

Adapted by Tonia Lee

## Act One

### Scene 1

Sampson: If I see those Montague men, I'm going to give them a beat down!

Gregory: Chill, Sampson, ya wildin' out.

Sampson: If they make me mad, I have something for them. (He grips his sword to show he is ready to fight.)

Gregory: Yo, don't be a freak with that sword! Trying to act hard may cost you your life!

Sampson: You know that people are scared of me once I get tight.

Gregory: You are rarely like this. Are you all right, B?

Sampson: I'm good. It is just that those Montagues always get me going. I can't stand them, yo!

Gregory: Yeah, you will get going by running away.

Sampson: Oh, you got jokes. No Montague will ever make me run.

Gregory: Yeah right, you're mad soft, man.

Sampson: You're lying. I'll push Montague men into the street and smack their women against the wall.

Gregory: Sampson, the beef is only between our masters and us servants. There's no reason to get the ladies involved.

Sampson: It's all the same to me. I'll kick the men's butts and chop off their ladies' heads.

Gregory: Chop off their heads?

Sampson: Yeah, man -- that's what I said.

Gregory: If you have any sense at all, you'll realize how stupid you just sounded.

Sampson: They'll sense that I have a lot of sense especially when it comes to using my sword.

Gregory: (He sees two Montague men across the street.) You may have your chance soon. I see two of Montague's servants across the street.

Narrator: Abram enters with a fellow servant, Balthasar.

Sampson: My sword is ready! Get them! I've got your back!

Gregory: I should turn my back and run.

Sampson: Don't be scared!

Gregory: Not of you.

Sampson: Yo, let them make the first move.

Gregory: Okay, I'll give them an evil eye when they pass, that should get things rollin'.

Sampson: Or even better, I'll give them the finger. They'll be mad stupid if they take that.

Narrator: Sampson gives Abram the finger.

Abram: Did you stick your finger at us?

Sampson: I did stick my finger.

Abram: But, did you stick it at us?

Sampson: I stuck my finger, but that doesn't mean I stuck it at you.

Gregory: Yo, you're trying to start with us, man?

Abram: Don't start trouble; won't be trouble.

Sampson: If you want trouble, I'm ready for you.

Abram: You think you are all that -- don't you?

Narrator: Benvolio, a Montague, comes into full view. Tybalt, a Capulet, is close behind him.

Gregory: (whispering) Say "yeah" -- there's one of our master's close relatives.

Sampson: Yeah, I am all that and more.

Abram: And your Mamma looks like a whore.

Sampson: Game over!

Narrator: Sampson takes his sword and swings it in the air. Benvolio rushes in with his sword.

Benvolio: Break it up you fools! You don't know what you are doing!

Tybalt: Yo, what's wrong with you, man! Why are you trying to stop a fight between our servants! (pushing a sword into Benvolio's back)

Benvolio: Chill, I'm only trying to squash the beef. You should help me bring some peace back to the streets.

Tybalt: What -- you are trying to talk to me about peace when you have your sword out, too? I hate the word peace, as I hate hell, hate all Montagues, as well as you! (Tybalt pushes his sword further into Benvolio's back.)

Narrator: Everyone starts fighting. Some of the people that were watching join them.

Officers: Beat'em down! They are always starting violence on our streets!

Citizens: Down with the Capulets! Down with the Montagues!

Narrator: Old Capulet comes in his nightgown with Lady Capulet his wife.

Capulet: What's all that noise? (calling his servants) Get my sword.

Lady Capulet: (picking at his advanced age) Oh, stop frontin'. You should be asking for a crutch. A crutch is more like it! What are you going to do with a sword!

Narrator: Old Montague enters with Lady Montague.

Capulet: My sword, I say! Old Montague is coming, waving his sword to provoke me! I'm not scared of him.

Montague: Capulet! (Lady Montague tries to restrain him.) Don't hold me back! Let me go!

Narrator: Prince Escalus of Verona and his men appear on the scene.

Prince: Thugs, peace breakers, (his voice is lost in the cacophony of shouts and swords clashing), neighbor-killers!

Narrator: The Montagues and Capulets keep fighting and ignore the Prince.

Prince: Are they deaf? (raising his voice) Hello? Drop those malicious, misused weapons and listen to the verdict of your angry Prince!

Narrator: Everyone stops fighting.

Prince: This is the third time you have caused violence in our streets. If ever you disturb the peace again, your lives will pay the price. Everyone go home.

Narrator: Everyone leaves expect for Montague, Lady Montague, and Benvolio.

Montague: Who started all of this drama? (to Benvolio) Tell us nephew, were you here when it began?

Benvolio: Your enemy's servants were fighting and started shooting before I came. I took my sword to try to stop them. That's when Tybalt arrived and stuck his sword in my back. After that, everyone started beastin' on one another.

