

# The Prologue

**The Chorus** describes the situation in Verona as the play opens. Two equally important families have been bitterly fighting each other for a long time. From each of these families, two young people illicitly fall in love. The tragic outcome of that love finally helps the two families resolve their hatred for each other.

## Act 1 Scene 1

Two Capulet servants are exchanging banter, when they spot two Montague servants. They pick a fight (1), and more members of both households join the brawl until the citizens of Verona and its Prince, **Escalus**, break them apart (2). After being told to report at different times to the Prince to discuss their respective punishments, Romeo's mother and father talk with **Benvolio**, to find out why **Romeo** has been avoiding people's company recently (3). **Benvolio** gently quizzes **Romeo**, and discovers that **Romeo** is in love (4) - but that the woman that he loves, does not love him. **Benvolio** promises to help him fix the situation - by showing him that there are other women he could fall in love with.

## Act 1 Scene 2

Capulet speaks with **Paris**, a suitor for his daughter **Juliet's** hand. Capulet does not wish to hurry **Juliet** into marriage, but suggests (1) that Paris get to know **Juliet** better at a ball he is putting on that evening. He sends a servant out with a list of people to invite. The servant, who cannot read (2), asks **Benvolio** and **Romeo** for help in reading the list of names, not knowing that they are Montagues, and enemies of his master. When **Benvolio** and **Romeo** read the list (3), they realize that **Rosaline** - the current object of **Romeo's** love - will attend. They decide to attend the ball themselves, where **Benvolio** hopes to convince **Romeo** (4) that there are more beautiful women for him to fall in love with, than **Rosaline**.

## Act 1 Scene 3

Lady Capulet asks **Juliet's** nurse to call **Juliet** (1). When **Juliet** arrives, **Lady Capulet** asks her how she feels about marriage (2) - and how she would feel about marrying **Paris**. After telling **Juliet** of the planned evening ball, she suggests that **Juliet** look **Paris** over (3), and see what she makes of him. **Juliet** says that she will observe him as closely as her parents will allow (4).

## Act 1 Scene 4

**Romeo**, **Benvolio**, and **Mercutio** head towards the ball, and as they banter back and forth (1), **Romeo** claims he has had a dream, to which **Mercutio** responds that he has had one too (2). Prompted to say more, **Mercutio** talks wildly (3) about the feverish visions and visitation that men and women have in their dreams. **Romeo** finally stops him, gently telling **Mercutio** that he is talking about nothing. As they stride on to the ball, **Romeo** mentions that he has a feeling something bad may happen (4), based on events of the evening.

## Act 1 Scene 5

The Capulet ball begins, and as servants scurry to put out food, and as Capulet reminisces about his more youthful days, **Romeo** spots **Juliet** - and **Tybalt** spots **Romeo** (1). **Tybalt**, thinking **Romeo** has come to disrupt the party, reacts angrily, but **Capulet** tells **Tybalt** to calm down - that he has heard good reports about **Romeo** (2). **Tybalt** storms out. **Romeo**, meanwhile, approaches **Juliet**, and kisses her hands (3) - he has fallen deeply in love. He then hears that she is a Capulet, and as he leaves the ball, **Juliet** in turn learns from the **Nurse** that the young man who was kissing her hand only moments before is named **Romeo** - and is a Montague (4).

## Act 2 Chorus

**Chorus** explains that **Romeo** is now in love - no longer with **Rosaline**, but with a different person. And with this new love, comes great danger for both **Romeo** and **Juliet**.

## Act 2 Scene 1

Near the **Capulet** orchard wall, **Romeo** struggles (1) over whether he should return secretly to **Juliet's** home, while **Benvolio** and **Mercutio** call out for him (2). After searching and calling for a while (3), they give up, and go home. **Romeo** emerges from hiding (4), and rues the fact that they do not know what it feels like to be in love.

## Act 2 Scene 2

**Romeo** approaches the balcony outside **Juliet's** room (1). After listening to her speak, he reveals himself (2). They talk and exchange vows of love. **Juliet** then tells **Romeo** that she will send someone to meet him for details of how they will get married (3). As they continue speaking, not wanting to part, the **Nurse** calls insistently from within (4). And so they part.

## Act 2 Scene 3

As **Romeo** arrives at **Friar Lawrence's** cell, **Friar Lawrence** is examining various medicinal -and poisonous -weeds (1). **Romeo** tells **Lawrence** that he wishes to be married to the woman he loves - not **Rosaline**, but **Juliet** (2). Although initially apprehensive about **Romeo's** new found love (3), **Friar Lawrence** sees the possibility of uniting the Capulets and the Montagues through **Romeo** and **Juliet's** love for each other (4).

