

Romeo and Juliette

PROLOGUE

A chorus laments the ongoing feud between the houses of Capulet and Montague.

ACT I

In a grand hall in the Capulet palace, party guests assemble for Juliette's debut as her cousin Tybalt and her fiancé Paris praise her beauty. Capulet presents his daughter to everyone's delight. The crowd includes a disguised Roméo, Mercutio, Benvolio and others associated with the Montagues. Mercutio chides his friend's melancholy, for Roméo's romantic pursuit of the fair Rosaline has yielded nothing – she is not at the party. The lovelorn young man spots Juliette, and not knowing she is a Capulet, immediately falls in love. She returns his affection, but their short-lived bliss is interrupted when it is revealed that the new lovers belong to rival houses. Tybalt has recognized Roméo and promises to avenge this affront to his family.

ACT II

The page Stéphano assists Roméo in scaling a balcony outside Juliette's rooms, where Roméo and Juliette share a tender moment. Grégorio and others Capulets are heard in the distance, and Roméo hides in the darkness of the garden. Gertrude encourages Juliette to go to bed, but the young girl carries outside, where the two lovers are soon reunited. Juliette proposes they marry the very next day and Roméo heartily accepts.

ACT III

In the cell of Frère Laurent, the monk celebrates the couple's union while Gertrude serves as a witness. Elsewhere in Verona, Stéphano taunts the Capulets with a song. Mercutio defends the young boy from Grégorio's blade, but is soon drawn into a disagreement with Tybalt. When a freshly married Roméo happens upon the scene, Tybalt turns his attention to his enemy, but Roméo merely embraces him as kin. Mercutio draws Tybalt into a duel, and in the ensuing melee, is mortally wounded. Now enraged over the death of his friend, Roméo slays Tybalt and is banished from Verona as a result.

ACT IV

As day breaks, the two lovers awaken after a night of passion. Juliette pardons Roméo for the murder of her cousin, and the two languish in bed, refusing to greet the day. But Roméo must leave, and moments after his departure, Gertrude enters followed by Capulet and Frère Laurent. Angered by recent events, Juliette's father demands she marry Paris immediately. Left alone with Laurent, she tearfully surmises her situation, and the monk offers a cure to end her woes – a special potion that will

simulate death. Once placed in the family crypt, she will revive to Roméo's waiting arms.

ACT V

Having missed a letter revealing Laurent's plan, Roméo has heard of Juliette's "death," and now inside the family vault, laments over her lifeless body. Wishing to join her in eternity, he empties a phial of poison, but as the toxin take effect, Juliette begins to wake. The lovers share a final moment before Juliette stabs herself with a dagger, and they die in each other's arms.