

# Ray Guildenstern's Romeo and Juliet

## Act I

### Scene 1

#### (Introduction, Discord and False Love)

*As the play begins, pre-show tape fades - Ray Guildenstern enters. He is the narrator, dressed entirely in black as are all the other players. Occasionally he and others will suggest a change of character with a small costume piece - a vest, a sword or a crown - but these are only suggestions. The set consists of 8-foot flats arranged in an accorded wing formation, a framed entrance UC, benches R & L - two potted trees dress the edges, R & L. Ray's bats are hung on a simple bat rack which stands DR, front of proscenium.*

**PRESHOW  
OUT**

**Ray** *(steps purposefully DC - looks into audience for a short while, silently studies them, smiles a little)* Let's get right down to it, shall we? *(music begins and, suddenly, Ray is the master of ceremonies)* We the players do now present for your entertainment a play! A play so pretty, a play so piquant, a play of such rare beauty that none but fools do fly from its playing. We the players present for you a play of soaring passion and plummeting grief! *(as he speaks, he gestures UC, where two players enter with foils)* A play ... of death-defying danger!

**"shall we?"  
NO. 1 IN**

**Mercutio** *(the two players circle each other)* Have at thee, beardless whelp!

**Tybalt** Lay on, thou suckling pig! *(they circle once, lunge and parry twice, then fall off balance when "fight music" section ends abruptly - tape continues to roll)*

**Ray** *(gesturing UC)* A play ... of bittersweet love! *("love music" begins as two other players, a male and female, enter from DL & DR)*

**Romeo** My life!

**Juliet** My love! *(they begin to walk toward each other)*

**Romeo** But soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the east ...

**Ray** Not yet! *(they stop - "love music" ends, tape continues to roll)* A play ... of discord and despair! *(four other players - the parents - enter from UC as "parental entrance music" begins - separating R&J with stern gestures - R&J reach for each other across the divide - all on stage bow as "entrance music" ends - tape continues to roll)* A play so populated with players that they are too numerous to mention in one short prologue. *(all remaining players enter from various directions as "chorus entrance music" begins - all players form line by end of this segment and bow in unison as tape ends)* We, the players, present for your entertainment this hour a play. A play by ...

**(tape ends)  
NO. 1 OUT**

**Players** *(breaking tableau and facing front)* The Bard!

**Ray** The Bard of Stratford-on-Avon - otherwise known as ...

**Players** Shakespeare!

**Ray** William Shakespeare! A play well-loved, a play well-known - and the play? ...

**Players** Romeo and Juliet!

**Ray** Or a reasonable approximation thereof. Players, you may go to your places. *("exit music" begins - players bow profusely, throw kisses to audience, and exit in various*

**"places"  
NO. 2 IN  
(all off)**

*directions*) We begin our play in a city called Verona in a country called Italy many, many years ago. There lived in Verona two wealthy families. *(Capulets enter from left, Montagues from right - they assume portrait poses, facing out)* The Capulets. *(Capulets wave)* And the Montagues. *(Montagues wave)* They did not get along. *(both sides face each other, shaking fists and making angry noises)* But ... I said *but ... (all are silent, looking at him)* the Prince of Verona *(puts on Prince hat)* - had already warned them ... *(speaking to them as the Prince)* Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace! You beasts that quench the fire of your rage with purple fountains issuing from your veins ... I have had it up to here *(to audience)* or words to that effect *(back to players)* I have had it up to here with your bickering! Be silent! Be at peace! Or else! *(two sides exit in opposite directions, Ray takes off hat - speaks again to audience)* And things *would* be quiet for a while ... but only for a while.

- Sampson** *(rushes on with Gregory from Capulet side, as Abraham enters with another player from Montague side - he looks around to see if anyone is watching, then ...)* I bite my thumb at you!
- Abraham** Do you bite your thumb at me?
- Sampson** I ... I ... *(aside to Gregory)* Is the law on my side if I say yes?
- Gregory** No.
- Sampson** *(to Abraham)* No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you; but I do bite my thumb, sir. *(does so)*
- Abraham** *(drawing his sword)* Draw, then, if you be a man! *(Sampson draws - they begin to fight)*
- Benvolio** *(runs on from Montague side)* Part, fools! Put up your swords.
- Tybalt** *(runs on from Capulet side, drawing his sword)* Benvolio! *(stage action stops)* Do you intervene where men would settle grievances?
- Benvolio** I do, sir. *(onlookers begin to wander on during this exchange)*
- Tybalt** You curr, you mewling pup! Draw and look upon your death.
- Benvolio** I do but keep the peace.
- Tybalt** Peace! I hate the word as I hate hell, all Montagues and thee. Have at you, coward! *(all four resume fighting)*
- Others** *(from both sides, chanting and cheering on the sword fight)* Run him through! Down with the Capulets! Take his measure! Down with the Montagues! ... etc.
- Capulet** *(running on from Capulet side with wife)* What noise is this? Give me my long sword!
- Lady C.** Why do you call for a sword? A crutch would serve you better!
- Capulet** A sword, I say! Look! *(pointing off to Montague side)* Old Montague is come and he flourishes his blade in spite of me!
- Montague** *(entering, sword drawn, with wife pulling him back)* You villain Capulet! Unhand me, woman - let me go!
- Lady M.** You shall not go!
- Montague** Shall!
- Lady M.** Not!

**Montague** Shall!

**Lady M.** Not!

**Ray** *(Prince bat on again - speaking to them as Prince)* Enough! *(all are quiet)* Throw your weapons to the ground. *(they drop their weapons)* Why do you disturb the quiet of our streets, wielding swords and spreading hate. For what purpose? If *ever* you disturb our streets again, you shall pay with your lives! Now go! On pain of death, all men depart! *(all depart)* And, like it or not, the Prince's word was the law. *(more conversational)* Now, old man Montague had a son, Romeo Montague, *(Romeo enters, love-sick)* and Romeo spent most of his time being in love. This week, Romeo's one true love is a girl named Rosaline. Next week, it might be Daphne or Cymbeline, but this week it is Rosaline ... definitely Rosaline. *(exits as tape begins)*

**Romeo** Ay me, sad hours seem long. Ay, me ... ay, me. *(sits, sighs)* Rosaline!

**Benvolio** *(running on behind Romeo)* Romeo! Good morrow, cousin. *(regards Romeo)* Why so sad? *(Romeo sighs)* Ah. In love again?

**Romeo** Out of love.

**Benvolio** Romeo run out of love? Impossible!

**Romeo** I am run out of her favor. She will not be hit with Cupid's arrow. *(stands, paces)* O brawling love, O loving hate! O anything of nothing first created! O heavy lightness, serious comedy! Misshapen confusion of orderly forms! Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health! Waking sleep! All that which is not what it is! This love feel I, that feels no love at all. *(stops, stares into distance, Benvolio chuckles)* do you laugh? **(music ends abruptly)**

**Benvolio** *(trying to look sad)* No, cousin, I rather weep.

**Romeo** Gentle friend, at what?

**Benvolio** At your grief.

**Romeo** Ay. Love's grief floats heavy in my breast - and this love that you have shown does add more grief to too much grief of my own. *(away)* Love is ... love is a smoke made with the fume of sighs. Being quenched, its fire still sparkles in lovers' eyes. Being dried up, its sea still flows with lovers' tears. It is a madness most discreet, a choking gall, a nourishing sweet.

**Benvolio** Love *is* confusing, cousin.

**Romeo** It is that. Farewell. *(starts to go)*

**Benvolio** Do not leave me - you do me wrong.

**Romeo** But I have already left *myself*. I know not *where* I am. I am not *here*. I am lost. This is not Romeo - he is somewhere else.

**Benvolio** Take my advice. Forget to think of her.

**Romeo** O teach me how I should forget to think.

**Benvolio** Examine *other* beauties.

**Romeo** And what purpose would that serve but to remind me of that first beauty which I cannot possess. Farewell, you cannot teach me to forget. *(exits)*

"Rosaline"  
NO. 3 IN

"laugh?"  
NO. 3 OUT

**Benvolio** *(walking after him)* I can and I will so - or I am not Benvolio. *(he is gone)*

## Scene 2

### (Invitation to the Dance, Juliet considers Marriage, Boys' Night Out)

**Ray** *(entering from side)* Rosaline paid no attention to Romeo, and Romeo rolled in his grief like a pig rolls in ... the mud. After all, sighing and crying is what true love is all about, right? *(on to other things)* On the other side of town - Capulet territory - old man Capulet, his wife and his daughter, Juliet - whom Romeo has not yet met, by the way - are getting ready for their yearly feast. *(Capulet enters with servant)* Old man Capulet has made out a list of all his friends and he is sending his servant to personally invite everyone on the list.