## Act 2 Scene 4

In the street, **Mercutio** and **Benvolio** joke about where **Romeo** might be (1), whereupon **Romeo** appears. As they exchange banter (2), the **Nurse** and her servant **Peter** arrive (3), and are roundly mocked by **Benvolio**, **Mercutio**, and even **Romeo**. Once **Mercutio** and **Benvolio** move

away, Romeo instructs the **Nurse** (4) to have **Juliet** come to church that afternoon, where **Friar Lawrence** will marry the two of them.

## Act 2 Scene 5

**Juliet** waits impatiently (1) for the **Nurse** to bring her news from her meeting with **Romeo**. When the **Nurse** arrives (2), she delays and teases **Juliet** (3), until finally she reveals that **Juliet** must meet **Romeo** at Church that afternoon, to get married (4).

## Act 2 Scene 6

**Friar Lawrence** and **Romeo** wait in the church (1) and (2). **Juliet** arrive, and they go in to the chapel, to get married (3) and (4).

## Act 3 Scene 1

As **Mercutio** and **Benvolio** talk in the street, **Tybalt** appears, looking for **Romeo** (1). **Mercutio** and **Tybalt** exchange tense words, when **Romeo** appears. **Tybalt** goads Romeo, but **Romeo** avoids a fight (2)- at which point **Mercutio** challenges **Tybalt**. They fight, and as **Romeo** tries to break them apart, **Tybalt** mortally wounds **Mercutio** (3) and leaves. **Mercutio** curses both the Capulets and the Montagues and dies. **Tybalt** reappears, and **Romeo** and **Tybalt** fight. **Romeo** kills **Tybalt**, and flees, as citizens and then the **Prince** arrive on the scene. **Benvolio** explains what happened, the Capulets protest that he is biased - and the **Prince** decides that **Romeo** should be exiled (4).

## Act 3 Scene 2

After impatiently awaiting **The Nurse** (1), **Juliet** receives the unwelcome news of **Tybalt's** death at **Romeo's** hands (2). After initially cursing **Romeo**, and getting chastised by **Juliet** (3), **Nurse** offers to fetch **Romeo**, so that he can visit **Juliet** before he leaves into exile (4).

## Act 3 Scene 3

In **Friar Lawrence's** cell and wracked by guilt, **Romeo** is inconsolable. **Friar Lawrence** tells **Romeo** of his sentence - he is banished, and will be executed if found in Verona after night fall (1). As **Romeo** wails and wishes for death, **Friar Lawrence** loses patience (2), and explains all the ways in which **Romeo** is, comparatively, lucky. As they speak, there is a knock on the door (3), and the **Nurse** enters, bringing news that **Juliet** wishes to see **Romeo** before he goes into exile. **Friar Lawrence** encourages him to go, adding that **Romeo** must leave **Juliet** for Mantua before day break (4). He promises to send **Romeo** news of any favorable developments.

## Act 3 Scene 4

In the hopes of relieving the general misery, and as he explains to **Paris** (1) how things have gone so badly wrong - and also wholly unaware that **Juliet** is now married to **Romeo**, **Capulet** hits on the idea (2) that the wedding of **Paris** to **Juliet** should go ahead. After some calculations (3) he lands on a wedding in three day's time. He tells **Lady Capulet** to deliver the news to **Juliet** (4).

## Act 3 Scene 5

**Romeo** leaves **Juliet's** home as dawn approaches (1), and hears that her mother is approaching. After speaking of her misery at **Tybalt's** death, **Juliet** hears that the family will try and poison **Romeo** for killing **Tybalt**. After this, **Lady Capulet** reveals that **Juliet** will be married to **Paris** three days from that morning. When **Juliet** refuses (2), **Lady Capulet** calls in **Capulet**, who is furious at **Juliet's** disobedience (3). He gives **Juliet** an ultimatum - either marry **Paris**, or be ejected from her own home. When the **Nurse** advises **Juliet** to reject **Romeo** and marry **Paris**, **Juliet**, feeling betrayed by all, tells the **Nurse** she is going to **Friar Lawrence's** cell, to seek forgiveness for displeasing her father. If **Friar Lawrence** cannot help her, **Juliet** is determined to kill herself (4).

## Act 4 Scene 1

Arriving at **Friar Lawrence's** cell, **Juliet** finds that **Paris** is making marriage arrangements for his wedding to **Juliet** (1). Asking for privacy (2) so she may confess herself to **Friar Lawrence**, **Paris** leaves, and **Friar Lawrence** devises a new approach - he gives **Juliet** a vial (3) containing a concoction that once drunk, will make her appear dead. Thinking she is dead, her family will take her out to the family cemetery. **Friar Lawrence** will have **Romeo** come to the cemetery, so that when **Juliet** wakes up, he and she can go to Mantua (4).

