry you! And I hope this marriage brings love to your two families instead of hate."

Friar Lawrence put his scissors back into his pocket and led Romeo to the church.

"Where is Romeo?" Mercutio leaned against the church steps. "You said he wasn't home when you got there."

"No," answered Benvolio, "but Tybalt has sent a letter to him."

"A challenge to fight?" asked Mercutio.

Benvolio kicked a stone. "I'm sure Romeo will accept the challenge."

"Then Romeo will die," said Mercutio. "Tybalt is an excellent fighter."

Benvolio knew Mercutio was right, but Romeo was no coward.

If Tybalt challenged him, Romeo would accept, and then Romeo would be killed. Benvolio didn't want to imagine that.



"I'd feel better if we knew where he was." said Benvolio.

"There is our poor lover now," pointed Mercutio

"Romeo!" cried Benvolio

"Why did you run away from us last night?" asked Mercutio.

"I'm sorry," said Romeo. "I had something very important to do. What were you so concerned about?"

"About our friend," said Mercutio "He's been so worried about love lately. We thought he might have done something terrible."

"Have you seen the letter, Romeo?" asked Benvolio.

"Letter?"

"Yes," said Mercutio. "From the house of Capulet, your enemy."

Romeo's eyes lit up. "From the house of Capulet! What did it say?"

"Why do you sound excited?" asked Benvolio.

"Is it news?" asked Romeo. "I'm so in love. It seems like thousand years since I last heard her voice. Where is the letter?"

"What do you mean 'her voice'?" asked Benvolio, puzzled.

"He's crazy," said Mercutio. "And I must be, too." He rubbed his eyes. "Is that an elephant coming toward us?"

They all looked up and saw Juliet's nurse walking toward them.

"Oh, I see." said Mercutio, loud enough for the nurse to hear. "It's just a fat lady."

"Fat lady!" The nurse turned red with anger and ran toward Mercutio. "You have no manners!"

"Stop this!" yelled Benvolio. "Both of you calm down."

"I was looking for young Romeo here, but I'm sad to see him with such rude men," said the nurse.

"Take him with you," said Mercutio. "A man in love is not good company for bad-mannered men like us."

"What can I do for you, madam?" asked Romeo.

"Can I talk to you in private, sir?" asked the nurse.

They stepped aside.

The nurse studied Romeo. "My young lady has told me everything. I have a message from her. But first, she is so young, so do you only pretend to love her?"

"Pretend?" protested Romeo "I cannot pretend. With Juliet I have discovered myself. My heart, my mind, and my soul belong to her."

The nurse no longer doubted Romeo. She looked into his dark eyes He was so handsome.

Romeo interrupted her stare, "Are you happy with my answer?"

She blushed. "My lady loves you, and she is very precious to me. What is important to her is important to me, Oh, dear Romeo," she said. "You're going to make Juliet very happy."

Romeo smiled, "I plan to," he said. "I've talked with Friar Lawrence, and he has agreed to marry us. Create a plan, and bring Juliet to the church so we can be married."

"Married," said the nurse. "How beautiful."

"Bring her as soon as you can."

Juliet paced back and forth in her bedroom. She was so impatient.

"I sent her so long ago," she thought. "Why is she so slow?"

She sat down but stood up again. The nurse had been gone for over three hours. How long does it take to walk to the town square?

The door blew open, and Juliet heard footsteps coming up the stairs.

"Oh, here she comes!" cried Juliet.

She opened her bedroom door. "Oh, what happened?" she begged. "Did you meet with him? Why do you look so sad?"

"Just a minute," said the nurse as she reached the top of the stairs. "I'm out of breath."

Juliet shook her. "Tell me! Is it good news or bad news?"

The nurse pinched her cheek. "You told me his face was more handsome than anyone's, but his hands, his feet, and his whole body are better, too."

The nurse fell onto the bed.

Juliet jumped on top of her. "I know. I know!" she snarled. "But what did he say about our marriage?"

"He said something about it."

"Oh, you tease me!" cried Juliet "Am I going to be married today or not?"

The nurse grinned.

"You didn't want to get married with Paris so quickly. Why are you so eager to marry this Romeo?"

Juliet stood up and straightened herself. "I'm not eager," she said. "But what did Romeo say?"

