Two Example Sections

Classical COMICS

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<th>Original Text</th>
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<th>Plain Text</th>
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<tr>
<td>ISBN: 978-1-906332-20-4</td>
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<th>Quick Text</th>
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Adapted by: John McDonald
Design/Layout by: Jo Wheeler
Characters by: Will Volley
Original Artwork by: Will Volley
Lettering by: Clive Bryant

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ROMEO AND JULIET

(The Condensed Story)
Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet are the children of two feuding families in the Italian city of Verona. After the initial Prologue, the play opens with a street fight between the Montagues and the Capulets. Escalus, Prince of Verona, announces that anyone caught feuding in the future will be given the death penalty.

Count Paris is related to the Prince; and Juliet’s father is anxious for his daughter to marry Paris, who is keen to marry Juliet. However, as a good father, he first wants to make sure Paris’ feelings are true. As a test, he organises a party, to which he invites every eligible lady in Verona. If Paris still wants to marry Juliet after that, then his feelings must be true.

Romeo is in love with Rosaline, but she is not interested in a relationship. Romeo and his friends see the guest list for the Capulet party and, seeing Rosaline on that list, decide to attend in disguise - after all, it is on “enemy territory”. There, Romeo meets Juliet and they instantly fall in love - but soon they find out that they are members of opposing families and their love for each other will not be permitted.

Being much in love, they decide to marry in secret. Friar Laurence, Romeo’s friend and teacher, agrees to carry out the service, hoping that the wedding will end the long running feud between the two families.

In the meantime, there is more fighting – Tybalt (Juliet’s cousin) kills Mercutio (Romeo’s friend and a relative of Prince Escalus). In revenge, Romeo then kills Tybalt and is banished from Verona. He escapes to Mantua after spending a single night with his bride.

Juliet’s father, unaware of his daughter’s secret marriage to Romeo, decides that Juliet must marry Paris later that week. Distraught, Juliet turns to Friar Laurence, who gives Juliet a potion that will simulate death for a short time. The idea being that she will be taken to the family tomb, where she will awake and escape to Mantua with Romeo.

Romeo inadvertently hears that Juliet is dead, even though she is not. He risks his life and returns to Verona, buying some poison from an apothecary on the way. Romeo arrives at Juliet’s burial chamber and opens the mausoleum. Paris finds him there and, thinking he is desecrating the grave, attacks him. They fight and Romeo kills Paris. Romeo then takes the poison and dies beside his wife.

Friar Laurence arrives too late to stop the suicide. Juliet wakes up and finds Romeo dead. She is grief-stricken and stabs herself with Romeo’s dagger, falling dead upon his body.

Prince Escalus arrives, along with the Montagues and the Capulets. Friar Laurence explains what has happened. The Prince blames the families, who, united in grief, finally decide to end their feud. The play ends with the Prince summarising this tragic story of love and hate.
SECTION 1
Act 1, Scene 1, lines 98 to 232.

Background

Romeo & Juliet is arguably the greatest love story ever told. Romeo is a Montague and Juliet is a Capulet – these two aristocratic families have been bitter enemies for many years, so any love between Romeo and Juliet is completely out of the question.

At the beginning of the play, an actor (Chorus), delivers a Prologue, explaining the enmity between the two families and a brief synopsis of the plot – how the “star-cross’d lovers” are doomed (“their death-marked love”) but also how their deaths bring about the reconciliation of the two families.

Act 1 of the play begins with a brawl in a public place, between servants of the house of Montague (Abraham and Balthasar) and the house of Capulet (Sampson and Gregory). Romeo’s cousin, Benvolio, tries to break up the fight, but Juliet’s cousin, the fiery Tybalt, enters and fights with Benvolio. More members of each house arrive, along with citizens and peace-officers, and the brawl quickly escalates into a riot. Old Montague and Old Capulet, the heads of each house, hear the commotions and they, too, want to get involved; but they are each restrained from doing so by their wives, who seem to have more sense than their husbands.

Escalus (the Prince of Verona) and his soldiers eventually break up the riot. The Prince is extremely angry, as this is the third time the Montagues and Capulets have fought in public. The Prince warns Old Montague and Old Capulet that whoever disturbs the peace again will be sentenced to death.

