

William Shakespeare

The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet

Dual Edition: Original and
Clear Modern English

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In Clear and Accessible English



William Shakespeare - The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet In Clear and Accessible English

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This book presents the original text alongside a direct rendering in controlled, clear English at the B1 level. The clear version follows the original sentence by sentence and keeps structure, content, and meaning fully intact. Only the language *level* is adjusted, and nothing is cut, removed, summarized, or simplified in substance. The original text remains visible at all times, so wording and argument can always be checked directly.

In the clear version, sentences are set line by line to support orientation and reading flow in longer or denser passages. This layout is intentional and designed to aid careful reading.

Reading complex texts with clarity and confidence

This Dual Edition offers the original text together with a clear modern English version, presented side by side. The format is designed for readers who need to work through demanding texts carefully, whether by choice or by requirement.

It is especially helpful in homeschooling and classroom settings, including high school and college study, history and humanities courses, and ESL learning. When time, experience, or reading practice is limited, the clear version supports steady progress without breaking contact with the original text.

Additionally, glossaries explain difficult terms where needed, and short summaries support overall comprehension. This allows readers to meet academic or curricular demands with greater confidence, less frustration, and full awareness of the text's structure and ideas.

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Scene 1.

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List of Characters

ESCALUS, Prince of Verona.

Escalus, Prince of Verona.

MERCUTIO, kinsman to the Prince, and friend to Romeo.

Mercutio, a relative of the Prince and a friend of Romeo. Paris, a young nobleman and a relative of the Prince. Paris's page.

PARIS, a young Nobleman, kinsman to the Prince.

Page to Paris.

MONTAGUE, head of a Veronese family at feud with the Capulets.

Montague, head of the Montague family, which is feuding with the Capulets. Lady Montague, Montague's wife. Romeo, the son of Montague. Benvolio, Montague's nephew and Romeo's friend. Abram, a servant of the Montague family. Balthasar, Romeo's servant.

LADY MONTAGUE, wife to Montague.

ROMEO, son to Montague.

BENVOLIO, nephew to Montague, and friend to Romeo.

ABRAM, servant to Montague.

BALTHASAR, servant to Romeo.

CAPULET, head of a Veronese family at feud with the Montagues.

Capulet, head of the Capulet family, which is feuding with the

LADY CAPULET, wife to Capulet.
JULIET, daughter to Capulet.
TYBALT, nephew to Lady Capulet.
CAPULET'S COUSIN, an old man.
NURSE to Juliet.
PETER, servant to Juliet's Nurse.
SAMPSON, servant to Capulet.
GREGORY, servant to Capulet.
Servants.

FRIAR LAWRENCE, a Franciscan.
FRIAR JOHN, of the same Order.
An Apothecary.
CHORUS.
Three Musicians.
An Officer.
Citizens of Verona; several Men
and Women, relations to both
houses; Maskers, Guards,
Watchmen and Attendants.

SCENE. During the greater part of
the Play in Verona; once, in the

Montagues. Lady Capulet,
Capulet's wife. Juliet, the
daughter of Capulet. Tybalt, Lady
Capulet's nephew. Capulet's
Cousin, an elderly man. Juliet's
Nurse. Peter, servant to Juliet's
Nurse. Sampson, a servant of
the Capulet family. Gregory, a
servant of the Capulet family.
Other servants.

Friar Lawrence, a Franciscan
friar. Friar John, another
Franciscan friar. An Apothecary.
Chorus. Three musicians. An
officer. Citizens of Verona;
various men and women related
to both families; masked guests,
guards, watchmen, and
attendants.

*The play takes place mostly in
Verona, except for one scene in*

Fifth Act, at Mantua.

Mantua during Act Five.

Prolog

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 Chorus enters.

Chorus.

Our story takes place in Verona,
where two noble families of
equal rank have hated each
other for many years.

That old hatred now breaks out
again into violence, and citizens
stain their hands with each
other's blood.

