

PLAYS FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

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Romeo and Juliet

by
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From the Play by
William Shakespeare

Romeo and Juliet was originally produced by Bristol Old Vic, UK, in 2013.

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

For a cast of seven

EMILY

MERCUTIO/BALTHASAR

ROMEO

CAPULET

JULIET

TYBALT

NURSE

For a cast of six

EMILY

MERCUTIO/BALTHASAR

ROMEO

CAPULET

JULIET

TYBALT/NURSE

Scene One

Emily is in her bedroom playing.

It is the type of bedroom that only a Disney Princess herself could imagine. All is pink. The walls are lined with fairy tale books.

Emily is looking through the books.

Emily Snow White – a story of true love. Sleeping Beauty – a story of true love. Cinderella – a story of true love. The Little Mermaid – a story of true love.

Emily finds a book she has not seen before. She opens it and begins to read...

'Romeo and Juliet, by William Shakespeare. A story of true love.'

True love... happy-ever-after.

Romeo and Juliet. Romeo is a handsome prince: Juliet is his princess. They meet and fall in love. There is some obstacle to their love. A cruel father, or a wicked stepmother, or an evil witch. But in the end good wins through, and with true love's kiss, they marry and live happy-ever-after. And that is just how it should be...

She continues reading.

'Two households both alike in dignity
(In fair Verona, where we lay our scene)'

Verona – that's in Italy. How romantic!

'From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.'

I wonder what that means?

*She is interrupted by the entrance of **Tybalt**.*

Hello. Who are you? Are you Romeo?

Tybalt I am Tybalt, of the house of Capulet.

Emily Not Romeo?

Tybalt Romeo is a Montague, and my foe.

Emily So, are you in this story?

Tybalt *nods.*

Good. And what do you do?

Tybalt I strike quickly being moved. A dog of the house of Montague moves me. Here comes a friend of them.

Emily A friend?

Tybalt Of the Montagues. I hate him, as I hate hell, and all Montagues.

Emily What's his name? Is this Romeo?

Tybalt He is Mercutio. I will bite my thumb at him, which is disgrace if he does bear it.

Enter Mercutio.

Mercutio Do you bite your thumb at me, sir?

Tybalt I do bite my thumb, sir.

Mercutio Do you bite your thumb at me, sir?

Tybalt *draws.*

Tybalt I bite my thumb, sir? Do you quarrel, sir? If you do, sir, I am for you.

Mercutio *draws.*

Mercutio Put up your sword.

Emily Put up your swords! Why are you fighting? This is a love story!

Tybalt Turn thee, Mercutio, look upon thy death.

They fight.

Emily *interrupts them.*

Emily Stop!

Tybalt & ?

Mercutio

Emily Stop! Why aren't you stopping?

Mercutio You have to say it in Shakespeare. Otherwise we can't understand you.

Emily Ok, I'll say it in Shakespeare, then...

Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace –
If ever you disturb this tale again
Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.
Depart away.

Exit Tybalt.

Scene Two

Emily and Mercutio.

Emily 'From forth the fatal loins of these two foes – '

The Montagues and the Capulets –

'A pair of star-cross'd lovers...'

Romeo and Juliet.

O where is Romeo, saw you him today?

Romeo enters.

Mercutio Romeo!

Emily So, this is Romeo...

Mercutio Good morrow, cousin.

Romeo Is the day so young?

Mercutio But new struck nine.

Romeo Ay me, sad hours seem so long.

Mercutio What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?

Romeo Not having that which, having, makes them short.

Emily In love?

Romeo Out.

Emily Of love?

Romeo Out of her favour where I am in love.
Dost thou not laugh?

Mercutio No coz, I rather weep.

Romeo Good heart, at what?

Mercutio At thy good heart's oppression.

Emily Tell me, who is that you love?

Romeo I do love a woman.

Mercutio The fair Rosaline?

Emily The fair *Rosaline*? What about...

Mercutio Forget to think of her.

Romeo O teach me how I should forget to think.

Mercutio By giving liberty unto thine eyes:
Examine other beauties.

Romeo Farewell, thou canst not teach me to forget.

Romeo begins to exit.

Emily Wait!

She hastily scribbles a note, and hands it to Romeo.

Read this guest list.

Romeo *[Reading.]* 'Signor Martino and his wife and daughters...'

Emily And Juliet.

Romeo *[Reading.]* 'County Anselm and his beauteous sisters... '

Emily And Juliet!

