



—Cast of Characters🎧—

Montague family and friends:

ROMEO MONTAGUE: A young man

LORD MONTAGUE: Romeo's father and the enemy of Lord Capulet

LADY MONTAGUE: Romeo's mother

MERCUTIO: Romeo's friend and Prince Escalus's cousin

BENVOLIO: A cousin and friend to Romeo

BALTHASAR: Romeo's servant

ABRAHAM: Lord Montague's servant

FRIAR LAWRENCE: A Franciscan priest

FRIAR JOHN: An associate of Friar Lawrence

Capulet family and friends:

JULIET CAPULET: A 13-year-old girl

LORD CAPULET: Juliet's father and the enemy of Lord Montague

LADY CAPULET: Juliet's mother

NURSE: Juliet's nanny

SAMPSON AND GREGORY: Servants to Lord Capulet

TYBALT: Juliet's cousin

PARIS: A young man who wants to marry Juliet; Prince Escalus's cousin

PRINCE ESCALUS: Prince and ruler of Verona



The Prologue



(The **Chorus** enters.)

CHORUS: Two families in Verona, Italy,
equally respected,
Have been feuding for many years.
A daughter of one family and
A son of the other—
A pair of star-crossed lovers—
Take their own lives.
Their pitiful, needless deaths
Bury their parents' feud.
The sad story of their death-marked love
And how it ended their parents' rage
Is the subject of this play. If you listen well,
Our play will fill in the details.



ACT 1

Summary

The play opens in Verona, a city in northern Italy. Two prominent families, the Capulets and the Montagues, have been involved in a long-standing feud. One day, some servants and members of the two families fight in the street. Prince Escalus, the ruler of Verona, states that any more fighting will be seen as civil disobedience—the penalty for which is death.

The parents of Romeo Montague are worried about him because he has been quite depressed lately. They ask their nephew Benvolio to find out the cause of Romeo's dark moods. Benvolio soon discovers that Romeo has been brooding over Rosaline, a young girl who does not return his love. His cousin, Benvolio, advises him to stop thinking about Rosaline and consider other young women. Just then, an illiterate servant of the Capulets





approaches. He asks for their help in reading a guest list. In this way, Romeo and Benvolio find out that a masked ball will be given that night at the Capulet house. Rosaline is listed as one of the invited guests. Benvolio sees this as a good chance for Romeo to compare Rosaline to other beautiful girls.

Before the party, Lord Capulet talks to Paris about Paris's wish to marry Juliet. Capulet is not willing to allow this because Juliet, his only child, is not yet 14. Yet even so, he invites Paris to come to the party and speak to Juliet himself. Capulet tells Paris that if Juliet is willing to marry him, Capulet will give his consent.

At the party, Romeo and Juliet meet by chance and fall in love at first sight. Later, they discover that they are members of the rival families.

Scene 1

(A street in Verona. **Sampson** and **Gregory** enter. They are armed with swords.)

SAMPSON: I tell you, Gregory, I won't be insulted by
any of those Montague dogs!

GREGORY: Calm down, Sampson. Remember,
The fight is between our masters—not us.

SAMPSON: It's all the same to me. I would go to the
wall against any of them.

GREGORY: Well, you're about to get your chance.
Draw your sword. Servants of the Montagues
are coming now.

SAMPSON (*drawing his sword*): Pick a fight with
them. I'll back you up.

GREGORY: How? Turn your back and run?

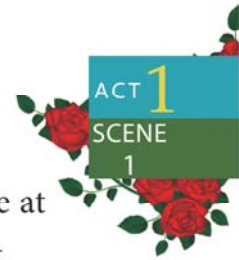
SAMPSON: Fear not.

GREGORY: I'm more afraid of what *you* will do than I
am of the Montagues.

SAMPSON: Let's keep the law on our side. Let them
start it.

GREGORY: I will frown as I pass by. Let them take it
as they will.





SAMPSON: Or as they dare! I will thumb my nose at them. They will lose face if they stand for it.

(Abraham and Balthasar enter.)

ABRAHAM: Do you thumb your nose at us, sir?

SAMPSON (*aside to Gregory*): Is the law on our side if I say yes?

GREGORY: It is not.

SAMPSON: Then no, sir, I do not thumb my nose at you. But I do thumb my nose.

GREGORY: Do you want to fight, sir?

ABRAHAM: Fight? No, sir!

SAMPSON: Well, if you do, I am ready. I serve as good a man as you do.

