

Synopsis

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Act I

Scene 1

The market place.

The scene is in Verona.

Romeo, son of Montague, tries unsuccessfully to declare his love for Rosaline and is consoled by his friends Mercutio and Benvolio. As day breaks and the townspeople meet in the market place, a quarrel develops between Tybalt, a nephew of Lord Capulet, and Romeo and his friends. The Capulets and Montagues are sworn enemies and a fight soon begins. The Lords Montague and Capulet join in the fray, which is stopped by the appearance of the Prince of Verona who commands the families to end their feud.

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Scene 2

Juliet's ante-room in the Capulets' house.

Juliet, playing with her nurse, is interrupted by her parents Lord and Lady Capulet. They introduce her to Paris, a wealthy young nobleman who has asked for her hand in marriage.

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Scene 3

Outside the Capulets' house.

Guests arrive for a ball at the Capulets' house. Romeo, Mercutio and Benvolio, disguised in masks, decide to go in pursuit of Rosaline.

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Scene 4

The ballroom.

Romeo and his friends arrive at the height of the festivities. The guests watch Juliet dance. Mercutio, seeing that Romeo is entranced by her, dances to distract attention from him. Tybalt recognises Romeo and orders him to leave, but Capulet intervenes and welcomes him as a guest in his house.

Scene 5

Outside the Capulets' house.

As the guests leave the ball, Capulet restrains Tybalt from pursuing Romeo.

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Scene 6

Juliet's balcony.

Unable to sleep, Juliet comes out onto her balcony and is thinking of Romeo, when suddenly he appears in the garden. They confess their love for each other.

Act 2

Scene 1

The market place.

Romeo can think only of Juliet and, as a wedding procession passes, he dreams of the day when he will marry her. In the meantime Juliet's nurse pushes her way through the crowds in search of Romeo to give him a letter from Juliet. He reads that Juliet has consented to be his wife.

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Scene 2

The chapel.

The lovers are secretly married by Friar Laurence, who hopes that their union will end the strife between the Montagues and Capulets.

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Scene 3

The market place.

Interrupting the revelry, Tybalt fights with Mercutio and kills him. Romeo avenges the death of his friend, and is exiled.

Act 3

Scene 1

The bedroom.

At dawn next morning the household is stirring and Romeo must go. He embraces Juliet and leaves as her

parents enter with Paris. Juliet refuses to marry Paris, and hurt by her rebuff he leaves. Juliet's parents are angry and threaten to disown her. Juliet rushes to see Friar Laurence.

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Scene 2

The chapel.

She falls at Friar Laurence's feet and begs for his help. He gives her a phial of sleeping potion which will make her fall into a death-like sleep. Her parents, believing her to be dead, will bury her in the family tomb. Meanwhile Romeo, warned by Friar Laurence, will return under cover of darkness and take her away from Verona.

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Scene 3

The bedroom.

That evening Juliet agrees to marry Paris, but next morning, when her parents arrive with him, they find her apparently lifeless on the bed.

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Scene 4

The Capulet family crypt.

Romeo, failing to receive Friar Laurence's message, returns to Verona stunned by grief at the news of Juliet's death. Disguised as a monk, he enters the crypt, and finding Paris by Juliet's body, kills him. Believing Juliet to be dead, Romeo drinks a phial of poison. Juliet awakes and, finding Romeo dead, stabs herself.