"Do you have to go to confession today?"

"Stop teasing me! Tell me what Romeo said!"

Juliet was frustrated and fell onto the bed.

The nurse fell sorry for her. "Okay, okay. I was only teasing you. A young woman that is going to get married can forgive me." She smiled.

"Married?" The word echoed in Juliet's head.

"Now if you want to make any confessions, you have to go to church. There you will find a young man who is eager to marry you." She smiled again.

Juliet gasped.

Juliet hugged the nurse. "Thank you! Thank you!" she cried. "Let's go right now!"

Friar Lawrence was preparing Romeo for the wedding. He wasn't sure if this wedding was the right thing to do. Marrying two young people without their parents' permission was not right. He wanted this marriage to bring the two families closer together, but he wasn't sure if it would.

"Will they get angry? Will they get angry with me?" he thought.

"Amen already," said Romeo. He was impatient from waiting on Friar Lawrence.

"Calm yourself, Romeo," scolded Friar Lawrence. "You need to live and love moderately. If not, neither love nor life will last long."

But he knew Romeo wouldn't be calm. Neither would Juliet. Then Juliet came running toward the church.

"I should send both of them home," thought Friar Lawrence. But he knew he couldn't do that.

"Good afternoon, Father," sang Juliet. She jumped into Romeo's arms.

"Juliet!" cried Romeo, holding her. "Please tell me you love me as much as I love you! And how happy you will be after we are married."

"I love you so much that words can't describe it," she said and kissed him.

"Okay, enough," said Friar Lawrence, separating the two. "Let's hurry with the wedding."

Friar Lawrence took them to the altar. Then he quickly performed the wedding ceremony. When he was through, he left them to pray, and he went to the garden to think.

The nurse found him there. "Romeo isn't welcome in Juliet's house," she said "Nor she in his. What are they going to do?"

"I haven't thought about that," replied Friar Lawrence. "Maybe they can tell their parents soon."

"Father," the nurse smiled. They are newlyweds. They want to be together."

"You are like a mother to Juliet. You should have thought about this problem before the wedding," snapped Friar Lawrence.

"You married them," she replied. "You should have thought about this problem, too."

"They need our help, so how can we solve this problem?" asked Friar Lawrence

"Their parents will kill us if they find out about this. We have to keep it a secret for a while. But we have to give

these two time to be man and wife together. I'm sure they'll be okay after a while."

"Right," agreed Friar Lawrence. "Take Juliet home. I'll help Romeo find a way to go into her bedroom tonight. That should solve the problem for a while. We'll worry about the parents later."

## CHAPTER FOUR

# The Swordfight in the Square

A messenger came and gave Benvolio some news. It was the Capulets. They were looking for Romeo.

"Tybalt is really angry." Benvolio said to Mercutio. "I think we should get out of here."

"I won't go," said Mercutio.

"I don't want to be here when they come," insisted Benvolio. "I don't want to get into a fight."

Just then, Benvolio saw Tybalt and some of his friends making their way across the street.

"Oh, no!" said Benvolio. "Here come the Capulets. Let's go!"

"I'm not worried about them," replied Mercutio.

It was too late to leave.

"Good afternoon," said Tybalt. "Can I speak with one of you?"

"Speak with us?" said Mercutio. "That's a strange way to ask someone to fight."

"I will fight if you give me a reason," answered Tybalt, putting a hand on his sword. He stepped closer. "Mercutio, Romeo was with you last night, right? Where is he now?"



"Do I look like a slave?" asked Mercutio. "Am I supposed to answer your every question? Even if I did know where Romeo was, I wouldn't tell you."

Tybalt drew his sword.

"Gentlemen," interrupted Benvolio. "Either stop this fight, or go somewhere else to finish it. Everyone is watching us."

"No need," said Tybalt. He saw Romeo walking toward them. "Here comes my man."

"Your man?" said Mercutio, teasing Tybalt. "Is he one of your servants?"

"A mistake," said Tybalt, as Romeo came up to them. "I should have called him a villain instead!" He looked at Romeo.

Romeo just smiled. "Tybalt," he said, "I love you, so I will forgive your anger. You will soon learn that I'm not a villain. Until then, goodbye."

Tybalt thought Romeo was just making fun of him. "You ruined our party last night with your presence. Now turn, and draw your sword!" shouted Tybalt.