**Capulet** Go, sir, walk about the city and find the persons whose names are written here. Say to them that the House of Capulet awaits their pleasure this evening. *(exits)*

**Servant** Very good, my lord! Thank you, my lord! *(looks at paper - then looks up, startled - then looks in direction Capulet left)* But my lord, I cannot read! *(to himself, staring at the list)* Find them out whose names are here written? I must find someone who is educated, for only the educated can read. *(starts to exit, but Romeo enters with Benvolio)*

**Benvolio** Forget Rosaline, Romeo. This grief is self-inflicted and will drive you mad.

**Romeo** Not mad, but bound and caged as if I were a madman - whipped and tormented and ... oh, good evening, fellow.

**Servant** Good evening, sir. Pray, sir, can you read?

**Romeo** Ay, I can read my own bad luck in my misery.

**Servant** *(holding out the list)* Very good, sir, but can you read this?

**Romeo** Ay, it is a list of names. *(reads)* Signior Martino and his wife and daughters, County Anselm and his beauteous sisters, the lady widow of Vitruvio, Signior Placentio and his lovely nieces, Mercutio and his brother Valentine, my uncle Capulet, his wife and daughters, my fair niece Rosaline ... *(aside)* Rosaline? Be still my heart! *(reading on)* ... and Livia, Signior Valentio and his cousin Tybalt, Lucio and the lively Helena. A fair assembly. And whither should they go?

**Servant** To my master's house - the great rich Capulet. And if you are not a Montague, I pray you come, too. Thanks and farewell! *(exits)*

**Benvolio** *(taunting Romeo)* Rosaline! To dine this night among all the beauties of Verona. *(in earnest)* Go, Romeo and look upon her this evening - compare her with the rest and you shall see that your swan is but a crow.

**Romeo** One fairer than my love? The all-seeing Sun never saw her match since first the world began. I'll go along, but no such sight shall I be shown. I shall but rejoice in the splendor of mine own. *(exeunt)*

**Ray** Truth be known, Romeo would have been *glad* to go to that party for *any* reason - just to be near Rosaline. But we're not interested in Rosaline - she's not even *in* this play. Juliet is who we're interested in and right now she is with her mother - getting ready for the party also. Big night, my friends - hold onto your hats. *(puts on nurses hat as Lady Capulet enters)*

**Lady C.** Nurse, where's my daughter? Call her to me.

**Ray**           *(as nurse)* Now, by my bosom, I called her only moments ago. Where has that girl gotten to? Juliet!

**Juliet**           *(entering)* How now, who calls?

**Ray**           Your mother, sweet child. *(bovers over Juliet, obviously very interested in what Lady C. has to say to Juliet)*

**Juliet**           *(bowing politely)* Madam, I am here. What is your will?

**Lady C.**       My will is this. Nurse, leave us for a while - we must talk privately. *(Ray leaves, disappointed - Lady C. looks awkwardly at Juliet - she is at a loss for words - finally ...)* Nurse, come back again. *(Ray re-enters)* I have changed my mind - you shall hear what I have to say. *(getting down to business)* You know my daughter's age?

**Ray**           Faith, I can tell you her age to the very hour!

**Lady C.**       She's not yet fourteen.

**Ray**           And that is a fact! I'd wager fourteen of my teeth that she is not yet fourteen! That is, I would if I *had* fourteen teeth. In faith, I have only four. But no matter! What day is it today?

**Lady C.**       It is two weeks and several days before the first of August.

**Ray**           Come August first, she shall be fourteen. Eleven years since she was weaned - and I remember the day like it was yesterday - for it was the day before that day that my ladybird while waddling about the floor fell down and cut her fair brow. My dear husband, God rest his soul - he was a merry man - he lifted up the poor hurt child *(pantomimes this)* and said to her, "Did you fall upon your face?" And by my word, the babe did stop crying and she said "Ay." *(laughing)* I shall never forget it! "Did you fall upon your face?" And she, pretty little fool, looked at him and said, "Ay." *(laughs again)*

**Lady C.**       Enough of this. I pray you hold your peace.

**Ray**           Yes, Madam, yet I cannot help but laugh. "Did you fall upon your face?" said he. "Ay" said she. Even though she had a bump upon her brow as big as a cockerel's stone, she silenced herself and said "Ay".

**Juliet**       I pray you silence yourself, too.

**Ray**           Peace, I am done. God bless you, child. You were the prettiest babe that ever I nursed. And if I have my wish, I will see you married.

**Lady C.**       And *that* is the very reason that I have come to talk to you. Tell me, Juliet, what are your feelings about marriage?

**Juliet**       *(carefully)* It is an honor that I have not even dreamed about.

**Lady C.**       Well, dream of it now. Younger ladies than you are already mothers. As I recall, I was myself a mother when I was your age. But let me come to the point - the valiant Paris desires you for his bride.

**Nurse**       Paris! Oh, lady, such a man as he! He is beautiful!

**Lady C.**       In all Verona there is no fairer flower than he.

**Nurse**       Oh, lady, he is a flower, in faith, a very flower!

**Lady C.** What say you? Can you love the gentleman? (*Juliet begins to speak, but Lady C. holds up her finger*) Think on it. He is invited this evening to attend our feast. Study him there - regard his beauty - his eyes. Young Paris is as a book ... a book of love that has no cover. You might be his cover - he bound within you and you about him. (*smiling at the innuendo*) Think on it. So you shall share with him all that he does possess and, by having him, will make yourself no less.

**Ray** No less, 'tis sure. Nay, dear, he will make you bigger! (*indicating stomach*) Men do cause their women to grow!

**Lady C.** Speak briefly, can you love the likes of Paris?

**Juliet** I will look upon him and I will try to like him, but I will look no more deeply than your permission gives me leave to look.

**Lady C.** Make haste, Juliet. Paris stays. (*exits*)

**Ray** Go, girl, seek happy nights and happy days. (*Juliet exits, Ray turns to audience*) This Paris that Juliet's mother is so excited about is a friend of Juliet's father. A nice enough man, reasonably good looking and fairly well off - but, well, boring. (*looks up to sky*) Time marches on ... the hour for the guests to arrive is nearly at hand. Romeo and his friends are on their way to the Capulet's house and the masked ball - not exactly looking for trouble, but not exactly looking to avoid it either. (*Romeo, Benvolio, Mercutio, et al enter with masks*)

**Romeo** Shall we offer some explanation of our arrival, or shall we simply arrive without apology?

**Benvolio** Let them look at us as much as they like. We'll dance a dance or two and be gone.

**Mercutio** Yes, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.

**Romeo** Not I, believe me. You may keep your dancing shoes with their supple souls - I have a soul of lead that so weighs me down I cannot move.

**Mercutio** You are a lover. Borrow Cupid's wings and soar with them above the ground.

**Romeo** I am too pierced with Cupid's arrow to fly at all. Under love's heavy burden do I sink.

**Mercutio** Not so! It is you who are too much a burden for love. Love is a tender thing.

**Romeo** *Is love such a tender thing?* No, love is too rude, too rough, too boisterous - it cuts like a knife.

**Mercutio** If love is rough with you, be rough with love. Cut love for cutting you. Beat love down. Give me a mask (*Benvolio hands Mercutio a mask*) What care I if curious eyes seek me out this night? (*holding out mask*) Here is my face - let them look upon it!

**Benvolio** (*to the rest*) Come, we will knock and enter and all of us shall dance. (*pantomimes dance - all but Romeo laugh*)

**Romeo** I'll go along, but I shall not dance. Perhaps we mean no harm in going to this dance, but it is not wise for us to go.

**Mercutio** Why, may one ask?

**Romeo** I dreamed a dream tonight.

**Mercutio** And so did I.

**Romeo** Well, what was yours?

**Mercutio** I dreamed that dreamers often lie.

**Romeo** They lie in bed asleep and dream things true.

**Mercutio** Oh, then I see that Queen Mab has been with you.

**Benvolio** Ho! Does Romeo sleep with Queen Mab?

**Mercutio** Ay, with the queen of dreams! She is no bigger than a tiny stone. Her chariot is an empty hazelnut and her wagon spokes are made of spiders' legs. Her canopy is made of grasshoppers' wings, her whip is a cricket's bone and her coachman a gray-coated gnat. And in this state she gallops night after night through lovers' brains to make them dream of love, over ladies' lips to make them dream of kisses, over soldiers' necks to make them dream of cutting foreign throats.

**Romeo** (*amused despite himself*) Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace! You talk of nothing.

**Mercutio** True, I talk of dreams - which are the children of an idle brain and no more reliable than the wind.

**Benvolio** Let us go, good hearts, not to talk at all, but to dance! Come, Romeo - we shall be late!

**Romeo** I fear that we move too *quickly*. My mind whispers to me that some bitter consequence will begin this night and that when the consequence is ended, I will likewise be at an end. But I leave my fate to God. On, lusty gentlemen! (*all exit noisily UC as partygoers enter from L and R, led by Capulet*)

### Scene 3 (Love at First Sight - The Beginning of the End)

**Capulet** Welcome, ladies and gentlemen! Ladies, mark you, those of you whose feet are not plagued with corns must dance and dance well. Ha! And which of you will *now* refuse to dance, eh? She who does not dance I will swear her feet are full of corns.  
Come, musicians, play! (*tape begins as players move to dance places*) More light, you knaves and move the tables to the walls. Ah, Paris! Come take my daughter's hand and lead her in this dance. I am past my dancing days - I shall stand aside and watch. (*moves DL*)

**Romeo** (*entering with others, sees Juliet and is instantly mesmerized - speaks to Mercutio*) What lady is that who does enrich the hand of yonder knight?