Lady Montague: Where's my boy, Romeo? Have you seen him today? I'm glad that he wasn't involved in today's incident.

Montague: Something has been depressing him. For the past few days, he has kept to himself.

Benvolio: Do you know what's the matter with him?

Montague: No

Benvolio: Have you asked him any questions?

Montague: Yes, and so have his friends, but Romeo is a hard person to understand.

Narrator: Romeo walks by.

Lady Montague: Look here he comes!

Montague: Maybe Romeo will tell Benvolio what has been bothering him if we leave him alone with his cousin. Come on, honey, let's go.

Benvolio: What's up, Romeo?

Romeo: I'm good. Do you have the time?

Benvolio: Yeah, it's a little after nine.

Romeo: (sighing deeply) Time drags when you're down. Was that my Moms and Pops that just left?

Benvolio: It was. Yo, what's been troubling you, Cuz?

Romeo: A girl.

Benvolio: In love?

Romeo: Out.

Benvolio: Of love?

Romeo: She dumped me, yo. I've been played. (He looks at Benvolio.) Are you laughing at me?

Benvolio: No Cuz, I feel for you man. Who's this girl?

Romeo: Rosaline, she doesn't want to date me anymore because she never wants to get married.

Benvolio: What! That's messed up! Forget her!

Romeo: How will I to forget someone as blazin' as Rosaline?

Benvolio: By finding a girl that blazes even more.

Romeo: There's not another girl like Rosaline. I'm wasted.

Benvolio: Stop OD'in'. Just step up your game; there's more fish in the sea.

Narrator: Romeo and Benvolio walk off.

## Scene 2

Capulet: You're right, Paris. Montague and I have hated each other for a long time. Men our age shouldn't be so pugnacious.

Paris: You both get mad respect in the neighborhood. It's a shame that you two cannot get along. (changing the subject) But now, have you thought about my previous request to marry your daughter?

Capulet: As I said before, my daughter is young; she isn't even fourteen yet. Let's think about marriage in a couple of years.

Paris: Girls younger than she have made happy mothers.

Capulet: All my other children are dead. Juliet is the world to me. Date her first. Once you win her heart, I will allow her to marry you.

Narrator: Capulet and Paris leave. A clown comes and hands Capulet a sheet of paper.

Capulet: By the way, I am having a costume party tonight at my house, and I am inviting you. Paris, there will be a lot of fine girls there including my daughter, Juliet.

Narrator: Capulet and Paris leave. The clown is walking down the street trying to read a sheet of paper that Capulet has given him when he sees Romeo and Benvolio.

Clown: Good afternoon. Do you know where this address is?

Benvolio: Yeah, make a right at the corner and walk up.

Clown: Thanks

Benvolio: Yo, did you see that sheet of paper the clown had? It was a guest list to Capulet's costume party. Guess who is invited to come?

Romeo: Don't know and don't care.

Benvolio: I bet you will care if I told you that your darling boo, Rosaline, was on the list. That means tonight she will be chillin' in Capulet's crib. Too bad it is Capulet's party, you know, since your families be hatin' on each other and all that.

Romeo: What? My baby Rosaline is going to be there! Forget Capulet, I'm crashing his party tonight.

### **Scene 3**

Lady Capulet: Nurse, where's my daughter, Juliet? Call her for me.

Nurse: Juliet! Juliet! Where are you?

Juliet: What's the matter? Who is calling?

Nurse: Your mother is. Go see what she wants.

Juliet: What Ma?

Lady Capulet: Nurse, could you leave us for a moment? I need to talk to Juliet alone. (changing her mind) On second thought, maybe you should stay and hear this conversation.

Nurse: Okay.

Lady Capulet: Juliet, you know that you will always be my little girl.

Nurse: Mine too. I remember when I was nursing you. You were the prettiest baby I ever nursed. Now you are already thirteen. How time flies. If I could see you grown and married then I will have my wish.

Lady Capulet: That's what I came to talk to you about. Juliet, how do you feel about getting married?

Juliet: It seems like a nice thing to do, but I don't think about it much.

Lady Capulet: You should start thinking about it. There are many nice girls in the neighborhood younger than you that are already married and have children. I was your age when I first had you. To make a long story short, Paris, a relative of the Prince of Verona himself, wants you as his bride.

Nurse: A relative of the Prince wants to marry you. Juliet, girl, he sounds like a great catch.

Lady Capulet: Juliet, dear, how do you feel about marrying Paris?

Juliet: I don't know.

Servant: (running into the room) Madam, the guests have arrived for the party. They are waiting for you and Juliet. I must go and start serving the meal at once.

Narrator: The women and the servant leave the room.