"I've never hurt you, Tybalt. And I couldn't now. I love you like a brother. More like a brother than you know." He bowed. "Be happy."

Mercutio looked at Romeo. "He's being dishonorable! Why is he acting like this?"

"I think he's being reasonable," said Benvolio. "Let's peacefully go away and be happy."

"I'll be happy when Tybalt is dead!" said Mercutio.

Tybalt lifted his sword. "I'm ready for you!"

"Tybalt! Mercutio!" said Romeo. "Put your swords away!"

Mercutio pushed Romeo aside and lunged at Tybalt. Tybalt stepped aside. Then he began swinging his sword at Mercutio.

"Tybalt! Mercutio! The prince has forbidden this! Stop!" Romeo shouted. "Benvolio, help me stop this fight."

Romeo stepped between the two and grabbed Mercutio. But Tybalt kept coming. Mercutio tried to defend himself, but Romeo was holding him too tightly. Tybalt's sword stuck into Mercutio's chest.

"Ahhhh!" Mercutio cried, falling to the ground.

Tybalt withdrew his sword and wiped off the blood.

Benvolio ran to Mercutio. "How bad is it?"

"It's enough." Mercutio coughed. He put his hand over his chest. Blood gushed through his fingers.

"Be brave," said Romeo. "You'll be okay."

"No," said Mercutio, his senses leaving him "I won't be okay."

Blood began to come out of his mouth. "Why did you come between us, Romeo? I couldn't defend myself."

Romeo looked into his friend's eyes "I was trying to stop you."

"You stopped me, all right." Mercutio gasped. "He has killed me."

"I'll take him to the doctor," said Benvolio. As he prepared to lift him, he felt his pulse fade away. "He's dead," he said.

Romeo stared at Mercutio. "My friend was killed because of me," he thought. "And Tybalt teases us all. Oh, Juliet, I wish I could have married you one day later. Then Tybalt would not be my cousin, and I could take revenge on him."

Romeo became so angry that the love and tenderness that he had felt began to disappear. In a second, he forgot about Juliet, about his marriage, and about the future. He wanted justice. He wanted revenge.

He picked up Mercutio's sword.

"Romeo," said Benvolio, "put the sword away. Here comes Tybalt."

Romeo didn't put the sword down. "So you've returned to see Mercutio's dead body. And to see us cry at your feet. No. No, Tybalt!" he yelled.

Tybalt strutted up to Romeo. "You poor little boy," he said. "Do you want to die just like Mercutio?"

"My sword is strong!" Romeo said, and he struck at Tybalt.

Tybalt blocked Romeo's blow with ease. But Romeo pressed on with incredible speed. Tybalt tried to keep calm. He tried to make it appear as if he could easily defend against Romeo's attacks. It soon became clear that he was not fighting a man, but an avenging angel.

Romeo swung at Tybalt so violently that he could no longer feel his arm or the sword. He kept raging forward. As he did, he saw Tybalt's eyes change from being confident to panic and then to horror.

Suddenly, there was no more ringing of swords. No more shouting. The vicious face of Tybalt became peaceful. It was then that Romeo saw how much he looked like Juliet. He watched Tybalt fall to the ground.

"Let's get out of here!" yelled Benvolio. "Tybalt's dead. The prince will kill you all if he finds you here."

"Oh, I'm a fool," he said.

"They are coming!" Benvolio screamed. "Romeo, get out of here!"

Juliet stood on her balcony. She watched the sunset.

"Please leave us, sun," she chanted. "Quickly become dark so that Romeo can come into my bedroom. Then we can hold each other all night."

The nurse slipped through the curtain and out onto the balcony. She looked worried.

Juliet knew something was wrong. "What's the matter?"

"He's dead." she said.

Juliet almost fainted "My Romeo? My love? Dead?"

"No," said the nurse, but the truth wasn't much better.

"No. Tybalt. Tybalt is dead. Killed by Romeo. And Romeo has been banished by the prince."

"Did Romeo really kill Tybalt?" Juliet could barely speak as she started to cry.

"There are no honest men," replied the nurse. "I hope something bad happens to Romeo."

Juliet became angry. "Don't say that!"

"He killed your cousin. How can you defend him?"