**Mercutio** I know not, my friend.

**Romeo** O she does teach the torches to burn bright. It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night as a rich jewel, beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear. I will wait until the dance is done and watch to see where she will stand and, touching hers, make blessed my rude hand. Did my heart love before now? My eyes tell me no - for never saw I true beauty before this night. (*stands transfixed for a moment, then works his way toward Juliet whom he nonverbally asks to dance during the following*)

**Tybalt** (*who has overheard Romeo's speech and crossed to Capulet*) Uncle, he, by his voice is a Montague come here to scorn our gathering. Now, by my honor, I will strike him dead and hold it not a sin.

**Capulet** (*seeing Romeo*) Stay, gentle cousin, let him alone. Young Romeo, is it? He does not disturb our dancing and, to tell the truth, he is said to be a virtuous and well-mannered youth. I will not do him harm, so therefore you take no note of him. And do not frown so - this is a feast!

"play!"  
NO. 4 IN

**Tybalt** I will not tolerate his presence here.

**Capulet** If I say that you shall tolerate him, you *shall* tolerate him or you shall leave. Am I not the master in my own house? God mend my soul!

**Tybalt** Why, uncle, it is a shame that he should be here.

**Capulet** A shame, is it? Is it so indeed? You shall know shame! Get you hence, saucy boy. Go - and fie on you! (*Tybalt exits and Capulet immediately changes his tone, speaking to the rest*) Yes, merrily my hearts! **(music begins to fade)** Come with me now to the table where we shall eat and drink. God rest you, one and all! (*leads others out, leaving Romeo and Juliet alone together - music fades completely out when last guest has left the stage - there is a brief pause before Romeo begins to speak*)

**Romeo** (*who, by now, is holding Juliet's hands*) If I profane with my unworhiest hand this holy shrine, the gentle sin is this: my lips, two blushing pilgrims, stand ready to smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss. (*kisses her hand as tape begins*)

**Juliet** Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much, which mannerly devotion shows in this. For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch, and palm to palm is holy palmer's kiss.

**Romeo** Have not saints lips and holy palmers, too? (*kisses her other hand*)

**Juliet** Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

**Romeo** O then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do - they pray. Grant me this, lest faith turn to despair.

**Juliet** Saints do not move, except to answer prayer. (*kisses his hand*)

**Romeo** Then do not move while I pray, for by your lips will my sin be washed away.

**Juliet** Then will my lips have the sin that they have taken from you.

**Romeo** Sin from my lips? O trespass sweetly urged! Give me my sin again. (*their mouths touch*)

**(all off)**  
**NO. 4 OUT**

**"kiss"**  
**NO. 5 IN**

**Ray** *(entering from UC as nurse - Re:J separate, startled)* Madam, madam! ***(music ends under Ray's voice)*** Your mother wants a word with you! *(they linger for a moment, staring at one another, then Juliet leaves UC)*

**Romeo** Who is her mother?

**Lady C.** Marry, bachelor, her mother is the lady of this house - a good and wise and virtuous lady. I nursed the daughter with whom you have just now spoken. I tell you, he that marries her shall be a lucky man. *(exits UC after Juliet)*

**Romeo** Is she a Capulet? O dear account, my life is my foe's debt.

**Benvolio** *(entering quickly with other Montague men)* Away, Romeo! We have danced and we must leave - now - *(starts to run, as do others, all laughing - notices that Romeo is not moving)* Quickly, Romeo, lest we be caught.

**Romeo** I fear that I am caught already. *(exeunt)*

**Juliet** *(re-entering with Ray as nurse behind, she is looking in direction that Romeo has just left)* Come hither, nurse. Who is yon gentleman?

**Ray** His name is Romeo and he is a Montague - the only son of your greatest enemy.

**Juliet** My only love sprung from my only hate! Too early seen unknown and known too late! O, monstrous birth of love that I must love a hated enemy.

**Lady C.** *(calling from off)* Juliet!

**Ray** Come, let's away. The strangers are all gone. *(Juliet exits and Ray feigns to follow her, but removes his nurse's cap and speaks to audience)* Romeo did not go home that night - he gave his buddies the slip and doubled back to the Capulet house. You know why. *(Romeo enters and kneel/sits, staring at a point in space at C)* There he sits in the garden staring up at Juliet's porch - balcony, if you like - hoping she'll walk out to comb her hair or polish her nails ... or anything. Shortly, she will. *(speaking off)* Juliet? *(she appears at the balcony - Ray surveys the scene with satisfaction)* Good. Good. *(exits)*

**Romeo** But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the East and Juliet is the sun! Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon, who is already sick and pale with grief that you, her handmaid, art far more fair than she. It is my lady - it is my love. O that she knew she were. See how she leans her cheek upon her hand! O that I were a glove upon that hand that I might touch that cheek.

**Juliet** Ay me!

**Romeo** She speaks. O speak again, bright angel, for you are as glorious as a winged messenger of heaven who bestrides the passing clouds and sails upon the bosom of the air.

**Juliet** O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo? Deny your father and refuse your name. Or, if you will not, be my love and I will no longer be a Capulet.

**Romeo** Shall I hear more, or shall I speak now?

**Juliet** It is only your name that is my enemy. Montague. But what's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. So Romeo, even if he were not called Romeo, would still be Romeo, still be perfect. O cast off your name and, in return, take all of me.

"madam!"  
NO. 5 OUT

**Romeo** I take you at your word. Call me but love and I will be newly baptized. Henceforth, I never will be Romeo.

**Juliet** Who is there?

**Romeo** I do not know how to tell you. My name is as hateful to me as it is to you.

**Juliet** Romeo! Are you not Romeo ... and a Montague?

**Romeo** I am neither, fair maid, if either you dislike.

**Juliet** How came you here? The orchard walls are high and hard to climb.

**Romeo** With love's light wings did I fly over these walls - stony limits cannot hold love out.

**Juliet** But my kinsmen may see you here, they will kill you - there is danger!

**Romeo** I have the night to hide me from their eyes. But, if you love me, I care not what they do.

**Juliet** Do you love me? I will take you at your word. O gentle Romeo, If you do love me, pronounce it faithfully.

**Romeo** Lady, I vow by yonder blessed moon that tips with silver all these tree tops ...

**Juliet** O do not swear by the moon, the inconstant moon. Your love might prove to be no more faithful.

**Romeo** Then what shall I swear by?

**Juliet** Do not swear at all - I believe you. Now I must go. Good night, my love - sweet repose and rest come to your heart as that within my breast.

**Romeo** O will you leave me so unsatisfied?

**Juliet** What satisfaction can you have tonight?

**Romeo** The exchange of your love's faithful vow for mine.

**Juliet** I gave you my vow before you asked for it. My love for you is infinite - the more I give to you, the more I have. I hear some noise from inside. Dear love, good-bye. Sweet Montague, be true. *(starts to go, hesitates)* Wait a moment and I'll return to you. *(disappears from balcony)*

**Romeo** O blessed night, I fear that this is but a dream, too sweet to be real.

**Juliet** *(entering from UC, she goes directly to him)* A few more words, dear Romeo, and we must say goodnight indeed. If your love is honorable, if your purpose is marriage, send me word tomorrow by a messenger who I will send to you. All my fortunes I will lay at your feet and I will follow you throughout the world.

**Ray** *(as nurse, from off)* Madam!

**Juliet** Coming! *(to Romeo)* But if you do not mean well, I beg of you, please ...

**Ray** *(again as nurse from off)* Madam!

**Juliet** Coming! I beg of you, if you do not mean well by me, do not pursue me. Stay away and leave me to my grief. Tomorrow I will send for you. A thousand times goodnight. *(exits)*

**Romeo** A thousand times the worse, to want your light.

**Juliet** *(re-entering, as before)* Romeo!

**Romeo** Juliet!

**Juliet** Shhhh! We must be quiet or we will be overheard.

**Romeo** Then I will speak with my soul.

**Juliet** What time tomorrow shall I send my messenger to you?

**Romeo** By the hour of nine.

**Juliet** I will not fail. 'Tis twenty years till then. *(staring into his eyes)* I have forgotten why I came back.

**Romeo** Let me stand here with you until you remember.

**Juliet** You standing here does not help me to remember. You are too distracting, so much do I love your company. 'Tis almost morning. I would have you gone, yet no further than a tiny bird that hops a little from my hand and which, with a silk thread, I pluck it back again to me.

**Romeo** I wish that I were your prisoner.

**Juliet** Sweet, so do I. But I would kill you with too much cherishing. Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow that I shall say goodnight till it be tomorrow.