The crowd disperses and Old Montague tries to find out who started it from Benvolio - thus, the scene is set for love to enter where, before, there was only hate.
WHO STARTED THIS FEUD UP AGAIN? TELL ME, NEPHEW, DID YOU SEE WHAT HAPPENED?

YOUR SERVANTS WERE FIGHTING CAPULET'S BEFORE I GOT HERE. I TRIED TO STOP THEM. BUT THAT HOTHEAD TYSALT SHOWED UP LOOKING FOR TROUBLE.

HE THREATENED ME AND THEN WAVED HIS SWORD AROUND, SWISHING IT THROUGH THE AIR AND ACTING LIKE HE WAS A GREAT FIGHTER.

AS WE WERE FIGHTING, MORE AND MORE PEOPLE BECAME INVOLVED, UNTIL THE PRINCE CAME AND BROKE IT UP.
WHERE'S ROMEO?
HAVE YOU SEEN HIM TODAY?
I'M GLAD HE WASN'T
PART OF THIS.

WARM, I DIDN'T
SLEEP TOO WELL LAST NIGHT,
SO I WENT FOR A WALK
JUST BEFORE DAWN.

I SAW
ROMEO IN A GROVE
OF SYCAMORE TREES ON
THE WEST SIDE OF
THE CITY.

I WENT
TOWARDS HIM,
BUT HE SAW ME AND
VANISHED AMONGST
THE TREES.

I ASSUMED HE
WANTED TO BE ALONE,
JUST LIKE ME, SO I DIDN'T
FOLLOW HIM. I DIDN'T WANT HIS
COMPANY ANY MORE THAN
HE WANTED MINE.
HE’S BEEN SEEN THERE BEFORE, MANY TIMES - CRYING AND SISHING, BUT AS SOON AS IT GETS LIGHT, HE COMES BACK HOME AGAIN.

HE LOCKS HIMSELF UP ALONE IN HIS ROOM, CLOSES THE WINDOWS AND PULLS THE CURTAINS TO KEEP THE DAYLIGHT OUT AND CREATE AN ARTIFICIAL NIGHT FOR HIMSELF.

HIS DEPRESSION WILL LEAD TO SOMETHING WORSE, UNLESS SOMEONE CAN FIND OUT WHAT’S BOTHERING HIM.

DON’T YOU KNOW, LUCREZIA?

I DON’T. HE WON’T TELL ME.

HAVE YOU TRIED TO REASON WITH HIM?

I’VE TRIED AND SO HAVE OUR FRIENDS...

-- BUT HE KEEPS HIS THOUGHTS TO HIMSELF. I DON’T THINK THAT’S GOOD FOR HIM. HE’S LIKE A FLOWER THAT HAS BEEN POISONED FROM THE INSIDE - HE WON’T OPEN UP TO THE AIR AND THE LIGHT OF THE SUN.

IF WE COULD ONLY FIND OUT WHY HE’S SO SAD, HE’D DO ANYTHING WE COULD TO HELP HIM.

LOOK, HERE HE COMES. PLEASE, LEAVE THIS TO ME. I’LL FIND OUT WHAT’S WRONG WITH HIM, IF ANYONE CAN.
I HOPE HE TELLS YOU THE TRUTH.
COME, MADAM, LET'S GO.

GOOD MORNING, COUSIN.

NINE O'CLOCK.
TIME GOES SLOWLY WHEN YOU'RE DOWN.
WAS THAT MY FATHER WHO RUSHED INSIDE?

IS IT MORNING?

IT WAS, WHAT MAKES THE TIME DRAG FOR YOU?
NOT HAVING THE THINGS THAT WOULD MAKE IT FLY.

OUT!

OF LOVE?

YOU'RE IN LOVE?
I’m in love, and she is not.

Although love seems gentle and kind, she is often cruel and harsh.

Love is supposed to be blind, but it still gets its own way, even though it can’t see.

Where shall we eat? My goodness! What’s happened here?

Don’t tell me – I know already. This is the kind of thing hate does – and love too.

Leave me alone! Love! Love is hate and hate is love!

Love can be everything and nothing: a sad happiness, a happy sadness, it’s a paradox, it’s not what it seems – seems what it’s not.

Light and heavy, bright and dark, cold and hot, slow and fast! A daydream! A nightmare! What is it?