"Should I lute my husband? My cousin would have killed Romeo. But my husband is still alive." Juliet tried to stop crying. "So why can't I stop crying? I should be glad that Romeo is still alive."

The tears came again. "Banished! He will never come to Verona or me again."

Romeo stood up when Friar Lawrence returned to his room. "Well, Father? What news? What did the prince decide?"

Lawrence removed his jacket and hung it on the coat rack. "A gentle judgment," he said, knowing that Romeo would not agree. "Not death, but banishment."

"Banishment!" Romeo cried. "Banishment is worse than death! Please say 'death'."

Friar Lawrence knew Romeo was saying this because of his love for Juliet. "The prince could have killed you. He didn't. The prince is being kind."

There was a loud knock on the door.

"Hide yourself, Romeo," said Friar Lawrence.

Romeo hid as Friar Lawrence opened the door. It was the nurse.

"Good afternoon, Friar," she said. "Is Romeo here?"

"He is very sad, but here," he said. "Romeo!"

Romeo came forward.

"He looks like Juliet," said the nurse. "Tears and crying."

"You break my heart, nurse," said Romeo, "to speak of Juliet."

"And you broke her heart," she said. "She wants to see Tybalt and you, but she can't see either."

"Because I'm the bad guy that murdered her cousin," said Romeo. "I will make Juliet happy and kill that bad guy."

He pulled out his knife and placed it against his chest.

"Don't do that!" Friar Lawrence knocked the knife out of Romeo's hands. "You amaze me. You killed Tybalt by mistake. But if you kill yourself, you will also be killing Juliet. She is still alive. Will you abandon her by killing yourself? The prince has given your life. Calm down, and think about what you will do."

Romeo collapsed in a chair.

Friar Lawrence put his hand on Romeo's head. "Meet your love tonight. Go to her room as we have planned. Comfort her. We will get you out of the city after you have done this. You can live in Mantua until we can fix things between your families. If your love is strong enough, it will endure.

"Good idea," said the nurse "I'll go and tell Juliet, you will come tonight."

Capulet was at his home with Paris. Because of Tybalt's death, he realized that many of the young people didn't listen to him. Tybalt hadn't listened to him, and so he had died. Capulet didn't want his only daughter to make the same mistake.

"Wife," he commanded, "speak to Juliet before you go to bed. Tell her that Paris loves her. Tell her that on Thursday, three days from now, she will marry Paris."

Lady Capulet bowed and left.

"Is this okay with you?" Capulet asked Paris.

"Of course. I only wish that we could marry tomorrow," he answered.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# The Secret Plan

Upstairs in Juliet's bedroom, Romeo kissed his lover's lips.

"Why do you have to leave so soon?" Juliet asked.

"I must go and live or stay and die."

"Stay, and we will die together," she said as she hugged him.

He kissed her again. "I will if you will."

"My lady!" whispered the nurse as she opened the bedroom door. "Your mother is coming."

"Goodbye, my wife, my love," said Romeo. "One more kiss, and I'll leave."

He moved her hair and kissed her forehead.

"My husband." said Juliet. "I must hear from you every day."

"Goodbye," he said again. "I'll write you every day."  
"When will we meet again?" "Soon ..."

"Hurry!" cried the nurse. "I'm frightened," said Juliet. "Trust me," Romeo said. He kissed her and climbed down the balcony.

"How are you, Juliet?" Lady Capulet asked, opening the door.



"I'm not well," said Juliet, dressing quickly. "Still crying over your cousin's death?" Lady Capulet asked. "We are all upset."

Her mother then gave her the news. "Next Thursday morning, you will marry Paris at Saint Peter's Church."

"No, I will not!" Juliet yelled before she had time to think about what she was saying.

Lady Capulet was angry, "You disobey?"

"I mean," Juliet said, "it is impossible."

Footsteps were coming up the stairs outside the bedroom. "Your father is coming. Tell him yourself."

Capulet came into the bedroom.

"Father." Juliet said. "I cannot marry Paris."

"But I desire you to marry him." Capulet said.

"I understand, but I cannot."

"Do my desires mean nothing to you?"

"They are very important to me, but I'm unable to marry Paris."

"How can you disobey me?" yelled Capulet. "Am I the master of this house? You will marry Paris next Thursday!"

