

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

ROMEO & JULIET

Adapted by

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Shooting script

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EXT. HIGHWAY. AFTERNOON.

A ribbon of freeway stretching into a blue and pink late afternoon sky. A huge dark sedan, windows tinted gold, headlights blazing, powers directly for us.

CUT TO: A heavy, low-slung, pickup truck traveling toward the sedan.

WIDE SHOT: Sky, freeway, the cars closing.

TIGHT ON: The sedan.

TIGHT ON: The pickup.

Like thunderous, jousting opponents, the cars pass in a deafening cacophony of noise.

INT. TRUCK. AFTERNOON.

TIGHT ON: The fat face of GREGORY, yelling at the disappearing sedan.

GREGORY

A dog of the house of Capulet moves
me!

He and the pimply-faced front-seat passenger, SAMPSON,
explode with laughter.

The red-haired driver BENVOLIO, keeps his eyes on the road.

EXT. EXIT RAMP. AFTERNOON.

The truck spirals down an exit ramp and screeches into busy
driveway of a large gas station.

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

Attendants immediately run to the truck. Two clean
windshields and duco, the third fills the gas tank.

INT. TRUCK. AFTERNOON.

Gregory in the back seat is boasting outrageously.

GREGORY

A dog of that house shall move me
to stand. I will take the wall of
any man or maid of Capulets.

Sampson, sarcastically.

SAMPSON

That shows thee a weak slave. For
the weakest goes to the wall.

GREGORY

'Tis true; and therefore women,
being the weaker vessels, are ever
thrust to the wall. Therefore, I
will push Capulet's men from the
wall, and thrust his maids to the
wall.

Benvolio, disgusted, gets out of the car.

BENVOLIO

The quarrel is between our masters...

GREGORY

(yelling after him)
...and us their men.

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

FOLLOW: Benvolio as he heads for the bathroom.

PICK UP: A mother wrangling three little boys out of a
station wagon - the smallest kid carries a toy pistol.

SUPER FAST SCAN TRACK: Past the mother to - the huge black
sedan pulling up outside the gas station mini-mart.

The front door of the sedan opens. Shiny black boots -
decorated with tiny, silver, cat-shaped spurs - plant

themselves on the ground. The boots are joined by two other pairs of well-shod feet.

HOLD: The spurred boots move out of frame.

CRANE UP: The other feet belong to a tough-looking Latin youth ABRA - and his goateed side-kick PETRUCHIO.

Abra and Petruchio enter the mini-mart, as four white-clad girls exit.

FOLLOW: The girls as they head for their car.

SUPER FAST SCAN TRACK: Past the girls to:

INT. TRUCK. AFTERNOON.

Sampson is trying to out boast Gregory.

SAMPSON

I will show myself a tyrant. When
I have fought with the men I will
be civil with the maids, I will cut
off their heads.

Gregory; mock outrage.

GREGORY

The heads of the maids?

Sampson leers lecherously at the girls.

SAMPSON

Ay, the heads of the maids, or
their maiden heads, take it in what

sense thou wilt.

GREGORY

They must take it in sense that
feel it.

Gregory and Sampson pump up the song on the sound system and
sing out at the girls.

GREGORY/SAMPSON

(SINGING)

I am a pretty piece of flesh!
I am a pretty piece of flesh!
Me, they shall feel while I am able
to stand;
I am a pretty piece of flesh!

The girls, pretending not to notice, get into the car.

EXT. GAS STATION - MINIMART. AFTERNOON.

GREGORY'S P.O.V.: The car pulls away revealing... Abra and
Petruccio exiting the mini-mart.

INT. TRUCK. AFTERNOON.

CLOSE ON: Gregory.

CLOSE ON: Sampson - Their singing abruptly halts.

SAMPSON

Here comes of the House of Capulet.

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

Abra and Petruchio stare coldly toward the boys.

INT. TRUCK. AFTERNOON.

CLOSE ON: Sampson swallowing hard.

CLOSE ON: Gregory; eyes locked to the Capulets. With fake bravado he nudges Sampson.

GREGORY

Quarrel I will back thee.

CLOSE ON: Sampson trying to quell his rising panic.

SAMPSON

Let us take the law of our sides.
Let them begin.

SUDDENLY: BANG! Gregory and Sampson jump.

WHIP PAN: It was the garage attendant slamming the hood.

Gregory and Sampson are mortally embarrassed.

EXT. MINI-MART. AFTERNOON.

Abra and Petruchio laugh contemptuously and move to their

CAR:

FOLLOW: The mother and kids exiting the mini-mart.

SUPER FAST SCAN TRACK: To...

INT. TRUCK. AFTERNOON.

Sampson furiously tries to save face.

SAMPSON

I will bite my thumb at them; which
is a disgrace to them if they bear
it.

Sampson quickly bites his thumb toward Abra's back as he
gets into the sedan.

INT. SEDAN. AFTERNOON.

Abra's eyes flick to the rear view mirror.

E.C.U.: The rear view mirror; Sampson biting his thumb.

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

Suddenly, a blood curdling screech of tires - the sedan,
rubber burning, reverses full speed toward Sampson and
Gregory.

The mother in the station wagon brakes to avoid collision -
a sports car shunts into her vehicle. Mother and children
scream.

Attendants scatter.

The Capulet car shudders to a halt inches from the truck, blocking its path.

INT. BLACK SEDAN. AFTERNOON.

CLOSE ON: A scurry of limbs scrabbling across seats and reaching for door handles;

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

Abra hauls Sampson from the truck. Gregory leaps out, Petruchio covers him. Abra slams Sampson against the side of the vehicle - then, goading him to go for his gun, screams:

ABRA

Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

Sampson's shaking hand hovers - ready to draw.

SAMPSON

I do bite my thumb, sir.

INT. STATION WAGON. AFTERNOON.

CUT TO: The panicked mother in the station wagon. She motions her children to the floor.

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

Customers run for cover.

CLOSE ON: Abra: An hysterical rage; he shrieks:

ABRA

Do you bite you thumb at us, sir?

SAMPSON

(sweating, murmurs to Gregory)

Is the law on our side if I say "Ay"?

GREGORY

No.

INT. BATHROOM. AFTERNOON.

CLOSE ON: The black cowboy boots, trousers down around them.
The sound of a toilet flushing.

PAN TO: The next cubicle, the door opens revealing Benvolio.

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

CLOSE ON: Sampson, still sweating.

SAMPSON

No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at
you, sir - but I do bite my thumb,
sir!

CUT TO: Gregory; a ridiculous inquiry.

GREGORY

Do you quarrel, sir?

CUT TO: Abra; a dangerous smile.

ABRA

Quarrel sir, no sir.

CLOSE ON: Sampson; unconvincing bravado...

SAMPSON

But if you do, sir, I am for you. I
serve as good a man as you.

CLOSE ON: Abra; a lethal question.

ABRA

No better?

CLOSE ON: Sampson, trapped.

SAMPSON

Well sir...

INT. STATION WAGON. AFTERNOON.

CUT TO: Inside the station wagon. The mother does not
notice her five year old aiming a toy gun toward the boys.

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

CUT TO: Gregory's P.O.V.: Benvolio emerging from the bathroom - he whispers maniacally.

GREGORY

Here comes our kinsman. Say better!

EXTREME CLOSE UP: Sampson; he screams:

SAMPSON

YES SIR, BETTER!

EXTREME CLOSE UP: Abra demonically roars:

ABRA

THOU LIEST!

CUT TO: Benvolio. Terror stricken, he sees the boys.

DISTORTED OUT OF CONTROL CLOSE UP: Abra shrieks:

ABRA

DRAW IF YOU BE MEN!

LIGHTNING CUT: Four hands reaching for guns.

SLAM ZOOM: To Benvolio - weapon outstretched he screams:

BENVOLIO

Part, fools! You know not what you do!

MUSIC STING; A SUPER MARCO SLAM ZOOM along the barrel of Benvolio's gun; the engraved gun type reads:

'Sword 9mm series S'

CUT TO: Benvolio. He screams in desperation:

BENVOLIO

Put up your swords!

Gregory, Sampson, Abra, and Petruchio freeze. A moment - then from behind, the unmistakable sound of a gun being cocked.

EXTREME CLOSE UP: The black cowboy boots.

CRANE UP: To find the dark cold eyes and feline smile, of the wearer of the boots. His name is TYBALT; a cigarette is clenched between his teeth and his gun is aimed at Benvolio's head.

TYBALT

What, art thou drawn among these
heartless hinds?
Turn thee Benvolio.

Benvolio, a choked explanation:

BENVOLIO

I do but keep the peace.

A mocking smile.

TYBALT

Peace? I hate the word
As I hate hell, all Montagues, and...

EXTREME CLOSE UP: Tybalt's finger squeezing the trigger...

Suddenly we hear firing from Tybalt's blind side.

Tybalt redirects his weapon, cracking off a single shot at the surprise attacker.

EXT./INT. MINIMART. AFTERNOON.

It is the five year old from the station wagon. The bullet smacks the toy gun from the child's hand, shattering the wagon's window.

Mother and children scream.

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

A panicked Benvolio falls back, accidentally his gun fires - the bullet whistles past Tybalt's head.

Tybalt combat rolls, and using a screaming car load of girls as cover, returns two quick shots, narrowly missing
Benvolio.

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

The gas station attendant hits a button and heavy metal screens slam down.

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

CUT TO: Gregory firing - a bullet rips through Abra's arm.

Petruchio dives for cover; Gregory and Sampson leap into Benvolio's truck. Rubber burns as they smash past the Capulet vehicle.

CLOSE ON: Tybalt taking aim.

EXT. HIGHWAY - SUPERMARKET. AFTERNOON.

His first shot plugs the fuel tank, the second a tire. Out of control and spewing gasoline the Montague truck careens across the highway and through the glass front of a supermarket.

Gregory and Sampson throw themselves from the truck moments before...

EXT. SUPERMARKET. AFTERNOON.

CLOSE ON: The gas tank erupts into an almighty fireball.

The screen fills with flame: the following images combust in front of us:

EXT. HIGHWAY - SUPERMARKET - FROM AIR. AFTERNOON.

NEWS CHOPPER P.O.V.: Citizens run in the streets.

Looters raid shops near the supermarket - security guards return fire.

INT. RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

A table of dark suited men and their wives.

CAPULET. CLOSE ON: The powerful 60 year old face of FULGENCIO
Seated next to him is his much younger wife GLORIA.

SUDDENLY: Windows explode in a tidal wave of glass. Diners
take cover.

Capulet moves fearlessly toward the window.

CAPULET

(to a waiter)

Give me my long sword!

EXT. STREET. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: The word MONTAGUE fills the screen.

PULL BACK: We see the word is the number plate of a large
black limousine.

The limousine is stuck in the traffic snarl - bullets bounce
off its bullet proof windshield.

INT. MONTAGUE'S LIMOUSINE. NIGHT.

TED MONTAGUE, a 60 year old red-faced bulldog of a man,
bursts from the back of the limousine.

MONTAGUE

What noise is this!

As Ted draws an enormous pearl handed revolver, CAROLINE, his conservatively dressed wife, tries to restrain him.

CAROLINE

Thou shalt not stir one foot to
seek a foe!

MONTAGUE

(shrugging her off)
Hold me not, let me go!

EXT. STREET. NIGHT.

Crouched behind a truck, Benvolio shakily tries to re-load.

CLOSE ON: The barrel of Tybalt's gun enters frame and presses into Benvolio's forehead. Tybalt whispers sweetly.

TYBALT

Look upon thy death, Benvolio.

CLOSE ON: Tybalt's finger on the trigger. Benvolio screams a scream of mortal horror.

SUDDENLY Tybalt is blinded by a burning shaft of light. A magnificently powerful helicopter gunship hovers above him. A command booms from the chopper's public address system.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

(over PA)
Rebellious subjects, enemies to
peace,
Throw your mistempered weapons to
the ground.

INT. CHOPPER. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: The steely gray eyes of CAPTAIN PRINCE, chief of the Verona Beach Police Department. He lifts the microphone and repeats the command.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

Throw your mistempered weapons to
the ground!

EXT. VERONA BEACH. NIGHT.

Tybalt looks up to the chopper. Patrol cars screech to a halt.

An almighty orchestral chord.

EXT. VERONA BEACH - MATTE SHOT. NIGHT.

SUPER WIDE SHOT: A trail of devastation winds up through grid-locked traffic to the burning supermarket.

In the distance looms an enormous statue of Christ flanked by two glass towers. We push toward the towers. One is neon-crowned MONTAGUE, the other, CAPULET.

We hear:

VOICE OVER

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.
From forth the fatal loins of these
two foes
A pair of star crossed lovers take
their life.
Whose misadventured piteous

OVERTHROWS

Doth with their death bury their
parents strife.

A dark chord.

EXT. VERONA BEACH SKYLINE. NIGHT.

A swarm of helicopters thunder into frame. We see
compressed, time-lapsed, images of their journey.

SLAM INTO: A coat of arms that labels a large tower - the
emblem reads; "Verona Beach Police Department: In God We
Trust".

HOLD:

INT. CAPTAIN PRINCE'S PRECINCT OFFICE. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: Captain Prince's grim features. He eyes Capulet
and Montague.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

Three civil brawls, bred of an airy

WORD

By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,
Have thrice disturbed the quiet of
our streets.

Capulet's lawyer tries to intervene.

LAWYER

My noble Prince I can...

Captain Prince overriding, slams the desk.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

If ever you disturb our streets
again,
Your lives shall pay the forfeit of
the peace.

Hold on Captain Prince's determined gaze.

EXT. VERONA STREET. DAWN.

A majestic sunrise; Ted Montague's limousine sulks through
deserted streets. In the distance, Jesus looks out over the
now peaceful city.

INT. MONTAGUE'S LIMOUSINE. DAWN.

Ted Montague, his wife Caroline, and nephew Benvolio ride in
uncomfortable silence.

Caroline finally speaks her anger.

CAROLINE

O where is Romeo? Saw you him

today?
(pointedly to Montague)
Right glad I am he was not at this
fray.

Montague snorts derisively and stares out the window.
Embarrassed, Benvolio tries to be of assistance.

BENVOLIO

Madam, underneath The Grove of

SYCAMORE

So early walking did I see your son.

Ted Montague speaks with contempt.

MONTAGUE

Many a morning hath he there been

SEEN

With tears augmenting the fresh
morning's dew.

Caroline struggles to contain her emotion.

CAROLINE

Away from light steals home my
heavy son
And private in his chamber pens
himself,
Shuts up his windows, locks fair
daylight out
And makes himself an artificial
night.

Montague barks into the car intercom.

MONTAGUE

Westward from this city side.

EXT. STREET. DAWN.

The limousine U-turns heading west.

EXT. BEACH. DAWN.

To the melancholic strains of Mozart's "Serenade for Winds", we see a blond nineteen year old boy sitting alone on an empty beach.

CLOSE ON: The boy, ROMEO. Looking out over the ocean he sucks on the last of a cigarette and then writes intensely in a small worn note book.

We hear his voice over.

ROMEO (V/O)

Love is a smoke made with the fume
of sighs;
Being purged, a fire sparkling in
lovers' eyes;
Being vexed, a sea nourished with
lovers' tears.
What is it else? A madness most
discreet,
A choking gall and a preserving
sweet.

INT. MONTAGUE'S LIMOUSINE. DAWN.

The limo is parked in a cross street that runs down to the beach.

Opposite the limo, young diehard clubbers, faded drag queens and street people, hang outside a dilapidated nightclub. A

broken neon sign reads: "The Grove of Sick Amore."

Ted, Caroline and Benvolio sit watching the silhouette of Romeo on the beach.

MONTAGUE

Black and portentous must this
humour prove
Unless good counsel may the cause
remove.

EXT. BEACH. DAWN.

P.O.V.: From the limousine. Romeo rises and listlessly makes his way up the beach - seeing his father's car he turns and heads for the path that hugs the beach front.

INT. MONTAGUE'S LIMOUSINE. DAWN.

BENVOLIO

So please you step aside.
I'll know his grievance or be much
denied.

Benvolio clambers out of the limo.

CLOSE ON: Montague, an encouraging smile.

MONTAGUE

Come Madam. Let's away.

EXT. STREET. DAWN.

The limousine pulls away and Benvolio heads after Romeo. He pauses. A deck at the rear of "Sick Amore" sprawls onto the beach. At the base of the deck, Benvolio can see Romeo squatting in discussion with an old drunk. Benvolio approaches with a not very convincing casualness.

BENVOLIO

Good morrow, cousin.

Romeo turns. Sore, red, unfriendly eyes squint back at Benvolio.

ROMEO

Is the day so young?

BENVOLIO

But new struck, Coz.