**Romeo** Sleep dwell upon your eyes, and peace in your breast. Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest! Away I go to the holy father's house to tell him of our plans and to ask his help. *(they part and exit)*

## Scene 4 (Wedding Plans)

**Ray** *(entering from wing)* In case you missed it, Romeo asked Juliet to marry him and she said yes. Just past dawn now and everything's moving mighty fast. Romeo on his way to the priest's house to see if he can get the priest to do the wedding. Juliet on pins and needles wondering whether Romeo is having any luck. In this scene, I play the priest. *(puts on monk's cap as tape begins)*

**Romeo** *(rushing on)* Good morrow, father.

**Ray** Romeo! The sun is barely up, my boy - you should be in bed. But, from the sight of you, I should say that you have not slept at all. What have you been doing?

**Romeo** I have been feasting with my enemy and I, like my enemy, am run through. We are bleeding, father, heal us, as only you can do. For if you heal me, you heal my enemy, too.

**Ray** Be plain, good son - you speak in riddles.

**Romeo** Then plainly know that I am in love with the fair daughter of rich Capulet. I will tell you later how this came to pass, but now I pray that you agree to marry us today.

**Ray** But what of Rosaline?

**"priest"  
NO. 6 IN**

**Romeo** I have forgotten that name.

**Ray** So soon? Only yesterday the tears streamed down your young face for love of Rosaline, my ears still ring with cries of "Rosaline!", but now you say that she is forgotten? Are you so changed?

**Romeo** I am not changed, except to know that she who I now love loves me in return. Rosaline never did so.

**Ray** Rosaline knew well that your love for her was not for her at all. You were in love with love. But I sense a change in you that causes me to look again and what I see is this: your marriage to a Capulet might well bring down the wall between your families. I will agree to marry you for your sakes, but moreso for the sakes of your families and of our city.

**Romeo** Then let us hurry. *(darts off)*

**Ray** *(correcting Romeo)* Then let us go wisely and slow. *(removes cap, becomes Ray again)*  
**tape ends** Of course, that would be impossible for Romeo. Let's go back into town. That's where Romeo's headed and that's where his two friends, Benvolio and Mercutio, are looking for him. *(exits - enter Benvolio and Mercutio)*

**Mercutio** Where the devil is Romeo. Did he go home last night?

**Benvolio** Not to his father's home.

**Mercutio** That hard-hearted Rosaline has driven him mad.

**Benvolio** Be that as it may, Romeo is in danger.

**Mercutio** In danger of going mad.

**Benvolio** In danger of Tybalt.

**Mercutio** Tybalt?

**Benvolio** He has sent a challenge to Romeo's house. Romeo will answer the challenge, on his honor.

**Mercutio** Then on his honor Romeo will die. Tybalt is a duelist of the very first house, a swordsman, a fencer of formidable skill. Romeo is no match for him. *(Romeo enters)*

**Benvolio** Here comes Romeo now.

**Romeo** Good morrow, gentlemen.

**Mercutio** Good morrow and good day! Where have you been? Last night we turned to say, "Romeo, what of Rosaline now?" and you had vanished. Could you not at least have said farewell?

**Romeo** My business was great, Mercutio - so great that it might excuse my lack of courtesy.

**Mercutio** Rosaline it was then, eh? *(to Benvolio)* This wild-eyed gander has chased his goose from sun down to sun up. Did you ever hear the like? *(enter Ray as nurse, and Peter)*

**Romeo** Well, well - here's a dainty goose and a dew-backed gosling. Good morrow, my lady!

**Ray** My fan, Peter! *(Peter hands Ray the fan, which he flutters in front of his face)* Good boy, Peter. Gentlemen, good day.

"slow"  
 NO. 6 OUT

**Mercutio** Yes, good boy, Peter. We would rather look upon her fan than her face, for her fan is the fairer of the two. *(Mercutio and Benvolio laugh - Romeo smiles)*

**Ray** Can any of you tell me where I may find the young Romeo?

**Romeo** I am Romeo, lady. What is it you want with me?

**Mercutio** Methinks we have found out Romeo's new love. Romeo, did you woo her with bones and biscuits, or did she follow you willingly home? *(he and Benvolio laugh)*

**Benvolio** Come Mercutio, let us leave Romeo to learn his new tricks from this old hound. It is as like to be an ugly sight. *(laughing, Benvolio and Mercutio leave)*

**Ray** I pray you, sir, who were those rude men?

**Benvolio** Men who love to hear themselves talk and who will speak more in a minute than they will bear hearing in a month.

**Ray** Peter, take my fan. *(Peter does so and stands aside - Ray speaks confidentially to Romeo)* I am a messenger come from Juliet.

**Romeo** You are the messenger? I vow, gentlewoman ...

**Ray** Good man! I shall tell my lady - she will be a joyful woman!

**Romeo** What will you tell her? You are not listening to me.

**Ray** I will tell her that you vow! By Joseph's coat, she will be a joyful woman!

**Romeo** So I *shall* vow as man to wife, and so shall she as wife to man - *(significantly)* this afternoon at St. Peter's Church. Go! - tell her this and here is a farthing for your trouble. *(extends a coin to Ray)*

**Ray** No, sir - not a penny. God in heaven bless you. She will be a joyful woman! Come, Peter! *(all exit - Ray with Peter L, Romeo R - Juliet enters from UC - she is impatient - sees Ray off L)*

**Juliet** *(as Ray enters with Peter)* Nurse! O nurse, what news? Did you meet with him? *(Ray starts to speak)* Shhhh! *(sotto voce)* Send Peter away.

**Ray** Go wait at the gate, Peter. *(Peter exits)* Poor Peter.

**Juliet** Now, sweet nurse, tell me ... *(Ray turns to her, pain in his face)* O Lord, why do you look so sad? Is it bad news? Tell me!

**Ray** I am tired, lady. How my bones ache. What a journey I have had.

**Juliet** I am sorry for that, good nurse, but pray you, speak, speak!

**Ray** What haste! Can you not wait a moment? Do you not see that I am out of breath?

**Juliet** I can see that you have breath to tell me that you are out of breath! Is the news good or bad? Answer that and I'll be satisfied. Is it good or bad?

**Ray** Your taste in men is bad, that much I'll say. He may be pretty, but his friends are rude. Ah, me, but my bones ache. What did you have for dinner?

**Juliet** I did not eat! I cannot eat! What says Romeo of our marriage, what of that?

**Ray** Lord, how my head aches. It pounds as if it would fall apart. I am too old to be running all about. Ohhhh.

**Juliet** In faith, I am sorry that you are not well. Sweet, sweet, sweet nurse - tell me what word you bring from my love.

**Ray** Your love spoke like an honest man, a courteous and a kind man, a handsome and, I'll wager, a virtuous man. Where is your mother?

**Juliet** Where is my mother? She is inside! Where should she be? What says my love? Surely he does not ask about my mother!

**Ray** *(finishes teasing her, smiling now with good news)* Can you get away today for a little while - to go to church?

**Juliet** *(thrilled)* I can!

**Ray** *(taking her by the shoulders, as happy as Juliet)* Then go there straight away. Your love is waiting there to make you his wife. Go!

**Juliet** *(momentarily speechless, she kisses Ray firmly on the cheek)* Honest nurse, farewell! *(exits)*

## Scene 5 (Bloodshed and Banishment)

**Ray** *(removing nurse's hat)* Less than an hour later, Romeo and Juliet were married in secret and afterward, they went their separate ways - Juliet back home to wait for Romeo, who had promised to come to her that night - and Romeo back to town with nothing to do but walk the streets of Verona - thinking about Juliet - grinning - you know why. It was at about that time that Tybalt was arriving at the town square. *(Tybalt enters - he is angry and he is looking for Romeo)* Tybalt, however, was not a joyful man. Remember Tybalt? He's the fella who tried to get Romeo kicked out of the Capulet dance. He was a man with a big ego and a tiny brain. His big ego had told his tiny brain that it was time to get even. And his brain, being so tiny, naturally went along with whatever his ego said. *(Tybalt enters - approaches Ray)*

**Tybalt** You there! Have you seen Romeo?

**Ray** Romeo who, my lord?

**Tybalt** Romeo Montague, that same hairless pup who last night danced with Juliet.

**Ray** A hairless dancing puppy, my lord? This is wondrous strange!

**Tybalt** *(going for sword)* I will show you steel that is wondrous strange as it cuts across your simple throat!

**Mercutio** *(entering with Benvolio)* Tybalt! See, Benvolio, Tybalt is a terror among the meek - women and children run from his fury! *(they laugh - Tybalt turns to them as Ray slips away)*

**Tybalt** Mercutio, where is your young companion Romeo?

**Mercutio** By my word, Tybalt, he is not here, unless ... he is behind you! *(Tybalt whirls around - then back to face Mercutio, angrier than ever)* Pardon, my lord, I was mistaken. *(bows sarcastically)*

**Benvolio** I pray you, good Mercutio, let us leave. You are too quick to quarrel. You have yourself said that with his sword Tybalt is a match for any man.

