

# Romeo and Juliet

William  
Shakespeare



TIMELESS SHAKESPEARE



## — The Prologue —

*(The Chorus enters.)*

**CHORUS:** This play is about two families in Verona, Italy. They have been fighting for years. Two teens fall in love. One is a Capulet. The other is a Montague. They take their own lives. The fighting stops. Read on. You will learn the details.

## ACT 1

### — Scene 1 —

*(A Verona street. Sampson and Gregory enter. They have swords. They are looking for trouble.)*

**SAMPSON:** I won't be put down by Montagues. Believe me!

**GREGORY:** Calm down. This isn't our

fight. The fight is between our bosses.

**SAMPSON:** It's all the same to me. I would fight any of them.

**GREGORY:** Here's your chance. Draw your sword!

**SAMPSON** (*drawing his sword*): Pick a fight with them. I'll back you up.

**GREGORY:** How? By running away?

**SAMPSON:** Don't worry!

**GREGORY:** I'm more afraid of what you will do. I'm not afraid of the Montagues.

**SAMPSON:** We'll let them start the fight. Then we'll have a right to fight back. The law will be on our side.

**GREGORY:** I'll frown as they pass by. They can take it however they want.

**SAMPSON:** I'll make a face at them. They'll

have to fight. Or they'll be shamed.

*(Abraham and Balthazar enter.)*

**ABRAHAM:** Did you make a face at us?

**SAMPSON** *(aside to Gregory):* What will happen if I say yes? Will we be arrested?

**GREGORY:** Yes.

**SAMPSON:** Then, no. I didn't make a face at you.

**GREGORY:** Do you want to fight?

**ABRAHAM:** Fight? No, sir!

**SAMPSON:** Well, if you do, I'm ready. My boss is as good as yours.

**ABRAHAM:** As good? Maybe. But no better.

**GREGORY:** Say "better"—here comes Benvolio. He'll back us up.

**SAMPSON:** Yes, say “better”!

**ABRAHAM:** You lie!

**SAMPSON:** Draw your swords. Gregory,  
are you ready?

*(They fight. **Benvolio** enters.)*

**BENVOLIO:** Stop, fools! Put away your  
swords. You don’t know what you’re  
doing.

*(He beats down their swords. **Tybalt** enters.)*

**TYBALT:** Are you fighting with the servants?

**BENVOLIO:** No, I’m trying to stop the  
fight. Put your sword away. Or use it to  
help me stop it.

**TYBALT:** Are you talking about peace with  
your sword drawn? I hate the Montagues.  
I hate you! Come on, coward!



*(They fight. Others join in. Lord and Lady Capulet enter.)*

**CAPULET:** What's going on? Give me a sword too.

**LADY CAPULET:** You need a crutch, not a sword.

**CAPULET:** Give me my sword! Montague is coming. He's waving his sword to make me mad.

*(Lord and Lady Montague enter.)*

**MONTAGUE:** I hate you, Capulet!

*(to his wife, who is holding him back):*  
Let me at him!

**LADY MONTAGUE:** Stop! I will not let you do this.

*(Prince Escalus and his men arrive.)*

**PRINCE:** Rebels, listen! Drop your swords and listen to me. This is the third time you have fought in our streets. If you do this again, you will pay with your lives. Clear the streets!

Capulet, come with me. Montague, I will meet with you this afternoon. You will die if I catch you fighting one more time.

*(Everyone leaves except the Montagues and Benvolio.)*

**MONTAGUE:** Who started this fight, nephew?

**BENVOLIO:** I saw Capulet's servants fighting with yours. I tried to stop them. Tybalt came in and drew his sword. The crowd joined in. Then the Prince came and stopped it.

**LADY MONTAGUE:** Where is Romeo? I'm glad he wasn't in this fight.

**BENVOLIO:** I saw him earlier. He was in the woods. I walked toward him. When he saw me, he ran and hid. I didn't follow him.

**MONTAGUE:** He goes there a lot to cry. When it's light, he hides in his room. I wish we knew what was wrong. We would gladly help him.

**BENVOLIO:** Here he comes. I'll see if I can find out anything.



**MONTAGUE:** I hope you can.

*(Lord and Lady Montague leave. Romeo enters.)*

**BENVOLIO:** Good morning, cousin.

**ROMEO:** Is it still morning? Sad hours  
drag on so! Was that my father who just  
left?

**BENVOLIO:** It was. Tell me what makes  
you so sad.

**ROMEO:** Love. I want love. The woman I  
love will not love me back. What a waste.  
Her beauty will die with her.

**BENVOLIO:** She has sworn she will not  
get married?

**ROMEO:** She has. It seems such a waste.  
It makes me feel like dying.

**BENVOLIO:** Listen, cousin. Forget her!

**ROMEO:** Teach me how to do that!

**BENVOLIO:** You must look at other beautiful ladies.

**ROMEO:** It won't work. I would only think of her. She is more beautiful than anyone else. You can't teach me to forget her!

**BENVOLIO:** I will. Or I'll die trying!

*(Romeo and Benvolio leave.)*