



Romeo and Juliet (1968)

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Review By Tim Dirks

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● **Romeo and Juliet** (1968) is Florentine director Franco Zeffirelli's beautiful modern interpretation of Shakespeare's enduring, classic yet tragic love story of "star-crossed lovers." Filmed on location in Italy, it was the most commercially successful Shakespeare film and its most entertaining, refreshing and natural rendition - a passionate celebration of young love.

The film won four Academy Award nominations for Best Picture, Director, Cinematography (Pasqualino De Santis), and Costume Design (Danilo Donati), winning two Oscars - Best Cinematography and Costume Design. Nino Rota's evocative musical score, including a period ballad "What is a Youth" (with lyrics by Eugene Walter) was un-nominated.

The earlier 1936 MGM, George Cukor-directed version of the film, starring Leslie Howard and Norma Shearer, or the 1954 British-Italian version (with Laurence Harvey and Susan Shentall as the lovers) cast much older, more mature lovers in the starring roles. The story was refashioned in director Robert Wise's and Jerome Robbins' *West Side Story* (1961) as a tragic tale of conflict between two warring rival NYC gangs, with Richard Beymer and Natalie Wood. It was recently remodeled with a radical, MTV-style and rock soundtrack in Baz Luhrmann's unconventional *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* (1996), starring Leonard DiCaprio and Claire Danes as the young lovers in a late 20th century setting.

With brilliant forethought, Zeffirelli gambled by filling the two starring lead roles with two young



unknown and fresh-faced teenage actors: 16-year old Olivia Hussey as the stunningly beautiful, dark-haired Juliet (just a few years older than Shakespeare's Juliet - a "fortnight and odd days" from 14), and 17-year old, slender and blue-eyed Leonard Whiting as Romeo. It retained the exciting feuding scenes between hot-headed members of the opposing families, the ineffectual but well-intentioned Friar Laurence, Juliet's bawdy Nurse, and the double-suicide of the youths. Laurence Olivier served as the uncredited off-screen narrator.

Although much of Shakespeare's dialogue was cut for the film (including much of Juliet's potion speech in Act IV, Scene 3, and the death of Paris in Act V, Scene 3), it appealed to the youthful, counter-cultural generation of the late 60s with its realism, the passion of the lovers, the brief nudity of the couple on their wedding night (morning), and its contemporary feel. The film's reinterpreted modern message, coupled with youthful, idealistic, yet strong-willed and rebellious heroes heralding dreams of peace, love, and freedom, have made the two lead characters representative, anti-establishment icons.

The opening prologue sets the scene, outlines the action of the play and the ongoing, bloody feud which has broken out between two important families in Renaissance Verona, the poignant premonition that "star-crossed lovers" [Romeo - son of the Montague family, and Juliet - daughter of the Capulet family] will die by the tragedy's end, and the reconciliation of the two bitter, warring families.

Prologue:

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
Do with their death bury their parents' strife.

Act I, Scene 1:

In the city of Verona, Gregory (Richard Warwick) and Sampson (Dyson Lovell), two House of Capulet servants with red, yellow and white costumes, walk in the marketplace - armed. There, they see Abraham (Ugo Barbone), servant to the senior Montague, and Balthazar (Keith Skinner), servant to Romeo Montague. As the Montague servants pass, Sampson bites his thumb, and spits. After a short period of jokes, deliberate antagonist talk and ribald humor, the Capulet servants spoil for and provoke a fight. The two sides begin to scuffle with drawn swords. Shouts and cries of "Capulet!" are heard as they fight. Benvolio (Bruce Robinson), nephew to Montague and friend to Romeo, enters and tries to stop the fight: "Put up your swords. You know not what you do. The Prince hath expressly forbid this bandying in Verona streets." An impetuous, rash, and furious Tybalt (Michael York), Lady Capulet's fiery nephew, arrives with his kinsmen, ready to brawl with Benvolio whose sword is unsheathed: "What, drawn, and talk of peace? I hate the word, as I hate hell, all Montagues and thee." Tybalt lunges at Benvolio, slashing his eye, and the feud is fueled again. Other Capulets and Montagues are summoned to the fighting by the ringing of church bells.