**Romeo** *(entering)* Mercutio! Benvolio! And Tybalt, my brother, greetings!

**Tybalt** Romeo, you are a villain!

**Romeo** Not so, Tybalt! I am this hour your cousin. So fare you well. *(starts to leave)*

**Tybalt** Boy, you insult me. Turn and draw! *(sword up)*

**Romeo** I do not insult you, sir. But I do love you, even though you cannot now know the reason for my love. Be satisfied, therefore, to know that my love for you surpasses your understanding. *(Mercutio and Benvolio laugh)*

**Tybalt** Then love this, Romeo, love this to your grave! *(about to lunge)*

**Mercutio** Hold, Tybalt!

**Tybalt** What would you have with me?

**Mercutio** I would have pepper and vinegar with you and have you roasting on a spit. So out spit *(draws)* and seek your meat! *(en garde)*

**Romeo** Gentle Mercutio, put away your sword! *(all on stage freeze)*

**Ray** *(entering casually)* Mercutio and Benvolio were well-matched, about the same in size and skill. They fought for some time, neither one giving way to the other. A crowd gathered to watch. Tables were knocked over. Women fainted. Children screamed. It looked as if the fight might go on forever when Romeo, coming between the two, said ...

**Romeo** *(unfreezing with Benvolio)* Draw, Benvolio! Beat down their weapons! Gentlemen, stop this outrage! The Prince has forbidden this violence in Verona streets. Hold, Tybalt! Good Mercutio! *(Romeo, trying to hold Mercutio back, blocks Mercutio's sword - all except Ray freeze again)*

**Ray** At that instant, when Mercutio's guard was down, Tybalt saw his chance - and he took it. *(Ray becomes part of the crowd as all unfreeze - Tybalt runs Mercutio through)*

**Mercutio** *(a stunned pause, drops to knees, looks up at Romeo)* Why the devil did you come between us? A plague on both your houses! I am dead. *(goes limp)*

**Benvolio** *(holding Mercutio)* Romeo, Mercutio is dead.

**Romeo** Mercutio slain? Now, Tybalt, do I become the villain that you would have me. With Mercutio's soul but a little way above our heads, he waits for company. Either you or I must go with him.

**Tybalt** You wretched boy. You shall be with him hence. *(sword up)*

**Romeo** *(en garde)* This shall determine that. *(all but Ray freeze)*

**Ray** A brief fight not worth describing. Tybalt lost. *(all unfreeze as Romeo runs Tybalt through - Tybalt falls with a loud cry - tape begins)*

**Benvolio** Romeo, away, be gone. Tybalt is dead - the Prince will doom you to death if you are taken. Run, be gone, away! *(Romeo hesitates a moment - then exits at a gallop, as does Benvolio in the opposite direction - looking around for witnesses as he does so)*

**(loud cry)**  
**NO. 7 IN**

*From the Capulet side, Lord and Lady Capulet and others enter and go to the body of Tybalt, as from the Montague side, Lord and Lady Montague and others enter and go to the body of Mercutio - Ray crosses to UC to become the Prince*

**Lady C.** Tybalt, my cousin, O my brother's child! O Prince, the blood is spilled of my dear kinsman. Prince, as you are true, for blood of ours shed blood of Montague. O cousin, cousin!

**Benvolio** Noble Prince, I can tell you what fell out this day.

**Ray** Benvolio, who began this bloody fray?

**Benvolio** It is true that Romeo killed Tybalt. But it was Tybalt who began the fray and Mercutio who tried to silence him. Romeo begged them both to put away their swords, warning them to keep the peace which you have so wisely decreed. Tybalt was deaf to peace and with hot steel he pierced Mercutio's breast just as Romeo came between them trying to end their struggle. Only then did Romeo take up Mercutio's sword and only then was Tybalt slain. Then Romeo ran away. By my life, this is the truth.

**Lady C.** This man is a friend of the Montagues. He is lying to protect them. I beg for that justice which you, Prince, must give. Romeo killed Tybalt. Romeo must not live.

**Ray** Romeo killed Tybalt. Tybalt killed Mercutio. Who must die now to make justice out of slaughter?

**Montague** Not Romeo, Prince, he was Mercutio's friend. By killing Tybalt, he only did what the law should do, avenge Mercutio.

**Ray** And for that offense Romeo must leave Verona. He is exiled, banished from our city. And each of your houses shall pay so heavy a fine that you shall repent this day for more than loss of life. I will not hear your pleading, your excuses. I will not be softened by your tears. Let Romeo fly in haste, or else the hour that he is found shall be his last. Take these bodies away and do as I have commanded you. *(as the bodies are lifted, all disperse in opposite directions)* I show them mercy, and so that mercy itself becomes a murderer by pardoning those that kill. *(exits as **tape ends**)*

"kill"  
NO. 7 OUT

**PRODUCTION NOTE:** If intermission is taken, Ray does not leave stage, but steps DC as one of the players brings him his vendor's cap and tray. If no intermission is taken, Ray exits, the following line is deleted and Juliet enters (top of Act II).

**Ray** And on that note, we the players invite you to stand up, walk around, reflect on what has happened and, if you're so inclined, purchase a box of authentic Elizabethan intermission food from your humble servant (*boms*) ... me. Milk Duds! Red Hots! Get your Boston baked beans! Milk Duds! Red Hots! ... etc.

## End of Act I

# Act II

## Scene 1

### (Grief)

**PRODUCTION NOTE:** If intermission has been taken, Ray has made his way back to the stage, ad libbing that the audience should be seated for the second act. When all are settled, he says ...

**Ray** *(removing vendor's hat and tray which a player takes for him into the wing)* Hope you heard a few good jokes in the lobby, because things are going to start to go downhill now. Tybalt is dead and Romeo being banished is going to put a pretty severe kink in Juliet's honeymoon plans. *(exits)*

**If intermission is not taken, delete this line, proceeding directly to Juliet's line below.**

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- Juliet** Come, civil night, you sober-suited matron all in black. And I will fly upon the wings of night whiter than new snow upon a raven's back. Come, gentle night, come loving, black-browed night. Give me my Romeo, and when we die, take him and cut him out in little stars and he will make the face of heaven so fine that all the world will be in love with night and pay no worship to the garish sun. (*enter Ray as nurse*) O here comes my nurse.
- Ray** My lady.
- Juliet** Now, nurse, what news? Ay, me, why do you wring your hands - why so sad? What news is it you bring of my love?
- Ray** Alas, my lady, he is dead. We are undone - he is killed, he's dead!
- Juliet** Can heaven be so jealous?
- Ray** Romeo can. O Romeo, Romeo! Whoever would have thought it?
- Juliet** What do you mean? What devil are you that torments me so? Has Romeo killed himself? If he is dead, say "yes", if he is not, say "no." These small words will determine my joy or woe.
- Ray** I saw the wound (*indicating the heart*) here on his chest. A pitiful corpse. Pale, pale as ashes, covered in blood.
- Juliet** O break, my heart! Poor bankrupt heart, break at once! Let me die at once and lie with Romeo in the grave!
- Ray** O Tybalt, Tybalt - the best friend that I had! O courteous Tybalt, honest gentleman! That I should ever live to see you dead!
- Juliet** What black storm is this that blows so hard? Is Romeo slaughtered *and* is Tybalt dead? My dearest cousin and my dearer lord?
- Ray** Tybalt is killed and Romeo banished. Romeo killed Tybalt and he is banished.
- Juliet** O God! Did Romeo's hand shed Tybalt's blood?
- Ray** It did, it did! Alas the day, it did!
- Juliet** O Romeo - beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical! Was ever book containing such vile matter so fairly bound? O that deceit should dwell in such a gorgeous palace!
- Ray** There is no honesty in men. All are liars, all murderers. Shame come to Romeo!
- Juliet** Blistered be your tongue for speaking such a wish! Romeo was not born to shame. His brow is a throne where honor may be crowned.
- Ray** He has killed your cousin.
- Juliet** Shall I condemn my own husband? O my love, why have you killed my cousin, that villain-cousin who would have murdered you? (*beat*) Why am I crying? The man who would have killed my husband is dead. I should rejoice in this ... but still I cry. I cry for a single word, a word worse than death ... banished. Romeo is banished. Banished. To speak that word is father, mother, Romeo, Juliet all slain, all dead. There is no end in that word's death. Where is my father and my mother, nurse?

**Ray** Weeping over Tybalt's corpse. Will you go to them?

**Juliet** Do they wash his wounds with their tears? I will spend my own for Romeo's banishment. Let me die! Let my wedding bed be my tomb.

**Ray** Go to your chamber, lady. I will send Peter to fetch Romeo. Romeo is at the parish house - he will come to you this night.