Romeo *[Reading.]* 'Signor Placentio and his lovely nieces...'

Emily And Juliet!!

Romeo *[Reading.]* 'Livia and Rosaline...'

Emily And Juliet!!!

Romeo Rosaline! A fair assembly. Whither should they come?

Emily To the great rich Capulet's. Juliet's family.

Romeo Who?

Emily Just go!

*Emily prompts **Mercutio** to speak.*

Mercutio At this same ancient feast of Capulet's
Supps the fair Rosaline, whom thou so loves,
With all the admir'd beauties of Verona.

Emily Go thither and with untainted eye
Compare her face with one that I shall show
And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.

Romeo One fairer than my love! The all-seeing sun
Ne'er saw her match since first the world begun.

Emily Just you wait...

Romeo I'll go along.

*Exeunt **Mercutio** and **Romeo**.*

Emily smiles, job done.

Scene Three

Emily From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-cross'd lovers:

Romeo and Juliet.

Enter Capulet and Nurse.

Capulet Nurse, where's my daughter? Call her forth to me.

Nurse What, Juliet!

Enter Juliet.

Juliet Madam, I am here, what is your will?

Capulet This is the matter. Nurse, give leave awhile,
We must talk in secret. Nurse, come back again,
I have remember'd me, thou's hear our counsel.
Thou knowest my daughter's of a pretty age.

Nurse Faith, I can tell her age unto an hour.
Come Lammas Eve at night she shall be fourteen.
Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nurs'd.

Capulet Tell me, daughter Juliet,
How stands your dispositions to be married?

Juliet It is an honour that I dream not of.

Capulet Well, think of marriage now.
The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.

Emily Paris!

Nurse *[To Emily.]* A man, young lady. Lady, such a man
As all the world – why, he's a man of wax.

Capulet *[To Emily.]* Verona's summer hath not such a flower.

Emily But *Paris!*

Capulet *[To Juliet.]* What say you, can you love the gentleman?
This night you shall behold him at our feast;
Read o'er the volume of young Paris' face
And find delight writ there with beauty's pen.
Speak briefly, can you like of Paris' love?

Juliet I'll look to like, if looking liking move.

Emily No!
An idea.
The guests are come.

Nurse Go, girl, seek happy nights to happy days.

Emily Make sure you look at all the guests. All of them. Not just Paris. *All* of them. Really really closely.

Exeunt Nurse, Capulet and Juliet.

Scene Four

Emily, Romeo and Mercutio.

Mercutio Come, knock and enter, and no sooner in
But every man betake him to his legs.
They enter the Masque. A crowd of revellers. Romeo hangs back.

Emily Welcome, gentlemen, ladies that have their toes
Unplagu'd with corns will walk a bout with you.
Ah my mistresses, which of you all
Will now deny to dance?
You are welcome, gentlemen: come, musicians, play.
A dance.
Romeo does not join in.
Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.

Romeo Not I, believe me. They have dancing shoes
With nimble soles, I have a soul of lead
So stakes me to the ground I cannot move.

Emily You are a lover, borrow Cupid's wings
And soar with them above a common bound.

Romeo Under love's heavy burden do I sink.
[*To Mercutio.*] I dreamt a dream tonight.

Mercutio And so did I.

Romeo Well what was yours?

Mercutio That dreamers often lie.

Romeo In bed asleep, while they do dream things true.
 My mind misgives
 Some consequence yet hanging in the stars
 Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
 With this night's revels, and expire the term
 Of a despis'd life clos'd in my breast
 By some vile forfeit of untimely death.

Mercutio You talk of dreams
 Which are the children of an idle brain,
 Begot of nothing but vain fantasy.

Romeo Then he that hath the steerage of my course
 Direct my suit.

Emily He? I think you mean me. And I'm a she...

Emily leads Romeo to Juliet.

Romeo What lady's that?

Emily Juliet...

Romeo O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright.
 It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
 As a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear –
 Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear.
 Did my heart love till now? Forswear it sight.
 For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

Tybalt emerges from the crowd... and sees Romeo.

Tybalt This by his voice should be a Montague.
 What, dares the slave
 Come hither?

Emily helps Romeo evade Tybalt...

Now by the stock and honour of my kin,
 To strike him dead I hold it not a sin.

*... and leads him back to **Juliet**.*

Romeo If I profane with my unworhiest hand
This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this:
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

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 palmers' kiss.

Romeo Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

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

Romeo O then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do:
They pray: grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

Juliet Saints do not move, though grant for prayer's sake.