Romeo rises, Benvolio follows.

ROMEO

Ay me! Sad hours seem long.

Romeo stops as if taking in Benvolio for the first time.

ROMEO (CONT.)

Was that my father that went hence
so fast?

BENVOLIO

(GUILTY)

It was.

Benvolio chases Romeo down the path which divides the beach

from a string of cheap souvenir shops and sleazy bars.

BENVOLIO

What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?

ROMEO

Not having that which having makes
them short.

BENVOLIO

In love?

ROMEO

Out.

BENVOLIO

Of love?

ROMEO

Out of her favor where I am in love.

BENVOLIO

Alas that love, so gentle in his
view,
Should be so tyrannical and rough
in proof!

ROMEO

Alas that love, whose view...

Romeo is halted by the sight of last night's disturbance
displayed on a small TV screen in an outdoor bar.

ROMEO (CONT.)

What fray was here?

Benvolio starts to reply.

ROMEO (CONT.)

(ANGRILY)

Yet tell me not, for I have heard
it all.

Here's much to do with hate, but
more with love.

Romeo turns the corner away from the beach. He strides
along the sidewalk raging.

ROMEO (CONT.)

Why then, O brawling love, O loving
hate,

O anything, of nothing first
create!

O heavy lightness, serious vanity,
Misshapen chaos of well-seeming
forms,

Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold
fire, sick health,

Still-waking sleep, that is not
what it is!

Romeo screams at a huge bouncer who lounges in the doorway
of a sex club.

ROMEO (CONT.)

This love feel I, that feel no love
in this!

The bouncer's hand moves to his gun. Romeo, ignoring him,
turns on Benvolio. A mocking laughter through tears:

ROMEO (CONT.)

Dost thou not laugh?

Benvolio, nervously eyeing the bouncer, shepherds Romeo out of danger.

BENVOLIO

No, coz, I rather weep.

Romeo smiles.

ROMEO

Farewell, my coz.

Romeo, breaking into a jog, leaves Benvolio behind. Benvolio pursues him down the street.

EXT. ROMEO'S CAR. DAY.

CLOSE ON: The sleeping face of a fourteen year old boy -

BALTHASAR.

PULL BACK: Balthasar sleeps on the hood of a magnificent silver car.

Three or four kids doze on the sidewalk. As Romeo approaches, they jump up and begin vigorously polishing the already gleaming car.

Balthasar wakes. He springs off the hood, chases the kids away, then, producing a huge bunch of keys, opens the car door for Romeo.

Benvolio intercepts Romeo at the car.

BENVOLIO

Tell me in sadness, who is it that
you love.

ROMEO

In sadness, cousin, I do love...a
woman.

BENVOLIO

I aimed so near when I supposed you
loved.

Romeo leans against the car.

ROMEO

A right good marksman; and she's
fair I love.

Romeo pulls his shirt down to reveal a small shoulder
tattoo.

CLOSE ON: The tattooed word; ROSALINE.

BENVOLIO

Rosaline!
(he is impressed)
A right fair mark, fair coz, is
soonest hit.

ROMEO

She'll not be hit with Cupid's
arrow.
She hath Dian's wit,
And in strong proof of chastity
lives well armed.

Benvolio can't believe it.

BENVOLIO

Then she hath sworn that she will
still live chaste?

ROMEO

She hath; and in that sparing makes
huge waste.

Benvolio - a plan.

BENVOLIO

Be ruled by me; forget to think of
her.

ROMEO

O, teach me how I should forget to
think!

Benvolio indicates one of the working girls already
strutting
the foot path.

BENVOLIO

By giving liberty unto thine eyes.
Examine other beauties.

Romeo laughs dismissively. He throws the kids a few coins
and slides into the drivers seat. Balthasar jumps in back.

ROMEO

Farewell. Thou canst not teach me
to forget.

BENVOLIO

I'll pay that doctrine, or else die
in debt.

Benvolio leaps into the passenger seat of the moving vehicle.

INT. CAPULET OFFICE. DAY.

An orchestral fanfare. TRACK DOWN: Past monstrous letters that read CAPULET and in through a window to discover Fulgencio Capulet. He stares out the window toward the other tallest building in Verona; the one crested with the word MONTAGUE.

CAPULET

But Montague is bound as well as I,
In penalty alike;

Capulet turns: on the other side of his desk sits DAVID PARIS; a square-jawed young man in a red cashmere sweater. Tea has been served from an exquisite silver tea service.

CAPULET (CONT.)

And 'tis not hard, I think, for me
so old as we to keep the peace.

Dave smiles obligingly.

DAVE

Of honorable reckoning are you
both,
And pity 'tis you lived at odds so
long.

An awkward pause: Dave sips tea, then, with a deep breath...

DAVE (CONT.)

But now, my lord, what say you to
my suit?

Capulet considers the framed photograph on his desk.

CAPULET

But saying o'er what I have said

BEFORE;

My child is yet a stranger in the

WORLD;

Let two more summers wither in
their pride,
Ere we may think her ripe to be a
bride.

Dave is politely insistent.

DAVE

Younger than she are happy mothers
made.

CAPULET

(checking him hard)
And too soon marred are those so
early made.
Earth hath swallowed all my hopes
but she;
She is the hopeful lady of my earth.

Capulet rounds the desk and places a fatherly hand on Dave's
shoulder.

CAPULET (CONT.)

But woo her, gentle Paris, get her
heart.
My will to her consent is but a
part,
And she agreed, within her scope of

CHOICE

Lies my consent and fair according

voice.
This night I hold an old Accustomed
feast.

Capulet leans close.

CAPULET (CONT.)

At my poor house, look to behold
this night,
Fresh female buds that make dark
heaven light.
Hear all; all see,
And like her most whose merit most
shall be.

Capulet smiles knowingly. Dave seems encouraged.

CAPULET (CONT.)

(a hearty slap)
Come go with me!

Capulet excitedly ushers Dave from the office.

INT. POOL HALL. DAY.

Dim, smoke filled. Benvolio and Romeo play pool.

BENVOLIO

(chalking his cue)
Take thou some new infection to thy
eye.

He lines up the six ball top pocket.

BENVOLIO (CONT.)

And the rank poison of the old will

die.

A hopeless shot that slams the eight ball toward the side pocket. Romeo stops it with his hand and hurls it against the other balls.

BENVOLIO

Why, Romeo, art thou mad?

Romeo sinks the other balls with his hands.

ROMEO

Not mad, but bound more than a
madman is;
Shut up in prison, kept without my
food,

Romeo stalks away from the table.

ROMEO (CONT.)

Whipped and tormented.

He stops at the gun check, rummaging in his pocket.

ROMEO

Good day, good fellow.

A crusty old man looks up from the small television. His entire face a tattooed shooting target, the bullseye between his eyes.

The old man points to the sign that reads: "No ticket no gun." Romeo finally produces a ticket. Crusty the Target goes out back. Romeo's attention is caught by the television.

INT. T.V. STUDIO SET. DAY

CUT TO: TELEVISION.

An ostentatious woman and her over groomed partner Rich, hosts what looks to be a kind of Entertainment Tonight show. The graphic behind them reads "Solemnity Nights" with Susan Santandiago and Rich Ranchidis.

Susan speaks conspiratorially to camera.

SUSAN

Now I'll tell you without asking.
The great
Rich Capulet, holds an old
accustomed feast;

Rich chimes in:

RICH

A fair Assembly.

SUSAN

I Pray you sir can you read?

A list of names begins to scroll across the screen. Rich reads them off.

RICH

Signor Placentio and his wife and
daughters,
Signor Martino, the Lady Widow
Of Utruvio and her lovely nieces,
Rosaline and Livia...

INT. POOL HALL. DAY.

CUT TO: Benvolio, he leans into Romeo.

BENVOLIO

At this same ancient feast of

CAPULET'S

Sups the fair Rosaline; whom thou
so loves,
With all the admired beauties of
Verona.
Go thither, and with unattained eye
Compare her face with some that I
shall show,
And I will make thee think thy swan
a crow.

ROMEO

One fairer than my love?

Crusty returns. He hands the boys their guns.

ROMEO (CONT.)

The all-seeing sun Ne'er saw her
match since first the world begun.

CUT TO: TELEVISION.

SUSAN

If you be not of the house of
Montagues,
Come and crush a cup of wine!

RICH

Rest you merry!

CUT TO: Romeo, he considers.

ROMEO

I'll go along, no such sight to be
shown.
But to rejoice in splendour of mine
own.

The boys move off.

PUSH IN ON: THE TELEVISION.

EXT. CAPULET STATE. DAY.

An aerial shot of a magnificent island estate. An Italianate wonder of Florentine architecture. Armed guards patrol the grounds. The telecaption reads "Capulet Mansion."

The file tape loses its television quality. We sweep down through manicured gardens, where workers prepare decorations for tonight's celebrations, and into the house. The music darkens and we hear the desperate calling of a girl's name.

VOICE OVER

J U L I E T !

INT. CAPULET MANSION - CORRIDOR. DAY.

CUT TO: A long deserted corridor.

VOICE OVER

J U L I E T !

INT. CAPULET MANSION - DRAWING ROOM. DAY.

CUT TO: An echoey Chinoiserie style drawing room.

VOICE OVER

J U L I E T !

INT. BATHROOM. DAY.

CLOSE ON: The still, serene, submerged features of a beautiful young girl. Dark floating hair gently frames the face. Heavy liquid eyes stare up through the water.

We hear, though faintly, the calling:

VOICE OVER

J U L I E T !

With a rush JULIET surfaces. As she gulps air, we realise that she is in fact, in a bath.

We hear the calling loudly again.

VOICE OVER

J U L I E T !

Juliet listens. For a moment she is very still, then she closes her eyes and slides back beneath the surface of the water.

INT. ENTRANCE HALL CAPULET MANSION. DAY.

A Gothic, unfriendly environment heavy with religious iconography. The entrance hall is crowded with workers and servants preparing for tonight's party.

Gloria Capulet fiddles with a short black wig in the hallway mirror. She is attired in full Cleopatra costume.

Dissatisfied with the wig, she rips it from her head and calls maniacally.

GLORIA

J U L I E T !

Gloria is met by the NURSE, a fat, grandmotherly Hispanic woman.

GLORIA (CONT.)

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

NURSE

I bade her come. God forbid!
Where's this girl?
Juliet!

CUT TO: The top of the stairs. As if from nowhere, Juliet has appeared. She wears a bathrobe and her hair is wet.

JULIET

(COOLLY)

Madam, I am here. What is you will.

Gloria, startled, sweeps up the stairs and shuffles her daughter toward a doorway.

GLORIA

Nurse, give leave awhile, we must talk in secret.

INT. GLORIA'S DRESSING ROOM. DAY.

Gloria shepherds Juliet into her opulent dressing room and closes the door. She circles with nervous vexation searching for words, stops, then suddenly opens the door and yells out to the Nurse.

GLORIA (CONT.)

Nurse, come back again.
I have remembered me, thou's hear our counsel.

The Nurse enters. Gloria, still refusing eye contact, checks her appearance once more in the mirror. She takes a hairbrush and, feigning pleasantness, intensely brushes her hair.

GLORIA (CONT.)

Nurse, thou knowest my daughter's of a pretty age.

NURSE

(to Juliet)
Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nursed.

The hair brush clatters onto the dresser. A moment of tense silence. Gloria grips herself and pours a sherry.

Back still turned, she speaks to her daughter.

GLORIA

By my count, I was your mother much
upon these years
That you are now a maid.

A nembatal twists like a pin in the corner of Gloria's
mouth.

She slugs it down with the sherry and turns abruptly to face
Juliet.

GLORIA (CONT.)

Thus then in brief, the valiant
Paris seeks you for his love.

CUT TO: Juliet; an uncomprehending stare.

The Nurse, caught off guard, tries to buoy the situation.

NURSE

A man, young lady! Lady, such a

MAN

As all the world - why, he's a man
of wax.

The medication takes immediate effect upon Gloria. She
joins Juliet on the couch and coos in Paris's favour.

GLORIA

Verona's summer hath not such a
flower.

NURSE

Nay, he's a flower; in faith, a
very flower.

GLORIA

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.
This precious book of love, this
unbound lover,
To beautify him only lacks a cover.
So shall you share all that he doth
possess,
By having him, making yourself no
less.

Gloria probes Juliet's thoughts.

GLORIA

Can you like of Paris' love?

Juliet, adept at negotiating her mother's strange moods,
chooses her words precisely.

JULIET

I'll look to like, if looking
liking move,
But no more deep will I endart mine
eye,
Than your consent gives strength to
make it fly.

PETER the chauffeur enters.

PETER

Madam. The guests are come.

GLORIA

(checks the mirror)

We follow thee.

She exits, Nurse in tow.

CLOSE ON: Juliet stares out the windows and across the water.

Suddenly the Nurse's face leers into shot. She whispers enthusiastically into Juliet's ear.

NURSE

Go girl, seek happy nights to happy days.

CLOSE ON: Juliet's face.

EXT. CAPULET MANSION. DAY/NIGHT.

JUMP CUT: Aerial shot of Capulet Mansion. We time lapse from late afternoon to night; fairy lights illuminate, guests appear, music swells, and a single incandescent flare, explodes pink against the inky sky.

EXT. BEACH. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: Romeo: his face glows pink. He is sitting on the grubby shoreline of Verona Bay dressed as a boy King Arthur, with fake chain mail and sword.

Romeo watches the dying flare sink into the bay. The sound of the party drifts across the water. Balthasar, dressed as Frankenstein's monster, touches a lighter to a large bong and Romeo inhales smoke.

Behind them, Benvolio, drunk and dressed as a pizza, is yelling at Gregory, who, dressed as a Viking, is trying to

cut slices off his pizza costume. Sampson, also dressed as a Viking, sits in the back of a car. One arm is bandaged and he swigs from a bottle.

Suddenly the darkness is slashed by headlights. A reckless sports car speeds toward the boys. Stereo screaming, the car skids to a halt.

CLOSE ON: Music blares from the sound system. A silver stilettoed foot emerges from the car and plants itself firmly in the dirt.

CUT TO: The boys, eyes wide with amazement.

CUT TO: Another stiletto follows the first. Guitar groans.

PAN: Slowly up a shapely pair of black stockinged legs, past a hint of garter belt to a black sequined mini-skirt and up over a muscular dark skinned stomach and tiny sequined bra top, to discover: the 21 year old male, African American face of MERCUTIO.

CUT TO: The boys. Recovering from the initial shock, they laugh and cat-call raucously.

CUT TO: Mercutio. He roughly jams a short black wig onto his head and yells above the music.

MERCUTIO

Strike drum!

Mercutio magically produces invitations from somewhere within his mini-skirt and dances down the beach to the boys.

Aggressively bumping and grinding, Mercutio distributes the invitations. Reaching Romeo, he declares:

MERCUTIO

We'll on without apology.

Romeo lets the invitation fall to the sand.

ROMEO

I am not for this ambling.
Being but heavy, I will bear the
light.

Romeo pulls on the bong once more.

Suddenly, Mercutio is upon Romeo. Hauling him to his feet,
he waltzes him through the sand.

MERCUTIO

Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you
dance.

Romeo pushes Mercutio away.

ROMEO

Not I, believe me. You have
dancing shoes
With nimble soles. I have a soul
of lead.

Mercutio in mock sympathy.

MERCUTIO

Too great oppression for a tender
thing.

ROMEO

Is love a tender thing? It is too
rough, too rude, too boisterous,
and it pricks like thorn.

Romeo lies staring up at the stars.

MERCUTIO

If love be rough with you, be rough
with love.

Mercutio jumps on Romeo.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Prick love for pricking, and you
beat love down.

Romeo fights Mercutio off.

ROMEO

Under love's heavy burden do I sink!

CUT TO: Benvolio, impatiently honking the horn.

BENVOLIO

Every man betake him to his legs!

Mercutio heads Romeo toward the car.

MERCUTIO

Come, we burn daylight, ho!

Romeo pulls away.

ROMEO

But 'tis no wit to go.

Mercutio turns, exasperated.

MERCUTIO

Why, may one ask?

ROMEO

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.

Mercutio produces a tiny gold pill case.

MERCUTIO

O, then I see Queen Mab hath been
with you.
She is the fairies' midwife, and
she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate

STONE

On the forefinger of an alderman,
Drawn with a team of little atomies
Over men's noses as they lie asleep.

Tantalisingly, he passes the case beneath Romeo's nose.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Her chariot is an empty hazelnut,
Her wagoner a small gray-coated gnat.