"Please father!" cried Juliet, falling and grabbing her father's ankles. "You've always let me make my own decisions. Please, let me make my own decision now."

"Decisions? I'll give you a decision to make. Marry Paris next Thursday, or never look at me again. Don't speak! Just do it!" he said.

Juliet cried and held her mother. Lady Capulet pushed her away. "Your father is only doing what's best for you. Don't speak anymore."

She left Juliet alone with the nurse.

"How can we prevent this? Say something! What can I do?"

The nurse didn't have an answer. She knew if Juliet was gone, she would have no job and wouldn't be able to support herself.

"Nurse?" pleaded Juliet.

"All right," she said, "here is my advice. Romeo's banished and can never come back. He's the only one that knows you're married. Well, I know, and Friar Lawrence knows, but we won't say a word. Do you understand? If you marry Paris, only Romeo can challenge the marriage. But he won't because he will never come back to Verona."

Juliet was shocked. "Are you serious?"

She looked into the nurse's eyes.

"It's the only way," she said. "Paris will make a lovely husband!"

"Thank you, nurse," said Juliet stiffly. "You don't have to say anything else. Go tell my mother and father that I will marry Paris."

The nurse felt sick to her stomach as she watched Juliet go to the door and hold it open. The girl was like her own daughter Juliet had come to her for help, and all she could do was lie. What was worse, Juliet knew that she had lied.

"I said I will do it, nurse," said Juliet, crossing her arms. "So you may go I will go to Friar Lawrence in the morning and confess my sins."

Meanwhile. Paris was at the church talking to Friar Lawrence.

"Thursday is too soon," said the friar.

"That's what her father wants," said Paris.

"But what does Juliet say?"

"She is too upset because of her cousin's death." Paris explained. "But her father says she will marry me."

"I'm sorry," said Friar Lawrence, "but you are hurrying this wedding, and you don't even know what Juliet thinks. I don't like it."

"Friar Lawrence!" came a voice.

Friar Lawrence looked down the path and saw Juliet running through the garden.

"Oh, someday she will call my name and run to me like that," said Paris,

Friar Lawrence ignored him. "What is it?"

She froze when she saw Paris. "Nothing, Father," she said. "I have come to make confession."

"Hello, Juliet." Paris bowed.

Juliet bowed and looked at Friar Lawrence for help.

"Paris," he said, "you must give us time alone."

"Of course." he said. "Juliet. I will see you on Thursday."

He waved goodbye and walked away.

"Oh, Juliet," said Friar Lawrence. "I hear you must marry Paris on Thursday."

Juliet looked at him. "Certainly, Friar, you will prevent this from happening."

Friar Lawrence looked at Juliet

"Please understand ..."

"I see how it is," said Juliet. "First my nurse and now you. You married Romeo and me. But now you won't prevent this second, unlawful marriage."

She angrily walked away but stopped short and turned "You amaze me, you older people. You are so brave when there is nothing to fear, but when there is trouble, you run away. Is this the wisdom of older people? Well, I was prepared for this!" She pulled out a knife.

"Juliet!" exclaimed Friar Lawrence, "what are you doing?"

She put the knife against her heart. "Since you will not help, this knife will solve our problem."

"Wait!" cried Friar Lawrence. "There is another way."

"How?"

Friar Lawrence thought quickly. "Here," he said, pulling some flowers from his garden. "I will make a potion from these flowers. The drink will cause a death-like sleep. When you are at home alone in your bedroom, drink this potion. You will feel cold and sleepy, even your pulse will stop. Later, when your family takes your body to your family tomb, I will come and get you. I'll tell Romeo of this plan by letter. He will come too! Don't be afraid."

A determined look came over Juliet's face. "Give it to me! I'm not afraid."

Friar Lawrence went into his kitchen and prepared the poison.

The nurse put Juliet's wedding dress on her bed. "You'll be a beautiful bride," she said. "Paris is a lucky man."

Capulet and his wife stood on the side.

Juliet looked at them. "I'm happy to have a great father and mother."

She gave a half smile and bowed.

"You are a perfect lady," said Capulet.

Juliet moved the wedding dress and sat down.

"Please excuse me, and leave me alone for the night. I must pray."

"Let's go. Leave her to pray," said Capulet. "Daughter, you have made me very happy."