## Scene 4

Narrator: It is evening. Standing in front of Capulet's house are Romeo, Mercutio, Benvolio, and several other masked men. Torchbearers lead the masked men into the party. The men give a short speech to the guests at the party, before making their entrance.

Romeo: (Holding his speech in his hand) Yo, should we give a speech like everyone else, or just bust in and forget the speech?

Benvolio: Forget the speeches, man. Being led in by some dude carrying a torch and then giving a speech is wack. Plus no one is able to hear the speeches, anyway. Let's be original and impress the ladies. We can represent with a dance.

Romeo: Yo, I would rather do the torch thing. I don't feel like dancing.

Mercutio: No, the dance idea sounds cool, Benvolio. Romeo, man, what is wrong with you?

Romeo: I'm not in the mood for dancing.

Mercutio: I bet you would be in the mood if you saw Rosaline.

Romeo: Man, why does love hurt so much?

Mercutio: Love is sweet. It only hurts you because you are taking your love life too serious.

Romeo: Love isn't sweet. It is rough and rude, and pricks at you like a thorn.

Mercutio: If love is rough with you, then you need to be rough with love. If it pricks you, prick it back. (To a torchbearer) Hand me a mask. I'm ready to party.

Benvolio: I'm ready, too. Let's go.

Romeo: Yo, I don't think I should go in there.

Mercutio: Romeo, man, you are wasting time. I'm ready to dance with a cute shorty.

Romeo: I had a dream last night.

Mercutio: Me too.

Romeo: What happened in your dream?

Mercutio: Man, I don't pay attention to dreams. Dreams are the result of a tired brain.

Romeo: Some people's dreams come true.

Mercutio: And you must believe in Queen Mab.

Romeo: Who?

Mercutio: She's the little fairy that makes your dreams come true. You haven't heard of her? Tiny creatures carry her wagon over dudes' noses while they are sleeping . . .

Romeo: Chill, Mercutio. I'm getting tired of your sarcasm.

Benvolio: (looking into the party) Yo, they have finished serving dinner. We better go in before it's too late.

Romeo: No gas. I have a strange feeling about this party. Have you ever had the feeling that you were going to die young?

Benvolio: Come on, Romeo. It's time to snap out of your depression.

Narrator: Benvolio and Mercutio drag Romeo into the party.

## Scene 5

First Server: Where's that lazy butt, Potpan? He should be helping us with the dishes.

Second Server: It's a shame when you get stuck with all the work.

First Server: Pack everything away! Check the silverware! Save a piece of that chicken and smoked turkey for me; you know that we have some greedy people around here. And do me a favor, tell the doorman to let the guests in.

Narrator: The second servant leaves.

First Server: Anthony and Potpan get your butts in here!

Anthony: Yo, calm down. We're coming.

First Server: One of you should be in here washing dishes and the other one serving food.

Potpan: Chill, we can't be everywhere at once. Take it easy.

Capulet: (greeting his guest at the costume party) Welcome, I've hired the hottest DJ in town and everyone is just sitting around. All of the ladies must have some serious corns on their feet.

A woman at the party: Why are you snappin' on us? It's not the women. The men here are not asking us to dance.

Capulet: (chuckling) In my day, I would whisper sweet nothings in a pretty girl's ear. But not now, my time for that has gone. However, you young men need to ask these beautiful ladies for a dance.

Narrator: The guests start to dance. Romeo can be seen sneaking into the party with his costume and mask covering his face.

Romeo: (to a servant) Yo, who's that girl over there?

Balthasar: I don't know, sir.

Romeo: (talking to himself still covered by his mask) Yo, she's bangin'! I've got to ask her for a dance!

Tybalt: (standing near Romeo and overhears what he says) He sounds like a Montague. How dare one of those creeps crash our party!

Capulet: (walking by and noticing Tybalt's anger) Hello, Nephew. What's bothering you?

Tybalt: Uncle, I'm mad tight! A Montague has crashed our party!

Capulet: Oh, you mean Romeo. I saw him, too.

Tybalt: Uncle, do you need me to jack him up for you?

Capulet: Calm yourself, boy. He's not bothering anybody. Just ignore him. This is a party; go have some fun.

Tybalt: I can't have fun when a Montague is here disrespecting our family. I've got to get him!

Capulet: He will be tolerated! I'm in charge here; you need to watch your temper!

Tybalt: Uncle, it's a shame!

Capulet: What is a shame is all this unnecessary fighting. It needs to stop between the Montagues and our family. Either shut up or leave. If not, I'll find a way to shut you up. (Capulet walks away.)

Tybalt: It's time for me to bounce. My uncle's acting mad grimy. This Montague surprise visit may be welcomed now, but later something will go wrong.

Narrator: Tybalt leaves. Meanwhile, Romeo walks to Juliet and takes her hand.

Romeo: My bad, for taking your hand. If I have offended you, I would like to make amends with a tender kiss. Would you mind?

