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and newly killed.’ Balthasar and Friar Lawrence were brought in. They looked very suspicious. Finally, Romeo’s father arrived on the scene. He was late because grief over the banishment of her beloved son had just killed Romeo’s mother. Friar Lawrence told those present everything and finished by saying that, if any of it was his fault, he should be punished. Balthasar confirmed much of Friar Lawrence’s story and Romeo’s letter confirmed the rest.

Finally the old men recognised their foolishness. The destructiveness of their feud had come home to them fully. Old Capulet offered Old Montague his hand and declared peace between them. Montague offered to raise a statue of Juliet in pure gold and Old Capulet declared then that he would erect one for Romeo. The prince looked at both these old men and was amazed by the enormous loss they suffered. ‘This day is so terrible,’ he began, ‘that the sun will not rise. Go and talk about what has happened. There never was a story more sorrowful than this of Juliet and her Romeo.’

Romeo and Juliet

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE (CAST)

<i>Escalus</i>	Prince of Verona
<i>Mercutio</i>	A young gentleman and kinsman to the prince, friend of Romeo
<i>Paris</i>	A noble young kinsman to the prince
<i>Page to Paris</i>	
<i>Montague</i>	Head of a Veronese family, feuding with the Capulets
<i>Lady Montague</i>	Montague’s wife, Romeo’s mother
<i>Romeo</i>	Montague’s son
<i>Benvolio</i>	Montague’s nephew, Romeo and Mercutio’s friend
<i>Abraham</i>	Montague’s servant
<i>Balthasar</i>	Romeo’s servant
<i>Capulet</i>	Head of another Veronese family, feuding with the Montagues
<i>Lady Capulet</i>	Capulet’s wife, Juliet’s mother
<i>Juliet</i>	Capulet’s daughter
<i>Tybalt</i>	Lady Capulet’s nephew, Juliet’s cousin
<i>Capulet’s cousin</i>	An old gentleman
<i>Nurse</i>	Capulet’s servant, Juliet’s former nanny
<i>Peter</i>	Nurse’s attendant
<i>Sampson</i>	} Servants of the Capulet household
<i>Gregory</i>	
<i>Antony</i>	
<i>Potpan</i>	
<i>Friar Lawrence</i>	Franciscan father, confidante of Romeo and Juliet
<i>Friar John</i>	Franciscan father, assists Father Lawrence
<i>An apothecary</i>	Working in Mantua
<i>Simon Catling</i>	} Musicians
<i>Hugh Rebeck</i>	
<i>James Soundpost</i>	

Guards, citizens of Verona, dancers, torchbearers, pages and servants

Chorus

SCENE During the greater part of the play in Verona; once, in the fifth act, at Mantua





THE PROLOGUE

[Enter Chorus.]

Chorus Two households of equal wealth and power are here in Verona where this story happened. From old arguments they broke into new fights where bloodshed of the citizens has resulted. From these two enemies two star-crossed lovers are born, meet and take their own lives and, in doing so, end the war between their families. The fearful story of their doomed love, their parents' rage which, excepting the children's death, nothing could destroy, is now the subject of this two-hour play, and if you listen well, what we have not told you already will be presented in our performance.

[Enter Chorus.]

Chorus Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;
Whose misadventur'd piteous overthrows
Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.
The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,
And the continuance of their parents' rage,
Which but their children's end naught could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;
The which, if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

ACT I

scene i

A public place.

[Enter Sampson and Gregory of the Capulet house, with swords and small shields.]

Sampson Gregory, I swear I will not put up with insults.
Gregory No, that would be dishonest.
Sampson I mean, in anger we will draw our swords.
Gregory Yes, while we can we must protect ourselves.
Sampson Well, I react quickly when I am angered.
Gregory Yes, but you are not moved to act quickly.
Sampson A dog from the Montague's would move me!
Gregory If you move, it means you don't stay still and it is brave to stand and face your enemies ... therefore, if you move, you run away.
Sampson A dog from the Montague house will cause me to stand – I will walk as far from the stench of the Montagues as I can.
Gregory But that would make you weak because the weakest avoid struggle.
Sampson Yes, that would make me a woman as they are the weakest of all. I will push Montague's men and throw their women to the wall.
Gregory The fight is between our masters and us their men.
Sampson It doesn't matter. I will be brutal – when I have fought with the men I will cut off the young women's heads.

A public place.

[Enter Sampson and Gregory armed with swords and bucklers.]

Sampson Gregory, o' my word, we'll not carry coals.
Gregory No, for then we should be colliers.
Sampson I mean, an we be in choler we'll draw.
Gregory Ay, while you live, draw your neck out o' the collar.
Sampson I strike quickly, being moved. 5
Gregory But thou art not quickly moved to strike.
Sampson A dog of the house of Montague moves me.
Gregory To move is to stir; and to be valiant is to stand:
therefore, if thou art moved, thou runn'st away. 10
Sampson A dog of that house shall move me to stand:
I will take the wall of any man or maid of Montague's.
Gregory That shows thee a weak slave; for the weakest goes to the wall.
Sampson 'Tis true, and therefore women, being the weaker vessels, are ever thrust to the wall; therefore I will push Montague's men from the wall, and thrust his maids to the wall. 15
Gregory The quarrel is between our masters and us their men.
Sampson 'Tis all one, I will show myself a tyrant:
when I have fought with the men I will be civil with the maids, I will cut off their heads.