With a conjurer's dexterity Mercutio extracts a small, gray pill.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

And in this state she gallops night
by night
Through lovers' brains, and then
they dream of love;

He palms the pills. It reappears from behind Romeo's ear.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

O'er lawyers' fingers who straight
dream on fees;
O'er ladies' lips, who straight on
kisses dream,
Which oft the angry Mab with
blisters plagues.
Because their breaths with
sweetmeats tainted are.

The pill box glints in the moonlight.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Sometime she driveth o'er a
soldier's neck;
And then dreams he of cutting
foreign throats.
And being thus frightened, swears a
prayer or two
And sleeps again.

Mercutio now intensely angry:

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

This is that very Mab
That plaits the manes of horses in
the night
And bakes the elf-locks in foul
sluttish hairs

He screams into the night.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

This is the hag, when maids lie on
their backs,
That presses them and learns them
first to bear,
Making them women of good carriage.
This is she, this is she...

CLOSE ON: Mercutio. He breaks off. There is a strange
stillness amongst the group. Romeo goes to his friend.

ROMEO

Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace.
Thou talkest of nothing.

Mercutio meets Romeo's gaze.

MERCUTIO

True, I talk of dreams;
Which are the children of an idle
brain,
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy.
Which is as thin of substance as
the air
And more inconstant than the wind,
who woos
Even now the frozen bosom of the

NORTH

And, being angered, puffs away from

THENCE

Turning his attention to the dew-
dropping south.

CUT TO: Benvolio in the car. The alcohol has caught up with him and he looks a little queasy.

BENVOLIO

This wind you talk of blows us from

OURSELVES:

Supper is done and we shall come
too late.

Romeo looks toward the distant city.

ROMEO

I fear, too early, for 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 despised life closed in my
breast,
By some vile forfeit of untimely
death.

PAUSE: The water turns golden as fireworks explode across the bay. Romeo smiles.

ROMEO (CONT.)

But he that hath the steerage of my

COURSE

Direct my sail!

He takes the pill and drops it into his mouth.

ROMEO (CONT.)

On, lusty gentlemen!

With the rush of a mind altering cocktail, we ZOOM IN on Romeo's eyes; they shimmer with the shooting star reflection of exploding fireworks - a bending Eastern chord, we launch into Donna Summer's 'I Feel Love', sung by the vocalist from Soundgarden with orchestration by 'Deconstruction' and sitar by Ravi Shankar.

EXT. MERCUTIO'S CAR - ON FREEWAY. NIGHT.

PULL OUT: From Romeo's eyes. He is lying in the passenger seat of Mercutio's convertible as it rockets along the freeway. The camera is directly above Romeo. He stares up at the fireworks that reflect in the windshield. The car and freeway begin to rotate and the camera follows. We feel that the car is now travelling upside-down. The camera sways through a brilliant explosion of fireworks that fill the screen with a zillion pixilating, colored dots of fire.

INT. CAPULET'S MANSION - BALLROOM. NIGHT.

PULL OUT: To discover the glittering dots of fire refracting from the sparkling domed roof of the magnificently ornate Capulet Ballroom. The camera swoops down over bizarrely costumed revellers cavorting to a driving Latin big band. The camera partners with a drugged Mercutio and Benvolio who shamelessly caper with each other in a mock antic adagio.

CUT TO: Romeo gazing blankly at the dance floor.

CUT TO: Mercutio. He sweeps up a thirty-something sophisticate and twirls her in Romeo's direction.

MERCUTIO

Everyman betake him to his legs!

Romeo moves off through the crowd.

CUT TO: ROMEO'S P.O.V.: Contorted images of costumed guests eat, drink and laugh in a grotesque collision of Yves Saint Laurent cocktail party and Bacchanalian romp.

Suddenly a large arm coils around Romeo's neck.

Fulgencio DISTORTED EXTREME CLOSE UP: A seriously intoxicated Capulet; his puffy red face squeezes against Romeo's.

CAPULET

Ah, I have seen the day that I

COULD

Tell a whispering tale in a fair
ladies ear.
Such as would please.

Capulet screams above the music:

CAPULET (CONT.)

Come musicians play!

Blood drums in Romeo's ears. Breaking free from Capulet's grasp as he pushes through the crowd toward the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT.

Silent, underwater shot. Romeo's tranquil features submerged in a basin of water.

BEAT.

With a gasp, Romeo rises. A moment. His breathing calms.

Then, smoothing water into his hair, he gazes into the bathroom mirror. He turns:

The entire wall opposite the mirror, is a magnificent salt-water fish tank.

Romeo, drawn by it's submarine beauty, leans against the fish tank. Applause echoes faintly through the bathroom speakers.

INT. BALLROOM. NIGHT.

As the applause dies, a dark-haired Latina Diva takes the spotlight. The band ease into the opening bars of a love ballad.

INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT.

As the music swells, Romeo watches a moustached catfish glide past a medieval castle.

Suddenly, Romeo pulls away. Peering back at him through the castle is a pair of exquisitely beautiful angelic eyes.

The Diva's first pure, aching beautiful notes soar.

Confused, Romeo looks again. There is no mistake - it is a girl. Through a shimmering curtain of ribbon weed, two dark wide eyes, a childish nose and sumptuous full lips.

Romeo pushes his face closer to the glass. The other face snaps abruptly away.

INT. POWDER ROOM. NIGHT.

CUT TO: Juliet, dressed as an angel, on the other side of the tank. We now realise that the girls' powder room and the boys' bathroom are divided by this watery wonder world.

Juliet warily moves closer to the glass.

INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT.

Romeo leans his face against the glass. The love ballad builds.

SLOW TRACK: From Romeo's profile, in through the water, and...

INT. POWDER ROOM. NIGHT.

...out the other side, to find Juliet in profile, peering into the tank.

INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT.

Romeo presses his nose lightly against the glass.

INT. POWDER ROOM. NIGHT.

Juliet; a tiny smile.

Suddenly, CRASH! The door slams open. Juliet turns, startled. It is the Nurse.

NURSE

Juliet, your mother calls.

The Nurse bustles Juliet out the door. Juliet looks over her shoulder at the mystery boy.

INT. BALLROOM. NIGHT.

Romeo, now without his mask, slams out of the bathroom - Juliet and the Nurse have disappeared into the crowd.

CUT TO: Juliet being dragged along by the Nurse. She glances back toward the mystery boy, but he is gone.

Juliet and the Nurse rejoin Dave Paris, who is dressed as an astronaut, and Gloria, at the side of the dance floor.

Dave, irresistible smile, extends his hand to Juliet.

DAVE

Will you now deny to dance?

Juliet looks to Dave, desperately searching for a reason to decline. Gloria, brushing aside her silly daughter's protests, slugs the last of her champagne and corrals them onto the dance floor.

GLORIA

(whispering to Juliet)

A man, young lady, such a man.

As Juliet is dragged onto the floor her eyes furtively search for the boy.

CUT TO: Romeo in the crowd. Desperate to find the girl, he roughly shunts aside a reveller dressed as Lucifer, Prince of Darkness.

HOLD ON: Lucifer. He removes his mask: it is Tybalt. He turns to Abra, who's dressed as a demon.

TYBALT

What, dares the slave come hither
to fleer and scorn at our solemnity?
Now by the stock and honor of my

KIN

To strike him dead I hold it not a
sin.

Tybalt moves off aggressively, but is halted as Capulet slams a hand into his chest.

CAPULET

Why how now kinsman, wherefore
storm you so?

TYBALT

Uncle, this is that villain Romeo.
A Montague, our foe.

Capulet peers across the ballroom.

CAPULET

Young Romeo is it?

TYBALT

'Tis he.

CAPULET

Content thee gentle coz, let him
alone.
I would not for the wealth of all
this town

Here in my house do him
disparagement.
Therefore be patient; take no note
of him.

Tybalt can't believe it.

TYBALT
I'll not endure him.

CLOSE ON: Capulet, exploding with rage.

CAPULET
He shall be endured!
(slapping Tybalt viciously)
What, goodman boy! I say he shall!
Go to.

Capulet violently shoves Tybalt to the ground.

CAPULET
You'll make a mutiny among my guests!

A middle aged couple look on shocked - Capulet waves to them

FESTIVELY:

CAPULET
What? Cheerly my hearts!

Capulet snorts at Tybalt in disgust.

CAPULET
You'll not endure him! Am I the
master here or you? Go to.

Smoothing his hair into place, Capulet turns back into the
ballroom.

CLOSE ON: Tybalt choking back tears of rage.

CUT TO: Romeo moving through the crowd. For a moment the crush clears and he spies the Angel on the dance floor.

CLOSE ON: Romeo whispers:

ROMEO

Did my heart love till now?
Forswear it, sight.
For I ne'er saw true beauty till
this night.

Romeo begins to circumnavigate the dance floor in an attempt to get closer to Juliet.

CUT TO: Dave slow dancing with Juliet.

Juliet's eyes search the room for the boy.

CLOSE ON: Romeo.

CLOSE ON: Juliet.

Their eyes connect.

Juliet looks quickly back to Dave who, oblivious, returns his most devastating smile.

CUT TO: The songstress, her voice soars.

CUT TO: Juliet. Unable to look away from the boy, she stares over Dave's shoulder.

CUT TO: Romeo. Ignoring the danger, he continues to move toward the Angel.

With the Diva's spiralling final notes, the ballad concludes.

A complete black out. As the crowd break into wild applause, Juliet's eyes search the darkness, but the boy is gone.

The crowd cheers and screams its applause. An avalanche of balloons, tinsel and confetti rains down from the roof; swathes of red silk drop from the ceiling and the space is transformed.

CLOSE ON: Juliet, searching for the boy.

Suddenly: A gasp, Juliet's eyes widen, shocked.

In the dark, a hand has shot out from the drape curtaining off the stage and clasped hers. Juliet barely dares breathe.

She glances furtively to Dave Paris - he watches the stage.

Slowly Juliet turns toward the hand; there through a break in the curtain she can see eye, cheek and lips of the mystery boy. As the Diva reprises the chorus, Romeo gently pulls Juliet behind the curtain.

INT. BEHIND CURTAIN. NIGHT.

Concealed from the party by the red velvet drape, hands still clasped, the teenagers are so close their bodies almost touch.

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.

Romeo moves his lips toward Juliet's. She stops him.

JULIET

Good pilgrim, you do wrong your
hand too much,
Which mannerly devotion shows in
this.
For saints have hands that pilgrim's
hands do touch,
And palm to palm is holy palmers'
kiss.

ROMEO

Have not saints lips, and holy
palmers too?

JULIET

(a gentle scolding)
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.

He kisses her.

ROMEO (CONT.)

Thus from my lips, by thine my sin
is purged.

JULIET

Then have my lips the sin that they
have took.

ROMEO

Sin from my lips? O trespass
sweetly urged!
Give me my sin again.

He kisses her.

JULIET

You kiss by th' book.

They kiss again.

Suddenly a harsh light falls across the entwined couple.
They break apart - Nurse has pulled open the curtain and
stands eyeing them severely.

NURSE

Madam, your mother craves a word
with you.

We see that the party is breaking up. But for groups of
die-hard revellers, the room is nearly empty.

NURSE (CONT.)

Come, let's away.

She takes firm control of her charge.

Juliet furtively motions for the startled Romeo not to follow as he trails them across the room.

CUT TO: ROMEO'S P.O.V.: The Nurse and Juliet reach the door, but instead of leaving, they turn and ascend the staircase that arcs around to the mezzanine level. They join a vexed Gloria Capulet who clings to a patient Dave Paris.

Inaudible words are exchanged. Juliet flickers her eyes nervously to Romeo.

CUT TO: Romeo. He halts at the foot of the stairs unsure.

CUT TO: Gloria. Catching Juliet's interest in the boy, she indicates to her daughter to 'COME ALONG'.

CUT TO: Romeo; a dawning realisation.

ROMEO

(under his breath)
Is she a Capulet?

CUT TO: Juliet. She stops and turns back.

CUT TO: Romeo, comprehending the reality of who she is.

CUT TO: Juliet. The Nurse whispers in her ear.

NURSE

His name is Romeo, and a Montague,
The only son of your great enemy.

An orchestral treatment of Joy Division's "Love will tear us

Apart" swells;

HOLD ON: Juliet. Like a cloud passing across the sun, a dark coldness descends upon her.

CUT TO: Mercutio. He throws himself upon the shell shocked Romeo.

MERCUTIO

Away, begone, the sport is at its best.

Mercutio shuttles Romeo toward the door.

ROMEO

Ay so I fear,

A covert glance over his shoulder.

ROMEO (CONT.)

The more is my unrest.

EXT. CAPULET MANSION. NIGHT.

Mercutio bundles Romeo through the front door and down the stairs to the waiting getaway car.

INT. CAPULET MANSION - STAIRS ALCOVE WINDOW - NIGHT.

CUT TO: Juliet. Manoeuvred by the Nurse up the stairs, she breaks away and rushes to a tiny, windowed alcove.

EXT. CAPULET MANSION - MAIN ENTRANCE. NIGHT.

CUT TO: Mercutio's convertible and its noisy confederacy joining the line of departing limos.

A huge sign combusts into blinding fireworks that write in giant words "CAPULET."

As the convertible passes beneath the blazing words, Romeo turns. Through a deluge of falling sparks, he glimpses the mystery girl high up in the tower.

EXT. CAPULET MANSION - WINDOW. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: Juliet leaning out of the tower window. Brilliant sparkles light in her eyes.

PUSH IN: We hear her secret whisper:

JULIET

My only love, sprung from my only
hate.
Too early seen unknown, and known
too late.
Prodigious birth of love it is to me

EXT. CAPULET MANSION - MAIN ENTRANCE DRIVE. NIGHT.

CUT TO: JULIET'S P.O.V.: In slow motion Romeo, through the falling curtain of fiery embers.

JULIET (CONT.) (V/O)

That I must love a loathed enemy.

EXT. CAPULET MANSION - WINDOW. NIGHT.

Warm wind blows the smoke from the expended fireworks.
Juliet closes the window and leans against the glass.

CRANE DOWN: The side of the building past revellers who don't know when to leave. Standing in the front doorway is someone else who cannot take their eyes off the departing Romeo. It is Tybalt. The music darkens as we push through the smoky wind.

TYBALT

I will withdraw. But this intrusion
shall,
Now seeming sweet, convert to
bitterest gall.

INT. MERCUTIO'S CAR. NIGHT.

Caught in the jam of departing vehicles, Mercutio's car crawls along the bridge that links Capulet island with the mainland. The boys sing along raucously with the radio.

BOYS

"I am a pretty piece of flesh,
I am a pretty piece of flesh..."

PUSH IN: On Romeo, he whispers:

ROMEO

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

Romeo leaps from the car. Benvolio yells after him.

BENVOLIO

Romeo! Cousin Romeo! Romeo!

EXT. CAPULET BRIDGE. NIGHT.

Romeo runs back along the bridge toward the estate. At the gates, armed guards supervise the exodus of vehicles. Romeo uses the traffic to shield himself from view.

Romeo leaps from the bridge and into the shadows at the base of the high stone wall that borders the compound.

EXT. CAPULET BRIDGE. NIGHT.

Mercutio's car prowls back along the bridge. The last guests have departed and the gates are swinging shut. The convertible halts in front of them.

BENVOLIO

He ran this way. Call, good
Mercutio.

MERCUTIO

Nay, I'll conjure too.

Mercutio leaps from the car. He postures like a magician in a low-budget variety special. The boys cheer him on.

MERCUTIO

Romeo! Humours! Madman! Passion!
Lover!
I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright
eyes,

By her high forehead and her
scarlet lip,
By her fine foot, straight leg, and
quivering thigh.
And the demesnes that there adjacent
lie,
That in thy likeness thou appear to
us!

EXT. CAPULET WALL. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: Romeo's fake chain mail shirt tangled in the
barbed wire at the top of the wall.

PAN DOWN: Romeo, now on the other side of the wall, pulls up
his undershirt and gingerly inspects the cuts inflicted by
the wire.

Mercutio's cavorting echoes from the bridge. Romeo smiles
ironically.

ROMEO

He jests at scars that never felt a
wound.

Romeo moves off through the darkened grounds of Capulet
estate.

EXT. CAPULET BRIDGE. NIGHT.

The boys laugh hysterically as Mercutio staggers around the
bridge in imitation of a love sick fool.

MERCUTIO

O Romeo, that she were, O that she

WERE

An open-arse and thou a poperin pear!

The hilarity is abruptly arrested as a security spotlight blazes to life, pinning Mercutio in its beam. The sound of automatic weapons cocking pierces the night.

CLOSE ON: Mercutio. He's brave but not stupid. He gets back into the car.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Come, shall we go?

EXT. THE BACK OF CAPULET MANSION. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: A pair of stone cherubs on top of the retaining wall of a terraced garden. Romeo's face appears between them.