Juliet: Your sudden touch didn't bother me. Even the statues of saints are touched by those who worship them. Sometimes a touch can be like a gentle kiss.

Romeo: True, but worshippers have lips, too.

Juliet: Yes, lips that they use to pray.

Romeo: Well then, can I let lips do what hands do?

Juliet: Yes, but the statues of saints don't move.

Romeo: Then stay still while my prayer is answered.

Narrator: Romeo kisses Juliet, but Juliet doesn't move.

Romeo: Wow, the sin of my lips is cleaned by your lips.

Juliet: So my lips must have the sin taken from your lips.

Romeo: If your lips have taken my sin, then I must have offended you again. Let me make up for that with another kiss to take my sin back from your lips.

Narrator: Romeo and Juliet kiss for a second time.

Juliet: You are a good kisser.

Nurse: Juliet, your mother would like to have a word with you.

Narrator: Juliet leaves.

Romeo: Who's that girl?

Nurse: Her name is Juliet. She is the daughter of Lady Capulet, one of the hosts of the party.

Romeo: (talking to himself) Oh, that's messed up. She's a Capulet. She is supposed to be my enemy.

Benvolio: (catching Romeo by the arm) Yo, we out, man. This party was crazy fun.

Romeo: (still stunned by the Nurse's revelation) It's too bad that I couldn't have the best of the party.

Narrator: Romeo and Benvolio leave together.

Juliet: Nurse, who is that boy over there that is leaving?

Nurse: I don't know.

Juliet: Could you please ask him his name? (The Nurse leaves.)

Nurse: (returning) His name is Romeo, and he is a Montague. He's the only son of your great enemy.

Juliet: (talking to herself) The one I love is the son of the one I hate! When I first saw him, I didn't recognize him. Now -- it's too late. Why does my first love have to also be my hated enemy?

Nurse (overhearing) -- What's this? What's this?

Juliet: Oh um -- it's just a part of a new song that I heard.

Narrator: Juliet's mother calls her.

Nurse: Coming! Coming! Let's be off. The guests are leaving.

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## Old “Sckool” Shakespeare

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### Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer Day?

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;  
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:  
    So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,  
    So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

William Shakespeare

# Responding to Act One

## Enlarging your Vocabulary

Define the following words using a dictionary or by using the context in which the word was used in Act 1:

1. cacophony
2. malicious
3. pugnacious

## Act 1 Reviewing the Details

1. What does the Prince of Verona say will happen to a Capulet or a Montague if he gets into another fight?
2. Why does Romeo want to go to Capulet's party even though he is not invited?
3. What do Juliet's mother and the Nurse think about the idea of Juliet marrying Paris? What does Juliet think about the idea?
4. Why does Tybalt leave Capulet's party?
5. How do Romeo and Juliet discover each other's identity? What are their reactions to this information?

## Examining Author's Craft: Literary Elements

**Characterization** - the way an author reveals the personality of a character. Writers reveal a lot about their characters' personalities by describing their appearance, way of talking, thoughts, and actions. Readers can also learn about a character through what other characters say about him or her and their reactions to that character.

**Character Foil** – a character whose personality or behavior is the opposite of another character.

**Metaphor** – exists when two **unlike** things are compared and the words “like” or “as” are **NOT** used in the comparison.

## Grasping a Deeper Understanding

1. Describe Tybalt's characterization? What impact does Tybalt's character have on the events that occurred in Act 1? Who in this act could be Tybalt's character foil? Why?

2. What metaphor do Romeo and Juliet use before their first kiss? How does this metaphor give you a better understanding of Romeo and Juliet's feelings for one another?
3. Describe the lifestyle of the Capulet family. What details from Act 1 help you to conclude this?

### **Creative Expression**

A. Write a diary page from the point of view of Tybalt. Include his feelings about the events that happened to him in this act. Be sure that your diary page remains true to Tybalt's characterization.

B. Consider various weather symbols (sun, rain, clouds, tornado, snow etc.) and draw a weather symbol that best represents the characterization of the main characters in Act 1. Be sure to explain how each weather symbol you drew is related to a character's personality from Act 1 and forecast what behaviors you expect from that character later in the play based upon what you read in this act.

### **Discussion Prompts**

1. The prince plans to use the death penalty to enforce peace on the streets of Verona. On a scale from 1 (terrible) and 10 (excellent) how good of an idea do you think this is? Does the death penalty help a society to enforce its laws?
2. Romeo and Juliet fall in love at first sight. Do you think it is possible for two people to fall in love at first sight? Why or why not? Explain.
3. During Romeo and Juliet's time period, people married much younger than today. If a teenage friend wanted your advice about if he or she should get married to someone he or she fell in love with, what would you advise him or her to do and why?