

# Broadway's ROMEO AND JULIET

By William Shakespeare

 #R&Jcinema

## CAST

Romeo	<b>Orlando Bloom</b>
Juliet	<b>Condola Rashad</b>
Friar Lawrence	<b>Brent Carver</b>
Nurse	<b>Jayne Houdyshell</b>
Lord Capulet	<b>Chuck Cooper</b>
Lady Capulet	<b>Roslyn Ruff</b>
Mercutio	<b>Christian Camargo</b>
Benvolio	<b>Conrad Kemp</b>
Tybalt	<b>Corey Hawkins</b>
Prince Escalus	<b>Geoffrey Owens</b>
Lord Montague	<b>Michael Rudko</b>
Lady Montague	<b>Tracy Sallows</b>

## PRODUCTION

Stage Director	<b>David Leveaux</b>
Scenic Design	<b>Jesse Poleshuck</b>
Costume Design	<b>Fabio Toblini</b>
Lighting Design	<b>David Weiner</b>
Original Music/ Sound Design	<b>David Van Tieham</b>

Filmed live at the Richard Rogers Theatre, Broadway  
Directed for the screen by Don Roy King for Broadway HD  
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Running time without interval 2 hours 16 minutes

*Romeo and Juliet* is a tragedy written by William Shakespeare early in his career and it was among his most popular plays during his lifetime. Today, along with Hamlet, it is one of Shakespeare's most frequently performed plays. *Romeo and Juliet* belongs to a tradition of tragic romances stretching back to antiquity. Its plot is based on an Italian tale, translated into verse as *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet* by Arthur Brooke in 1562 and retold in prose in *Palace of Pleasure* by William Painter in 1567. Shakespeare borrowed from both, but expanded the plot and developed supporting characters, particularly Mercutio and Paris. This production was the first time *Romeo and Juliet* had been staged on Broadway for 36 years.

## THE STORY

### ACT I

In the streets of Verona another brawl breaks out between the servants of the feuding noble families of Capulet and Montague. Benvolio, a Montague, tries to stop the fighting, but finds himself embroiled when the rash Capulet, Tybalt, arrives on the scene. Prince Escalus, the ruler of Verona, attempts to prevent any further conflicts between the families by decreeing death for any individual who disturbs the peace in the future. Romeo, the son of Montague, meets his cousin Benvolio. Romeo confides that he is in love with Rosaline, a woman who does not return his affections. Meanwhile, Paris, a kinsman of the Prince, seeks Juliet's hand in marriage. Her father Capulet, though happy at the match, asks Paris to wait two years, since Juliet is not yet old enough. Capulet sends out invitations to a masquerade and feast. He invites Paris, hoping that Paris will begin to win Juliet's heart. Romeo and Benvolio, still discussing Rosaline, encounter the Capulet servant bearing the list of invitations. Benvolio suggests that they attend, since that will allow Romeo to compare his beloved to other beautiful women of Verona. Romeo agrees to go with Benvolio to the feast, but only because Rosaline, whose name he reads on the list, will be there.

In Capulet's household, young Juliet talks with her mother, Lady Capulet, and her nurse about the possibility of marrying Paris. Juliet has not yet considered marriage, but agrees to look at Paris during the feast to see if she thinks she *could* fall in love with him. The feast begins. A melancholy Romeo follows Benvolio and their friend Mercutio to Capulet's house. Once inside, Romeo sees Juliet from a distance and instantly falls in love with her; he forgets about Rosaline completely. As Romeo watches Juliet, entranced, Tybalt recognises him, and is enraged that a Montague would sneak into a Capulet feast. He prepares to attack, but Capulet holds him back. Romeo speaks to Juliet and the two experience a profound attraction. They kiss, not even knowing each other's names. When Romeo finds out from Juliet's nurse that she is the daughter of Capulet—his family's enemy—he becomes distraught. When Juliet learns that the young man she has just kissed is the son of Montague, she is equally upset.