**Juliet** O find him! Send him this ring. *(slips ring from finger)* Bid him come to take his last farewell. *(exits)*

**Ray** Peter! *(Peter enters)* O look, Peter, there are splinters in your ear. Has your ear been pressed against the door? *(Peter looks down, embarrassed)* No matter. Go to the parish house. There you will find Romeo. Place this ring in his hand and bid him come to Juliet's chambers this night *(Peter does not move)* and hurry! *(Peter exits - Ray removes nurse's hat to speak to audience, takes out monk's cap, but does not put it on yet)* Romeo had run to the church, *(Romeo runs on and crouches on the floor, looking scared)* figuring he'd be safe there from the Prince's soldiers. And he was safe, for the moment - safe from everything except more bad news. While Romeo hid in the basement, the priest went for a walk to see how bad things had gotten. As you know *(putting on monk's cap)* things had gotten pretty bad. Romeo, come here - come here you fearful man. Trouble follows you wherever you go.

**Romeo** *(running to Ray)* What news? What is the Prince's sentence? What is to become of me?

**Ray** I bring you news of the Prince's doom. You will not die. *(Romeo rises joyfully, taking Ray by the arms - but Ray continues)* Not body's death, but body's banishment is your fate.

**Romeo** *(backing away)* Banishment? Banishment? Death would be a mercy compared to this! Do not say banishment! With banishment, you cut off my head with a golden axe and smile at me as you do so!

**Ray** Rude, unthankful boy! For what you have done the law demands that you should die, but the Prince has brushed aside the law and instead of death, has said "banishment". This is mercy!

**Romeo** It is torture! Every dog and cat and mouse, every fly may gaze upon my Juliet, but I cannot! They may marvel at the wonder of her eyes, her skin, her lips - but I may not! And you say that exile is not death? Have you no poison, no sharp knife, no quicker means of death than banishment? "Banishment" is the word that damned men howl in hell!

**Ray** Hear me speak, Romeo.

**Romeo** So that you can speak again of banishment?

**Ray** I will give you armor against that word. I will give you philosophy to comfort you and protect you against adversity.

**Romeo** But still banished? Hang philosophy! Unless philosophy can make a Juliet, remove Verona and reverse the Prince's doom, it helps me not!

**Ray** Let us talk of this more calmly.

**Romeo** How can you talk of what you do not understand? *(takes dagger from his belt)* Out, sword, and wound the breast of Romeo! Let me die!

**Ray** *(snatching dagger from Romeo)* Are you a man? You have the appearance of a man, but you cry like a woman and you behave *(throwing down dagger)* like an animal. You amaze me. Cheer up, man! Tybalt, who would have killed you, is dead. There you should be happy. The law that *should*

have killed you, the Prince has set aside. There you should be happy. And Juliet is alive! There you should be happy! A pack of blessings lights upon your back, but you behave like a sullen wench! (*more conciliatory*) Be patient and you shall see your Juliet. Then you shall know joy. (*there is a knock at the "door", UC*) There is someone at the door! Romeo, hide! Who is there? (*another knock*) I come, I come! You'll be found, Romeo - run to my study. (*another knock*)

- Romeo** I will not hide. What care I if I am taken, I am already dead. (*another knock*)
- Ray** What foolishness is this? Who knocks so hard? (*enter Peter*) What's your will?
- Peter** I bring this ring! (*holding out the ring*)
- Ray** Is this an offering, my son? Are you a member of my parish?
- Peter** I bring this ring for Romeo!
- Romeo** I am Romeo. (*crosses to Peter, takes ring*) This is Juliet's ring! (*grabbing Peter*) Do you come from her? Tell me, man! What does she say?
- Peter** I am Peter, come from the house of Capulet.
- Ray** He is a simpleton, Romeo. Do not press him so - you will frighten him.
- Romeo** What says my lady Juliet? What word does she send me.
- Peter** She weeps, my lord.
- Romeo** O would that I were not a Montague! My name is hateful to me! My lady weeps and I am banished, both of my own hand!
- Peter** She bids you come to her this night.
- Romeo** She ... (*taking Peter by the shoulders*) she bids me come? A joy past joy calls out to me! Tell my lady that I will fly to her side this night. Go, tell her this! Make haste! (*Peter exits*)
- Ray** Go to Juliet, but take care that by the break of dawn you are gone from Verona and on your way to the city of Mantua. Wait there and I will send a man to find you and bring you news of Juliet and tell you how our plans for your reunion are progressing.
- Romeo** Thank you, father.
- Ray** It is late. Farewell. (*Romeo exits - Ray removes monk's cap*) Back at the Capulet house, Juliet had locked herself in her room, moaning and crying like she'd just lost her best friend - which is exactly what everybody, except her nurse, thought had happened. They all thought that Juliet was grieving for Tybalt. So, hoping that a wedding would distract her from her grief, Mr. Capulet decided that Juliet should get married - to Paris - handsome, wealthy, polite, boring Paris. Good intentions. Bad idea. (*exits*)
- Capulet** (*entering with Paris and Lady Capulet*) Things have fallen out so terribly of late that I have had no time to speak to Juliet of your love for her. She loved her kinsman Tybalt dearly, and so did I. She will not eat or sleep or even leave her room.
- Paris** These times of woe afford no time to woo. Sir, goodnight. (*bowing to Lady C.*) Give my regards to your daughter.
- Lady C.** I will.

**Capulet** Paris, wait. (*graveley*) You are a good and honest man - and Juliet is suffering. (*beat*) I will consent to your union with my daughter. What say you? (*Paris starts to speak, but Capulet rolls on, excitedly*) In one stroke, I will weave a wedding veil from my daughter's funeral shroud! Ay, this is well! She is an obedient girl and I know that she will do as I instruct her. What day is this?

**Paris** Why, Monday, my lord.

**Capulet** Then you shall marry Juliet on Thursday. What say you to Thursday?

**Paris** (*not believing his own luck*) My lord, I would that Thursday were tomorrow.

**Capulet** Excellent! (*to Lady C.*) Go to Juliet before you go to bed. Tell her of her wedding day. (*Lady C. exits, Capulet then speaks to Paris*) Farewell, my lord. Goodnight. (*exiting in opposite directions*) Ah me, it is so very, very late.

## Scene 2 (Honeymoon and Aftermath)

**Ray** (*enters and, as he speaks, moves a bench DC*) Late that night, Romeo climbed the garden wall one last time to spend the few remaining hours before dawn with his new bride. (*turns upstage where Romeo and Juliet slowly enter, Juliet walking with her head leaning against Romeo's shoulder, their arms around each other - Romeo sits on the bench, Juliet sits on the ground with her head on his knee - the classic pose - Ray speaks poetry as they move into place*) But passion lends them power, time and means to meet, tempering extremities with extreme sweet. (*regards them for a moment, then exits*)

**Juliet** (*as Romeo begins to stand*) Will you be gone? It is not yet day!

**Romeo** Look, love, what light streaks the distant clouds. The day stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops. I must be gone - and live - for if I stay, I die.

**Juliet** That light is not the day, but some meteor sent from the sun to light your way to Mantua. Therefore stay, yet - you need not to be gone.

**Romeo** (*relenting*) Then let me be taken by the Prince's men and put to death. If you wish, I will call the light I see a pale reflection of the moon and not the sun at all. I have more cause to stay than will to go. Come death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so.

**Juliet** (*seeing the light and sensing the danger*) O Romeo look, it *is* the day! Hie hence, and be gone away! O now be gone - more light and light it grows.

**Romeo** More light and light, more dark and dark our woes.

**Ray** (*steps in from wing, speaking forward and not looking at them - he does not wear the nurse's hat, but he speaks as the nurse*) Madam!

**Juliet** (*does not look at Ray, but responds to his voice as if it were coming from the audience*) Nurse?

**Nurse** Your mother is coming to your chamber. The day is broke. Be wary, look about. (*exits*)

**Juliet** Then windows, let day in and life out.

**Romeo** Farewell, farewell! One kiss, and I must go. (*they kiss*)

**Juliet** O husband, friend, love, lord, are you gone so? I must hear from you every day. (*Romeo nods agreement, kissing her again*) Do you think that we will ever meet again?

**Romeo** I doubt it not, and all these sorrows will make for happy conversation in time to come.

**Juliet** O God, I have a trouble-ridden soul. Methinks I see you now as one who is dead and in the bottom of a tomb. Does my eyesight fail me? You look so pale!

**Romeo** And to me, my love, do you look pale as well. Dry sorrow drinks our blood. Farewell, farewell!  
*(exit)*

**Juliet** *(looking after him)* O Fortune, do not keep him long, but send him back to me.

**Lady C.** *(entering)* Ho, daughter, are you up?

**Juliet** *(taken off guard)* Madam! I ... I am not well.

**Lady C.** Evermore weeping for Tybalt's death. You will wash him from his grave with tears!

**Juliet** *(looking in the direction of Romeo's exit)* Yes, madam, I cannot choose but to weep, so deep is my loss.

**Lady C.** And yet the villain lives who slaughtered him.

**Juliet** What villain, madam?

**Lady C.** That same villain, Romeo. We will have vengeance, fear not, and you shall be satisfied.

**Juliet** *(still staring toward Romeo)* Indeed, I shall not be satisfied with Romeo until I behold him and wreak upon his body the pain I feel at love's loss.

