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Skip to main content or search all Shakespeare texts Characters in the Play Entire Play The prologue of Romeo and Juliet calls the title characters "star-crossed lovers"—and the stars do seem to conspire against these young lovers.Romeo is a Montague, and Juliet a Capulet. Their families are enmeshed in a feud, but the moment they meet—when Romeo and his friends attend a party at Juliet's house in disguise—the two fall in love and quickly decide that they want to be married.A friar secretly marries them, hoping to end the feud. Romeo and his companions almost immediately encounter Juliet's cousin Tybalt, who challenges Romeo. When Romeo refuses to fight, Romeo's friend Mercutio accepts the challenge and is killed. Romeo then kills Tybalt and is banished. He spends that night with Juliet and then leaves for Mantua.Juliet's father forces her into a marriage with Count Paris. To avoid this marriage, Juliet takes a potion, given her by the friar, that makes her appear dead. The friar will send Romeo word to be at her family tomb when she awakes. The plan goes awry, and Romeo learns instead that she is dead. In the tomb, Romeo kills himself. Juliet wakes, sees his body, and commits suicide. Their deaths appear finally to end the feud. Prologue Act 1, scene 1 A street fight breaks out between the Montagues and the Capulets, which is broken up by the ruler of Verona, Prince Escalus. He threatens the Montagues and Capulets with death if they fight again. A melancholy Romeo enters and is questioned by his cousin Benvolio, who learns that the cause of Romeo's sadness is unrequited love. Act 1, scene 2 In conversation with Capulet, Count Paris declares his wish to marry Juliet. Capulet invites him to a party that night.Capulet gives a servant the guest list for the party and orders him off to issue invitations. The servant cannot read the list and asks for help from Romeo and Benvolio. When they find out that Rosaline, on whom Romeo dotes, is invited to the party, they decide to go too. Act 1, scene 3 Lady Capulet informs Juliet of Paris's marriage proposal and praises him extravagantly. Juliet says that she has not even dreamed of marrying, but that she will consider Paris as a possible husband if her parents wish her to. Act 1, scene 4 Romeo and Benvolio approach the Capulets' party with their friend Mercutio and others, wearing the disguises customarily donned by "maskers." Romeo is anxious because of an ominous dream. Mercutio mocks him with a speech about a dream-giving queen of fairies. Act 1, scene 5 Capulet welcomes the disguised Romeo and his friends. Romeo, watching the dance, is caught by the beauty of Juliet. Overhearing Romeo ask about her, Tybalt recognizes his voice and is enraged at the intrusion.Romeo then meets Juliet, and they fall in love. Not until they are separated do they discover that they belong to enemy houses. Act 2, Chorus Again the Chorus's speech is in the form of a sonnet. Act 2, scene 1 Romeo finds himself so in love with Juliet that he cannot leave her. He scales a wall and enters Capulet's garden. Meanwhile Benvolio and Mercutio look for him in vain. Act 2, scene 2 From Capulet's garden Romeo overhears Juliet express her love for him. When he answers her, they acknowledge their love and their desire to be married. Act 2, scene 3 Determined to marry Juliet, Romeo hurries to Friar Lawrence. The Friar agrees to marry them, expressing the hope that the marriage may end the feud between their families. Act 2, scene 4 Mercutio and Benvolio meet the newly enthusiastic Romeo in the street. Romeo defeats Mercutio in a battle of wits. The Nurse finds Romeo, and he gives her a message for Juliet: meet me at Friar Lawrence's cell this afternoon, and we will there be married. Act 2, scene 5 Juliet waits impatiently for the Nurse to return. Her impatience grows when the Nurse, having returned, is slow to deliver Romeo's message. Finally Juliet learns that if she wants to marry Romeo, she need only go to Friar Lawrence's cell that afternoon. Act 2, scene 6 Juliet meets Romeo at Friar Lawrence's cell. After expressing their mutual love, they exit with the Friar to be married. Act 3, scene 1 Mercutio and Benvolio encounter Tybalt on the street. As soon as Romeo arrives, Tybalt tries to provoke him to fight. When Romeo refuses, Mercutio answers Tybalt's challenge. They duel and Mercutio is fatally wounded. Romeo then avenges Mercutio's death by killing Tybalt in a duel. Benvolio tries to persuade the Prince to excuse Romeo's slaying of Tybalt; however, the Capulets demand that Romeo pay with his life; the Prince instead banishes Romeo from Verona. Act 3, scene 2 Juliet longs for Romeo to come to her. The Nurse arrives with the news that Romeo has killed Tybalt and has been banished. Juliet at first feels grief for the loss of her cousin Tybalt and verbally attacks Romeo, but then renounces these feelings and devotes herself to grief for Romeo's banishment. The Nurse promises to bring Romeo to Juliet that night. Act 3, scene 3 Friar Lawrence tells Romeo that his punishment for killing Tybalt is banishment, not death. Romeo responds that death is preferable to banishment from Juliet. When the Nurse enters and tells Romeo that Juliet is grief-stricken, Romeo attempts suicide. Friar Lawrence then says that Romeo may spend the night with Juliet and leave for exile in Mantua next morning. The Friar promises that Balthasar will bring Romeo news of Verona and suggests that Romeo can expect in time that the Prince may relent and allow him to return to Verona. Act 3, scene 4 Paris again approaches Capulet about marrying Juliet. Capulet, saying that Juliet will do as she is told, promises Paris