

Romeo and Juliet Remembered

Adapted by Geoffrey Arndt from William Shakespeare's text

Backstage at a large, vacant theater, filled with memories of shows long past. The whole play takes place in the memories of Romeo and Juliet.

Verona, Italy.

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| ROMEO | Son of MONTAGUE |
| BENVOLIO | Montague cousin of ROMEO |
| ABRAM | a Montague |
| LORD MONTAGUE | Father of ROMEO |
| LADY MONTAGUE | Mother of ROMEO |
| JULIET | Daughter of CAPULET |
| TYBALT | Capulet cousin of JULIET |
| SAMPSON | a Capulet |
| GREGORY | a Capulet |
| LORD CAPULET | Father of JULIET |
| LADY CAPULET | Mother of JULIET |
| NURSE | Capulet servant to JULIET |
| MERCUTIO | Friend of ROMEO |
| PARIS | To wed JULIET |
| PRINCE | Prince of Verona |
| FRIAR LAWRENCE | Marries ROMEO & JULIET |
| FRIAR JOHN | Messenger for FRIAR LAWRENCE |
| APOTHECARY | Sells poison to ROMEO |

***ROMEO and JULIET at the beginning are narrators. They are ever-present, and their names will be Underlined throughout.**

PROLOGUE

(The set is a chaotic backstage area of a theater with set pieces, costumes, and décor from multiple productions draped around. Two mannequins with arms outstretched are silhouetted on the stage in a romantic fashion. Romeo runs on and looks at the costumes...maybe tries one on. Juliet runs in, and Romeo freezes. These two will be Romeo and Juliet Storytellers.)

JULIET: Now, where could he have gone? *(Juliet begins dramatically to look around for Romeo, who changes position as she looks and talks.)* The Ancient Greeks had seven different words for love, you know. Agape is universal love. Philia, which is friendly love. There was Ludus, which was a playful love. *(She looks around or under something. Romeo has put on another costume and a new pose.)* Hmm...there was Philautia, or love for oneself...just be careful not to love yourself too much because that...is narcissism. Storge...love for your family...boo. *(Romeo has on sunglasses, and Juliet has disappeared behind him, so he can no longer see her. She begins to sneak up on him.)* And of course, the Greeks invented stories of intimate love or Eros waaaay before Bridgerton even dropped on Netflix. *(There is a pause; Romeo gets up to look for Juliet, but she has snuck up behind him. (He takes off his sunglasses, and she puts her hands over his eyes.)* Enduring love, though, that is what the Greeks called, Pragma. *(Romeo takes her hand and spins into a dip. He is about to lean in for a kiss, when an adult, Friar Lawrence, enters and clears his throat. Romeo and Juliet break up their embrace. They steady themselves, dust off, and they begin to walk off in opposite directions as he says:)*

FRIAR: The Most Excellent and Lamentable Tragedy of Romeo *(Romeo isolated in light)* and Juliet *(Juliet isolated in light. They both strike winsome and dramatic poses for a beat)*. I am Friar Lawrence. I married them in secret.

JULIET: Spoilers!

ROMEO: *(Indicating the audience)* They all know the story.

FRIAR: I also buried them...

JULIET: Now, that is really a spoiler.

FRIAR: That, I did in public view. Their story needed to be told.

ROMEO: Is that why we are here now? This story is like *(counts on his fingers)*

JULIET: 426 years-

ROMEO: -Right-

FRIAR: I know, my children, *(They cross over to him)* but people are still fighting...we are still divided.

ROMEO/JULIET: (*embarrassed look toward the audience*) woooooow...

JULIET: How about we help tell it this time, Friar Lawrence?

ROMEO: And do we need to tell it, you know, like with the like impossible to understand language?

FRIAR: It is not impossible lang... okay, it is tough to follow sometimes. How about, yes, this time, you can help tell the story.

JULIET: (*Jumping into dramatic action*) Alright. We will need costumes, sets, and oh, yes (*snaps fingers and an actors playing Romeo and Juliet in the story appears. Romeo has a flower in his hand.*) a cast! Oh, I like him. What do you think?

ROMEO: She could be you.

JULIET: Wait (*Juliet takes the flower from Romeo's hand and puts it in Juliet's hair.*) Now we can begin. (*Juliet and Romeo come together, looking at their cast. Then, they look to each other. Softy:*) I love you.

ROMEO: For 426 years, and for 426 more!

FRIAR: Take your places, children. We begin. (*Lights shift. Romeo/Juliet exit.*)

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|---|---------------------------------------|
| Two <u>households</u> , both alike in <u>dignity</u> , | <i>families, rank</i> |
| In fair Verona, where we lay our scene, | |
| From ancient <u>grudge break to new mutiny</u> , | <i>rivalry, outbreaks, fighting</i> |
| Where <u>civil</u> blood makes <u>civil</u> hands unclean. | <i>Civilian</i> |
| From forth the <u>fatal loins</u> of these two foes | <i>fateful, children</i> |
| A pair of <u>star-cross'd</u> lovers take their life, | <i>doomed</i> |
| Whose <u>misadventured piteous overthrows</u> | <i>unfortunate, pitiful, downfall</i> |
| Doth with their death <u>bury</u> their parents' <u>strife</u> . | <i>end, fighting</i> |
| The fearful passage of their <u>death-mark'd</u> love, | <i>doomed</i> |
| And the continuance of their parents' rage, | |
| Which, <u>but</u> their children's end, <u>naught</u> could remove, | <i>except for, nothing</i> |
| Is now the two hours' <u>traffic</u> of our stage. | <i>Performance</i> |

ROMEO: Maybe more like an hour twenty.