From these two enemy families
come two lovers whose fate is
doomed from the beginning.

Their tragic and heartbreaking
deaths finally bring an end to
their parents' bitter feud.

This play tells the painful story of
their doomed love and of the

The fearful passage of their
death-mark'd love,

And the continuance of their
parents' rage,

Which, but their children's end,
nought 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.

lasting rage between their
families, which nothing except
their children's deaths could
stop.

You will watch that story unfold
on this stage over the next two
hours.

If you listen with patience and
attention, our performance will
make clear whatever this
introduction cannot fully show.

Exit.

The Chorus exits.

What happens in this scene: The Chorus introduces the setting and announces the play's outcome in advance: two noble families in Verona are locked in an ancient feud, and a pair of ill-fated lovers born from these rival houses will die. Their deaths alone will end their parents' hatred.

ACT I

Scene 1.

A public place.

*Enter Sampson and Gregory
armed with swords and bucklers.*

*Sampson and Gregory enter,
armed with swords and shields.*

SAMPSON.

Gregory, on my word, we'll not
carry coals.

Sampson.

Gregory, I swear, we will not let
anyone shame us.

GREGORY.

No, for then we should be
colliers.

Gregory.

No, because then people would
think we take insults from
anyone.

SAMPSON.

I mean, if we be in choler, we'll
draw.

Sampson.

I mean, if they make us angry,
we will draw our swords.

GREGORY.

Ay, while you live, draw your
neck out o' the collar.

Gregory.

Yes, but while you are alive, you
had better keep your neck out of
the hangman's collar.

SAMPSON.

I strike quickly, being moved.

Sampson.

When someone provokes me, I
strike quickly.

GREGORY.

But thou art not quickly moved to
strike.

Gregory.

But no one provokes you quickly
enough to make you strike.

SAMPSON.

A dog of the house of Montague
moves me.

Sampson.

Any dog from the Montague
house can provoke me!

GREGORY.

To move is to stir; and to be
valiant is to stand:

therefore, if thou art moved, thou
runn'st away.

Gregory.

To be provoked means to move,
and a brave man stands firm.

So if you are moved, you are
running 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.

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.

A dog from that house will move
me to stand and fight.

I will force any Montague man or
woman away from the wall.

Gregory.

That only shows you are weak,
because the weakest person
gets pushed to the wall.

Sampson.

True, and that is why women,
being weaker, always get pushed
to the wall.

So I will push Montague's men
away from the wall, and push his
women up against it.

Gregory.

The quarrel is between our
masters, and between us as
their servants.

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.

GREGORY.

The heads of the maids?

SAMPSON.

Ay, the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads; take it in what sense

thou wilt.

GREGORY.

They must take it in sense that feel it.

SAMPSON.

Me they shall feel while I am able to stand:

Sampson.

It is all the same to me.

I will act like a tyrant.

After I fight the men, I will be nice to the women and cut off their heads.

Gregory.

The women's heads?

Sampson.

Yes, their heads, or their maidenheads.

.....
Take it in whichever sense you want.

Gregory.

The women will have to take it in the sense they feel it.

Sampson.

and 'tis known I am a pretty
piece of flesh.

GREGORY.

'Tis well thou art not fish; if thou
hadst, thou hadst been poor

John. Draw thy tool; here comes
of the house of Montagues.

Enter Abram and Balthasar.

SAMPSON.

My naked weapon is out: quarrel,
I will back thee.

GREGORY.

How? Turn thy back and run?

They will feel me as long as I can
stand.

Everyone knows I am a fine
piece of flesh.

Gregory.

It is good you are not a fish.

If you were, you would be dried
poor-john.

.....
Draw your weapon!

Here come men from the house
of Montague.

Abram and Balthasar enter.

Sampson.

My bare weapon is out.

Start the fight, and I will stand
behind you.

Gregory.

How?