I have this love – but it has no love for me.
WHY DON'T YOU LAUGH?
I'D RATHER CRY.
WHY, DEAR FRIEND? BECAUSE YOU'RE SO UNHAPPY.
THAT'S WHAT LOVE DOES TO YOU. MY OWN TROUBLES ARE ENOUGH FOR ME, WITHOUT ADDING YOURS TO THEM. I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN, BUT IT'S ONLY MAKING THINGS WORSE.

I LOVE IS A SMOKESCREEN OF LOVERS' SIGHS. WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARS, IT'S THE FIRE IN LOVERS' EYES. WHEN LOVE TURNS, IT TURNS TO A SEA OF TEARS.
WHAT ELSE IS IT?
A KIND OF SUBTLE INSANITY - BOTH A BITTER POISON AND A SWEET REMEDY.

FAREWELL, COUSIN. WAIT, DON'T GO WITHOUT ME. IT'S WRONG OF YOU TO LEAVE ME LIKE THIS.

COME WITH ME? I'VE LOST MYSELF, I'M NOT HERE.
THIS ISN'T ROMEO. HE'S SOMEWHERE ELSE.

BE SERIOUS, TELL ME WHO YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH.
YOU DON'T WANT ME TO WHINE AT YOU.

WHINE? NO! WHO IS SHE?
THAT'S LIKE ASKING A SICK MAN TO MAKE HIS WILL. IT'S NOT RIGHT TO DO THAT TO A SICK MAN.

SERIOUSLY, COUSIN, SHE'S A WOMAN -- I ASSUMED THAT WHEN YOU SAID YOU WERE IN LOVE!

DID YOU AND DID YOU ASSUME A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN? SUCH A TARGET IS EASIEST TO HIT.

NOT BY CUPID'S ARROW, IT ISN'T. SHE WON'T FALL IN LOVE WITH ME. I'VE TRIED EVERYTHING, BUT SHE HAS HER OWN MIND. SHE'S MODEST, AND NO FOOL FOR LOVESONGS.

SHE DOESN'T CARE FOR SWEET-TALK, DISLIKES ANYONE LOOKING AT HER LOVINGLY, AND SHE ISN'T IMPRESSED BY GIFTS.
IT'S SUCH A PITY -- SHE'S SO BEAUTIFUL. BUT WHEN SHE DIES, HER BEAUTY WILL BE GONE.

HAS SHE SWORN NEVER TO MARRY?

SHE HAS, AND IN DOING, HER BEAUTY CANNOT BE PASSED ON TO HER CHILDREN.

IT'S UNFAIR! WHY SHOULD SHE BE SO LOVELY AND CLEVER -- AND STILL MAKE ME SO MISERABLE?

SHE HAS NO TIME FOR MEN AND THAT'S THE END OF ME.

THEN, DO AS I SAY - FORGET ABOUT HER.

AND HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO DO THAT?
LOCK AROUND YOU - THERE ARE PLENTY OF OTHER BEAUTIFUL GIRLS.

THEY'LL ONLY MAKE ME THINK OF HER EVEN MORE.

WHEN YOU SEE A GIRL WEARING A BLACK MASK, YOU CAN'T HELP WONDERING HOW LOVELY SHE MUST BE UNDERNEATH IT.

A MAN WHO GOES BLIND CAN'T FORGET THE WONDERFUL SIGHTS HE ONCE SAW!

SHOW ME A PRETTY GIRL, AND ALL IT WILL DO IS REMIND ME OF SOMEONE EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL.

FAREWELL. YOU CAN'T TEACH ME TO FORGET HER.

I'LL PROVE YOU WRONG, OR DIE TRYING.
SECTION 2
Act 2, Scene 2, lines 1 to 157

Background

Before this famous orchard scene, Romeo is oblivious to the fighting in Act 1. He is deeply in love with a lady called Rosaline (who is never actually seen in the play). Rosaline doesn’t reciprocate Romeo’s love and as we saw in the previous section, he mopes about, saying things like, “this is not Romeo, he’s some other where”. He meets Benvolio, who tries to cheer him up, without much success.

Meanwhile, Old Capulet is discussing his daughter Juliet with Count Paris, a relative of Prince Escalus. Paris wants to marry Juliet, but Capulet thinks she may be too young. He decides to host a great party, to which he intends to invite all the eligible young ladies of Verona for Paris to view. If Paris still wants Juliet after seeing them, and if Paris can succeed in winning Juliet’s heart, then Capulet will agree to the marriage. Capulet sends his servant round Verona, with a list of people to invite.

