Romeo and Juliet

William Shakespeare



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THE TRAGEDY OF ROMEO AND JULIET

by William Shakespeare

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Dramatis Personæ

ESCALUS, Prince of Verona.
MERCUTIO, kinsman to the Prince, and friend to Romeo.
PARIS, a young Nobleman, kinsman to the Prince.
Page to Paris.

MONTAGUE, head of a Veronese family at feud with the Capulets.
LADY MONTAGUE, wife to Montague.
ROMEO, son to Montague.
BENVOLIO, nephew to Montague, and friend to Romeo.
ABRAM, servant to Montague.
BALTHASAR, servant to Romeo.

CAPULET, head of a Veronese family at feud with the Montagues.
LADY CAPULET, wife to Capulet.
JULIET, daughter to Capulet.
TYBALT, nephew to Lady Capulet.

CAPULET’S COUSIN, an old man.
NURSE to Juliet.
PETER, servant to Juliet’s Nurse.
SAMPSON, servant to Capulet.
GREGORY, servant to Capulet.
Servants.

FRIAR LAWRENCE, a Franciscan.
FRIAR JOHN, of the same Order.
An Apothecary.
CHORUS.
Three Musicians.
An Officer.
Citizens of Verona; several Men and Women, relations to both houses; Maskers, Guards, Watchmen and Attendants.

SCENE. During the greater part of the Play in Verona; once, in the Fifth Act, at Mantua.

THE PROLOGUE

Enter Chorus.

CHORUS.
Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-cross’d lovers take their life;

Whose misadventur’d piteous overthrows
Doth with their death bury their parents’ strife.
The fearful passage of their death-mark’d love,
And the continuance of their parents’ rage,
Which, but their children’s end, nought could remove,
Is now the two hours’ traffic of our stage;
The which, if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

[_Exit._]

ACT I

SCENE I. A public place.

Enter Sampson and Gregory armed with swords and bucklers.

SAMPSON. Gregory, on my word, we’ll not carry coals.

GREGORY. No, for then we should be colliers.

SAMPSON. I mean, if we be in choler, we’ll draw.

GREGORY. Ay, while you live, draw your neck out o’ the collar.

SAMPSON. I strike quickly, being moved.

GREGORY. But thou art not quickly moved to strike.

SAMPSON. A dog of the house of Montague moves me.

GREGORY.
To move is to stir; and to be valiant is to stand: therefore, if thou art moved, thou runn’st away.

SAMPSON.
A dog of that house shall move me to stand.
I will take the wall of any man or maid of Montague's.

GREGORY. That shows thee a weak slave, for the weakest goes to the wall.

SAMPSON. True, and therefore women, being the weaker vessels, are ever thrust to the wall: therefore I will push Montague's men from the wall, and thrust his maids to the wall.

GREGORY. The quarrel is between our masters and us their men.

SAMPSON. 'Tis all one, I will show myself a tyrant: when I have fought with the men I will be civil with the maids, I will cut off their heads.

GREGORY. The heads of the maids?

SAMPSON.
Ay, the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads; take it in what sense thou wilt.

GREGORY. They must take it in sense that feel it.

SAMPSON.
Me they shall feel while I am able to stand: and 'tis known I am a pretty piece of flesh.

GREGORY. 'Tis well thou art not fish; if thou hadst, thou hadst been poor John. Draw thy tool; here comes of the house of Montagues.

Enter Abram and Balthasar.

SAMPSON. My naked weapon is out: quarrel, I will back thee.

GREGORY. How? Turn thy back and run?

SAMPSON. Fear me not.

GREGORY. No, marry; I fear thee!

SAMPSON. Let us take the law of our sides; let them begin.

GREGORY. I will frown as I pass by, and let them take it as they list.

SAMPSON.
Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb at them, which is disgrace to them if they bear it.

ABRAM. Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

SAMPSON. I do bite my thumb, sir.

ABRAM. Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

SAMPSON. Is the law of our side if I say ay?

GREGORY. No.

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

GREGORY. Do you quarrel, sir?

ABRAM. Quarrel, sir? No, sir.

SAMPSON. But if you do, sir, I am for you. I serve as good a man as you.

ABRAM. No better.

SAMPSON. Well, sir.

Enter Benvolio.

GREGORY. Say better; here comes one of my master’s kinsmen.

SAMPSON. Yes, better, sir.

ABRAM. You lie.

SAMPSON. Draw, if you be men. Gregory, remember thy washing blow.

[_They fight._]

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

[_Beats down their swords._]

Enter Tybalt.

TYBALT.
What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds?
Turn thee Benvolio, look upon thy death.

BENVOLIO.
I do but keep the peace, put up thy sword,
Or manage it to part these men with me.

TYBALT.
What, drawn, and talk of peace? I hate the word
As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee:
Have at thee, coward.

[_They fight._]

Enter three or four Citizens with clubs.

FIRST CITIZEN. Clubs, bills and partisans! Strike! Beat them down! Down with the Capulets! Down with the Montagues!

Enter Capulet in his gown, and Lady Capulet.

CAPULET. What noise is this? Give me my long sword, ho!

LADY CAPULET. A crutch, a crutch! Why call you for a sword?

CAPULET.
My sword, I say! Old Montague is come,
And flourishes his blade in spite of me.

Enter Montague and his Lady Montague.

MONTAGUE. Thou villain Capulet! Hold me not, let me go.

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

Enter Prince Escalus, with Attendants.

PRINCE.
Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,
Profaners of this neighbour-stained steel,—
Will they not hear? What, ho! You men, you beasts,
That quench the fire of your pernicious rage
With purple fountains issuing from your veins,
On pain of torture, from those bloody hands
Throw your mistemper’d weapons to the ground
And hear the sentence of your moved prince.
Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word,
By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,
Have thrice disturb’d the quiet of our streets,
And made Verona’s ancient citizens

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