Romeo hauls himself up onto the wall. Below is a Greco-Roman style pool area. To the right the darkened rear wing of Capulet Mansion. Suddenly the back of the house explodes with light. Romeo takes cover.

ROMEO

But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?

Romeo's question is answered as out onto the verandah comes Juliet. She is still clad in her angel robe, but without the halo and wings. She slowly descends to pool level.

ROMEO

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 thou her maid art far more
fair than she.
Be not her maid, since she is
envious.
Her vestal livery is but sick and
green,
And none but fools do wear it.
Juliet stands on the top step of the pool stairs. She is
directly below Romeo as he whispers.

ROMEO (CONT.)

Cast it off!

Juliet sits on the edge of the pool, her legs dangle in the
water.

ROMEO (CONT.)

It is my lady. O, it is my love!
O that she knew she were!

Juliet sighs.

JULIET

Ay me!

ROMEO

(WHISPERS)

She speaks.
O, speak again, bright angel!

Juliet looks longingly toward the stars.

JULIET

O Romeo, Romeo! - Whyfore art thou
Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy
name.

Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn
my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

CLOSE ON: Romeo. Incredulous.

ROMEO

Shall I hear more, or shall I speak
at this?

JULIET

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy.
Thou are thyself, though not a
Montague.
What's Montague? It is not hand
nor foot
Nor arm nor face nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some
other name!
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
called,
Retain that dear perfection which
he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff
thy name,
And for thy name, which is no part
of thee,
Take all myself.

Romeo wildly calls:

ROMEO

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

Romeo jumps down from the wall. Juliet screams, and turns,
toppling backwards. Romeo grabs her hand but her momentum

pool. overbalances him and they both plunge headlong into the

EXT. CAPULET MANSION - POOL - UNDERWATER. NIGHT.

Underwater shot: A slow motion phosphorescent tangle of arms, legs and bodies.

EXT. CAPULET MANSION - BACK GARDEN. NIGHT.

CUT TO: A security guard. Alerted by the noise he moves toward the pool area.

EXT. CAPULET MANSION - POOL GARDEN - NIGHT.

CUT TO: Above water, real time: Romeo and Juliet surface spluttering. Juliet thrashes the water in an attempt to get distance from her attacker.

JULIET

What man art thou that, thus
bescreened in night,
So stumblest on my counsel?

Romeo: A calming gesture as he tries to tread water.

ROMEO

By a name I know not how to tell
thee who I am:
My name, dear saint, is hateful to

MYSELF

Because it is an enemy to thee.
The ferocious barking of a guard dog arrests the teenagers attention. A moment, then they slide beneath the water.

CUT TO: The security guard and dog appearing above the pool area.

GUARD'S P.O.V.: The rippling surface of the water.

CUT TO - UNDERWATER SHOT: Romeo and Juliet submerged, hair streaming, stare at each other like two beautiful fish.

CUT TO: The guard. He can see noisy caterers cleaning up around the other side of the house. Frowning, he returns the way he came.

CUT TO: Romeo and Juliet. Gasping for air, they cautiously surface. A moment - then Juliet, a small smile.

JULIET

Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

ROMEO

Neither, fair maid, if either thee
dislike.

Juliet looks nervously toward the house. She drags Romeo toward a small grotto at the end of the pool.

JULIET

How cam'st thou hither, tell me,
and whyfore?
The garden walls are high and hard
to climb,
And the place death, considering
who thou art.

ROMEO

(with splashy bravado)
With love's light wings did I o'er
perch these walls.

For stony limits cannot hold love
out,
And what love can do, that dares
love attempt.
Therefore thy kinsmen are no stop
to me.

Juliet drags Romeo firmly into the grotto.

JULIET

(a real fear)
If they do see thee, they will
murder thee.

Romeo slowly pulls Juliet toward him.

ROMEO

I have night's cloak to hide me
from their eyes.
And but thou love me, let them find
me here.
My life were better ended by their

HATE

Than death prorogued, wanting of
thy love.

The lovers kiss long and deep. Then Juliet, suddenly
fearful, pushes Romeo away.

JULIET

Thou knowest the mask of night is
on my face,
Else would a maiden blush bepaint
my cheek,
For that which thou hast heard me
speak tonight.
Fain would I dwell on form - fain,
fain deny
What I have spoke. But farewell
compliment!
Dost thou love me?

Romeo tries to speak, Juliet silences him.

JULIET (CONT.)

I know thou wilt say 'Ay', and I
will take thy word. Yet, if thou
swarest,
Thou mayst prove false. O gentle
Romeo,
If thou dost love, pronounce it
faithfully.
Or if thou think'st I am too
quickly won,
I'll frown, and be perverse, and
say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo. But else, not
for the world.
In truth, fair Montague, I am too
fond,
And therefore thou mayst think my
'haviour light.
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove
more true
Than those that have more cunning
to be strange.

ROMEO

Lady, by yonder blessed moon I vow,
That tips with silver all these
fruit-tree tops -

JULIET

O, swear not by the moon, th'
inconstant moon,
That monthly changes in her circled
orb,
Lest that thy love prove likewise
variable.

ROMEO

What shall I swear by?

JULIET

Do not swear at all.
Or if thou wilt, swear by thy
gracious self,
Which is the god of my idolatry,
And I'll believe thee.

She touches his cheek. Romeo moves his lips close.

ROMEO

If my heart's dear love -

Confused, Juliet breaks away.

JULIET

Well, do not swear. Although I joy
in thee,
I have no joy of this contract
tonight.
It is too rash, too unadvised, too

SUDDEN;

Too like the lightning, which doth
cease to be
Ere one can say 'it lightens.'
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.

She rushes up the stairs - Romeo follows desperately.

ROMEO

O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

Juliet - a shocked look.

JULIET

What satisfaction canst thou have
tonight?

CLOSE ON: Romeo.

ROMEO

The exchange of thy love's faithful
vow for mine.

CLOSE ON: Juliet. She runs joyously to Romeo.

JULIET

I gave thee mind before thou didst
request it!

Kissing him passionately.

JULIET (CONT.)

And yet I would it were to give
again.

ROMEO

Wouldst thou withdraw it? For what
purpose love?

JULIET

But to be frank and give it thee
again.

They kiss again. The Nurse calls from inside.

NURSE (O/S)

Juliet!

Juliet looks to the house.

JULIET

(BREATHLESSLY)

Three words, dear Romeo, and good
night indeed.
If that thy bent of love be
honourable.
Thy purpose marriage, send me word
tomorrow,
By one that I'll procure to come to
thee,
Where and what time thou wilt
perform the rite,
And all my fortunes at thy foot
I'll lay
And follow thee my lord throughout
the world.

NURSE (O/S)

Madam!

JULIET

I come, anon - But if thou meanest
not well,
I do beseech thee...

NURSE (O/S)

Madam!

JULIET

(to Nurse)

By and by I come!
To cease thy strife and leave me to
my grief.
Tomorrow will I send.

Romeo holds Juliet's gaze.

ROMEO

So thrive my soul.

NURSE (O/S)

Madam!

Juliet breaks away.

JULIET

A thousand times good night!

With a final kiss, Juliet runs inside.

ROMEO

A thousand times the worse, to want
thy light.

Love goes toward love as schoolboys
from their books;

But love from love, toward school
with heavy looks.

Juliet re-appears at the upper balcony.

JULIET

Romeo! What o'clock tomorrow
Shall I send to thee?

ROMEO

By the hour of nine.

Juliet unclasps a delicate silver necklace from around her
neck.

JULIET

I will not fail. 'Tis twenty year
till then.
Goodnight, goodnight! Parting is
such sweet sorrow.
That I shall say goodnight till it
be morrow.

She lets the necklace fall from her hand. Romeo catches it
and she is gone.

ROMEO

Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace
in thy breast,
Would I were sleep and peace, so
sweet to rest.

INT. GREENHOUSE. DAWN.

Morning sunlight filters through the lush foliage of a
tropical rainforest.

PAN DOWN: As we hear:

FATHER LAURENCE (O/S)

O mickle is the powerful grace that

LIES

In plants, herbs, stones, and their
true qualities.

We discover the intensely concentrating features of FATHER
LAURENCE. Fifties, wiry and wearing a priest's collar,
Laurence delicately makes an incision in the bulb of a small
purple flowered plant.

A pair of fresh faced ten year old boys look on in
wonderment
as a vivid blue sap oozes from the incision.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

Within the infant rind of this weak

FLOWER

Poison hath residence, and medicine
power.

PULL BACK: The Priest carefully gathers the sap into a beaker. We discover that we are in a small tropical greenhouse.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

(to the boys)

For this, being smelt, with that
part cheers each part;
Being tasted, stays all senses with
the heart.

The boys follow the Father as he moves out of the greenhouse and into an adjoining work area. The walls are lined with bottles of herbs and dried plants and a television flickers in the corner.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

For naught so vile on the earth
doth live,
But to the earth some special good
doth give;

With the precision of a chemist, Father Laurence funnels the sap into a small bottle and places it in the refrigerator. From out of the refrigerator he produces a large jar of candy. He eyes the boys sternly.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

Nor aught so good but, strained
from that fair use,
Revolts from true birth, stumbling
on abuse.

The boys take their candy and scam.

CUT TO: The muted television. A morning news program shows footage of a murder scene cordoned off with police tape. A distraught mother is being restrained.

CLOSE ON: The priest contemplating the television.

FATHER LAURENCE

Two such opposed kings encamp them

STILL

In man as well as herbs: grace and
rude will;
And where the worser is predominant,
Full soon the canker death eats up
that plant.

A feverish knocking breaks the priest's reverie.

ROMEO (O/S)

Good morrow, father!

Father Laurence snaps off the television and exits the workroom.

EXT. WALL. DAWN.

Romeo, dressed in last night's chain mail, pounds
desperately
on a wooden door set into a high stone wall.

ROMEO

Good morrow, father!

EXT. COURTYARD. DAWN.

From the workroom, Father Laurence enters a courtyard which encloses a tranquil tropical garden. He opens a door in the wall of the courtyard and smiles as the costumed Romeo bursts in.

FATHER LAURENCE

Benedicite!
What early tongue so sweet saluteth
me?

Without pausing, the priest continues through the courtyard and toward the church.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

Young son, it argues a distempered

HEAD

So soon to bid good morrow to thy
bed.
Or if not so, then here I hit it
right -
Our Romeo hath not been in bed
tonight.

The priest enters the back of the church.

INT. SACRISTY. DAWN.

Romeo, on fire to tell of his experience, follows the priest into the sacristy.

ROMEO

The last is true. The sweeter rest
was mine.

FATHER LAURENCE

(he stops)

God pardon sin! Wast thou with
Rosaline?

ROMEO

With Rosaline, my ghostly father?
No.
I have forgot that name and that
name's woe.

The Father lays out the cut glass bottles and communion tray
for mass.

FATHER LAURENCE

That's my good son! But where hast
thou been then?

Unconsciously, Romeo helps the priest prepare. It is clear
he knows the routine by heart.

ROMEO

I have been feasting with mine
enemy,
Where on a sudden one hath wounded
me.
That's by me wounded. Both our

REMEDIES

Within they help and holy physic
lies.

FATHER LAURENCE

(buttoning a long
black cassock)
Be plain, good son, and homely in
thy drift.
Riddling confession finds but
riddling shrift.

ROMEO

Then plainly know my heart's dear

love is set,
On the fair daughter of rich
Capulet.
We met, we wooed, and made exchange
of vow,
I'll tell thee as we pass. But
this I pray,
That thou consent to marry us today.

CUT TO: The Priest, thunderstruck. The two kids, now
dressed in red altar-boy robes, enter.

ALTAR BOYS

Good morrow, Romeo.

The apoplectic priest waves the boys away. They get the
message and bolt.

FATHER LAURENCE

Holy Saint Francis! What a change
is here!
Is Rosaline, that thou didst love
so dear,
So soon foresaken? Young men's
love then lies
Not truly in their hearts, but in
their eyes.

ROMEO

Thou chid'st me oft for loving
Rosaline.

FATHER LAURENCE

(very angry)
For doting, not for loving, pupil
mine.

ROMEO

I pray thee chide me not. Her I
love now

Doth grace for grace and love for
love allow.
The other did not so.

FATHER LAURENCE

O, she knew well
Thy love did read by rote, that
could not spell.

The Father falls into a chair and considers. He looks through the sacristy door to where a small children's choir has assembled. Their angelic voices soar into the purest of hymns.

CHOIR

How can you just leave me standing
Alone in a world so cold,
Maybe I'm just too demanding,
Maybe I'm just like my father, too
bold,
Maybe you're just like my mother,
She's never satisfied.
Why do we scream at each other?
This is what it sounds like when
doves cry...

We recognise the hymn as "When Doves Cry" by Prince.

PUSH IN: On the Priest; moved, he looks to Romeo.

FATHER LAURENCE

But come, young waverer, come, go
with me.
In one respect I'll thy assistant
be.
For this alliance may so happy

PROVE

To turn your households' rancor to
pure love.

Romeo hurriedly assists the priest with his vestments.

ROMEO

O, let us hence! I stand on sudden
haste.

Father Laurence holds Romeo in his powerful gaze.

FATHER LAURENCE

Wisely and slow. They stumble that
run fast.

The procession is joined by the two little altar boys and
the mass begins.

EXT. VERONA BEACH. DAY.

As the Angelic voices of the choir soar, we see a pay phone
etched with hyper-real starkness against the white sand,
green sea and blue sky.

A single leaning palm tree frames the image like a
ridiculous
tourist postcard.

Benvolio speaks on the pay phone. Mercutio, torso naked but
for his holstered Sports Rapier 9mm, drums his fingers on
the side of the booth.

MERCUTIO

Where the devil should this Romeo
be?
Came he not home tonight?

BENVOLIO

(slamming down the phone)
Not to his father's. I spoke with

his man.

Mercutio storms off down the beach.

MERCUTIO

Why, that same pale hard-hearted
wench, that Rosaline,
Torments him so that he will sure
run mad.

BENVOLIO

(running to keep up)
Tybalt hath sent a letter to his
father's house.

MERCUTIO

(halts abruptly)
A challenge, on my life.

CLOSE ON: Benvolio, unsure.

BENVOLIO

Romeo will answer it?

MERCUTIO

Any man that can write may answer a
letter.

BENVOLIO

Nay, he will answer the letter's
master, how he dares, being dared.

Mercutio clamps Benvolio into a headlock.

MERCUTIO

Alas, poor Romeo, he is already
dead!
Stabbed with a white wench's black
eye,

He whispers into Benvolio's ear:

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Run through the ear with a love
song.
(in disgust)
And is he a man to encounter Tybalt?

BENVOLIO

(struggling to break free)
Why, what is Tybalt?

MERCUTIO

(releasing him)
More than Prince of Cats, I can
tell you.
O, he's the courageous captain of
compliments.
The very butcher of a silk button.

Lightening fast, Mercutio draws his gun. He twirls it in an
impressive display of gunmanship which ends with the barrel
between the startled Benvolio's eyes.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

A duellist, a duellist.

Romeo's car pulls into the beach side parking lot. Benvolio
heads toward it.

BENVOLIO

Here comes Romeo, here comes Romeo!

EXT. BEACH - PARKING LOT. DAY.

Romeo alights from his car and throws his keys to Balthasar who lounges outside the beach side hang. Mercutio saunters up the beach with mock nonchalance.

MERCUTIO

Signor Romeo, Bonjour. There's a French salutation to your French slop. You gave us the counterfeit fairly last night.

ROMEO

Good morrow to you both. What counterfeit did I give you?

MERCUTIO

The slip, sir, the slip. Can you not conceive?

Romeo smiles smugly.

ROMEO

Pardon, good Mercutio. My business was great, and in such a case as mine a man may strain courtesy.

MERCUTIO

(SARCASTICALLY)

A most courteous exposition.

ROMEO

Nay I am the very pink of courtesy.

MERCUTIO

(CAMPY)

Pink for flower?

The boys laugh. Romeo feigns anger.

ROMEO

I will bite thee on the ear for
that jest!

Mercutio, goading Romeo to follow, backs off down the beach.

MERCUTIO

Come between us, good Benvolio! My
wits faint.

Mercutio flicks sand at Romeo, then sprints off down the
beach. Romeo, laughing, gives chase.

ROMEO

Switch and spurs, switch and spurs,
or I'll cry a match.

EXT. BEACH - SHORELINE. DAY.

Romeo is gaining on Mercutio, who runs headlong into the
sea.

With a yell, Romeo dives in after him.

EXT. BEACH - AT SEA. DAY.

Mercutio splashes the laughing Romeo.

MERCUTIO

Why, is not this better now than
groaning for love?

Romeo tries to dunk Mercutio.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Now art thou sociable.

