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—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?

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(*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!



Literary Glossary

aside

lines spoken by an actor that the other characters on stage supposedly cannot hear; an aside usually shares the character's inner thoughts with the audience

- Although she appeared to be calm, the heroine's **aside** revealed her inner terror.
-

backstage

the part of the theater where actors prepare to go onstage, where scenery is kept, etc.

- Before entering, the villain impatiently waited **backstage**.
-

cast

the entire company of actors performing in a play

- The entire **cast** must attend tonight's dress rehearsal.
-

character

a fictional person or creature in a story or play

- Mighty Mouse is one of my favorite cartoon **characters**.
-

climax

the outcome of the main conflict of a play or novel

- The outlaw's capture made an exciting **climax** to the story.
-

comedy

a funny play, film, or TV show that has a happy ending

- My friends and I always enjoy a Jim Carrey **comedy**.
-

conflict

the struggle between characters, forces, or ideas at the center of a story

- *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* illustrates the **conflict** between good and evil.
-

conclusion

the resolution of all plot conflicts, bringing a story to a close

- That play's **conclusion** was very satisfying. Every conflict was resolved.
-

dialogue

words spoken by the characters in a novel or play

- Amusing **dialogue** is an important element of most comedies.
-