The arrival of the governor or Prince of Verona (Robert Stephens) and his men is signalled by a fanfare of trumpets. He scolds both families for disturbing the peace of the town three times. The penalty for further fights and violations of the peace shall be death:

Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace, throw your mistempered weapons to the ground...And hear the sentence of your moved Prince. Three civil brawls bred of an airy word, by thee old Capulet, and Montague have thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets. If you ever disturb our streets again, your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace. For this time all the rest depart away. You, Capulet, shall go along with me. And Montague, come you this afternoon. Once more, on pain of death, all men depart.

As the crowd disperses in the aftermath of the brawl, Lady Montague (Esmeralda Ruspoli) bandages the hand of one of her kinsmen. She asks for information about the whereabouts of her son Romeo, whom she has not seen. Benvolio describes how he saw Lady Montague's sad, love-sick son walking before dawn by himself underneath the grove of sycamore. [In the early part of the film, his unrequited love for Rosaline is not made obvious.] After a solitary Romeo (Leonard Whiting) appears, he notices wounded men being carried about:

God's me, what fray was here? Yet tell me not for I have heard it all. Here's much to do with hate and more with love.

Act I, Scene 2:

The Capulet hall is being prepared for festivities, as Lord Capulet (Paul Hardwick) returns from speaking to the Prince about the recently imposed sanctions on his family for feuding: "...but Montague is bound as well as I, in penalty alike, and 'tis not hard, I think, for men as old as we to keep the peace." Count Paris (Roberto Bisacco) agrees with him that it should be easy to uphold the peace, but is more interested in his own "suit" - his desire to wed Juliet, Capulet's almost 14 year old daughter whom he is courting. Juliet's dotting, indulgent father maintains that she is still too young to marry, and Paris is urged to wait two more years until she will be "ripe to be a bride":

But saying o'er what I have said before, My child is yet a stranger in the world. She hath not seen the change of fourteen years. Let two more summers wither in their pride, 'ere we may think her ripe to be a bride.

Although Paris argues: "Younger than she, are happy mothers made." Capulet suggests that if Paris can win Juliet's consent and heart, Capulet will not oppose their marriage: "The earth hath swallowed all my hopes but she. She is the hopeful lady of my earth. But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart, my will to her consent is but a part." Paris is invited to a party ("an old accustomed feast") to be held that evening.

Act I, Scene 3:

In Lady Capulet's (Natasha Parry) chamber, she asks for her talkative, vigorous, and grossly humorous old Nurse (Pat Heywood) to call Juliet, her daughter. The Nurse swears by the purity she had when she was a twelve-year old that she has called Juliet, but the girl hasn't responded: "Now, by my maidenhead at twelve years old, I bade her come. Where is the girl, Juliet...Juliet! Where is the girl? Juliet!" The camera zooms in the courtyard to a window where Juliet (Olivia Hussey) obediently responds and is framed: "How now, who calls?" In her mother's presence, after a long reminiscence about how long she has known Juliet and the family, the Nurse wishes that she will live long enough to see Juliet marry: "God mark thee to His grace thou wast the prettiest babe that 'er I nurs'd. And I might live to see thee married once, I have my wish." Since that is the topic which Lady Capulet wishes to broach, she urges her shy, sweet, and innocent daughter to consider marrying potential husband Paris - who will be present at the evening's party:

Lady Capulet: How stands your disposition to be married?

Juliet: (humbled) It is an honor that I dream not of.

Nurse: An honor, were I not thyne only Nurse, I would say that hadst sucked wisdom from thy teat.

Lady Capulet: Well, think of marriage now, younger than you, here in Verona, ladies of esteem, are made already mothers. By my count I was your mother much upon these years that you are now a maid.

Nurse: Oh yes, I remember...

Lady Capulet: ...thus then, in brief, the valiant Paris seeks you for his love...What say you? Can you love the gentleman?...Speak briefly, can you like of Paris' love?