The servant meets Romeo and Benvolio and asks them to read the list for him. Romeo sees Rosaline’s name on the list and, when the servant invites them to come along too (as long as they’re not Montagues, which of course they are!), Benvolio thinks it would be a good idea for Romeo to compare Rosaline to the most beautiful women in Verona – that way, he’ll realise she’s not quite as wonderful as he thinks she is.

In the Capulet house, Juliet’s mother tells her about Paris’ intentions. Juliet seems happy, at this stage, to welcome his attentions.

The party begins. Romeo is spotted by Tybalt as a Montague in the Capulet house, but Capulet instructs him to keep the peace and not spoil the party. Despite being on “enemy territory”, Romeo Montague meets Juliet Capulet. They kiss, and instantly fall in love.

After the party, the love-struck Romeo scales the wall of Capulet’s orchard…
Romeo and Juliet

ONLY THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN IN LOVE MAKE JOKES ABOUT A BROKEN HEART.

BUT, SOFT! WHAT LIGHT THROUGH YONDER WINDOW BREAKS?

IT IS THE EAST, AND JULIET IS THE SUN. RISE, LOVELY SUN, AND KILL THAT OLD JEALOUS MOON! IT IS PALE AND BAD BECAUSE JULIET IS MORE BEAUTIFUL.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE MOON LOOKING SICK AND GREEN. THEY'RE JUST THE CHILDISH COLOURS OF CHASTITY. GET RID OF THEM!

SHE IS MY LADY. SHE IS MY LOVE.

I WISH SHE KNEW THAT I LOVE HER. SHE'S SEEMS TO BE TALKING. BUT SAYING NOTHING. WHO CARES? HER EYES ARE SPEAKING AND I'LL ANSWER THEM!

I'M BEING OVERCONFIDENT. SHE'S NOT TALKING TO ME. TWO OF THE BRIGHTEST STARS IN THE SKY HAVE ASKED HER EYES TO TAKE THEIR PLACE FOR A WHILE.

IMAGINE IF HER EYES WERE IN THE SKY AND THE STARS WERE IN HER HEAD? HER BEAUTIFUL FACE WOULD OUTSHINE THOSE STARS, LIKE THE SUN OUTSHINES A LAMP.

IF HER EYES WERE UP THERE IN THE SKY, THEY'D SHINE SO BRIGHT THE BIRDS WOULD THINK IT WAS MORNING AND BEGIN SINGING. SEE HOW SHE IS LEANING HER CHEEK ON HER HAND. OH, TO BE A GLOVE ON THAT HAND, SO THAT I COULD TOUCH THAT CHEEK!
O ROMEO, ROMEO!
WHEREFORE ART THOU
ROMEO?

FORGET YOUR
FATHER AND CHANGE
YOUR NAME, OR, IF YOU WONT,
JUST SWEAR THAT YOU LOVE
ME AND I'LL STOP BEING
A CAPULET.

I WISH YOU HAD
A DIFFERENT NAME,
BUT WHAT'S IN A NAME?
THAT WHICH WE CALL A
ROSE BY ANY OTHER
NAME WOULD SMELL
AS SWEET.

AND ROMEO WOULD
BE JUST AS PERFECT, IF
HE WAS CALLED SOMETHING ELSE.
LOSE YOUR NAME, ROMEO, YOU CAN
HAVE ALL OF ME IN EXCHANGE
FOR A NAME THAT'S NO
PART OF YOU.

I'LL TAKE
YOUR WORD
FOR THAT.
JUST SAY
YOU LOVE
ME AND I'LL TAKE A
NEW NAME.
I'LL NEVER
BE ROMEO
AGAIN.

WHAT KIND OF MAN
ARE YOU, HIDING IN THE
DARKNESS, LISTENING TO
MY PRIVATE THOUGHTS?

SHE'S SPEAKING.
SPEAK AGAIN. MY ANGEL,
YOU'RE LIKE A MESSENGER
FROM HEAVEN, SHINING ABOVE
MY HEAD, INVITING MORTALS TO
LOOK UP AND SEE YOU SITTING
ON A SLOW-MOVING CLOUD,
SAILING ACROSS
THE SKY.