FRIAR: The which if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

JULIET: A street in Verona. Enter Sampson and Gregory, armed.

SCENE 1

GREGORY: The quarrel is between our masters and us their men. *menservants*

SAMPSON: I strike quickly, being moved. *attack, angered*
A dog of the house of Montague moves me.

ROMEO: Enter my cousin, Abram. (*ABRAM enter, armed*)

GREGORY: Draw thy tool! *sword*

SAMPSON: I will bite my thumb at them, *give the finger*
which is a disgrace to them if they bear it. *take it without a fight*

ABRAM: Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

SAMPSON: I do bite my thumb, sir.

ABRAM: Do you bite your thumb *at us*, sir?

SAMPSON: (*to Gregory*) Is the law on our side if I say "ay"? *yes*

GREGORY: No!

SAMPSON: (*mockingly*) No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but I bite my thumb, sir.

GREGORY: (*to Abram*) Do you quarrel, sir? *challenge us*

ABRAM: Quarrel sir? No, sir!

SAMPSON: But if you do, sir, I am for you!
I serve as good a man as you. *will fight you, master*

ABRAM: No better?

SAMPSON: Well, sir—

GREGORY: (*sees Tybalt coming*) Say "better"! Here comes one of our kinsmen.

SAMPSON: Yes, better.

ABRAM: You lie!

SAMPSON: Draw, if you be men! (*They fight.*)

ROMEO: (*All freeze*) Enter my other cousin, Benvolio, also armed.

BENVOLIO: Part, fools! You know not what you do! *Separate*

JULIET: (*All freeze*) Enter MY cousin, Tybalt.

TYBALT:(*to Benvolio*) What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds?
Turn thee, Benvolio. Look upon thy death! (*draws his sword*) *face your death*

BENVOLIO: I do but keep the peace. *just*

TYBALT: What, drawn, and talk of peace? I hate the word, *your sword drawn*
As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee! (*They fight*)

ROMEO/ JULIET: (*All freeze*) Enter...our parents...

JULIET: Sooooo, embarrassing

CAPULET: (*To Montague*) My sword I say! Old Montague is come
And flourishes his blade in spite of me. (*They are about to fight, then freeze.*) *defiance*

ROMEO/JULIET: Enter...the Prince.

PRINCE: Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,
On pain of torture, from those bloody hands
Throw your mistemperd weapons to the ground. *Hostile*
Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word *public, started by few words*
By thee, Capulet, and Montague,
Have thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets. *three times*
If ever you disturb our streets again,
Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace! *you'll be executed for*
Once more, on pain of death, all men depart! (*All exit*)

SCENE 2

ROMEO: My mother speaks with Benvolio.

LADY MONTAGUE: O, where is Romeo? Saw you him today?
Right glad I am he was not at this fray?

BENVOLIO: Madam, an hour before the worshipped sun
Peered forth the golden window of the east, *from*
Underneath the grove of sycamore
So early walking did I see your son.

LADY MONTAGUE: Many a morning hath he there been seen,
With tears augmenting the fresh morning dew, *adding to*
Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs.
But all so soon as the all-cheering sun *as soon as*
Should in the furthest east begin to draw
The shady curtains from Aurora's bed, *god of dawn*
Away from the light steals home my heavy son, *comes home, sad*
And private in his chamber pens himself, *bedroom, locks*
Shuts up his windows, locks fair daylight out,
And makes himself an artificial night.

MONTAGUE: Black and portentous must this humor prove, *foreboding, mood*
Unless good counsel may the cause remove. *advice, remove the cause*

BENVOLIO: So please you, step aside.
I'll know his grievance or be much denied. *(They exit) the cause of his distress*

JULIET: You were being so dramatic.

ROMEO: My heart was broken, what was I supposed to-

JULIET: Shhhh...you're on! *(Romeo enters)*

BENVOLIO: Good morrow, cousin. *good morning*

ROMEO: Is the day so young?

BENVOLIO: But new struck nine. *just now*

ROMEO: Ay me, sad hours seem long.

JULIET: See, dramatic!

ROMEO: Shhhh...

BENVOLIO: What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?

ROMEO: Not having that, which having, makes them short.

BENVOLIO/ JULIET(dramatically): In love?

ROMEO: Out—

BENVOLIO/ JULIET(dramatically): Of love?

ROMEO: Out of her favor where I am in love.

BENVOLIO: Alas, that Love, so gentle in his view, *too bad Cupid who looks gentle*
Should be so tyrannous and rough in proof! *is actually rough*

ROMEO: Alas, this love feel I, that feel no love in this. *I love one who doesn't love me*
What fray was here?