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.

Act I, Scene 4:

A group of torchbearers and playful masked entertainers/gatecrashers, along with Romeo, Mercutio (John McEnery) (a relative of the Prince), and Benvolio, make their way toward Lord Capulet's party in disguise. Romeo asks what excuse (or "apology") they should give for their entrance, and Benvolio replies that they don't need one: "Let them measure us by what they will. We'll measure them a measure and be gone. Come, knock and enter, and no sooner in, but every man betake him to his legs." After Romeo mentions a sleeping dream that he had, Mercutio delivers his fanciful, imaginative Queen Mab speech about "the fairies' midwife," who knows about the waking and sleeping, troubling dreams of men. She is no bigger than a figure carved in an agate ring stone. And she is drawn by tiny creatures in a cart made from various parts - long spinners' legs, grasshopper wings, spider's webs, and watery beams of moonshine - they pull her across the bridges of sleeping men's noses. When she rides "through lovers' brains," they dream of love. Whomever she visits, they dream of their greatest desires. If she rides over ladies' lips, they dream of kisses. But she also can be angry and mischievous, causing soldiers to be startled awake in the midst of real battle - "sometimes she driveth o'er a soldier's neck and then dreams he of cutting foreign throats, of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades, drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes; and being thus frightened, swears a prayer or two, and sleeps again." Queen Mab can put knots in horses' manes - a foreboding omen. "The hag" has also taught women to bear the weight of men - and children. When Romeo accuses Mercutio: "Thou talk'st of nothing," he assents that he feels a hollowness in his own brain:

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 side to the dew-dropping south.

Revellers and Benvolio remind everyone that they will be late to the party. As he dons his mask and pauses before proceeding to the party, Romeo adds a premonition of real evil that he senses may occur, something that may end in his "untimely death," (a reference to the future meeting with Juliet at the party, their 'star-crossed love,' and their subsequent deaths):

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. But He that hath the steerage of my course direct my sail.

Act I, Scene 5:

As a jovial host, Lord Capulet meets and welcomes the entering guests and the masked Montagues. He fondly remembers the times ("tis gone") when he came to masked dances and courted fair ladies with "a whispering tale." Romeo lifts his mask and watches the dancers. During a marvelously-choreographed sequence of dance, he is immediately startled, entranced, and smitten by the lady Juliet engaged in a hand dance, poetically and rapturously praising her as white and pure among darker objects - as a jewel in the ear of a black Ethiopian, or a snowy dove among black crows:

Oh, she doth teach the torches to burn bright. It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night. As a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear; beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear. So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows, as yonder lady o'er her fellows shows. Did my heart love till now? Forswear it sight, for I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

Tybalt overhears Romeo's voice and suspects that the young man is a Montague who has come to "scorn at our solemnity" during the Capulet feast - he reacts with ill-temper and anger. A genial and indulgent Lord Capulet dismisses the uninvited guest Romeo as "a virtuous and well-managed youth." He restrains and cautions Tybalt ("a saucy boy") to "take no note of him" in his house - and he rebukes him ("He shall be endured!"). Tybalt fumes and is prepared to fight. Romeo responds to Lady Capulet's call for "the moureska!" A young boy named Leonardo sings "What Is A Youth":

What is a youth? Impetuous fire.
What is a maid? Ice and desire.

The world wags on.

A rose will bloom
It then will fade
So does a youth.
So do-o-o-oes the fairest maid.

Comes a time when one sweet smile
Has its season for a while...Then love's in love with me.
Some they think only to marry, Others will tease and tarry,
Mine is the very best parry. Cupid he rules us all.
Caper the cape, but sing me the song,
Death will come soon to hush us along.
Sweeter than honey and bitter as gall.
Love is a task and it never will pall.
Sweeter than honey...and bitter as gall
Cupid he rules us all.