SHALL
I HEAR MORE, OR
SHALL I SPEAK
NOW?

IT'S ONLY YOUR
NAME THAT'S MY ENEMY.
YOU'D STILL BE YOU, EVEN
IF YOU WEREN'T A
MONTAGUE.

WHAT'S MONTAGUE?
IT'S NOT A HAND, NOR A FOOT,
OR A FACE, NOR ANY OTHER
BODY PART.
I can't tell you who I am by telling you my name. I hate my name because my name is your enemy. If I had it written down, I'd tear the words to pieces.

I recognise the sound of your voice from the few words you've spoken. Aren't you Romeo, and a Montague?

I flew over the wall on the wings of love. Stone walls can't keep love out. Love can do anything it wants to do - so your family don't worry me.

If they see you, they'll murder you.

I don't want them to find you here.

There's more danger in your eyes than twenty of their swords. If you'll only give me one loving look, I'll be immune to their hatred.

The darkness will hide me from them. If you don't love me, then I hope they find me. I'd rather they killed me than live without your love.

Who told you how to get here?
LOVE TOLD ME
JUST LIKE IT MADE US COME BACK
JUST LIKE IT TOLD ME
WHAT TO DO AND I WAS ITS EYES
I'M NO SAILOR, BUT IF YOU WERE ACROSS THE FURTHEST OCEAN
I'D RISK EVERYTHING TO FIND YOU.

I'M GLAD MY FACE IS HIDDEN BY THE NIGHT, OTHERWISE YOU'D SEE HOW I'M BLUSHING ABOUT WHAT YOU'VE OVERHEARD ME SAY TONIGHT.

I'D LIKE TO GO BACK TO FORMALITIES
I'D LIKE TO DENY WHAT I SAID - BUT I CAN'T!

DO YOU LOVE ME?
I KNOW YOU'LL SAY "YES" AND I'LL BELIEVE YOU.

EVEN IF YOU SWEAR IT
YOU MIGHT BE LYING '
THEY SAY THAT JOVE, THE GOD OF OATHS
LAUGHS AT LOVERS' LIES.'

IF YOU REALLY LOVE ME, SAY IT TRUTHFULLY, ROMEO. OR, IF YOU THINK I'M YOURS TOO EASILY, I'LL PROVE AND PLAY HARD-TO-GET, THEN YOU'LL HAVE TO COURT ME TO WIN MY HEART.

BUT THE TRUTH IS, ROMEO MONTAGUE,
I LOVE YOU, AND, BECAUSE OF THAT, YOU MAY THINK MY BEHAVIOR IS TOO LOOSE.

BUT TRUST ME,
I'LL BE MORE FAITHFUL TO YOU THAN GIRLS WHO ACT ALL COY AND STAND-OFFISH.
I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN MORE LIKE THAT, BUT YOU OVERHEARD WHAT I SAID AND IT'S NO USE DENYING IT NOW.

SO, YOU'LL HAVE TO MAKE ALLOWANCES AND NOT UNDERESTIMATE THIS LOVE YOU ACCIDENTALLY STUMBLED ON IN THE DARKNESS.

DEAR LADY, I SWEAR BY THE MOON ABOVE US --

... THAT SHINES ITS LIGHT ON THE TOPS OF THE FRUIT TREES --
DON'T SWEAR BY THE MOON. THE MOON IS FICKLE; IT CHANGES ITS POSITION IN THE SKY EVERY MONTH. DON'T SWEAR BY IT, IN CASE YOUR LOVE TURNS OUT TO BE FICKLE, TOO.

WHAT WILL I SWEAR BY?

DON'T SWEAR AT ALL, OR IF YOU HAVE TO SWEAR BY YOURSELF, IF YOU SWEAR BY WHAT YOU TRULY ARE, I'LL BELIEVE YOU.

IF THE LOVE IN MY HEART --

NO, DON'T SWEAR. I'M AT EASE WITH YOU, BUT I'M UNEASY ABOUT MAKING PROMISES TONIGHT.

IT IS TOO RASH, TOO ILL-ADVISED, TOO SUDDEN. IT'S LIKE LIGHTNING -- THOSE FLASHERS AND THEN DISAPPEARS IN AN INSTANT.

GOODNIGHT, MY HEART!

GOODNIGHT, GOODNIGHT!