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## THE STORY (Cont'd)

### ACT II

As Mercutio and Benvolio leave the Capulet house, Romeo leaps over the orchard wall into the garden, unable to leave Juliet behind. From his hiding place, he sees Juliet in a window above the orchard and hears her speak his name. He calls out to her, and they exchange vows of love. Romeo hurries to see his friend and confessor Friar Lawrence, who, though shocked at the sudden turn of Romeo's heart, agrees to marry the young lovers in secret since he sees in their love the possibility of ending the age-old feud between Capulet and Montague. The following day, Romeo and Juliet meet at Friar Lawrence's cell and are married.

### ACT III

The next day, Benvolio and Mercutio encounter Tybalt—Juliet's cousin—who, still enraged that Romeo attended Capulet's feast, has challenged Romeo to a duel. Romeo appears. Now Tybalt's kinsman by marriage, Romeo begs the Capulet to hold off the duel until he understands why Romeo does not want to fight. Disgusted with this plea for peace, Mercutio says that he will fight Tybalt himself. The two begin to duel. Romeo tries to stop them by leaping between the combatants. Tybalt stabs Mercutio and he dies. Romeo, in a rage, kills Tybalt. Romeo flees from the scene. Soon after, the Prince declares him forever banished from Verona for his crime. Friar Lawrence arranges for Romeo to spend his wedding night with Juliet before he has to leave for Mantua the following morning.

In her room, Juliet awaits the arrival of her new husband. The Nurse enters, and, after some confusion, tells Juliet that Romeo has killed Tybalt. Distraught, Juliet suddenly finds herself married to a man who has killed her kinsman. Romeo arrives to spend the night with Juliet. All too soon morning comes and the lovers bid farewell, unsure when they will see each other again. Juliet learns that her father, influenced by the recent events, now intends for her to marry Paris in three days time. Unsure of how to proceed—unable to reveal to her parents that she is married to Romeo, but unwilling to marry Paris now that she is Romeo's wife—Juliet asks her nurse for advice. She counsels Juliet to proceed as if Romeo were dead and to marry Paris, who is a better match anyway. Disgusted with the Nurse's disloyalty, Juliet disregards her advice and hurries to Friar Lawrence.

### ACT 1V

Friar Lawrence concocts a plan to reunite Juliet with Romeo in Mantua. The night before her wedding to Paris, Juliet must drink a potion that will make her appear to be dead. After she is laid to rest in the family's crypt, the Friar and Romeo will secretly retrieve her, and she will be free to live with Romeo, away from their parents' feuding. Juliet returns home to discover the wedding has been moved ahead one day, and she is to be married tomorrow. That night, Juliet drinks the potion, and the Nurse discovers her, apparently dead, the next morning. The Capulets grieve, and Juliet is entombed according to the plan.

### ACT V

But Friar Lawrence's message explaining the plan does not reach Romeo in Mantua. Its bearer, Friar John, gets confined to a quarantined house. Romeo hears only that Juliet is dead and decides to kill himself rather than live without her. He buys a vial of poison from a reluctant Apothecary, then returns to Verona to take his own life at Juliet's tomb. He enters the tomb, sees Juliet's inanimate body, drinks the poison and dies by her side. Just then, Friar Lawrence enters and realises that Romeo has killed himself. At the same time, Juliet awakes. Friar Lawrence hears the guards approaching. When Juliet refuses to leave with him, he flees alone. Juliet sees her beloved Romeo and realises he has killed himself with poison. She kisses his poisoned lips and when that does not kill her, buries his dagger in her chest, falling dead upon his body. The guards arrive, followed closely by the Prince, the Capulets and Montague. Seeing their children's bodies, Capulet and Montague agree to end their long-standing feud and to raise gold statues of their children side-by-side in a newly peaceful Verona. [Synopsis Credit: Sparknotes]



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