Mercutio, evading, heads for shore.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Now art thou Romeo. Now art thou...

EXT. BEACH - SHORELINE. DAY.

Romeo tackles Mercutio on the wet sand. Mercutio falls
suddenly serious.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

(QUIETLY)

What thou art, by art as well as by
nature.

A moment between the boys. A shadow falls across them.
Romeo looks up.

ROMEO

Here's goodly gear.

Standing above the boys is the Nurse. She wears a
ridiculous, all red, "Jackie O" style disguise of
sunglasses,

scarf and parasol.

MERCUTIO

(BEMUSED)

God ye good e'en fair gentlewoman.

The nurse, ignoring Mercutio, speaks dramatically to Romeo.

NURSE

I desire some confidence with you.

She turns and walks back to the parking lot where Peter the chauffeur waits beside the limousine.

Benvolio and the other boys look on curiously.

MERCUTIO

A bawd, a bawd, a bawd! So ho!

But Romeo rises and to the amazement of Mercutio actually follows this woman. Mercutio looks questioningly to Benvolio, who shrugs.

BENVOLIO

She will entice him to some supper?

Even more strangely, Romeo gets into the limousine.

MERCUTIO

(taken by surprise)

Romeo, will you come to your
father's?

We'll to dinner thither.

ROMEO

(as he closes the door)
I will follow you.

MERCUTIO

Farewell, ancient lady. Farewell.

The car pulls away.

EXT. STREET. DAY.

The limousine drives through Verona Beach.

INT. MOVING LIMOUSINE. DAY.

CLOSE ON: Romeo jammed into the corner of the seat. The Nurse's face is pressed alarmingly close to his. She speaks in cold deadly earnest.

NURSE

If ye should lead her in a fool's
paradise, as they say, it were a
very gross kind of behavior, as
they say. For the gentlewoman is
young; and therefore, if you should
deal double with her, truly it were
an ill thing and very weak dealing.

BEAT: Romeo chooses his words carefully.

ROMEO

Bid her to come to confession this
afternoon,
And there she shall at Friar
Laurence's cell
Be shrived and

(PUSH IN ON: Romeo)
married.

INT. JULIET'S BEDROOM. DAY.

CLOSE ON: Juliet's face peering out her bedroom window.

JULIET

O God she comes!

EXT. CAPULETS MANSION - DRIVEWAY. DAY.

PULL BACK: JULIET'S P.O.V.: The limousine pulls up at the front door, the Nurse alights.

Juliet bolts from the room.

INT. LANDING. DAY.

Juliet hurries down the stairs - the Nurse, a way ahead, disappears into a doorway.

INT. STAIRWAY. DAY.

Juliet races down a dark stairwell that leads to the bowels of the house.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

The kitchen, obviously the Nurse's domain, is decorated with a mixture of religious iconography and travel posters. Most of the posters depict a strange city of decadent, decaying, beauty.

Juliet bursts breathlessly into the room.

JULIET

O honey nurse, what news?

The Nurse, buried up to her ample hips inside the refrigerator, does not turn around.

Juliet cries impatiently.

JULIET

Nurse!

The nurse emerges from the ice box laden with food. Moving to the counter she starts to make a sandwich.

NURSE

I am aweary, give me leave awhile.
Fie, how my bones ache. What a
jaunce have I.

Juliet under her breath.

JULIET

I would thou hadst my bones and I
thy news.

Juliet goes to the nurse.

JULIET

Nay come, I pray thee, speak: good;

GOOD

Nurse, speak.

Sandwich made, the nurse shuffles over to a corner couch.

NURSE

Jesu, what haste. Can you not stay
awhile?
Can you not see I am out of breath?

Juliet cannot stand the suspense any longer.

JULIET

How art thou out of breath when
thou hast breath
To say to me that thou art out of
breath!
Is the news good or bad? Answer to
that.

The Nurse takes a big bite from her sandwich and answers
through thoughtful chews.

NURSE

Well, you have made a simple
choice.
You know not how to choose a man.
Romeo? No, not he.
Though his face be better than any
man's, yet his leg excels all men's
and for a hand and a foot and a
body, though they be not to be
talked on, yet they are past
compare.
He's not the flower of courtesy,
but I'll warrant him as gentle as a
lamb. Go thy ways, wench, serve
God. What, have you dined at home?

Juliet is flabbergasted.

JULIET

No, no. But all this I did know
before. What says he of our
marriage? What of that

NURSE

Lord how my head aches! What a
head have I:
My back -

This is a game that Juliet knows well. She moves behind the
Nurse and begins massaging her back.

NURSE (CONT.)

o' t'other side - ah, my back!
Beshrew your heart for sending me

ABOUT

To catch my death with jauncing up
and down.

With sublime self control, Juliet coo's sweetly.

JULIET

I'faith I am sorry that thou art
not well.
Sweet, sweet, sweet Nurse, tell me,
what says my love?

NURSE

Your love says like an honest
gentleman,
And a courteous, and a kind, and a
handsome,
And I warrant a virtuous - Where is
your mother?

Juliet cracks.

JULIET

Where is my mother? How oddly thou
repliest!
'Your love says, like an honest
gentleman, "Where is your mother"'

The nurse sulks.

NURSE

O God's lady dear are you so hot?
Henceforth do your messages yourself.

Juliet's frustration explodes.

JULIET

Here's such a coil! COME WHAT SAYS

ROMEO?

PAUSE: The Nurse considers Juliet.

NURSE

Have you got leave to go to
confession today?

JULIET

I have.

NURSE

Then hie you hence to Father
Laurence cell.
There stays a husband to make you a
wife!

Juliet, with a scream of joy, hugs the Nurse to her.

HOLD ON: Juliet's ecstatic features.

INT. CHURCH. DAY.

TIGHT ON: FATHER LAURENCE:

FATHER LAURENCE

These violent delights have violent
ends!

PULL BACK: Father Laurence is preaching energetically from the pulpit. Hidden from the congregation, Romeo waits in a small alcove chapel at the side of the altar.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

The sweetest honey
Is loathsome in its own
deliciousness,
Therefore love moderately.

The Father glances toward Romeo.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

Long love doth so.
Too swift arrives as tardy as too
slow.
Juliet pushes through the double doors at the far end of the church.

Father Laurence motions to the middle-aged choir master who leads the choir into a choral version of Led Zeppelin's "A Whole Lot of Love" with Latin lyrics.

Father Laurence hurries from the altar over to Romeo.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

Here comes the lady.

Juliet bursts into the tiny chapel. Trying to observe a vestige of decorum, she greets Father Laurence.

JULIET

Good afternoon to my ghostly confessor.

But before the priest can reply, the two lovers embrace, kissing passionately.

FATHER LAURENCE

(DRYLY)

Romeo shall thank thee, daughter,
for us both.

The choir completes the hymn and the priest, realising it is his cue, rushes back to the altar. He quickly delivers a prayer to the congregation while eyeing the increasingly amorous smooching of the young couple.

The choir launch into a joyous chorus and the priest returns to Romeo and Juliet. He delicately parts the couple.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

Come, come, and we will make short
work.
For, by your leaves, you shall not
stay alone
Till Holy Church incorporate two in
one.

A young boy with a voice like Jamiroquai steps forward. He launches into a wailing solo.

MACRO CLOSE UP: A simple silver ring. Engraved on the

inside of the band are the words 'I love thee.'

PULL BACK: Romeo slips the ring onto Juliet's finger as the priest executes the formal sacrament of marriage.

INT./EXT. CHURCH. DAY.

CRANE UP: Through the majestic patterning of stained glass, and out of the church to find Peter, the chauffeur, cradling a small camera as he waits nervously beside the limo.

EXT. CHURCH. DAY.

The music swells in celebration. Romeo and Juliet, now newly-wed, rush from the side door of the church. The priest follows, throwing handfuls of rice. Peter studiously takes a snap as the bride and groom kiss.

Peter holds the door of the limousine open. Reluctantly Juliet gets into the car.

As the car pulls out of the driveway, Romeo runs alongside.

HOLD: On Romeo as he watches the big black car speed away.

EXT. UNDERWATER. DAY.

FISH-EYE VIEW: From the bottom of the ocean; Mercutio's distorted features. Gun aimed, he stares intently into the water.

A muffled BANG! and a bullet whizzes past the camera.

EXT. VERONA BEACH. DAY.

We see that Mercutio - wading in knee deep water close to the beach - is hunting fish.

Benvolio shelters in the shade of an unmanned life guard tower.

A shimmering heat haze blankets the deserted beach and the horizon is stacked with purple storm clouds.

BENVOLIO

I pray thee, good Mercutio, let's
retire.
The day is hot,

Mercutio, ignoring him, plugs away at another fish. Benvolio nervously looks to see if there is any reaction to the sound of the shot.

BENVOLIO (CONT.)

The Capels are abroad. And if we
meet we shall not 'scape a brawl.

Mercutio strides out of the water.

MERCUTIO

Thou art like one of these fellows
that, when he enters the confines
of a tavern, claps me his sword
upon the table and says 'God send
me no need of thee!'
(he hands Benvolio
his gun)
and by the operation of the second
cup draws him on the drawer, when
indeed there is no need.

Another incredible sleight of hand routine and Mercutio has managed to draw Benvolio's pistol, retrieve his own gun, and trap Benvolio with a barrel at each temple.

The joke has worn thin for Benvolio; he pushes past Mercutio toward where Balthasar, Sampson and Gregory lounge in the shade of the beach-side hang.

Suddenly he stops dead - a monstrous black sedan prowls into the beach side parking lot.

BENVOLIO

By my head, here comes the Capulets.

MERCUTIO

By my heel, I care not.

EXT. BEACH - PARKING LOT. DAY.

The sedan mounts the curb and slides to a halt only metres from Benvolio and Mercutio.

Tybalt, Abra and Petruchio alight from the sedan and walk menacingly toward Mercutio and Benvolio.

TYBALT

Gentlemen, good day. A word with one of you.

The boys from the hang, drawn the Capulet car, converge - eyes dart nervously, hands stray towards guns.

Mercutio smiles mockingly.

MERCUTIO

And but one word with one of us?
Couple it with something. Make it
a word and a...

Leaning close to Tybalt, he camps the implication.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

...blow.

Mercutio scores. The boys laugh.

TYBALT

(FURIOUS)

You shall find me apt enough to
that, sir,
(clutching at his
side arm)
And you will give me occasion.

CLOSE ON: Mercutio. He stops, eyeing the hand on the gun.
No one moves.

MERCUTIO

(a breathy, coquettish

VOICE)

Could you not take some occasion
without giving?

The boys fall about again. Tybalt cracks.

TYBALT

Mercutio, thou consortest with Romeo.

The accusation stings - Mercutio's anger flares.

MERCUTIO

Consort? What, dost thou make us
minstrels? And thou make minstrels

of us look to hear nothing but
discords. Here's my fiddlestick.

Indicating his holstered gun.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Here's that shall make you dance.
(barking at Tybalt)
Zounds,
(goading him to go
for his gun)
consort!

CLOSE ON: Tybalt.

CLOSE ON: Mercutio. He will not back down. Benvolio tries
to diffuse things.

BENVOLIO

Either withdraw unto some private
place.
Or reason coldly of your grievances.
Here all eyes gaze on us.

MERCUTIO

Men's eyes were made to look, and
let them gaze.
I will not budge for no man's
pleasure, I.

At that moment, Romeo's car pulls into the lot. Tybalt
smiles.

TYBALT

Well sir, here comes my man.

Tybalt moves toward Romeo who bounds from his car full of
happy news.

TYBALT

Romeo, the love I bear thee can

AFFORD

No better term than this:

CLOSE ON: Tybalt. He clears his jacket from his side arm and issues the challenge.

TYBALT (CONT.)

Thou art a villain!

CLOSE ON: Mercutio.

CLOSE ON: Benvolio.

All eyes are on Romeo.

Romeo calmly approaches his now cousin.

ROMEO

Tybalt, the reason that I have to
love thee
Doth much excuse the appertaining

RAGE

To such a greeting: villain am I
none,
Therefore farewell. I see thou
knowest me not.

Romeo turns, and to the amazement of all, walks back to his car. Tybalt, unable to shoot him in the back, is confused. He hurls himself into his sedan.

Kicking it into a sand spraying U-turn, he careens the short distance to Romeo's car. Slamming into the back of it he blocks Romeo in.

Tybalt leaps out, maniacally kicking at bumper, door and headlights. Romeo flicks the locks down. Tybalt shatters the side window and hauls Romeo through the door, slamming him against the savaged fuselage.

TYBALT

Boy, this shall not excuse the

INJURIES

That thou hast done me!

He smashes Romeo across the face, Romeo crashes to the roadway.

TYBALT

(YELLING)

Turn and draw.

A cut has opened in the side of Romeo's mouth. He unsteadily lifts himself up, and meeting Tybalt's gaze, speaks through bloodied teeth.

ROMEO

I never injured thee,
And so, good Capulet, which name I

TENDER

As dearly as mine own...

Romeo cautiously extracts his gun...

ROMEO (CONT.)

...be satisfied.

...and throws it at Tybalt's feet.

Storm clouds obscure the sun as Romeo turns and walks from

the parking lot.

Mercutio, Benvolio and the others cannot believe their eyes.

MERCUTIO

O calm, dishonourable, vile
submission!

EXT. BEACH - VACANT LOT. DAY.

Tybalt's anger must be answered. He ceremoniously disarms, gives his weapon to Abra, and sprints after Romeo who is now passing a beach side lot that houses an abandoned grand hotel. A bone-cracking kick sends Romeo crumbling into the vacant lot. The boys swarm toward the fray. Romeo, still refusing the fight, scrambles up the stairs of the deserted hotel. Tybalt trips him and Romeo careens into an ornamental wooden railing, smashing it to pieces.

Tybalt kicks savagely at the helpless Romeo.

Suddenly, Mercutio appears running full tilt down the concrete terrace. He plucks up one of the splintered wooden palings and yells...

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Tybalt, you ratcatcher,

...as he bludgeons him across the face. Tybalt goes down.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Will you walk?

Tybalt leaps to his feet grabbing a lump of wood.

TYBALT

What wouldst thou have with me?

He swipes at Mercutio.

MERCUTIO

(AVOIDING)

Good King of Cats, nothing but one
of your nine lives.

Mercutio jabs, Tybalt sidesteps.

TYBALT

I am for you.

Tybalt aims a double-handed blow to Mercutio's head.
Mercutio blocks, hooking Tybalt's stick away.

Unarmed, Tybalt throws his full body weight upon Mercutio,
slamming him against a window that shatters in a storm of
glass.

Lightning fast, Mercutio jackknives to his feet. He raises
his weapon to deliver a skull-crushing final blow to the
trapped Tybalt. Romeo rushes between them.

ROMEO

Forbear this outrage, good Mercutio!

Seizing the opportunity, Tybalt lunges at Romeo with a
lethal triangle of broken glass. He misses, gouging instead
a slash of flesh from Mercutio's stomach.
A scream of excruciating pain as Mercutio grabs at his
bloodied side. Everyone is still. In the abrupt silence,
sirens are heard closing in the distance. Abra tugs at
Tybalt.

ABRA

Away Tybalt!

They bolt for their vehicle.

Benvolio goes to Mercutio.

BENVOLIO

Art thou hurt?

But Mercutio, covering his wound with his hand, laughs.

MERCUTIO

Ay, ay, a scratch.

He turns to his assembled fans at the bottom of the stairs. With outrageous bravado he plays at being Caesar the conqueror.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

A scratch!

The boys cheer their conquering hero. Romeo helps Mercutio down the stairs.

ROMEO

Courage, man. The hurt cannot be much.

Mercutio holding his bleeding side, jokes through the pain.

MERCUTIO

'Twill serve. Ask for me tomorrow
and you shall find me a grave man.

He turns the next thought to the assembled audience.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

(through crazy laughter)
A plague o' both your houses!

Mercutio turns from the cheering boys to Romeo who is struggling to support his weight.

Mercutio - through weak and desperate breathing.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Why the devil came you between us?
I was hurt under your arm.
Romeo starts to register the panic in Mercutio's eyes.

ROMEO

I thought all for the best.

Like an animal trying to break free from a mortal trap, Mercutio pushes Romeo away. He screams in horror, as if falling in the dark:

MERCUTIO

A plague o' both your houses!
They have made worms' meat of me.

Mercutio staggers down the stairs and collapses in the dirt. Romeo is there instantly, cradling his friend's head out of the dust. The dying boy stares back at Romeo, smiling through the chilling cold.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

(a silent whisper)
Your houses!

Everything stands still, everything is quiet. The storm

finally breaks.

EXT. BEACH - RAIN. DAY.