He hobbled out of the bedroom. "Should I wait beside you tonight?" the nurse asked.

"Thank you," Juliet didn't even look at the nurse, "but that okay, you've done enough for me already."

The words hurt the nurse's feelings, "I would do anything for you, you know that," the nurse said softly.

"Then leave me," Juliet said.

The nurse walked out of the room.

"Get some sleep," said Lady Capulet. "You will need it." She left.

Juliet silently closed the door and took out the potion Friar Lawrence had given her. She held it tightly. She had a thought. What if she woke up before Romeo came? Wouldn't she suffocate in the family tomb? Worse, what if, surrounded by horrible images of death, she became crazy? What if, waking up beside Tybalt, she became mad? What if...

"Enough of what ifs" she whispered. "This is the only answer." She put the bottle to her lips, "Romeo, I drink this for you." She drank. Her throat burned. She gagged. Bright lights appeared before her. Her body went numb. She felt herself falling. And then nothing.

Before dawn, the nurse woke up and went to Juliet's room. "One word of encouragement," she mumbled.

"That's all. Surely Juliet will listen to me."

She opened Juliet's door and tiptoed to where the young lady was sleeping. She put her hand on her cold forehead. Her scream woke up the entire house.

## CHAPTER SIX

# The Lovers' Tragedy

Balthasar's hand shook as he opened the door of Romeo's apartment in Mantua.

"Ah," Romeo said, "news from Verona? Do you have a letter from the friar? How's my father? How's my Juliet?"

"Her soul is with the angels," answered Balthasar.

"Her soul is always with the angels," Romeo smiled, "but what about the rest of her?"

"Her body is in the Capulet's tomb."

Romeo rose from his desk. "What do you mean?"

"I... saw her body in the tomb. She... she is dead."

"That can't be true!"

"I wish it weren't true."

"Go, Balthasar. Get me a horse. Meet me by the city walls. I will leave tonight."

"Please, don't go sir," said Balthasar. "You are angry, and nothing good will happen because of this."

Romeo gathered his things and packed them into a bag. "You are mistaken. This is not anger. It is a reasonable response to these events. Now go and do what I told you!"

Balthasar left.

"Juliet," said Romeo. "I will lie with you tonight."



But how, he wondered. Then he remembered. There was a man in Mantua who sold strange drugs. He threw his bag over his shoulder and walked out.

As soon as he walked out, a monk arrived at Romeo's apartment.

"Hello!" he cried. "I have a letter for Romeo! Hello? It comes from Friar Lawrence, and it's very important! Is anyone there? Hello?" No one was there to answer.

Friar Lawrence stayed hidden as he walked to the Capulet's family tomb. By looking at the moon, he could tell that it was almost midnight. That meant that Juliet would wake up soon. He didn't want to think about Juliet waking up in a cold tomb surrounded by dead bones.

He walked faster until he arrived at the crossroads where he instructed Romeo to meet him. There was nobody there. He waited for a long time, but there was no Romeo.

Finally, he saw a man walking toward him, but it didn't look like Romeo.

"Who else would be coming to the graveyard at this time of night?" he thought.

"Who's there?" called Friar Lawrence.

"Friar Lawrence?" returned the voice. "Is that you?"

"Friar John?" asked Friar Lawrence, squinting to see who it was.

"Yes." said Friar John.

"What are you doing here?" asked Friar Lawrence.  
"Where is Romeo?"

"That's what I came to talk to you about."

"Did you take the letter to Romeo?"

"I never got the chance to," said Friar John. "I was stuck at the customs house. By the time I got to Mantua, Romeo was gone."

"Oh no," said Friar Lawrence, "I'm sure he has heard about Juliet's death by now and has... has... dear God, what has he done?"

"You seem upset, my brother."

"Go to my house," Friar Lawrence said.

"Wait there in case Romeo shows up. Tell him Juliet is alive."

Friar John didn't really understand, but he did as he was told.

"Wait here with the torch," said Paris to his servant.

The servant went to the side of the road while Paris went to the Capulet's tomb. He dropped flowers in front of the tomb. "This," he told himself. "I will do this every night to show how much I loved Juliet."

As he dropped the flowers, he heard his servant whistle. Was it a ghost? Paris looked across the graveyard and saw a man approaching. He hid himself behind a large tombstone.