**Lady C.** So it shall be. But listen, dear, I bring you joyful tidings.

**Juliet** And joy comes well in such a needy time. What tidings do you bring?

**Lady C.** That your father has arranged for you a day of joy - one that neither you nor I expected.

**Juliet** A day of joy, Madam? And what day is that?

**Lady C.** My child, this Thursday morning, at Saint Peter's Church, the gallant young Paris will make you his joyful bride.

**Juliet** *(snapping out of her reverie, she lets this sink in, her anger building as she speaks)* Madam, I swear to you by Saint Peter's Church and by Saint Peter too that the gallant young Paris shall *not* make me a joyful bride. He shall not make me *any* manner of bride! I would rather marry Romeo - whom you know I hate - than marry Paris! These are joyful tidings indeed!

**Lady C.** Here comes your father. You may tell him this yourself.

**Capulet** *(entering, in high spirits)* Wife and Juliet, my hearts! What, Juliet still in tears? How now, wife, have you delivered to her the happy news?

**Lady C.** Ay, sir, but she will have none of it.

**Capulet** None of it? Does she not give me thanks? Does she not count her blessings, unworthy as she is, that such a worthy gentleman should want her as his bride? What misshapen pride is this?

**Juliet** Not pride, father.

**Capulet** Thank me no thankings, nor proud me no prouds, but get you ready to be married two days hence or I will drag you there like a criminal to the gallows! Out, you green-sickness carrion! Out, you baggage! You tallow-face!

**Lady C.** Fie, husband, are you mad?

**Capulet** Hang you, young baggage! Disobedient wretch! I tell you that you will get to church on Thursday or you will never look me in the face again! Out! *(Juliet exits in tears)*

**Ray** *(entering downstage again as the Nurse, but without the cap - he speaks forward and Capulet answers him forward)* God in heaven bless her. You are wrong, my lord to berate her so.

**Capulet** And why is that, my Lady Wisdom? Hold your tongue!

**Ray** I mean no disrespect.

**Capulet** Peace, you mumbling fool! Save your advice for someone else - here we need it not.

**Ray** You are too hot, my lord.

**Capulet** God's bread, it makes me mad to work so hard to have her married to such a man as Paris and then to have a wretched, puling fool, a whining mammet answer "I'll not wed, I cannot love, I pray you pardon me!" *(near Juliet, threateningly)* Think on this: You will wed my friend on Thursday or you may beg and starve and die in the streets. For by my soul, I will never acknowledge you - you shall not belong to me! *(exits, followed by Lady C., ad libbing "My lord, my husband!" etc.)*

**Juliet** O God! O nurse, how shall this be prevented? Is there no pity sitting in the clouds? Comfort me, counsel me!

**Ray** *(speaks without enthusiasm)* Very well. Romeo is banished - and chances are that he will not dare come back to claim you. That being so, I think it best that you marry Paris. He is a lovely gentleman, a very eagle, madam. Romeo cannot compare. And, since you can never see your husband again, your first marriage is as good as dead. My counsel is therefore that you marry Paris.

**Juliet** Do you speak from your heart?

**Ray** And from my soul.

**Juliet** *(with great sarcasm)* Well, you have comforted me marvelous much. *(with rising anger)* You cannot know how *deeply* your words have affected me. You have *moved* me, Nurse! I am *changed* indeed - *(Ray has begun to back away from her, afraid)* so much so that I doubt that I will *ever* require your counsel again! Now, leave me! Go! Go in and tell my mother *(suddenly calm)* ... that I have gone to church to pray forgiveness for my sins. *(exits)*

**Ray** *(blankly speaking half to himself, half to Juliet's receding form)* Marry, I will. *(Ray crosses DC thoughtfully)* Juliet is on her way to Saint Peter's Church - not to pray, but to ask the help of Father Lawrence who married her to Romeo and who helped Romeo escape to Mantua, and who will now, with the best of intentions, end her life and that of her young husband, Romeo. *(monk's cap on)*

**Juliet** *(runs on, falls at Ray's feet)* O shut the door! And when you have done so, come weep with me, past hope, past care, past help.

**Ray** O Juliet, I already know your grief. I have spoken to Paris this day and learned from him your father's plans.

**Juliet** Tell me how I may prevent this thing or, behold (*knife out*) this bloody knife shall end my suffering. Speak quickly, for I long to die if you speak not of remedy.

**Ray** (*staying her hand*) Hold, daughter, I do see a kind of hope - a desperate hope born of desperation. If, rather than marry Paris, you would take your life, then it is likely that you would undertake a thing *like* death to be again with Romeo.

**Juliet** O I would leap, rather than marry Paris, from the top of any tower, or lurk where serpents are, chain me with roaring bears or hide me nightly in a tomb, covered with dead men's rattling bones and reeking limbs and broken yellow skulls. Things that on another day would terrify me, I will gladly do to be again with Romeo!

**Ray** Then hear me. Go home and agree to marry Paris in two days. (*she starts to protest, but he silences her*) I will send word to Romeo, for tomorrow night, (*withdraw vial*) you will drink this potion and straight-away fall into a cold and deathly slumber. Come morning, your nurse will find you and by night your grieving parents will have laid you in the tomb. But you will sleep, my child, through the finding and the grieving and the burying and when you wake, as from a pleasant dream, Romeo will be by your side. (*extends vial to her*)

**Juliet** (*taking the vial*) Give me the potion! Tell me not of fear!

**Ray** Go then and be strong in your resolve. I will send a man to Mantua to tell Romeo of our plan. (*Juliet exits - Ray pauses a moment, then exits also*)

**Capulet** (*entering with Lady C.*) You say my daughter has gone to ask forgiveness for her sins?

**Lady C.** Yes, to Saint Peter's Church and Father Lawrence, a holy man who I trust will instruct in the ways of calm humility.

**Capulet** (*seeing Juliet approach*) Stay, woman! Here she comes - and with a merry look upon her face! (*Juliet enters*) How now, my headstrong girl! What say you?

**Juliet** I beg your pardon, father, for my disobedience. (*knocking*) I promise henceforth to be ruled by you.

**Capulet** This is miraculous! (*lifting her up - calling off*) Send for Paris! Go tell him of this. I'll have you married tomorrow morning! I am a happy man! Come wife, we shall not sleep this night - there is much to do! (*calling off as they exit*) Servants! Bring me torches! Light the fires! There is much to be done by sunrise!

**Juliet** (*looking after him, but speaking to herself*) Tomorrow, father? Then I must act immediately and my dismal scene I must act alone. Come, vial. (*vial out*) But what if this mixture does not work at all? What if it is poison? What if I awake inside the vault before my Romeo comes to rescue me? Shall I be suffocated? Or if I live will not the terror of the place drive me mad? (*to a point in space*) O look! Is that my cousin's ghost seeking out fair Romeo? Stay, Tybalt, stay! Romeo, Romeo, Romeo, I drink to you. (*she drinks and falls as tape begins*)

"to you"  
NO. 8 IN

### Scene 3 (Death)

*A pantomime begins during which first Lady C. finds Juliet's body. She rushes out and returns with Lord Capulet, who silently calls off and others enter. They lift up Juliet's body and position a bench DC, placing her on the bench "in the tomb". Her body is draped with a sheer gauze shroud.*

**Ray** *(entering)* And when they found her in the morning, there was a great deal of crying, as parents must do whenever children die so young. The wedding guests, expecting song and dance, walked instead behind the lifeless body of the bride. They carried her to her tomb and as they stood shivering in the cold morning damp, the priest commended her soul to God. *(Ray moves upstage of the body, making the sign of the cross after which all file out, Lady C. falls on Juliet's body in tears, Lord Capulet lifts her up - they exit - Ray continues speaking upstage of Juliet's body)* What more could they do? *(tape ends as Romeo enters, crossing DL, facing front)* Romeo received a message that day in Mantua, but it was not the priest's message. The priest's messenger had been detained by Mantuan officers afraid that Verona was infected with the plague. *(he moves upstage to watch the rest)*

"do?"  
NO. 8 OUT

**Romeo** *(in good spirits)* If I may trust my dreams, I am about to receive some joyful news. I dreamed my lady came and found me dead - and breathed such life with kisses in my lips that I revived and was an emperor. Ah me! How sweet is love when dreams of love are so rich in joy.

**Benvolio** *(entering)* Romeo!

**Romeo** Benvolio! Do you bring me letters from my lady? How does my Juliet? Tell me! If she is well, then all is right with the world.

**Benvolio** Romeo, her body sleeps in Capulet's tomb and her soul is with the angels. O pardon me for bringing this ill news.

**Romeo** Is it even so? Juliet dead? Then I deny you stars! Hire me horses, Benvolio - and quickly! - this night I ride!