Tiny drops of water fall from the sky and bespeckle Mercutio's lifeless body. The droplets grow to a heavy rain. Romeo can hear the faint sound a thousand miles away of Benvolio whispering:

BENVOLIO

Mercutio is dead!

Tears streak Romeo's face. He cries out.

ROMEO

Oh sweet Juliet,
Thy beauty hath made me effeminate
And in my temper softened valor's
steel!

The sound of Tybalt's vehicle starting brings back cold reality. Romeo's sorrow turns to uncontrollable rage.

Shrugging aside Benvolio's attempts to restrain him, Romeo runs to his car.

EXT. BEACH - PARKING LOT. DAY.

Up ahead Tybalt's sedan screeches into a fishtailing U-turn and powers away. Romeo jumps into his vehicle. In an effort to head Tybalt off, he guns his damaged machine down a one way street.

The rain is now blinding. Romeo stops for nothing; pedestrians flee, cars spin out of control.

EXT. VERONA BEACH STREETS - FROM AIR. DAY.

AERIAL SHOT: The two cars speed along parallel roads toward Plaza Jesu. Romeo is gaining.

EXT. VERONA STREET - CHRIST ROUNDABOUT. DAY.

CUT TO: Tybalt's car negotiating the immense roundabout at the foot of the statue of Jesus.

EXT. CHRIST ROUNDABOUT. DAY.

CUT TO: Romeo's car firing out of the one way street and slamming into Tybalt's car. Tybalt's car careens out of control up the stairs of the statue, clips the fountain, flips, and slides upside down onto the roadway.

CUT TO: Tybalt scrambling from his upturned vehicle.

CUT TO: Romeo running toward him.

SUDDENLY Romeo is halted by Tybalt's drawn gun. Fearlessly marching toward it, he screams through tears.

ROMEO

Mercutio's soul
Is but a little way above our heads,

Romeo grabs the barrel of the gun; forcing it between his own eyes, he growls insanely at Tybalt.

ROMEO (CONT.)

Staying for thine to keep him
company.

Tybalt, unnerved, tries to back off.

TYBALT

Thou, wretched boy, shalt with him
hence.

Romeo, refusing to let go of the gun, forces Tybalt backward
through the torrential rain.

ROMEO

(with frightening intensity)
Either thou or I, or both, must go
with him.

Cars swerve, Romeo is relentless. He grips Tybalt's hand
trying to force him to shoot.

ROMEO (CONT.)

Either thou or I, or both, must go
with him.

Panicked, Tybalt wrenches free and lurches onto the roadway.
Blinded by the headlights of an oncoming car he thuds onto
its hood as it skids to a halt. The impact catapults his
gun high into the air.

Romeo coldly follows its slow motion, spinning trajectory.

Real time stretches as the gun dances high above his head.
Police sirens, cars swerving, people screaming, and the
yelling of panicked commands fade to a nothingness.

Romeo stands calmly considering the gun in the air. A
harrowing symphonic tone and the echo of Mercutio's voice
can be heard.

MERCUTIO (V/O)

Why the devil came you between us?

CUT TO: Patrol cars sliding to a halt.

CUT TO: The spinning gun slowly falling to earth.

CUT TO: Tybalt rising from the ground.

CUT TO: Cops leaping from their cars.

CUT TO: The gun landing in Romeo's hand. His eyes full of rage.

CUT TO: Cops levelling their revolvers.

COP

(Romeo in his sights)
Put up thy weapon.

CUT TO: Real time - Romeo fires three deliberate shots. Tybalt's body convulses backwards against the car, hitting it with a thud, bloodying the shattered windscreen.

The cop fires. A bullet grazes Romeo's arm - his gun drops as he screams.

ROMEO

O, I am fortune's fool!

At that moment a roaring hurricane wind hits; blinding
police.

CLOSE ON: The scaffolding surrounding the Jesus statue. Part of it's canvas covering rips away. Scaffold rains down as the insanely flapping material tries to smash free from

it's moorings.

Through the mayhem, a rusty Ford driven by Balthasar, slides to a halt.

Balthasar screams out at Romeo.

BALTHASAR

Romeo, away be gone! Stand not amazed!

Romeo collapses into the front seat.

The cops open fire as Balthasar speeds off into the storm.

INT. BALTHASAR'S CAR. AFTERNOON.

Romeo is bleeding from the bullet graze.

EXT. CAUSEWAY. AFTERNOON.

The gale-force winds throw waves across the causeway as the fugitives disappear into the black afternoon.

towers.
CRANE UP: In the distance we see Montague and Capulet
Divided by the statue of Christ, they suffer the storm's
rage.

EXT. MONUMENT. AFTERNOON.

Away, below the outstretched arms of Christ, lights from emergency vehicles pulse red through the downpour.

THE CAMERA: Falls through heavy rain toward a woman crouched over the lifeless body of Tybalt.

She cries:

GLORIA

Tybalt!

Cops nervously eye Fulgencio Capulet and Ted Montague, who, both flanked by body guards, face each other across the crime scene. Medics stand by helplessly as Gloria clings to Tybalt's body. A handcuffed Benvolio looks on.

GLORIA (CONT.)

Tybalt, my cousin, O my brother's child!
O, the blood is spilled of my dear kinsman.

Police lines part as Captain Prince arrives.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

Where are the vile beginners of this fray?

Benvolio struggles forward.

BENVOLIO

O noble Prince I can discover all
The unlucky manage of this fatal brawl.

Gloria appeals hysterically:

GLORIA

Prince as thou art true,
For blood of ours shed blood of
Montague!

CAPTAIN PRINCE

Benvolio, who began this bloody fray?

BENVOLIO

(pointing to Tybalt's corpse)
There lies the man, slain by young
Romeo,
That slew thy kinsman brave Mercutio.

Gloria interjects savagely.

GLORIA

He speaks not true! Affection
makes him false!

BENVOLIO

Romeo, that spoke him fair, could
not take
Truce with the unruly spleen of

TYBALT

Deaf to peace!

GLORIA

He is a kinsman to the Montague!
I beg for justice which thou Prince
must give.
Romeo slew Tybalt, Romeo must not
live!

Captain Prince turns to Gloria.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

Romeo slew him, he slew Mercutio.
Who now the price of his dear blood
doth owe?

Ted Montague pleads:

MONTAGUE

Not Romeo, Prince, he was Mercutio's
friend; His fault concludes but
what the law should end,
The life of Tybalt.

Captain Prince eyes Montague coldly.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

And for that offence
Immediately we do exile him.

Montague, body guards in tow, surges forward.

MONTAGUE

Noble Prince...?

Prince silences him.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

I will be deaf to pleading and

EXCUSES;

Nor tears nor prayers shall purchase
out abuses.
Therefore use none.

The Captain turns and addresses his assembled officers.

CAPTAIN PRINCE (CONT.)

Let Romeo hence in haste,
Else, when he is found that hour is
his last.

CLOSE ON: Captain Prince.

CAPTAIN PRINCE (CONT.)

Bear hence this body and attend our
will.
Mercy but murders, pardoning those
that kill.

INT. JULIET'S BEDROOM. AFTERNOON.

An acoustic guitar version of Joy Division's 'Love Will Tear Us Apart.' Juliet traces the path of a raindrop on the window pane as she speaks her thoughts to the storm.

JULIET

Come gentle night, coming loving
black browed night,
Give me my Romeo. And when I shall
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.
O, I have bought the mansion of a

LOVE

But not possessed it, and though I
am sold,
Not yet enjoyed. So tedious is
this day
As is the night before some festival
To an impatient child that hath new

ROBES

And may not wear them.

EXT. CAPULET'S MANSION - DRIVEWAY. AFTERNOON.

Juliet's P.O.V.: The limousine pulls into the driveway.

PULL OUT: Of the window and CRANE DOWN: Juliet runs from the room.

EXT. CAPULET MANSION. AFTERNOON.

Through the open doorway we see an excited Juliet meet the Nurse at the bottom of the stairs.

The music surges.

TRACK IN: The Nurse's words are lost in the storm.

Juliet buckles.

INT. CAPULET MANSION. AFTERNOON.

We are close enough now to hear Juliet's words.

JULIET

Oh God! Did Romeo's hand shed
Tybalt's blood?

NURSE

It did, it did! Alas the day, it
did!

JULIET

Oh serpent heart, hid with a
flowering face.

Was ever book containing such vile

MATTER

So fairly bound? O, that deceit
should dwell
In such a gorgeous palace!

NURSE

There's no trust, No faith, no
honesty in men. All perjured,
All forsworn, all naught, all
dissemblers.
Shame come to Romeo.

JULIET

Blistered be thy tongue
For such a wish! He was not born
to shame. Upon his brow shame is
ashamed to sit.

NURSE

Will you speak well of him that
killed your cousin?

JULIET

Shall I speak ill of him that is my
husband?
Ah, poor my lord, what tongue shall
smooth thy name
When I, thy three-hours wife have
mangled it?
But whyfore, villain, didst thou
kill my cousin?
That villain cousin would have
killed my husband.
All this is comfort, wherefore weep
I then?
Some word there was worser than
Tybalt's death:
I would forget it fain - exiled.
Tybalt is dead, and Romeo exiled.
To speak that word is father,
mother,
Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet, all slain,

All dead.

Juliet sinks to the floor, overwhelmed by tears.

JULIET (CONT.)

Nurse, I'll to my wedding bed,
And death, not Romeo, take my
maidenhead.

Nurse looks down at Juliet. She goes and comforts her.

NURSE

Hie to your chamber. I'll find

ROMEO

To comfort you. I know well where
he is.
Hark ye, your Romeo will be here at
night.

Juliet looks up through tears.

JULIET

O find him, give this ring to my
true knight,
And bid him come to take his last
farewell.

SLAM MACRO ZOOM: Into the ring. The screen fills with the
words 'I love thee'.

INT. PRESBYTERY BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Romeo lies on the bed shirtless and crying. His wound has
been bandaged and Balthasar crouches frightened in the
corner.

The priest leads the Nurse into the room.

Romeo looks up.

ROMEO

Nurse!

She goes to him.

NURSE

Ah sir! Ah sir! Death's the end
of all.

ROMEO

Speakest thou of Juliet?
Where is she? And how doth she?
And what says
My concealed lady to our cancelled
love?

NURSE

O, she says nothing, sir, but weeps
and weeps,
And then on Romeo cries, and then
falls down again.

Romeo is wailing inconsolably.

ROMEO

As if that name,
Shot from the deadly level of a
gun,
Did murder her, as that name's
cursed hand murdered her kinsman!

Father Laurence shakes the hysterical boy.

FATHER LAURENCE

I thought thy disposition better
tempered!
Thy Juliet is alive, There art thou
happy.
The law that threatened death
becomes thy friend
And turns it to exile. There art
thou happy.
A pack of blessings light upon thy
back.

Romeo calms. The Nurse gives him the ring.

NURSE

Here sir, a ring my lady bid me
give you.

Romeo enfolds the ring in his hand.

ROMEO

How well my comfort is revived by
this.

The priest goes to his wardrobe, removes a clean white shirt
and helps Romeo put it on.

FATHER LAURENCE

Go, get thee to thy love, as was
decreed.
Ascend her chamber. Hence and
comfort her.
But look thou stay not till the
Watch be set,
For then thou canst not pass to
Mantua where thou shalt live till
we can find a time
To blaze your marriage, reconcile
your friends,
Beg pardon of the Prince and call
thee back,
With twenty hundred thousand times
more joy
Than thou wentst forth in

lamentation.

Father Laurence ushers Romeo from the room.

INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT.

They hurry down the hallway.

The priest opens the front door.

FATHER LAURENCE

Go hence. Be gone by the break of

DAY

Sojourn in Mantua. Give me thy hand.

Romeo embraces him.

ROMEO

Farewell.

The priest and Balthasar watch as Romeo and the Nurse sprint for the car.

INT. CAPULET MANSION. NIGHT.

Sobs echo through the house.

Dave Paris stands in the entrance hallway clutching a huge bunch of flowers.

Fulgencio Capulet stands beside him, whisky glass in hand.

CUT TO: Gloria on the upper landing. There is a strange faraway quality about her as she descends to Dave and Capulet.

GLORIA

She'll not come down tonight.

Dave, an understanding smile.

DAVE

These times of woe afford no times
to woo.

Capulet guides Dave into the house.

CAPULET

Look you, she loved her kinsman
Tybalt dearly.

GLORIA

(JOINING)

And so did I.

CAPULET

(a cold glance at Gloria)
Well, we were born to die.

Capulet takes a large slug of whisky. Gloria leans close to Dave.

GLORIA

I'll know her mind early tomorrow.
Tonight she's mewed up to her
heaviness.

As Gloria, Dave and Capulet exit down the hallway we CRANE UP: toward Juliet's bedroom door.

INT. JULIET'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: Juliet's face. Tears stream onto the pillow. Without warning a hand lightly touches her cheek. Juliet's eyes dart up to discover Romeo standing above her.

A still moment of disbelief. Leaning down, Romeo kisses away the tears that fall from her dark, wide eyes.

Juliet's lips find Romeo's and they gently sink back onto the bed.

INT. SITTING ROOM. NIGHT.

Capulet sits in an armchair drinking. Dave and Gloria sit opposite as Capulet whips himself into a frenzy of drunken excitement.

CAPULET

We'll keep no great ado - a friend
or two.
For, hark you, Tybalt being slain
so late,
It may be thought we held him
carelessly,
Being our kinsman if we revel
much -
But soft what day is this?

DAVE

Monday my lord.

CAPULET

Well Wednesday is too soon - what
say you to Thursday?

Gloria looks up alarmed; Dave is stunned.

DAVE

My lord I...

CAPULET

(leaning close)

I will make a desperate tender of
my child's love.

(a drunken good humour)

I think she will be ruled in all
respects by me;

(exploding with
hearty laughter)

Nay, more, I doubt it not!

CUT TO: Gloria, her face hardens.

CAPULET

(to Dave)

But what say you to Thursday?

Dave is trying to catch up.

DAVE

My lord I...

CUT TO: Capulet he eyes Dave intently.

DAVE (CONT.)

I would that Thursday were tomorrow.

Delighted, Capulet jumps to his feet.

CAPULET

A Thursday let it be then!

Capulet holds out his glass in toast. Dave and Gloria rise.

CAPULET

Wife, go you to Juliet ere you go
to bed.

Tell her, a Thursday she shall be

MARRIED

To this noble sir!

CLOSE ON: The glasses clink.

EXT. CAPULET ESTATE. DAWN.

A pink and gold dawn breaks over Capulet Mansion.

INT. JULIET'S BEDROOM. DAWN.

A tangle of young limbs.

Romeo and Juliet blissfully asleep. The dawn light creeps
into the room.

EXT. CAPULET ESTATE. DAWN.

Balthasar's car covertly pulls into a side road near the
estate.

INT. JULIET'S BEDROOM. DAWN.

Romeo and Juliet still asleep.

CRANE DOWN: Toward the sleeping innocence of the faces.

HOLD: A shadow of fear passes across Romeo's features.

With a cry of panic, he sits bolt upright.

Wide awake, but disorientated, Romeo stares around the room - as Juliet stirs, he remembers where he is.

Slipping quietly from the bed, Romeo begins to dress.

CLOSE ON: Romeo. A pair of lips enter frame and find his neck. It is Juliet. She hugs herself to him.

JULIET

Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet
near day.

Romeo turns - softly he strokes her cheek.

ROMEO

I must be gone and live, or stay
and die.

Juliet kisses his finger-tips.

JULIET

Yond light is not daylight,

And then his cheek...

JULIET (CONT.)

I know it, I
It is some meteor that the sun

EXHALES

To light thee on thy way to Mantua.
Therefore stay yet. Thou needest
not to be gone.

Romeo, feverishly returning the kisses, throws himself on
Juliet.

ROMEO

Let me be taken, let me be put to
death.
I have more care to stay than will
to go.
Come, death, and welcome! Juliet
wills it so.

Juliet is suddenly still. Romeo kisses her gently.

ROMEO (CONT.)

How is't, my soul? Let's talk. It
is not day.

Juliet pulls Romeo to his feet.

JULIET

It is, it is! Hie hence, be gone,
away!
O, now be gone! More light and
light it grows.

Frantically she helps him into his clothes.

ROMEO

More light and light: more dark and

dark our woes.

There is an urgent knocking on the door. They freeze.

NURSE (O/S)

Madam!

JULIET

Nurse!

NURSE (O/S)

Your lady mother is coming to your chamber.

JULIET

Then, window, let day in, and let life out.

Desperately Juliet pulls Romeo out onto the balcony.

EXT. BALCONY. DAWN.

The storm, now past, has left a morning achingly pure.

