



Romeo and Juliet
by
William Shakespeare

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**A Short Story for ESOL & Functional
Skills Learners**



In the Italian city of Verona, two rich families, the Montagues and the Capulets, are bitter enemies. They have been fighting for many years, and even their servants quarrel in the streets.



Romeo is the young son of Lord and Lady Montague. One evening, Romeo and his friends secretly go to a party at the Capulet house. Romeo wears a mask so that no one will recognise him.



At the party, Romeo sees Juliet, the young daughter of Lord and Lady Capulet. He immediately falls in love with her. Juliet is also attracted to Romeo, and they talk and kiss.



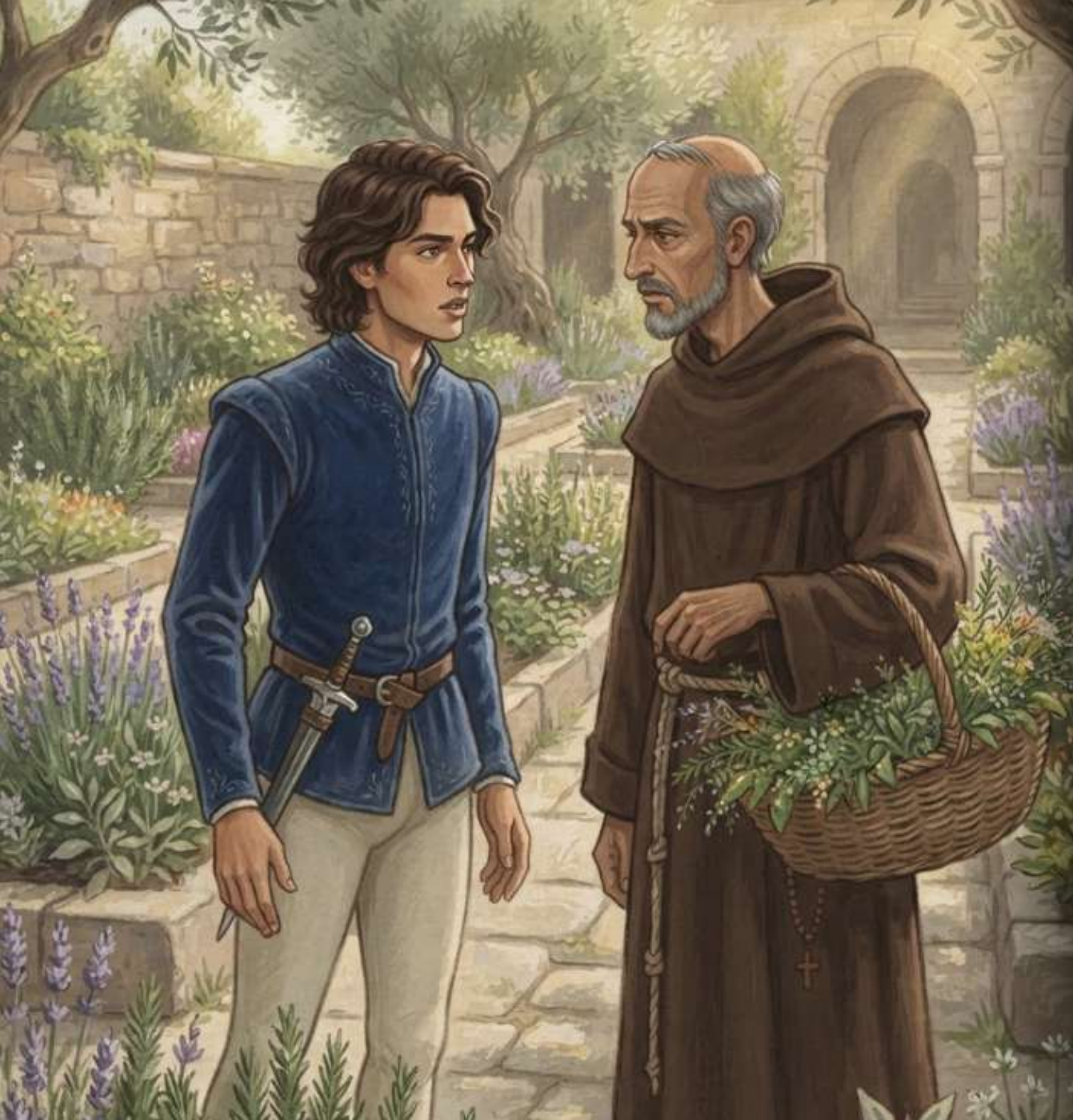
Soon, Romeo and Juliet discover the terrible truth. Romeo is a Montague and Juliet is a Capulet. Their families are enemies, so they know their love will cause serious problems.



Later that night, Romeo secretly enters the Capulet garden. He sees Juliet standing at her window and hears her talking about him. Romeo comes out of hiding and tells Juliet that he loves her.



Juliet tells Romeo that she loves him too. They decide that they want to get married. Romeo promises to arrange their marriage the following day.



Romeo visits Friar Laurence, a kind and trusted priest. He tells him about Juliet and asks him to marry them. Friar Laurence agrees because he hopes their marriage might end the fighting between the two families.



Romeo and Juliet are secretly married. They are very happy, but they cannot tell their families. They hope that one day the Montagues and Capulets will accept their love.



Soon afterwards, Juliet's cousin Tybalt challenges Romeo to a fight. Romeo refuses because Tybalt is now secretly part of his family. But Romeo cannot explain the real reason.



Romeo's friend Mercutio becomes angry and fights Tybalt instead. During the fight, Tybalt kills Mercutio. As Mercutio dies, he curses both the Montague and Capulet families.



Romeo is filled with anger and grief. He fights Tybalt and kills him. The Prince of Verona punishes Romeo by sending him away from the city.



Romeo secretly spends one final night with Juliet before leaving Verona. In the morning, they say a painful goodbye. Romeo then travels to the nearby city of Mantua.



Juliet's parents do not know that she is already married. They tell her that she must marry a young man called Paris. Juliet refuses, but her father becomes furious and orders her to marry him.



Desperate for help, Juliet goes to Friar Laurence. He gives her a special potion. He explains that after drinking it, she will appear to be dead for about two days.



Friar Laurence plans to send a message to Romeo explaining everything. When Juliet wakes, Romeo can take her away from Verona. Juliet agrees to the dangerous plan.



That night, Juliet drinks the potion.
The next morning, her family finds her
lying still and believes that she is dead.
Instead of preparing for a wedding, the
Capulet family prepares for her funeral.



But Friar Laurence's message does not reach Romeo. Instead, Romeo hears that Juliet has died. He does not know about the potion or the secret plan.



Heartbroken, Romeo returns to Verona and goes to Juliet's tomb. He sees Juliet lying there and believes she is truly dead. He drinks poison and dies beside her.



A short time later, Juliet wakes up. She sees Romeo lying dead beside her and realises what has happened. Filled with grief, Juliet takes Romeo's dagger and kills herself.



The Montagues and Capulets arrive at the tomb and discover the bodies of Romeo and Juliet. Friar Laurence explains their secret marriage and everything that has happened.



The two families finally understand that their hatred has destroyed their children. The Montagues and Capulets agree to end their feud and make peace, but it is too late to save Romeo and Juliet.