**Benvolio** I do beseech you, Romeo, have patience. Your actions are too rash.

**Romeo** Leave me and do the thing I bid you do. Have you no letters to me from Father Lawrence?

**Benvolio** No, my lord.

**Romeo** No matter. Get you gone and hire those horses. I will be with you shortly. *(exit Benvolio)* Well, Juliet, I will lie with you tonight. But how? I do remember an apothecary *(apothecary enters R and stands, facing front)* who lives hereabouts. He is poor and sharp misery has worn him to the bones. When last I saw him, I said to myself, "If a man did need to buy poison, even though the punishment for selling it is death, here is the wretch who would sell it to him." *(crosses R)* And, as I remember, this is his shop. What ho, apothecary!

**Apothecary** Who calls so loud?

**Romeo** Come hither, man. *(apothecary turns and faces Romeo)* I see that you are poor. Here are forty gold pieces. Let me have an ounce of poison, one that will dispatch me as quickly and as violently as powder fired from a cannon's womb.

**Apothecary** I have such drugs as you seek, but the penalty for selling them is death.

**Romeo** Old man, hunger is in your cheeks, need and oppression starve in your eyes. Can you be so full of wretchedness and yet afraid to die. The world is not your friend, neither is the world's law. The world affords no law to make you rich, so be not poor, but break the law and take this. *(offering money)*

**Apothecary** My poverty agrees to this, but not my conscience.

**Romeo** It is not to your conscience that I speak.

**Apothecary** (*Ray crosses down to Apothecary and hands a vial over the Apothecary's shoulder - the Apothecary then hands the vial to Romeo*) Put this in any liquid thing you will and drink it off and, even if you had the strength of twenty men, it would dispatch you straight.

**Romeo** There is your gold. (*hands money*) Farewell, buy food - get yourself fat. (*Apothecary exits*) Come cure, not poison, and go with me to Juliet's grave. (*exit*)

**Ray** (*"inside the crypt" - he looks around*) The Capulet family's tomb. A dark and musty place. Here among the quiet bones of the departed lies Juliet, not dead, but not yet alive. (*beat - looks out to audience*) Soon. (*stands over Juliet as Paris enters DR, carrying flowers - crosses slightly L - he is "outside the crypt"*)

**Paris** Sweet flower, with flowers will I decorate your bridal bed. Your bridal canopy is dust and stones which with my tears I will each evening wash. (*placing flowers on the ground*) Juliet. (*bears something*) Someone approaches! What cursed foot wanders this way tonight to interrupt my love's eternal sleep? (*enter Romeo*) Montague!

**Romeo** Paris!

**Paris** This is the proud banished Montague that murdered my love's cousin! She died of grief for him, Romeo - your doing! - and now I see that you have come to do some villainous shame to her dead body. (*sword out clumsily*) Condemned villain, I command you to go with me, for you must die. (*he is afraid, but he brandishes sword*)

**Romeo** (*quite calm at first*) I must indeed and therefore came I here. (*advances on Paris, who backs away*) Good gentle youth, do not tempt a desperate man. Please! Put not another sin upon my head by urging me to violence. Be gone! By heaven, I love you better than I love myself, for it is I whom I have come here to kill! Leave and hereafter say that a madman's mercy bid you to run away!

**Paris** I do defy you, and I apprehend you for a felon.

**Romeo** (*calm again*) Will you provoke me then? (*lashing out*) Then have at you, boy! (*in one swift motion, he knocks aside Paris' rapier and stabs him with a dagger - Paris falls facing upstage, Romeo regards Paris' body briefly, then speaks to the tomb*) You detestable womb of death, I will force your rotten jaws to open! (*phantomimes forcing the door open*) There!

**Ray** Now he knows that this is not a dream. (*Romeo crosses to Juliet, as Ray counters to "the door" - Romeo pulls back the shroud, revealing Juliet's body down to the waist*) Now he knows that all his dreams have turned to dust. (*Ray "exits the tomb", but remains visible as Romeo kneels upstage of Juliet and tape begins*)

"dust"  
NO. 9 IN

**Romeo** O my love, my wife! Death that has sucked the honey of your breath has had no power yet upon your beauty. Why are you still so fair? How is it that the blush lingers on your lips and in your cheeks? Shall I believe that Angel Death has taken you for his lover? I too will lie with you and never from this palace of dim night depart again. Here will I remain with worms as chambermaids. Here will I set up my everlasting rest. Eyes, look your last. Arms, take your last embrace. And lips, O you the doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss. Come, bitter conduct! Come unsavory guide! You desperate pilot, now crash upon the dashing rocks your seasick weary hull. Here's to my love! (*drinks*) O truthful apothecary, your drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss (*kisses her*) I die! (*falls*)

**Ray** (*takes out monks' cap*) Father Lawrence is on his way here, running as quickly as his old legs will carry him. He has just found out that his message never reached Romeo - and he is afraid that something terrible has happened. (*puts on monk's cap and "sees" blood on ground*) What blood is this which stains the stony entrance of this tomb? (*sees Paris*) Paris! (*kneels*) Dead. What dreadful dole is here? (*rises, "enters" tomb, sees Romeo, rushes to body, kneels*) Romeo! (*sees empty vial - picks it up, sniffs*)

*it*) Poison! But how? O Lord, what an unkind hour, what lamentable chance. (*Juliet stirs*) The lady stirs!

**Juliet** (*to Ray*) O faithful friend! Where am I? Ah! I do remember well where I should be and ... I am here. Where is my husband?

**Ray** I hear some noise approaching, lady. Come from that nest of death and unnatural sleep. Our plans have been undone. Stay not to question, we must not be found! Come, go, good Juliet. The watchmen are on their way. I dare no longer stay.

**Juliet** Go, get you hence, I will not away.

**Ray** (*after a moment's hesitation*) God protect you, child. (*exits R*)

**Juliet** What's here? (*picks up vial*) Poison I see has been my true love's end. Drunk all and left no friendly drop to help me follow you? I will kiss your lips - perhaps some poison lingers there. (*kisses him*) Your lips are warm!

**Capulet** (*from off*) Lead, boy! Which way?

**Juliet** A noise? Then I'll be brief. O happy dagger. (*takes Romeo's dagger from its sheath, pantomimes opening the top of her blouse open to expose her heart*) This is your sheath. There rust and let me die. (*stabs herself and falls - music out as others enter noisily*)

"die"  
NO. 9 OUT

**Capulet** (*entering DL, calling back, he is followed by Lady C., Lord and Lady Montague and others*) Go, some of you - search about the churchyard. (*lingers DC, looking back and forth as he speaks*) The people in the street cry "Romeo", some "Juliet" and some "Paris" and all run with open outcry here. (*sees Paris*) O lord! (*moves with wife et al to body*) He is dead.

**Lady C.** (*looking up, sees inside the tomb, gasps, points*) Husband, what do I see?

**Lady M** (*sees Romeo's body, rushes in to it, followed by Lord Capulet, who comforts her - others follow*) Romeo, my child, my child!

**Capulet** (*moving slowly toward Juliet's body as the Montagues moan quietly over Romeo's body*) Wife, look how our daughter bleeds. (*tape begins - Lady C. cannot look any longer, she buries her face in her husband's chest and weeps*)

"bleeds"  
NO. 10 IN

*Romeo and Juliet's bodies are placed upon the benches which are placed profile to the audience, head's touching - they are both covered with sheer gauze shrouds as the families continue to grieve silently.*

**Ray** (*entering from wing with Prince's hat in hand*) Father Lawrence returned later to explain to the families what had happened - how he had married Romeo and Juliet in secret and given Juliet the potion when Romeo was banished. He told them how the message he had sent to Romeo had not arrived and how the two had died - and why. (*looks at hat*) The Prince arrived (*surveys the scene*) saw what had occurred and spoke to them. (*speaks directly to audience - all listen*) It is true then? The course of their love, the news of her death, the poison and the dagger? (*lashes out in anger*) Where are your enemies? (*gesturing backward*) Capulets? Montagues? See what a scourge is laid upon your hate that heaven finds means to kill your joys with love? All .. are .. punished!

**Capulet** (*stepping with Montague downstage of Ray*) O brother Montague, give me your hand. I offer you peace - and this peace shall be my daughter's legacy. No more can I ask. (*extends hand*)

**Montague** (*takes hand*) But there is more that I can give. I will raise a statue in pure gold, so beautiful that so long as Verona stands, there shall be no figure at such value set as that of true and faithful Juliet.

**Capulet** And I will raise a statue equally rich to Romeo, and so shall he stand by his lady's side, both our children poor sacrifices to our former hatred.

*The bodies of Romeo and Juliet are lifted on their "stretchers" and carried out at the head of two files - one Montague and one Capulet - which exit as Ray speaks.*

**Ray** *(takes off Prince's hat, speaks to audience again, more conversationally, but still gravely)* A glooming peace this morning with it brings. The sun, for sorrow, will not show his head. Go hence to have more talk of these sad things. Some shall be pardoned and some punished. For never was there a story of more woe than this of Juliet and her Romeo. *(music plays out - there is no curtain call)*

**NO. 10  
PLAYS  
OUT**

**End of Play**