Will you stand behind me by
turning your back and running

away?

SAMPSON.

Fear me not.

Sampson.

Do not be afraid of me.

GREGORY.

No, marry; I fear thee!

Gregory.

No, by Mary, I am afraid of you!

SAMPSON.

Let us take the law of our sides;
let them begin.

Sampson.

Let us keep the law on our side.
Let *them* begin!

GREGORY.

I will frown as I pass by, and let
them take it as they list.

Gregory.

I will frown as I pass them, and
let them take it however they
want.

SAMPSON.

Nay, as they dare. I will bite my
thumb at them, which is

disgrace to them if they bear it.

Sampson.

No, let them take it however
they dare.

I will bite my thumb at them,
which insults them if they accept
the insult.

ABRAM.

Do you bite your thumb at us,
sir?

Abram.

Are you biting your thumb at us,
sir?

SAMPSON.

I do bite my thumb, sir.

Sampson.

I am biting my thumb, sir.

ABRAM.

Do you bite your thumb at us,
sir?

Abram.

Are you biting your thumb at *us*,
sir?

SAMPSON.

Is the law of our side if I say ay?

Sampson.

Will the law be on our side if I
say yes?

GREGORY.

No.

Gregory.

No.

SAMPSON.

No sir, I do not bite my thumb at
you, sir; but I bite my
thumb, sir.

Sampson.

Then no, sir, I am not biting my
thumb at you.
But I am biting my thumb, sir.

n

GREGORY.

Do you quarrel, sir?

Gregory.

Are you looking for a fight, sir?

n

ABRAM.

Quarrel, sir? No, sir.

Abram.

A fight, sir?

No, sir!

SAMPSON.

But if you do, sir, I am for you. I
serve as good a man as
you.

Sampson.

But if you are, sir, I am ready for
you.

I serve a man as good as yours.

ABRAM.

No better.

Abram.

Certainly no better.

SAMPSON.

Well, sir.

Sampson.

Well, sir.

Enter Benvolio.

Benvolio enters.

GREGORY.

Say better; here comes one of
my master's kinsmen.

Gregory.

Speaking of better, here comes
one of my master's relatives.

SAMPSON.

Yes, better, sir.

Sampson.

Yes, better, sir.

ABRAM.

You lie.

Abram.

You lie!

SAMPSON.

Draw, if you be men. Gregory,
remember thy washing blow.

Sampson.

Draw your sword, if you are men.
Gregory, remember your strong
blow!

They fight.

They begin to fight.

BENVOLIO.

Part, fools! put up your swords,
you know not what you do.

Benvolio.

Stop, fools, put away your
swords!
You don't know what you are
doing.

Beats down their swords.

He strikes their swords down.

Enter Tybalt.

TYBALT.

What, art thou drawn among
these heartless hinds?

Turn thee Benvolio, look upon thy
death.

BENVOLIO.

I do but keep the peace, put up
thy sword,

Or manage it to part these men
with me.

TYBALT.

What, drawn, and talk of peace? I
hate the word

As I hate hell, all Montagues, and
thee:

Have at thee, coward.

Tybalt enters.

Tybalt.

What, have you drawn your
sword among these cowardly
servants?

Turn around, Benvolio, and face
your death!

Benvolio.

I am only trying to keep the
peace.

Put away your sword, or help me
break up this fight.

Tybalt.

What?

You stand there with your sword
drawn and talk about peace?

I hate that word as much as I
hate hell, all Montagues, and
you.

Defend yourself, coward!

They fight.

They fight.

Enter three or four Citizens with clubs.

Three or four citizens enter carrying clubs.
.....

FIRST CITIZEN.

Clubs, bills and partisans! Strike!
Beat them down!

Down with the Capulets! Down
with the Montagues!

First Citizen.

Bring clubs, spears, and pole
arms!

Strike them down!

Down with the Capulets!

Down with the Montagues!

