



Romeo and Juliet

adapted from the play by William Shakespeare

Episode 1: Two families in Verona

Rosaline

*Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.*
A pair of star-cross'd lovers...and here their story shall begin.

[Scene 1: the streets of Verona]

Rosaline

Welcome to Verona, in Italy. My hometown. Our streets have been plagued for years by a feud between my family - the Capulets - and the Montagues. It's been going on for so long that no one really knows what started it.

Tybalt

Turn, Benvolio! Fight me!

Benvolio

I'm trying to keep the peace.

Rosaline

That angry one in purple is my cousin, Tybalt. He hates the Montagues. Always kicking off and starting fights. And the one in blue is Benvolio. He doesn't like all the fighting, and bless him, he's always trying to calm everyone down.

Tybalt

What? You talk of peace with your sword drawn? I hate the word as I hate all Montagues. Let's fight, coward!

Rosaline

I should probably tell you who I am. I'm Rosaline. And I try to not get involved with the family feud but, being a Capulet, I know all about it. Sadly we all do. Ah. Here comes the one person everyone needs to listen to. Prince Escalus of Verona.

Prince

Rebellious subjects, enemies of the peace! Throw your swords to the ground!

Rosaline

He's in charge around here. And he's had enough of the fighting too.

Prince

If you ever disturb our streets again, you'll pay a heavy price for it!

Rosaline

They should listen to the Prince. If the family feud ended, the story we're about to tell might never have happened. And before we can get onto those 'star-crossed lovers' - Romeo and Juliet - a bit more background is needed.

The older gentleman there is Lord Capulet, my uncle. The younger man is Count Paris. He's related to Prince Escalus, who stopped the fighting just now.

They are talking about my cousin - Juliet. Paris wants to marry Juliet and my uncle approves. I think it would be nice for Juliet to get a say in the matter, don't you?

Here comes our hero - Romeo - looking pretty sorry for himself. With his cousin Benvolio - we met him earlier as well.

Benvolio

Good morning, cousin.

Romeo

Is it still only morning? Every hour feels so long when you're sad.

Benvolio

Why are you so sad?

Romeo

Not having something that, if I had it, would make time fly by.

Benvolio

You're in love?

Romeo

Out of love. She's not interested in me at all.

Rosaline

Now I don't like to show off, but Romeo's talking about me. He loves me. At least, he thinks he does...and it's making him feel miserable. But he's right, I don't feel the same...and there's not much I can do about it. Besides, me being a Capulet and him being a Montague...
...that just spells trouble.

Capulet Servant

Excuse me, sir, can you read?

Romeo

Yes, if it's in a language I know.

Rosaline

Now the servant here can't read and he's been told to invite everyone on that guestlist to a party the Capulet's are holding. Obviously the Montagues are NOT invited, but he needs someone to help him and how's he supposed to recognise a Montague?

Romeo

This looks like a good party.

Capulet Servant

As long as you're not a Montague, you should come!

Benvolio

(Reading the guest list) Rosaline, the one you love, will be going...

Rosaline

Told you he loves me.

Benvolio

Going to a good party will cheer you up! And you may even make some new friends....

Romeo

I'll go - but I doubt I'll make any new friends. Or be cheered up.

Rosaline

So they're coming to the party? This plan doesn't bode well...

[Scene 2: Juliet's bedroom]

This is the balcony of my cousin Juliet's bedroom. I wonder if we can hear what's going on... Juliet's chatting with her mother, Lady Capulet, and her trusted servant, the nursemaid.

Lady Capulet

Juliet, tell me, how do you feel about getting married?

Juliet

It's an experience I haven't thought of.

Rosaline

Surely Lady Capulet can't already be talking about the wedding to Paris?

Lady Capulet

Well, think about marriage now. I was married by your age. To be brief, the valiant Paris seeks you for his wife. He's Verona's most handsome young man.

Nurse

Oh yes, very handsome!

Lady Capulet

Speak quickly. Could you fall in love with Paris?

Juliet

Fine, I'll look at him. But I can't force myself to like him. Any more than you can by asking me to do it.

Rosaline

It sounds like my aunt and uncle are going to have a bit of a challenge to persuade Juliet to marry Paris! So, the pieces are all in place. The party is fast approaching. A heart-broken Romeo, a frustrated Juliet, the Capulets, the uninvited Montagues. All in one room. What could possibly go wrong!