ROMEO

Farewell, farewell. One kiss, and I'll descend.

Romeo climbs down from the balcony and into the shadows.

JULIET

O, think'st thou we shall ever meet again?

Romeo smiles up at her.

ROMEO

I doubt it not;

Juliet's face darkens.

JULIET

O God, I have an ill-divining soul.
Methinks I see thee, now thou art
so low,
As one dead in the bottom of a tomb.

Romeo scrambles back up to the balcony.

ROMEO

Trust me, love, all these woes
shall serve
For sweet discourses in our times
to come.

From Juliet's bedroom comes the brittle sound of Gloria
Capulet's voice.

GLORIA

Ho daughter! Are you up?

Juliet spins around. Gloria has parted the curtains and is
staring directly at her daughter.

GLORIA

Well, well.

CUT TO: Romeo sheltered just below the lip of the balcony.

FOLLOW: His hand, as it slowly reaches up and touches

Juliet's fingers hidden behind her back.

Gloria returns to the room. Juliet steals a glance toward Romeo as he silently mouths:

ROMEO

Adieu, adieu!

As Romeo's face disappears into the shadows Juliet whispers a little prayer to herself.

JULIET

O Fortune, Fortune! Be fickle,
Fortune,
For then I hope thou wilt not keep
him long
But send him back.

INT. JULIET'S BEDROOM. DAWN.

Juliet is trying not to cry as she goes in to her mother. Gloria turns to her.

GLORIA

Thou hast a careful father, child:
One who, to put thee from thy
heaviness,
Hath sorted out a sudden day of joy
That thou expects not nor I looked
not for.

Juliet plays along.

JULIET

Madam, in happy time. What day is
that?

Gloria takes a deep breath.

GLORIA

Marry, my child, early next Thursday

MORN

The gallant, young, and noble
gentleman,
Sir Paris, at Saint Peter's Church,
Shall happily make thee there a
joyful bride.

CLOSE ON: Juliet. She can barely speak.

JULIET

Now by Saint Peter's Church, and
Peter too,
He shall not make me there a joyful
bride!

Fear passes across Gloria's face.

GLORIA

Here comes your father. Tell him
so yourself.

Capulet - whisky glass in hand - ebulliently bursts into the
room.

CAPULET

How now, wife?
Have you delivered to her our decree?

GLORIA

Ay, sir. But she will none, she
gives you thanks.
I would the fool were married to
her grave!

Capulet - a dangerous calm.

CAPULET

How? Will she none?
Is she not proud? Doth she not
count her blest,
Unworthy as she is, that we have

WROUGHT

So worthy a gentleman to be her
bride?

JULIET

Not proud you have, but thankful
that you have.
Proud can I never be of what I hate.

PAUSE: Capulet considers his daughter, then -

BAM! He hurls his glass against the wall, shattering it
into a thousand pieces.

CAPULET

Thank me no thankings, nor proud me
no prouds,
But fettle your fine joints 'gainst
Thursday next ...

Capulet advances. Juliet, terrified, retreats into the
hallway.

JULIET

Hear me with patience but to speak
a word...

INT. LANDING. DAY.

The Nurse appears as Capulet picks his daughter up and shakes her like a rag doll.

CAPULET

Speak not, reply not, do not answer
me!

He throws her to the floor. His fist thuds as it slams into her face.

GLORIA

(SCREAMING)

Fie, fie! What are you mad?

Gloria tries to restrain Capulet. He back-hands her, sending her flying against the wall - bellowing insanely, he advances on his cowering daughter.

CAPULET

Hang thee, young baggage!
Disobedient wretch.

The Nurse throws herself between Capulet and Juliet.

NURSE

God in heaven bless her!
You are to blame, my lord, to rate
her so.

Furious, Capulet shunts her aside.

CAPULET

Peace, you mumbling fool!

Capulet yanks his daughter's face close to his.

CAPULET (CONT.)

I tell thee what - get thee to
church a Thursday
Or never after look me in the face.
And you be mine, I'll give you to
my friend.
And you be not, hang, beg, starve,
die in the streets,
Trust to it. Bethink you. I'll
not be forsworn.

Capulet storms off down the hall.

CLOSE ON: Juliet. She huddles, shaking at the top of the stairs.

JULIET

O sweet my mother, cast me not
away!
Delay this marriage for a month, a
week.
Or if you do not, make the bridal

BED

In that dim monument where Tybalt
lies.

A trickle of blood issues from Gloria's cut lip. She checks her appearance in the hall mirror.

GLORIA

Talk not to me, for I'll not speak
a word.
Do as thou wilt, for I have done
with thee.

Gloria leaves.

JULIET

O God! - O Nurse, how shall this be prevented?

The Nurse doesn't reply.

JULIET (CONT.)

What sayest thou? Hast thou not a word of joy?
Some comfort, Nurse.

A heavy silence.

The Nurse goes to Juliet.

NURSE

Faith, here it is.
I think it best you married with this Paris.
O, he's a lovely gentleman!
I think you are happy in this second match,
For it excels your first; or if it did not,
Your first is dead - or 'twere as good he were
As living here and you no use of him.

Juliet is very still.

JULIET

Speakest thou from thy heart?

NURSE

And from my soul too. Else beshrew them both.

JULIET

Amen.

NURSE

(UNSURE)

What?

Juliet is matter of fact.

JULIET

Well, thou hast comforted me
marvellous much.
Go in; and tell my lady I am gone,
Having displeas'd my father, to
Friar Laurence,
To make confession and to be
absolved.

The old woman nods. She strokes Juliet's hair.

NURSE

This is wisely done.

Juliet does not look up.

A disturbing choral chant:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHURCH. DAY.

Sunlight pierces stained glass - the chant a sinister
underscoring. We hear Dave Paris' voice:

DAVE (O/S)

Immoderately she weeps for Tybalt's death...

CRANE DOWN: Father Laurence and Dave Paris stand at the front of the church.

DAVE (CONT.)

...Now, sir, her father counts it

DANGEROUS

That she doth give her sorrow so
much sway,
And in his wisdom hastes our

MARRIAGE

To stop the inundation of her
tears...

Father Laurence turns. Juliet stands framed in the white glare of the doorway.

Dave smiles.

DAVE

Happily met, my lady and my wife.

CLOSE ON: Juliet's hand concealed beneath her coat - we can just see the handle of a gun.

Juliet advances slowly, an icy calm:

JULIET

That may be, sir, when I may be a
wife.

DAVE

That 'may be', must be, love, on
Thursday next.

Juliet stares past Dave.

JULIET

What must be, shall be.

Father Laurence, a forced cheerfulness.

FATHER LAURENCE

That's a certain text.

DAVE

Come you to make confession?

Juliet forces a smile.

JULIET

Are you at leisure, holy father,
now?
Or shall I come to you at evening
mass?

FATHER LAURENCE

My leisure serves me, pensive
daughter, now.
(to Dave)
We must entreat the time alone.

DAVE

God shield I should disturb
devotion! - Juliet, on Thursday
early will I rouse ye;

Dave bends.

CLOSE ON: Juliet; she stares stonily ahead as Dave kisses her cheek.

DAVE (CONT.)

Till then, adieu, and keep this
holy kiss.

Dave leaves.

TRACK WITH: Juliet; she runs for the sacristy.

The priest follows.

INT. SACRISTY. DAY.

Juliet, shaking with sobs takes refuge in the shadows of the small room.

The priest goes to her.

FATHER LAURENCE

O Juliet, I already know thy grief.

Juliet pulls away.

JULIET

Tell me not, Father, that thou
hearest of this,
Unless thou tell me how I may
prevent it.

FATHER LAURENCE

It strains me past the compass of
my wits.

JULIET

(DESPERATELY)

If in thy wisdom thou canst give no

HELP

Do thou but call my resolution

wise,

And with this I'll help it presently!

She pulls the gun, pointing it towards herself.

Horrified, Father Laurence moves to her.

Juliet, panicked, levels the gun at him.

FATHER LAURENCE

Hold daughter!

JULIET

(through tears)

Be not so long to speak. I lone to
die!

Father Laurence holds out a soothing hand.

FATHER LAURENCE

I do spy a kind of hope,
Which craves as desperate an

EXECUTION

As that is desperate which we would
prevent.

If, rather than marry Paris,
Thou hast the strength of will to
slay thyself,
Then it is likely thou wilt

UNDERTAKE

A thing like death...

We hear the distended chords of Fauré's Requiem.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

to chide away this shame...

It continues throughout as;

The entire screen fills with a glinting tear drop of blue liquid.

Reflected in the fluid's convex surface, the face of Father Laurence.

The face disappears as the tear drop falls and splashes into a clear water solution.

Like a comet in slow motion, the drop stains the water a cobalt hue.

INT. GREENHOUSE WORKROOM. DAY.

PULL BACK: The blue liquid fills a tiny glass vial held by Father Laurence.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

No warmth, no breath shall testify
thou livest.

Each part, deprived of supple
government,
Shall stiff and stark and cold
appear, like death.

Now when the bridegroom in the

MORNING

Comes to rouse thee from thy bed,
there art thou, dead.

Thou shalt be borne to that same

ancient vault
Where all the kindred of the
Capulets lie.
In the meantime, against thou shalt
awake,
Shall Romeo by my letters know our
drift,
And hither shall he come.
And that very
Night shall Romeo bear thee hence
to Mantua.

The priest cautiously hands Juliet the vial.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

Take thou this vial, being then in
bed,
And this distilling liquor drink
thou off.
I'll send my letters to thy lord
with speed to Mantua.

EXT. CHURCH. DAY.

As Father Laurence speaks, the screen fills with an express envelope addressed "Romeo - Mantua." The envelope pulls away from the camera and falls into a canvas bag brimming with hundreds of like envelopes.

TRACK: With the canvas bag. It continues its journey into the back of an express delivery van.

Heavy double doors slam shut, filling the screen with the slogan 'Speed Express.'

The van pulls away.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MANTUA. DAY.

A burning red sun is setting over an endless vista of ragged wasteland.

CRANE DOWN: A weathered sign reads - Mantua: Behind it a vast colony of permanent trailer homes stretches into the distance.

The rap, rap, rap of knocking echoes through the park...

CUT TO: The source of the knocking. An express delivery man, envelope in hand, raps vigorously on the door of an unremarkable trailer.

INT. TRAILER. DAY.

TOPOGRAPHICAL SHOT: Romeo lies flat on a single bed in the crumpled trailer.

The rap, rap, rap is very loud now. We move toward Romeo and realise he cannot hear the knocking because he has Walkman headphones on.

EXT. TRAILER. DAY.

Unsuccessful, the delivery man is filling out a "WE CALLED" card. He pushes it under the door.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CAPULET MANSION. NIGHT.

The heraldic 'Wedding Chimes' by JS Bach. Juliet stands resplendent in a radiant bridal gown. The image floats ethereally in a towering slab of mirror.

PULL OUT: From the mirror. The wedding dress is in fact being held in front of Juliet by two members of the house staff. Juliet is dressed in her night gown. The Nurse suggests various pairs of shoes.

JULIET

(DISINTERESTED)

Ay, these attires are best.

The fuss dispensed with, the staff leave.

JULIET

But, gentle Nurse,
I pray thee leave me to myself
tonight.

NURSE

Why Bride?

Juliet navigates the Nurse toward the door.

JULIET

(almost in tears)
To move the heavens to smile upon
my state,
Which, well thou knowest, is cross
and full of sin.

Juliet holds the Nurse in a pleading stare. She leaves.

Alone now, Juliet hurries to her bedside drawer. She cautiously removes a rolled piece of cloth from which she

produces the glass vial.

JULIET

(WHISPERS)

What if this mixture do not work at
all?
Shall I be married then tomorrow
morning?

She cautiously begins to unscrew the tiny black lid.
Suddenly, a knock at her door. Palming the vial, Juliet
swings around to meet the arrival of her mother. Gloria
probes her daughter's uneasiness.

GLORIA

What, are you busy, ho? Need you
my help?

JULIET

(makes light of it)
No, madam. We have culled such

NECESSARIES

As are behoveful for our state
tomorrow.
So please you, let me now be left
alone,
And let the Nurse this night sit up
with you.

Juliet begins to pull down the covers on her bed.

JULIET (CONT.)

For I am sure you have your hands
full all
In this so sudden business.

Gloria, sensing Juliet's distress, moves cautiously toward
her. Taking hold of the bed covers she helps her daughter
into bed.

GLORIA

Good night.

Juliet slides into bed. Gloria covers her with the blanket.

GLORIA (CONT.)

Get thee to bed, and rest, for thou
hast need.

A brief moment between mother and daughter. Gloria, unable to cross that final barrier, moves to the door; but she is stopped by the urgency in Juliet's voice.

JULIET

Farewell!

Gloria turns to Juliet.

JULIET (CONT.)

God knows when we shall meet again.

CLOSE ON: Gloria. A faint perplexity, and then with an almost warm smile she turns out the light and leaves.

The room is in darkness but for patterns of moonlight through windows.

TRACK: Toward Juliet. The sombre tones of Fauré's Requiem seep into our consciousness.

JULIET

I have a faint cold fear thrills
through my veins
That almost freezes up the heat of
life.

She brings the vial her mouth.

JULIET (CONT.)

Come, vial. Romeo, I drink to thee.

Juliet drinks, a sudden violent convulsion, her face
contorts
in fear.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CAPULET ESTATE. DAY.

The sky is filled with green and grey clouds. A gusty rain
blows the flower arrangements across the lawn. Large white
wedding marquees flap in the wind.

Through blurring rain, we see ambulances and police
vehicles,
lights flashing. Father Laurence, accompanied by a dour
looking man in black, alights from his car. We follow their
P.O.V.: We hear snatches of radio calls.

MEDIC ONE (OVER RADIO)

Mortal drugs?

MEDIC TWO (OVER RADIO)

Of lethal quantity as 'twould
render death.

INT. CAPULET MANSION - DINING ROOM. DAY.

They enter the house and pass the vast dining room, bedecked with wedding decorations.

Capulet sits at the large mahogany table. In the background Gloria stares vacantly.

Moving swiftly toward a doorway, the music builds.

INT. CAPULET MANSION - JULIET'S BEDROOM. DAY.

The door opens. On the bed Juliet's still body. Father Laurence closes the door. The priest kneels and hastily examines Juliet's pupils. He looks to the man in black who retrieves the glass vial from the floor and pockets it.

FATHER LAURENCE

(to the man in black)

As the custom is,
In all her best array bear her to
church.

When the man in black allows two other dark suited men into the room, it becomes clear he is the undertaker.

UNDERTAKER

She shall be borne to that same
ancient vault
Where all the kindred of the
Capulets lie.

INT. MAUSOLEUM. DAY.

A thousand voices proclaim the 'Song of Ascension.'

PAN DOWN: From the vaulting glass ceiling of the Capulet mausoleum.

On view, enshrined in literally thousands of lit candles, is Juliet's peaceful body.

We move through lines of Capulet mourners. In the shadows of the front door a young man hides.

CLOSE ON: The young man. We recognise the distressed face of Balthasar.

PUSH IN: Balthasar rushes from the Mausoleum.

EXT. MANTUA. DAY.

We are high above Mantua. Beyond the trailer park stretches a long ribbon of black highway.

As a Speed Express van turns off the highway and into the park, we hear Romeo's voice over:

ROMEO (V/O)

If I may trust the flattering truth
of sleep
My dreams presage some joyful news
at hand...

CRANE DOWN: The Express van pulls up at the front office. The driver alights and goes inside.

INT. TRAILER. DAY.

Romeo sits at the trailer's small kitchen table smoking and writing in his notebook. The "WE CALLED" card lies next to an overflowing ashtray.

His voice over continues.

ROMEO (V/O)

And all this day an unaccustomed

SPIRIT

Lifts me above the ground with
cheerful thoughts.

I dreamt 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 itself

POSSESSED

When but love's shadows are so rich
in joy.

Stubbing out his cigarette, Romeo gazes through the trailer window to see Balthasar's speeding car turn off the highway and into the trailer park.

ROMEO

News from Verona!

An excited Romeo rushes from the trailer.

EXT. TRAILER PARK. DAY.

CRANE HIGH: Romeo sprints across open ground to intercept Balthasar's car. We see, but Romeo cannot, the Express van approaching from the office. The car slews to a halt and Balthasar jumps out.

Romeo yells joyously.

ROMEO

How now, Balthasar?

Balthasar cannot speak.

ROMEO (CONT.)

Dost thou not bring me letters from
the Priest?

How doth my lady? Is my father
well?

How doth my lady Juliet? That I
ask again,
For nothing can be ill if she be
well.

Balthasar does not know how to say what he has come to tell.
He looks away.

