

Roméo et Juliette Synopsis

Verona in the 14th Century

A choral prologue foretells the tragedy of the two rival families, the Montagues and the Capulets.

Act 1

At a masked ball in the Capulet palace, Juliette is admired by the guests. Among the crowd are long-standing enemies of the Capulet family, Roméo Montague, his friend Mercutio, and their friends. Roméo sees Juliette across the room and is immediately enchanted.

They are interrupted by Tybalt, who recognizes Roméo's voice and confronts the gatecrashers. Capulet restrains Tybalt so the party can continue, but Tybalt vows revenge on Roméo.

INTERMISSION

Act 2

Roméo steals into Juliette's garden and hides under her balcony. When she comes out, he announces himself and pledges his love. Juliette reciprocates. They are interrupted by the Capulets searching the grounds for Roméo's page Stephano, and they bid each other good night at the insistence of Gertrude, Juliette's nurse.

Act 3 – Scene 1

The lovers meet at Frère Laurent's cell. The Friar marries them in the hope that the union will end the feud between their families. The ceremony is soon over and Gertrude joins them for a benediction.

Act 3 – Scene 2

Outside the Capulets' house, Stephano incites tension between the families by singing an impertinent song. A fight ensues; Tybalt kills Mercutio and Roméo kills Tybalt. Roméo is banished from Verona by the Duke.

INTERMISSION

Act 4 – Scene 1

Roméo and Juliette have spent their wedding night together in Juliette's bedroom. Roméo is woken by birdsong and the lovers exchange words of adoration. Roméo leaves. Juliette's father enters and informs her that she is to marry his kinsman Paris. Juliette turns to Frère Laurent for help; he offers Juliette a sleeping potion that will give the impression that she has died. Then, once night has fallen, Frère Laurent will bring Roméo to the tomb. Juliette drinks from the bottle.

Act 4 – Scene 2

Juliette is dressed for her wedding. In front of all the wedding guests, as her father takes her arm to lead her into the chapel, she collapses. To the horror of all, Capulet cries out that she is dead.

Act 5

Roméo mourns Juliette at the Capulet tomb. Unaware of Frère Laurent's plan and believing that she is really dead, he takes poison. As he lies dying, Juliette awakes and, finding Roméo close to death, stabs herself with his dagger. The lovers die praying for God's forgiveness.