that she will marry him in three days. Act 3, scene 5 Romeo and Juliet separate at the first light of day. Almost immediately her mother comes to announce that Juliet must marry Paris. When Juliet refuses, her father becomes enraged and vows to put her out on the streets. The Nurse recommends that Juliet forget the banished Romeo and regard Paris as a more desirable husband. Juliet is secretly outraged at the Nurse's advice and decides to seek Friar Lawrence's help. Act 4, scene 1 Paris is talking with Friar Lawrence about the coming wedding when Juliet arrives. After Paris leaves, she threatens suicide if Friar Lawrence cannot save her from marrying Paris. Friar Lawrence gives her a potion that will make her appear as if dead the morning of the wedding. He assures her that when she awakes in the vault, Romeo will be there to take her away. Act 4, scene 2 Capulet energetically directs preparations for the wedding. When Juliet returns from Friar Lawrence and pretends to have learned obedience, Capulet is so delighted that he moves the wedding up to the next day and goes off to tell Paris the new date. Act 4, scene 3 Juliet sends the Nurse away for the night. After facing her terror at the prospect of awaking in her family's burial vault, Juliet drinks the potion that Friar Lawrence has given her. Act 4, scene 4 The Capulets and the Nurse stay up all night to get ready for the wedding. Capulet, hearing Paris approach with musicians, orders the Nurse to wake Juliet. Act 4, scene 5 The Nurse finds Juliet in the deathlike trance caused by the Friar's potion and announces Juliet's death. Juliet's parents and Paris join the Nurse in lamentation. Friar Lawrence interrupts them and begins to arrange Juliet's funeral. The scene closes with an exchange of wordplay between Capulet's servant Peter and Paris's musicians. Act 5, scene 1 Romeo's man, Balthasar, arrives in Mantua with news of Juliet's death. Romeo sends him to hire horses for their immediate return to Verona. Romeo then buys poison so that he can join Juliet in death in the Capulets' burial vault. Act 5, scene 2 Friar John enters, bringing with him the letter that he was to have delivered to Romeo. He tells why he was unable to deliver the letter. Friar Lawrence anxiously goes to the tomb to be there when Juliet comes out of her trance. Act 5, scene 3 Paris visits Juliet's tomb and, when Romeo arrives, challenges him. Romeo and Paris fight and Paris is killed. Romeo, in the tomb, takes poison, dying as he kisses Juliet. As Friar Lawrence enters the tomb, Juliet awakes to find Romeo lying dead. Frightened by a noise, the Friar flees the tomb. Juliet kills herself with Romeo's dagger. Alerted by Paris's page, the watch arrives and finds the bodies. When the Prince, the Capulets, and Montague arrive, Friar Lawrence gives an account of the marriage of Romeo and Juliet. Their deaths lead Montague and Capulet to declare that the families' hostility is at an end. Synopsis:Paris again approaches Capulet about marrying Juliet. Capulet, saying that Juliet will do as she is told, promises Paris that she will marry him in three days.Enter old Capulet, his Wife, and Paris. CAPULET 2019 Things have fallen out, sir, so unluckily 2020 That we have had no time to move our daughter. 2021 Look you, she loved her kinsman Tybalt dearly, 2022 And so did I. Well, we were born to die. 2023 5 'Tis very late. She'll not come down tonight. 2024 I promise you, but for your company. 2025 I would have been abed an hour ago. PARIS 2026 These times of woe afford no times to woo.— 2027 Madam, good night. Commend me to your 2028 10 daughter. LADY CAPULET 2029 I will, and know her mind early tomorrow. 2030 Tonight she's mew'd up to her heaviness. CAPULET 2031 Sir Paris, I will make a desperate tender 2032 Of my child's love. I think she will 'be` ruled 2033 15 In all respects by me. Nay, more, I doubt it not.— 2034 Wife, go you to her ere you go to bed. 2035 Acquaint her here of my son Paris' love, 2036 And bid her—mark you me?— on Wednesday 2037 next— 2038 20 But soft, what day is this? PARIS 2039 Monday, my lord. CAPULET 2040 Monday, ha ha! Well, Wednesday is too soon. 2041 O` Thursday let it be.—O` Thursday, tell her, 2042 She shall be married to this noble earl.— 2043 25 Will you be ready? Do you like this haste? 2044 "We'll keep no great ado: a friend or two. 2045 For hark you, Tybalt being slain so late, 2046 It may be thought we held him carelessly, 2047 Being our kinsman, if we revel much. 2048 30 Therefore we'll have some half a dozen friends, 2049 And there an end. But what say you to Thursday? PARIS 2050 My lord, I would that Thursday were tomorrow. CAPULET 2051 Well, get you gone. O` Thursday be it, then. 2052 "To Lady Capulet." Go you to Juliet ere you go to bed. 2053 35 Prepare her, wife, against this wedding day.— 2054 Farewell, my lord.—Light to my chamber, ho!— 2055 Afore me, it is so very late that we 2056 May call it early by and by.—Good night.They exit. Find out what's on, read our latest stories, and learn how you can get involved. Sign up Paris is still hanging around hoping he can marry Juliet. Unfortunately, Juliet's still way depressed about Tybalt/Romeo.Of course, her parents don't know about the Romeo part, and Juliet's grief for Tybalt seems so extreme to her father that he changes his mind about waiting a few years before she is married. What better way to cheer her up than to force her into a marriage with a man she's just not that into?Figuring that there's no way Juliet could refuse a great guy like Paris, Lord Capulet decides to go full speed ahead. How about marrying her next week? he asks Paris.Sure!(Click the summary infographic to download.) 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