The Tragedy of ROMEO and JULIET

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Synopsis

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.

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Characters in the Play

ROMEO
MONTAGUE, his father
LADY MONTAGUE, his mother
BENVOLIO, their kinsman
ABRAM, a Montague servingman
BALTHASAR, Romeo's servingman

JULIET
CAPULET, her father
LADY CAPULET, her mother
NURSE to Juliet
TYBALT, kinsman to the Capulets
PETRUCHIO, Tybalt's companion
Capulet's Cousin
SAMPSON, GREGORY, PETER } *servingmen*
Other Servingmen

ESCALUS, Prince of Verona
PARIS, the Prince's kinsman and Juliet's suitor
MERCUTIO, the Prince's kinsman and Romeo's friend
Paris' Page

FRIAR LAWRENCE
FRIAR JOHN
APOTHECARY
Three or four Citizens
Three Musicians
Three Watchmen

CHORUS

Attendants, Maskers, Torchbearers, a Boy with a drum, Gentlemen, Gentlewomen, Tybalt's Page, Servingmen.

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⌜ACT I⌝

⌜Scene 1⌝

Enter Sampson and Gregory, with swords and bucklers, of the house of Capulet.

SAMPSON Gregory, on 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 of collar.
SAMPSON I strike quickly, being moved.
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.
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.
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.

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