Enter Capulet in his gown, and Lady Capulet.

Capulet enters in his gown with Lady Capulet.
.....

CAPULET.

What noise is this? Give me my
long sword, ho!

Capulet.

What is all this noise?

Bring me my long sword!

LADY CAPULET.

A crutch, a crutch! Why call you
for a sword?

Lady Capulet.

A crutch, a crutch!

Why are you calling for a sword?

CAPULET.

Capulet.

bier: A movable frame on which a coffin or corpse is carried to the grave.

canopy: An ornamental covering suspended above a throne, bed, or tomb; here referring to the stone roof or canopy over Juliet's tomb.

cell: A small, simple room in a monastery or religious house; Friar Lawrence's private quarters.

clubs → club: A heavy stick used as a weapon; also the traditional cry used to summon apprentices and tradesmen to break up a street fight in Elizabethan London.

corns → corn: A small area of hardened skin on the foot caused by pressure or friction, painful when touched.

court: The residence and household of a ruler or noble; also an enclosed area used for social gatherings or sport.

courtiers' → courtier: A person who attends the court of a ruler, seeking favour through elegance, flattery, and social skill.

dates → date: The sweet fruit of the date palm, imported from the Middle East and used as an ingredient in Elizabethan cooking and confectionery.

discord: Conflict and disagreement between people; a lack of harmony.

dovehouse: A small building or shelter kept for housing doves or pigeons.

ducats → ducat: A gold coin widely used in Europe during the Renaissance, serving as a standard currency in trade.

gown: A long outer garment; in Shakespeare's time, a robe worn as a sign of professional or social status.

groan: A deep sound of pain, grief, or distress.

hay: A fencing thrust; from the Italian "hai", meaning "you have it", called out when a hit is scored on an opponent.

kinsman: A male relative; a member of one's family or clan.

maidenheads → maidenhead: A woman's virginity; here used here in a bawdy pun by the servants.

maidenhood: The state or condition of being a virgin; girlhood before marriage.

on pain of death: Under threat of being executed; a formal warning that the penalty for disobedience is death.

page: A young male servant attending a person of rank, typically as part of his training in courtly manners.

pantry: A small room in a house used for storing food, provisions, and kitchen supplies.

passado: A fencing move in which the swordsman steps forward with one foot while thrusting; a term from Italian fencing practice.

plantain: A common broad-leaved plant whose leaves were used in folk medicine to soothe wounds and skin irritations.

pole arms → pole arm: Long-handled weapons such as spears, halberds, or pikes, used by infantry in medieval and Renaissance warfare.

poor-john: Dried and salted hake, a cheap fish eaten by the poor; used as a term of contempt.

prompter: A person stationed offstage in a theatre who whispers forgotten lines to actors; Romeo uses the image to say he has forgotten what he meant to say.

punto reverso: A backhanded thrust or cut in fencing, delivered with the sword hand turned outward; a term from Italian swordsmanship.

quarrel: A cause or grounds for a dispute or fight; also the dispute itself.

quinces → quince: A hard, golden-yellow fruit related to the apple and pear, used in Elizabethan cooking for preserves and pies.

rose cakes → rose cake: Small cakes or confections flavoured or decorated with rose petals or rose water, a common ingredient in Elizabethan cooking.

scorn: Open contempt or disdain for someone or something regarded as inferior or unworthy.

sycamore grove: A group of sycamore trees; here associated with the lovesick Romeo wandering alone at dawn, as the sycamore was conventionally linked with melancholy lovers.

vial: A small glass bottle used to hold liquids, especially medicines or potions.

wicker basket: A basket woven from flexible twigs or reeds, used for carrying goods; Friar Lawrence uses one to gather herbs.

wormwood: A bitter-tasting plant used in folk medicine. The Nurse applies its bitter juice to her nipple to wean the infant Juliet.

yew tree: A dark evergreen tree traditionally planted in churchyards and associated with death and mourning.

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