BALTHASAR

Then she is well and nothing can be
ill.

Her body sleeps in Capels' monument,
And her immortal part with angels
lives.

I saw her laid low in her kindred's
vault.

For a long moment Romeo is profoundly still. When he
speaks, it is with a chilling calm.

ROMEO

Is it e'en so?

Balthasar nods.

Romeo turns and stares into the distant wasteland.

CLOSE ON: He speaks with bitter determination.

ROMEO

Then I defy you stars.

Romeo moves to the car.

ROMEO

I will hence tonight.

Balthasar tries to restrain him.

BALTHASAR

Have patience...

Exploding with fury, Romeo throws Balthasar against the vehicle.

ROMEO

Leave me!

CUT TO: The Speed Express messenger. Returning to his truck, the priest's undelivered envelope in his hand, the messenger looks toward the two boys.

CUT TO: The boys. Balthasar pleads with Romeo.

BALTHASAR

Your looks are pale and wild and do

IMPORT

Some misadventure.

ROMEO

(with cold serenity)

Tush, thou art deceived.

(a niggling thought)

Hast thou no letters to me from the Priest?

Balthasar shakes his head.

Romeo smiles.

ROMEO

No matter - I will hence tonight.

Romeo climbs into the passenger seat of the car. Balthasar reluctantly gets behind the wheel.

As silent tears begin to flow, Romeo turns his face to the setting sun.

PUSH IN: As he whispers:

ROMEO

Well Juliet, I will lie with thee
tonight.

Balthasar's car roars out of the park.

CUT TO: The delivery man. He looks to the envelope in his hand, then gets back into his truck.

EXT. HIGHWAY. NIGHT.

Balthasar's car speeds along the night-time highway.

CRANE UP: In the distance the glow of city lights.

EXT. ALLEYWAY. NIGHT.

Balthasar's car pulls into an alley and stops outside a decrepity apartment block.

INT. APARTMENT BLOCK. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: A bespectacled eye peers through the crack of a partly open doorway. Below the face, the barrel of a shotgun protrudes menacingly.

CUT TO: Romeo in the dark, paint peeling hallway.

ROMEO

Let me have
A dram of poison, such soon-
speeding gear
As will disperse itself through all
the veins
That the life-weary taker may fall
dead.

The eye considers, a voice rasps back.

APOTHECARY

Such mortal drugs I have, but
Verona's law
Is death to any he that utters them.

Romeo speaks with fury.

ROMEO

The world is not thy friend, nor
the world's law.
Then be not poor, but break it and
take this.

Romeo shoves a wad of money at THE APOTHECARY'S face.

BEAT. The rattle of a latch chain and the door swings open.

Standing in the doorway is The Apothecary. Sixty something, he has a face scarred with age and abuse.

APOTHECARY

My poverty, but not my will consents.

CLOSE ON: Romeo.

ROMEO

I pay thy poverty and not thy will.

INT. PRESBYTERY. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: Father Laurence. He speaks into the telephone with concern.

FATHER LAURENCE

Who bore my letter then to Romeo?

INT. SPEED EXPRESS DEPOT. NIGHT.

A bored clerk is on the other end of the line. The priest's letter is on the counter beside him.

CLERK

I could not sent it - here it is again.

INT. PRESBYTERY. NIGHT.

Father Laurence is worried.

FATHER LAURENCE

By my brotherhood, unhappy fortune!
The letter was of dear import.
(PAUSE: the priest listens)
Adieu.

He hangs up the receiver and looks at the wall clock.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

Now must I to the monument alone.
Within this hour will fair Juliet
awake.

DISSOLVE FROM: The clock to...

INT. APOTHECARY'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: A cat skitters across a stained formica table.

PULL BACK: The Apothecary's apartment is filled with cats. Dozens of feline eyes glow in the dim room. Romeo stands nervously. The Apothecary extracts a small chemist's vial from inside a 'Statue of Our Lady' table lamp - he now speaks with cool professionalism.

APOTHECARY

Drink it off and if you had the
strength of twenty men it would
dispatch you straight.

Romeo takes the vial and hands over the money.

ROMEO

There is my gold - worse poison to
men's souls
Than these poor compounds that thou
mayst not sell.

INT. BALTHASAR'S CAR. NIGHT.

Motor running, Balthasar waits in the alley outside the apartment building. He checks the rear view mirror and freezes. At the end of the alleyway a police car crawls to a halt.

EXT. ALLEYWAY. NIGHT.

Romeo exits the building, and as he does so, the streetlight catches his face. The Cop's and Romeo's eyes meet.

INT. POLICE CAR. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: The cop.

COP

This is that banished haughty
Montague.

INT. BALTHASAR'S CAR.

Balthasar cracks; he guns the engine and the car lurches forward.

EXT. ALLEYWAY. NIGHT.

Tires screech as Romeo dives into the passenger seat of Balthasar's moving vehicle.

Siren blaring, the police car gives chase.

AERIAL SHOT. NIGHT.

Balthasar's car winds through traffic - the patrol car gaining.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF TOWN. NIGHT.

A police car U-turns over a median strip.

EXT. BALTHASAR'S CAR. NIGHT.

TIGHT ON: A rusted brown hood.

The tortured engine screams as Balthasar negotiates the speeding car through city traffic.

CRANE UP: Red and blue police light approach fast.

INT. PRECINCT OFFICE. NIGHT.

Captain Prince barrels through the corridors of police headquarters pulling on his flying jacket.

EXT. STREET. NIGHT.

TIGHT ON: A smoking tire as it lays rubber to the asphalt.

Balthasar grits his teeth as he weaves the car through the impossibly tight space between a container truck and a bus.

WHIP PAN: The patrol car is almost upon them when... in a seemingly suicidal manoeuvre Balthasar throws his car into a right-angle turn across four lanes of oncoming traffic. Horns blare.

CUT TO: A skidding, squealing, out of control sedan, braking to avoid collision.

Miraculously, Balthasar's vehicle shoots out of its path and onto the other side of the roadway.

The sedan slams into the following patrol car.

EXT. DRIVEWAY. NIGHT.

Balthasar's car speeds into the driveway of the Verona Beach Eternal Rest Cemetery.

INT. CHOPPER. NIGHT.

Captain Prince scans the night time city below. He speaks to the pilot and the chopper banks sharply.

EXT. CEMETERY. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: A stone angel etched against the night sky.

PAN DOWN: Romeo pulls a crowbar from the trunk of the parked car. Police sirens sound in the distance.

Romeo eyes Balthasar intently.

ROMEO

Upon thy life, whatever thou

HEAREST

Or seest, stand all aloof. Give me
the light -

Balthasar stands motionless - Romeo rips the torch from his hands and strides into the cemetery. Balthasar follows.

BALTHASAR

I do beseech you...

Romeo turns, punching Balthasar hard; he goes down, blood spurting from his nose.

ROMEO

Do not interrupt me in my course or
By heaven I will tear thee joint by

JOINT

And strew this hungry churchyard
with thy limbs!

Balthasar slowly rises. Both boys are trying hard not to
cry.

ROMEO (CONT.)

The time and my intents are savage
wild,
More fierce and more inexorable far
Than empty tigers or the roaring sea.

BALTHASAR

I will be gone and not trouble ye.

Romeo smiles.

ROMEO

So shalt thou show me friendship.

They embrace as Romeo whispers.

ROMEO (CONT.)

Live, and be prosperous; and
farewell, good fellow.

EXT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: A crowbar wrenches at ornate glass and iron doors.

PULL BACK: The Gothic structure of the mausoleum rears
against the night sky. Romeo frenziedly attacks the gates
of the small side chapel.

ROMEO

Thou detestable maw, thou womb of
death,
Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to
open.

With a final heave the doors scrape open.

Silence.

ROMEO'S P.O.V.: An endless marble corridor lit by hundreds
of tiny flickering eternal flames.

CLOSE ON: Romeo. He murmurs:

ROMEO

In despite I'll cram thee with more
food.

Suddenly a hurricane wind and whirr of machinery: like a huge black insect, Captain Prince's chopper swoops down over the mausoleum.

Romeo is caught in the glare of the chopper's burning arc light. Sirens scream, police units race through the cemetery.

Blinded, Romeo fires wildly toward the chopper.

The police cars screech to a halt.

CLOSE ON: A police marksman in the chopper. His finger squeezes the rifle trigger.

BANG! A bullet slams into Romeo's shoulder. The other cops open fire and Romeo is sent reeling backwards into the mausoleum in a fusillade of bullets.

INT. CHOPPER. NIGHT.

An angry Captain Prince bellows into the radio.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

Hold! Hold!

The police hold their fire.

INT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

Bleeding from the shoulder wound, Romeo drags shut the heavy

double doors of the chapel. He bangs off three shots through a pane of broken glass and screams at the police.

ROMEO

Stand all aloof!

EXT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

Outside the chopper hovers. Police take up siege positions. Captain Prince's voice echoes through the bullhorn.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

Romeo, come forth, come forth.

INT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

Romeo uses the crowbar to wedge the doors shut. He bangs off another shot as he yells out at the Police.

ROMEO

Tempt not a desperate man!

Romeo waits. There is no response from the cops.

INT. CHOPPER. NIGHT.

As the chopper settles to earth, Captain Prince speaks into the radio.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

Bring forth these enemies Montague

and Capulet.

INT. PRIEST'S CAR. NIGHT.

Orange rescue lights reflect through the windshield of the priest's car as it crawls past the crashed sedan and police vehicle.

Father Laurence thumps the steering wheel in frustration.

FATHER LAURENCE

Saint Francis be my speed tonight!

Across the road Police swarm around the entrance to the cemetery.

FATHER LAURENCE

Fear comes upon me.

O, much I fear some ill unthrifty
thing.

HOLD ON: The green glow of the car clock as the seconds pulse away.

INT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

TRACK: Down the marble corridor lit by the eternal flames.

DISCOVER: Romeo. He weakly stands at the entrance to the viewing chapel.

The chapel is dark.

As Romeo's eyes adjust he can just see, picked out by a

shaft of blue moonlight, the glowing figure of a sleeping girl. He moves down the aisle past the tombs of long-dead Capulets.

Romeo is close now. He halts as if in the presence of an unbelievable vision. He lights a match and the room glows gold. The warm light reveals a Juliet even more beautiful in seeming death.

Romeo lights some of the hundreds of candles that surround her.

ROMEO

O my love, my wife,
Death, that hath sucked the honey
of thy breath,
Hath had no power yet upon thy
beauty,
Thou art not conquered. Beauty's
ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy
cheeks,
And death's pale flag is not
advanced there.

Romeo kneels close, as if not wanting to wake a sleeping child. Unconscious tears fall from his eyes as he whispers.

ROMEO (CONT.)

Ah, dear Juliet, why art thou yet
so fair?
Shall I believe that unsubstantial

DEATH

Is amorous and keeps thee here in

DARK

To be his paramour? For fear of

THAT

I still will stay with thee. Here,
oh here
Will I set up my everlasting rest
And shake the yoke of inauspicious

STARS

From this world-wearied flesh.

He lays himself close.

ROMEO (CONT.)

Eyes, look your last.
Arms, take your last embrace. And,
lips, O you
The doors of breath, seal with a
righteous kiss...

Gently Romeo kisses Juliet's lips. Ever so slightly,
Juliet's hand moves - Romeo does not notice.

ROMEO (CONT.)

A dateless bargain to engrossing
death.

Romeo drinks from the vial; the power of the compound is
immediate. He convulses and falls, his head resting on
Juliet.

ROMEO (CONT.)

(fighting for breath)
O true apothecary, thy drugs are
quick.

Behind Romeo's head we can see Juliet's eyes opening. Romeo
sucks the last few breaths of life into his lungs. Through
a blurry consciousness Juliet becomes aware of Romeo.

JULIET

Oh Romeo, what's here?

Forcing herself up, she cradles his head in her arms.
Romeo's clear wide eyes stare back, he is completely still
but for the sound of weak breaths desperately drawn across
motionless lips.

Juliet finds the vial clenched in Romeo's hand. Tears slip from her eyes.

JULIET (CONT.)

Drunk all, and left
No friendly drop to help me after.
I will kiss thy lips.
Haply some poison yet doth hang on

THEM

To make me die with a restorative.

She delicately kisses Romeo's lips.

JULIET (CONT.)

(a heart-broken whisper)
Thy lips are warm.

Desperately the lovers cling to each other. With all his desire to stay alive, Romeo whispers:

ROMEO

Thus with a kiss I die.

There is no breath. He is still. Silence. Sobbing, Juliet hugs the lifeless Romeo to her.

JULIET

Romeo. O' my true love Romeo.

She looks to the gun in his hand.

EXT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

TRACK: Quickly past Captain Prince and the Capulets taking cover behind a patrol car.

Two police officers urgently convey Montague and his wife toward them.

Discover Father Laurence arriving.

CUT TO: Father Laurence's P.O.V.: Patrol cars, lights flashing, surround the mausoleum.

He sees, through the open door of a police car, a handcuffed youth. It is Balthasar. Father Laurence hurries to him.

It is dawning on Father Laurence.

FATHER LAURENCE

Balthasar?

BALTHASAR

(DESPERATELY)

I brought news of Juliet's death...
And then in post came Romeo from

MANTUA

To this same place... to this same
monument.

CLOSE ON: Father Laurence.

FATHER LAURENCE

How long hath he been there?

BALTHASAR

Full half an hour.

Father Laurence turns towards the mausoleum.

FATHER LAURENCE

Romeo.
(a shock of realisation)
The lady stirs...

INT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

TRACK SLOW TOWARD: Juliet: Sobbing uncontrollably she prises the gun from Romeo's hand.

EXT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

Father Laurence, desperate, breaks through the police line and runs toward the mausoleum.

CUT TO: The parents and Captain Prince.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

Hold! Go not forth!

INT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

Juliet turns the gun on herself.

EXT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: Father Laurence, he screams as he mounts the mausoleum stairs.

FATHER LAURENCE

The lady stirs!

CRACK! The sound of a single gun shot rips through the night.

CUT TO: Captain Prince.

CUT TO: The parents, a look of cold shock.

CUT TO: The priest - his cry echoes through the night.

INT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

Juliet lies peacefully on Romeo's chest. Her eyes awake. A wash of deep red blood floods across them both. As we move away from the forms of the two young lovers lit by a ring of candles, the police burst in, guns ready to resolve what has already been resolved. Continuing up, we pass through the glass dome of the viewing chapel, and over the building.

EXT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

There, huddled at the base of the Mausoleum steps, are the Montague and Capulet parents and Father Laurence.

From high up we see Captain Prince emerge from the Mausoleum and speak to the group. A moment, then their cries float gently up.

EXT. SKY. NIGHT.

We are travelling high into the sky now. The cries of the parents and the buzz of radio calls fade to nothing.

EXT. VERONA BEACH STREET - CHRIST ROUNDABOUT-FROM AIR. DAWN.

As the sun struggled to rise, we push toward the figure of Jesus silently surveying the city.

EXT. VERONA BEACH - CHRIST ROUNDABOUT. DAWN.

As Jesus' face fills the screen, droplets of water begin to streak his cheeks.

HOLD: Music swells; the droplets grow to a torrent, and a heavy rain begins to fall.

For a long beat, we stay with this image.

CRANE DOWN: From the Jesus. A sea of black umbrellas stretches back from the steps of Freedom Tower.

EXT. FREEDOM TOWER. DAY.

At the top of the steps are a pair of flower strewn caskets. Before the caskets stand Fulgencia and Gloria Capulet, and Ted and Caroline Montague. They stare with blank, uncomprehending sorrow.

Among the crowd we see the distraught faces of Benvolio, Balthasar, Father Laurence and the Nurse.

The caskets are gently slid into a pair of long black cars. Montague and Capulet descend the stairs. Captain Prince blocks their path. He holds them in his gaze.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

See what a scourge is laid upon
your hate,
That heaven finds means to kill
your joys with love;
And I, for winking at your discords
too,
Have lost a brace of kinsmen. All
are punished.

The Prince steps aside. The procession moves off. Montague and Capulet look to one another, a moment, and then the two adversaries together follow the bodies of their dead children.

AERIAL SHOT: The rain falls. Two black cars lead the people of Verona Beach in a sorrowful parade.

As the cars pass beneath the towering effigy of Jesus, the image pixilates into a television picture.

PULL OUT: A TV anchor woman watches the image on a studio monitor.

She turns:

ANCHOR WOMAN

(to camera)
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 a story of more woe
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

The anchor woman changes beat to the next story; but her dialogue fades, and her image gets smaller as the television recedes into a black distance.

The music that reminds us most of these two lost lives
swells. When the television is very small it is switched
off.

BLACK SCREEN. HOLD A BEAT.

THE END