I HOPE YOU SLEEP AS SWEETLY AND SOUNDLY AS I WILL.

ARE YOU GOING TO LEAVE ME UNSATISFIED?

WHAT SATISFACTION COULD YOU HAVE TONIGHT?

A PLEDGE OF TRUE LOVE FOR EACH OTHER.

I GAVE YOU MINE BEFORE YOU EVEN ASKED FOR IT, REMEMBER? BUT I WISH I HAD IT BACK NOW.

WHY WOULD YOU TAKE IT BACK, MY LOVE?

SO I COULD BE FREE TO GIVE IT TO YOU OVER AGAIN. BUT I'M WISHING FOR SOMETHING I ALREADY HAVE. MY LOVE AND HAPPINESS ARE AS DEEP AND BOUNDLESS AS THE SEA.

THE MORE I GIVE, THE MORE I HAVE -- THEY ARE BOTH ENDLESS.
I HEAR A NOISE INSIDE. DEAR LOVE, GOODBYE!

ONE MOMENT NURSE!

BE TRUE TO ME, ROMEO MONTAGUE. WAIT FOR A MOMENT I'LL COME BACK.

WHAT A WONDERFUL NIGHT! BECAUSE IT'S NIGHT, I'M SCARED THIS IS JUST A DREAM. IT'S ALL TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.

LISTEN QUICKLY, ROMEO; THEN IT'S GOODNIGHT FOR REAL. IF YOUR INTENTIONS ARE TRULY HONOURABLE AND YOU WANT TO MARRY ME, I'LL SEND SOMEONE TO YOU TOMORROW. GIVE THEM A TIME AND PLACE FOR THE CEREMONY, THEN MY DESTINY WILL BE YOUR DESTINY AND I'LL GO ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD WITH YOU - ANYWHERE.

MADAM!

COMING!

MADAM!

I'M COMING, I'M COMING!

I'M A THOUSAND TIMES WORSE-OFF, WITHOUT YOUR LIGHT.

I LOVE RUNS TO LOVE, BUT WHEN IT'S TIME FOR LOVE TO PART, IT SLOWLY MOVES, WITH A HEAVY HEART.

GOODNIGHT... A THOUSAND TIMES!
# DRAMATIS PERSONAE

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<td><strong>ESCALUS</strong></td>
<td>Prince of Verona</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MERCUTIO</strong></td>
<td>Kinsman to Escalus, Prince of Verona, and friend of Romeo and Benvolio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARIS</strong></td>
<td>A young nobleman, kinsman to Escalus, Prince of Verona.</td>
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<td><strong>MONTAGUE</strong></td>
<td>Head of the Montague house (a Veronese family), at feud with the Capulet family.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LADY MONTAGUE</strong></td>
<td>Wife to Montague.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ROMEO</strong></td>
<td>Son of Montague</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BENVOLIO</strong></td>
<td>Nephew to Montague and friend of Romeo and Mercutio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
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<tr>
<td>ABRAHAM</td>
<td>Servant to Montague.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BALTHASAR</td>
<td>Servant to Romeo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAPULET</td>
<td>Head of the Capulet house (a Veronese family), at feud with the Montague family.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LADY CAPULET</td>
<td>Wife to Capulet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>JULIET</td>
<td>Daughter to Capulet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>TYBALT</td>
<td>Nephew to Lady Capulet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NURSE</td>
<td>A Capulet servant and Juliet’s foster-mother.</td>
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PETER
*A Capulet servant, attending on the Nurse.*

SAMPSON
*Servant to Capulet.*

GREGORY
*Servant to Capulet.*

FRIAR LAURENCE
*A monk of the Franciscan Order*

CHORUS
*Introduces each Act of the play.*

**BACKGROUND TO THE PLAY**

Shakespeare based *Romeo and Juliet* on the 1562 poem *The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet* by Arthur Brooke. This in turn was based on an Italian novella by Matteo Bandello (1554) and most likely made known to Shakespeare through an English Translation by William Painter in 1567, which he called *Palace of Pleasure*. Shakespeare added much to the pace of the plot, and in turn intensified the emotional development of the play. It is this basis of an intricate, intertwined plot, coupled with Shakespeare’s beautifully poetic lines, set against a backdrop of conflict and forbidden love, that makes this tragedy one of the most famous and enduring stories to come from the great Bard.