## Act 4 Scene 2

**Capulet** is planning the wedding ceremony (1) when **Juliet** returns home, and asks for forgiveness for her disobedience (2), and confirms that she will marry **Paris**. Overjoyed (3), **Capulet** sets to work lining up details for the wedding feast with renewed vigor - including telling **Paris** the good news (4).

## Act 4 Scene 3

**Juliet** goes to her room (1), dismisses the **Nurse**, and asks her mother to leave her alone (2) so that she may prepare for the wedding. Once alone, **Juliet** takes out the vial of sleeping potion, and, after hesitating - wondering whether it may not work (3), or whether perhaps it is a poison - she drinks the mixture (4), and lays down.

## Act 4 Scene 4

As preparations continue to be made for the wedding and feast (1), **Capulet** gets chastised by both the **Nurse** and **Lady Capulet** for being a meddler (2). As servants go here and there with supplies (3) **Capulet** hears the music that announces the arrival of **Paris** and his retinue. **Capulet** heads off to meet them. He tells the **Nurse** to fetch **Juliet** (4).

## Act 4 Scene 5

The **Nurse** tries to wake **Juliet** - and discovers that she is “dead.” (1) **Capulet**, **Lady Capulet**, **Paris**, and **Friar Lawrence** all gather around, and what was meant to be a festive occasion is immediately thrown into dark unhappiness and mourning (2). **Friar Lawrence** orders everybody to move with speed, to take **Juliet’s** body to the family burial place (3). Musicians who were expecting to play at the party, sit around sadly, and are pestered by **Peter** (4).

## Act 5 Scene 1

Expecting news (1) from **Friar Lawrence**, **Romeo** instead receives the news of **Juliet’s** death and placement in the family tomb from **Balthazar** (2). **Romeo** purchases poison from an impoverished apothecary (3), and determines to kill himself besides **Juliet’s** body(4) - not having received the news from **Friar Lawrence** that she is only in a deep sleep.

## Act 5 Scene 2

**Friar Lawrence** hears from Friar John (1) that his letter to **Romeo**, explaining that **Juliet** is not dead but just in a deep sleep, did not get delivered because **Friar John** (and the letter) were quarantined (2) in a house suspected of being infected by the plague. Realizing that **Juliet** will soon wake up (3) - and that **Romeo** won’t be there - he orders **Friar John** to get a crow bar (4), since he must get to the tomb himself, before **Juliet** wakes up, alone, in her family tomb.

## Act 5 Scene 3

**Romeo** arrives at **Juliet’s** tomb, and finds **Paris** mourning. They fight, and **Paris** dies (1). **Romeo** enters the tomb, finds **Juliet’s** body, drinks the poison, and dies (2). **Friar Lawrence** approaches and enters the tomb, seeing **Paris’** blood at the entrance, and then discovers **Romeo** and **Paris** dead, near **Juliet**, who awakes. **Lawrence** tries to persuade **Juliet** to leave, she refuses, and **Friar Lawrence** flees - leaving **Juliet** alone. Discovering **Romeo** and **Paris**, and that there is no poison left, she stabs herself to death (3). As townspeople and the **Prince** converge, **Montague** announces that **Romeo’s** mother died of grief that evening. **Friar Lawrence** explains what happened (4), and the play ends with all mortified, resolving to set aside their “ancient grudge”.

The New Book  
wordplayshakespeare.com/#!/play/romeo&juliet/pages/3/1/3

Bug Report Plays Logout

Previous Page

Next Page

Word Play

TYBALT  
Follow me close, for I will speak to them.  
35 Gentlemen, good e'en. A word with one of you.

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

TYBALT  
You shall find me apt enough to that, sir,  
and you will give me occasion.

MERCUTIO  
40 Could you not take some occasion without giving?

TYBALT  
Mercutio, thou consortest with Romeo—

MERCUTIO  
Consort! What, dost thou make us minstrels? And thou  
make minstrels of us, look to hear nothing but discords.  
Here's my fiddlestick, here's that shall make you dance.  
45 'Zounds, consort!

BENVOLIO  
We talk here in the public haunt of men.  
Either withdraw unto some private place,  
Or reason coldly of your grievances,  
Or else depart; here all eyes gaze on us.

Video Play Button

0:01 / 0:54

More

"More" Button

Scene Navigator

106

A1 S2 A1 S3 A1 S4 A1 S5 A2 Chorus A2 S1 A2 S2 A2 S3 A2 S4 A2 S5 A2 S6 A3 S1 A3 S2