

## Kids Love Shakespeare's ROMEO & JULIET - Quick Summary for Kids

This story takes place in Verona, Italy - where two families are fighting. The families are named the Montagues and Capulets and they have hated one another for a long time. At the beginning of the play the Prince of Verona warns both families that anyone caught fighting in the streets of Verona will be sentenced to death.

One of the main characters is named Romeo Montague. Romeo is usually peaceful and interested more in love than in fighting. At the beginning of the play Romeo tells his cousin Benvolio and his friend Mercutio that he is sick with love for a girl who won't love him back. Benvolio and Mercutio encourage him to forget about her and go with them to a costume party at the house of Capulet. They know it will be dangerous because they are Montagues, but they think it will be fun.

Old Capulet has one daughter named Juliet. He is hoping Juliet will agree to marry Count Paris and is excited for them to spend time together at the party. Capulet wants his party to be a happy place for love to blossom. When his nephew, Tybalt, tells him that there are Montagues at the party, Capulet demands that Tybalt leave them alone to enjoy the party.

While Romeo is at the party he meets Juliet. He falls instantly in love with her and is sad to hear that she is the daughter of his family's enemy. Romeo decides to risk his life and sneaks to Juliet's bedroom window to speak with her. While he watches and listens to Juliet, Romeo learns that she is in love with him too. They speak at the window and make plans to secretly get married even though their families are enemies. The next day Romeo and Juliet go to Friar Lawrence who agrees to marry them. Friar Lawrence hopes their marriage will help to bring peace to the families.

On the way home from the wedding Tybalt, who is still angry that the Montagues came to the Capulet party, challenges Romeo to a duel in the street. Romeo refuses to fight him. Mercutio agrees to fight Tybalt instead. Romeo tries to stop the fight and accidentally gets in the way. Tybalt stabs Mercutio and Mercutio dies. Romeo is so angry and sad the Mercutio is dead that he agrees to fight Tybalt and then kills him. Benvolio begs Romeo to run away from Verona so that the Prince of Verona can't sentence him to death.

Juliet is sad to hear of her cousin's death, but she is even more sad to hear that her husband Romeo must leave Verona. She has another problem, too. Her father is forcing her to marry Count Paris. She goes to Friar Lawrence for advice. Friar Lawrence gives Juliet a special type of poison. The poison will make her fall into a very deep sleep, but everyone will think she is dead. Friar Lawrence plans to send a message to Romeo so that he can come back to Verona and meet Juliet when she wakes up in her family's tomb. Then they can leave Verona and be together.

Juliet follows her part of the plan, but something goes very wrong. Friar Lawrence's message never makes it to Romeo. Instead, Romeo hears that Juliet is dead. Romeo returns to Verona with a very strong poison. He goes to Juliet in the tomb, drinks the poison, and dies. When Juliet wakes up she finds Romeo laying next to her. She is so sad that she takes his dagger and kills herself.

This story is a tragedy because the ending is so sad. There is one good thing that comes of Romeo and Juliet's deaths. When the Montagues and the Capulets learn what happened with their children they agree to end the years of fighting. The Prince of Verona hopes the the story of Romeo and Juliet will help to keep Verona a peaceful place.