ABRAHAM: As good, perhaps. But no better.

GREGORY: Say “better.” Here comes Benvolio. He’ll back us up.

SAMPSON: Yes, say better, sir.

ABRAHAM: You lie.

SAMPSON: Draw your swords, if you are men.
Gregory, are you ready?

(They fight. Benvolio enters.)

BENVOLIO: Stop, fools! Put up your swords. You don't know what you're doing.

(He beats down their swords. **Tybalt** enters.)

TYBALT: Benvolio, do you fight with servants? Turn and get ready to die!

BENVOLIO: I'm just trying to keep the peace.
Put your sword away—
Or use it to help me stop this fight.

TYBALT: What? Your sword's drawn,
And you talk of peace? I hate the sword,
As I hate hell, all Montagues, and you!
Come on, coward!

(They fight. Others, from both sides, join in. Then **Lord and Lady Capulet** enter.)

CAPULET: What's this? Give me a sword, too!

LADY CAPULET: A crutch is more like it!
Why do you call for a sword?

CAPULET: My sword, I say! Old Montague
Is coming and waving his blade to spite me.

(**Lord and Lady Montague** enter.)

MONTAGUE: You villain, Capulet!

(*to his wife, who is holding him back*): Let me go!





LADY MONTAGUE: No! Not one foot to seek a foe!

(Prince **Escalus** enters, with **attendants**.)

PRINCE: Rebels, enemies to peace,
Killers of your own neighbors—listen!
Throw down your weapons.
Hear the sentence of your angry prince.
Three fights between your two families
Have disturbed the quiet of our streets.
If you ever disturb our streets again,
You shall pay with your lives.
For now, clear the streets!



You, Capulet, shall go along with me.
And, Montague, you come this afternoon
To hear what I have to say about this case.
Once more, on pain of death, all men leave.

(Everyone exits but Lord and Lady Montague and Benvolio.)

MONTAGUE: Who started this fight, nephew?

BENVOLIO: Capulet's servants and yours

Were fighting hand to hand when I got here.
I drew my sword to part them. Just then,
Tybalt came, with his sword out.
He swung it about and cut the winds, which,
Not being hurt, hissed at him in scorn.
As we were trading blows, more and more
People joined in the fight.
Then the prince came and stopped it.

LADY MONTAGUE: Oh, where is Romeo?

Did you see him today?
I am glad he was not in this fight.

BENVOLIO: Madam, an hour before the sun

Peered from the golden window of the east,
My troubled mind drove me to take a walk.
I saw your son in a grove of sycamores.





I walked toward him, but he saw me
And stole away into the woods.
I could see that he wanted to be alone,
So I did not follow him.

MONTAGUE: He has been seen there often,
Adding tears to the fresh morning's dew.
But as soon as the sun begins to rise,
My son goes home to escape the light.
He locks himself in his room and
Shuts his windows, keeping fair daylight out
And making himself an artificial night.
If he would only tell us what is wrong,
We would do anything we could to help.

BENVOLIO: Well, here he comes.
I'll see if I can find out anything.

MONTAGUE: I hope you can.
(to Lady Montague): Come, madam, let's go.
(Lord and Lady Montague exit. Romeo enters.)

BENVOLIO: Good morning, cousin.

ROMEO: Is the day so young?
Ah, me! Sad hours drag on so!
Was that my father who just left?

BENVOLIO: It was. What sorrow makes your hours
seem so long?

ROMEO: The sadness that comes from love—
Or rather, from not having love.
The woman I love will not listen
To my sweet words, nor look into
My longing eyes, nor accept gifts of gold.
She is rich in beauty. It is so sad that her
Treasure of beauty will die with her.

BENVOLIO: Then she has sworn that she will live
chaste?

ROMEO: She has. And it seems such a waste
That her beauty won't be passed on
to any child.
She has sworn off love, and that cruel vow
Makes me feel like dying now.

BENVOLIO: Listen to me, cousin.
Forget to think of her!

ROMEO: Oh, teach me how to do that!

BENVOLIO: Give liberty to your eyes.
Look at other beauties.





ROMEO: If I did, I would only think of her.
He who goes blind cannot forget
The precious treasure of his lost eyesight.
Show me a woman who is beautiful,
And her beauty would only make me think
Of one who is even more beautiful.
Farewell. You cannot teach me to forget!

BENVOLIO: I will, or I'll die trying!

(Romeo and Benvolio exit.)