Romeo Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take.

They kiss.

***Romeo** narrowly avoids being caught again by **Tybalt**...*

Tybalt This is a Montague, our foe.
I'll not endure him.

*... but returns to **Juliet**.*

Romeo Thus from my lips, by thine, my sin is purg'd.

Juliet Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

Romeo Give me my sin again.

*They kiss, only to be interrupted by **Nurse**.*

Nurse Madam, your father craves a word with you.
Come, let's away.

***Nurse** leads **Juliet** away. As they walk...*

Emily His name is Romeo...

Nurse ... and a Montague...

Romeo *[Aside.]* Is she a Capulet?
O dear account...

Nurse ... The only son of your great enemy.

Juliet My only love sprung from my only hate...

Romeo *[Aside.]* ... My life is my foe's debt.

Juliet Prodigious birth of love it is to me
That I must love a loathed enemy.

Exeunt Juliet and Nurse.

Mercutio, separated from Romeo, finally succeeds in finding him.

Mercutio Away, begone, the sport is at the best.

Romeo Ay, so I fear; the more is my unrest.

They make to exit, watched by Tybalt.

Tybalt I will withdraw; but this intrusion shall
Now seeming sweet, convert to bitt'rest gall.

Exit Tybalt.

Scene Five

Emily, Romeo and Mercutio.

Emily Now Romeo is belov'd and loves again,
Alike bewitched by the charm of looks,
But to his foe suppos'd he must complain
And she steal love's sweet bait from fearful hooks.

She stops Romeo.

Can you go forward when your heart is here?

Mercutio Romeo! My cousin Romeo! Romeo!

Romeo Can I go forward when my heart is here?
Turn back, dull earth, and find thy centre out.

Mercutio Romeo! Humours! Madman! Passion! Lover!

***Romeo** does not answer.*

Romeo, good night.

*Exit **Mercutio**.*

Romeo He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

Emily He doesn't understand true love and happy-ever-after like we do.

***Romeo** complains to **Emily**.*

Romeo Being held a foe, I may not have access
To breathe such vows as lovers use to swear:
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,
And the place death, considering who I am,
If any of her kinsmen find me here.

Emily But stony limits cannot hold love out,
And what love can do, that dares love attempt.

Romeo If they do see me, they will murder me.

Emily You have night's cloak to hide you from their eyes.

Romeo Yes, but she love me, let them find me here!

*Enter **Juliet** above.*

Emily But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?

Romeo It is the east and Juliet is the sun!
It is my lady, O it is my love!
O that she knew she were!

Juliet Ay me.

Romeo She speaks.
O speak again, bright angel.

Juliet My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words
Of thy tongue's uttering, yet I know the sound.
Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?
O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name.
'Tis but thy name that is my enemy:
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's a Montague?
What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other word would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes.
Romeo, doff thy name,
And for thy name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

Romeo I take thee at thy word.
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptis'd:
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

Juliet Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say –

Romeo – Ay –

Juliet And I will take thy word.
Sweet, good night.
This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.
Good night, good night. As sweet repose and rest
Come to thy heart as that within my breast.

*Their kiss is interrupted by **Nurse** calling.*

Nurse Madam!

Juliet Anon, good nurse.
Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.
If that thy bent of love be honourable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow
Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite.

Nurse Madam!

Juliet I come, anon!

Nurse Madam!

Juliet By and by I come –
A thousand times good night.

Exit Juliet.

Romeo A thousand times the worse, to want thy light.

Enter Juliet above again.

Juliet Hist! Romeo, hist!
What o'clock tomorrow
Shall I send to thee?

Romeo By the hour of nine.

Juliet I will not fail. 'Tis twenty year till then.
Good night, good night. Parting is such sweet sorrow
That I shall say good night till it be morrow.

Exit Juliet.

Romeo Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast.

Romeo suddenly turns to Emily.

Marry us.

Emily What? Me?

Romeo This I pray,
That thou consent to marry us today.

Emily But...

Romeo Her I love now
Doth grace for grace and love for love allow.

Emily ... I've never married anyone. I don't know if I'm allowed to. I don't know what to do.

Pause.

Well, actually I do know how to marry people. I do it all the time. When I play. And this is just a play, isn't it?

Pause.

Yes! I'll do it. Of course, I'll do it. I'll marry you. But I'll have to marry you in secret. Your families wouldn't allow it. But, you know what, it will all be so happy-ever-after that your families' hatred will eventually turn to pure love. It's what happens in stories.