Yet tell me not, for I have heard it all.

Here's much to do with hate, but more with love. *it's all about*

Why, then, O brawling love, O loving hate,

O anything of nothing first create! *created of nothing*

O heavy lightness, serious vanity,

Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms, *foolishness*

Dost thou not laugh? *attractive*

BENVOLIO: No coz, I rather weep. *cousin*

ROMEO: Good heart, at what? *friend*

BENVOLIO: At thy good heart's oppression.

ROMEO: Why, such is love's transgression. *love's ways*

JULIET: *(R and B silently continue discussing Romeo's broken heart at Juliet says:)*
Boooo, fast forward.

ROMEO: Are you serious? I'm baring my soul.

JULIET: It is really corny. *(She snaps a finger and we hear Romeo.)*

ROMEO: Love is a smoke made with the fume of sighs;

Being purged, a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes;

Being vexed, a sea raging with lovers' tears;

love being exchanged

love being denied

ROMEO: Wow...you're right.

JULIET: I know.

ROMEO: How long do I go on? (*Juliet snaps her fingers.*)

ROMEO: One fairer than my love! The all-seeing sun
Ne'er saw her match since first the world begun. *anyone as beautiful*
(*Juliet gives him a knowing look. She snaps again and Romeo is silent.*)

ROMEO: Right...let's skip this part. We pick it up when Benvolio tells me about
this party-

JULIET: Thrown by my father.

BENVOLIO: At this night's ancient feast of Capulet's *traditional*
Sups the fair Rosaline, whom thou so loves, *dines*
With all the admired beauties of Verona.
Go thither, and with unattainted eye *there, unbiased*
Compare her face with some that I shall show,
And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.

ROMEO: I'll go along, no such sight to be shown, *not to see whom you show*
But to rejoice in splendor of mine own. [*exit*] *the beauty of Rosaline*
(*They Exit.*)

SCENE 3

JULIET: Later that day, in my mother's chamber, she and my Nurse discuss my growing up, and marrying...I'm thirteen, by the way!

LADY CAPULET: Nurse, where's my daughter? Call her forth to me.

NURSE: I bade her come. God forbid! Where's this girl? (*screaming*) Juliet! Juliet!

JULIET: Madam, I am here. What is your will? *what do you want*

LADY CAPULET: This is the matter.—Nurse, give leave awhile, *leave us*
We must talk in secret. [*Nurse starts to leave*] Nurse, come back again!
I have remembered me. Thou know'st my daughter's of a pretty age.

NURSE: Even or odd, of all days in the year,
Come Lammas-eve at night shall she be fourteen.
Susan and she—God rest all Christian souls!—
Were of an age: well, Susan is with God; (*Lady Capulet begins to speak. Nurse interrupts.*)
She was too good for me: but as I said,
On Lammas-eve at night shall she be fourteen; (*Lady Capulet begins... Nurse interrupts.*) 'Tis
since the earthquake now eleven years;
For then she could stand alone: nay, by the rood,
She could have run and waddled all about;
For even the day before, she broke her brow:
And then my husband—God be with his soul! (*Pause. Lady begins... Nurse interrupts.*)
He 'was a merry man—took up the child:
'Yea,' quoth he, 'dost thou fall upon thy face?
Thou wilt fall backward when thou has more wit;
Wilt thou not, Jule?' and, by my holidame,
The pretty wretch left crying and said 'Ay.'
And I might live to see thee married once, O, I have my wish.

LADY CAPULET: Marry, that "marry" is the very theme I came to talk of.
Tell me, daughter Juliet, How stands your disposition to be married?

JULIET: It is an honor that I dream not of.

JULIET: Thirteen!

LADY CAPULET: Well, think of marriage now. Younger than you,
Here in Verona, ladies of esteem *high-breeding*
Are made already mothers. By my count
I was your mother much upon these years *at the same age*
That you are now a maid. Thus then in brief:
The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.

NURSE: A man, young lady! Lady, such a man as all the world.

LADY CAPULET: Verona's summer hath not such a flower.

NURSE: Nay, he's a flower, i'faith, a very flower.

indeed

LADY CAPULET: What say you? Can you love the gentleman?

This night you shall behold him at our feast.

See

Read o'er the volume of young Paris' face,

read like a book

And find delight writ there with beauty's pen.

Written

This precious book of love, this unbound lover,

uncovered/unmarried

To beautify him, only lacks a cover.

he only needs a cover

That book in many's eyes doth share the glory

a book cover is made

That in gold clasps locks in the golden story.

beautiful by a beautiful tale

So shall you share all that he doth possess

all his wealth and status

By having him, making yourself no less.

marrying him

NURSE: No less? Nay, bigger. Women grow by men.

get pregnant

LADY CAPULET: Speak briefly. Can you like of Paris' love?

JULIET: I'll look to like, if looking liking move,

if looks will make me like him

But no more deep will I engage mine eye

I won't look any deeper

Than your consent gives strength to make it fly.

than you want me to

The guests are come.

NURSE: Go, girl, seek happy nights to happy days. [*Juliet exits*] They grow up
So fast...

JULIET/JULIET: I'm thirteen!