"It was no ghost," thought Paris, "it was Romeo with a crowbar. The man who killed Tybalt. Now he has come to destroy the tomb, not when I'm here."

Romeo started to open the door with the crowbar.

"Stop right there, villain." Paris commanded, stepping forward.

"Don't try to stop me." Romeo said without looking up. "Leave me alone!"

The door groaned open. Paris grabbed Romeo by the arm.

When Romeo felt his hand, he spun around and swung the crowbar, hitting Paris in the head. Paris fell dead to the ground. His servant, who had been watching, ran off to tell the soldiers.

Romeo dragged Paris' body into the tomb.

There on a stone he found Juliet's body.

Romeo fell to his knees. "Oh, my love, my wife," he said, "you are still so beautiful, even in death."

He brushed the hair back from Juliet's face.

"You are the last thing I want to see on this earth."

He pressed his lips against hers. Then he opened a small bottle.

"Here is to my love!" he said as he drank the poison.

The drug was quick. He placed his lips on Juliet's once more. "With this kiss. I die."

His body shook and then he died.

"Who's in here?" called Friar Lawrence as he entered the tomb.

He lifted his torch and saw Paris dead on the ground. Then he saw Romeo dead at the base of the stone where Juliet was lying.

"If only I had been here one hour earlier, then I could have saved them both," he mumbled.

Juliet groaned.

"And now lady awakes"

Juliet rose up and so Friar Lawrence. "Friar," she said "where is my husband?"

Horses could be heard in the distance. "I hear some noise," said Friar Lawrence "Let's leave right away!"

"Where is Romeo?" demanded Juliet.

They could hear voices coming closer.

"I cannot stay!" whimpered Friar Lawrence. "Romeo is dead on the ground. Paris is also dead. Now come on!"

"You may go," she said, kneeling to examine Romeo.

"My lady. I have to go!"

"Then go." Juliet said, "But I cannot."

Friar Lawrence looked at Juliet and then ran out of the chime.

"What's this," thought Juliet "a bottle in Romeo's hand, it's poison."

She looked at the bottle. "You drink it all and didn't leave any for me."

She took the knife from Romeo's belt.

"I cannot live without Romeo." she said, and she stuck the knife into her heart.

She fell on top of Romeo just as the prince rushed in. Montague followed him in, and so did Capulet and his wife.

"The peace in my city has been broken." The prince looked at the two old men. "I'm sure that this is because of the hate you have between your two families."

More torches were brought in

"What happened here?" demanded the prince.

A captain entered and whispered into the prince's ear.

The prince nodded "All right, then. Bring the suspicious man in."

Two soldiers dragged in Friar Lawrence and threw him on the ground.

Friar Lawrence pleaded. "I know I look guilty, but I didn't murder anyone."

"Then what happened here?" asked the prince.

Friar Lawrence told them everything. He told them how he had married Romeo and Juliet.

Everyone gasped.

"When old Capulet said he wanted her to marry Paris she came to me for help," said Friar Lawrence. "I gave her a

drink to make her sleep. She would have killed herself there in my room if I hadn't."

"Continue," said the prince.

"I tried to tell Romeo, but my letter arrived too late. When I came here to get Juliet. Romeo had already arrived. He didn't know that she was just sleeping, so he killed himself." He looked at Paris' body. "I guess Paris died trying to stop Romeo from entering the tomb. I tried to get Juliet to leave, but she wouldn't."

"Why didn't you stay with her?" asked Capulet.

"I was afraid. I'm a coward," he cried.

"Enough," the prince said. "It's true that you should have helped these young people. But it's not your fault," said the prince. He turned to Capulet and Montague. "See what has happened because of your ancient grudge. You've lost your only children."

Capulet looked up from the body of his daughter. He saw his old enemy kneeling across from him. "Brother Montague," he said, "please forgive me for all of this hatred."

Montague leaned across the bodies of Romeo and Juliet and put his arms around Capulet "I will make a pure gold statue in honor of your daughter." "And I will put one of Romeo by her side."

Prince Escalus lifted the two old men to their feet. "Let's leave this place and talk somewhere else."

He led all the grieving people out of the tomb. "There has never been a more tragic story than this one of Romeo and Juliet," said the prince.

- THE END -

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