After circling around the perimeter of the crowd during the song, Romeo takes Juliet by the hand from the opposite side of a pillar, and speaks his first words to her alone - to tell her of his passion. She responds in equal measure as they sensually press their hands together in a famous scene. With metaphoric, religious imagery, they speak of a holy shrine, pilgrims, devotion, saints, prayer, faith, and sin - terms that bespeak the sacramental nature of their passionate love:

Romeo: If I profane with my unworthing hand this holy shrine, the gentle sin is this:
my lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand to smooth the rough touch with a gentle
kiss. (He attempts to kiss her hand)

Juliet: Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much, which mannerly devotion
shows in this; for saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch, and palm to palm is
holy palmers' kiss. (They place their palms together)

Romeo: Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

Juliet: Ay, pilgrim, lips are things to use in prayer. (She demurely turns away)

Romeo: Oh...O then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do; they pray, grant thou, lest
faith turn to despair. (They interlock their hands)

Juliet: Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

Romeo: Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take. Thus from my lips by thine, my
sin is purged. (They kiss)

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. (They kiss
again and Juliet sighs)

When Juliet's Nurse calls her away to her mother, Romeo asks the Nurse to identify the young girl he loves, and learns that Juliet is of the rich house of Capulet ("...he that shall lay hold of her shall have the chinks.") It is a harsh, burdening blow to hear that she is the daughter of his family's leading enemy - Romeo realizes the grave nature of his love and the indebtedness of his life: "O, dear account! My life is my foe's debt." As the guests leave, Juliet asks her Nurse to inquire about her newfound love. After speaking to Tybalt, she returns with the disheartening news that Romeo is "of the House of Montague." Juliet despairs, stricken by the ironic fact that she is in love with the only son of her family's greatest enemy:

My only love sprung from my only hate, too early seen unknown, and known too late!
Oh! Prodigious birth of love it is to me that I must love a loathed enemy.

Act II, Scene 1:

Juliet is by the fountain in the garden of the Capulet residence when the Nurse calls for her. Romeo's reveler friends, Benvolio and Mercutio search for their love-sick pal, invoking no response from their derisive comments: "He heareth not, he stirreth not, he moveth...not. The ape is dead." Calls of "Romeo" and "Juliet" intermingle in the night air. Romeo scales the garden wall surrounding the Capulets to duck away from his comrades and to find some solitude, while listening to them from an orchard tree. He mutters to himself about Mercutio ("He jests at scars that never felt a wound") and the newest set of wounds which he must himself endure.

Act II, Scene 2:

From the Capulet garden, Romeo sees Juliet upon her balcony in front of her illuminated windows - at the start of the famous balcony scene. He delivers his oft-quoted soliloquy (speech to himself), wishing that he could tell her that she is his love. Enraptured, he compares her eyes to twinkling stars:

But soft, what light through yonder window breaks? O...it is my lady, oh, it is my love. O that she knew she were. She speaks, yet she says nothing; what of that? Her eye discourses, I will answer it. Oh, I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks. Two of the



fairest stars in all the heavens, having some business, do entreat her eyes to twinkle in their spheres till they return. See how she leans her cheek upon her hand. Oh, that I were a glove upon that hand, that I might touch that cheek.

Juliet stretches her arms, sighs: "Ah, me!", and then speaks from her mournful, emotion-filled heart. In declaring her open love, she considers whether Romeo would give up his name - the label that is her real enemy. She also wonders if she could deny or give up her own name - possibly by marriage to him:

O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore 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... 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy, thou art thyself, though, not a Montague. What is Montague? It is nor 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 name 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 that name which is no part of thee, take all myself. (She embraces herself.)

Romeo blurts out that he will renounce his name: "I take thee at thy word! Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized; henceforth, I never will be Romeo," startling her from her reverie. He pushes the leaves aside and she sees him, but cannot identify him. She gasps at the intruder: "What man art thou, that thus bescreened in night so stumblest on my counsel?" But because he has already given up his name for her, he cannot tell her his name: "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. Had I it written, I would tear the word."

Fleeing for the safety of her room, she turns back because she recognizes his voice: "My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound. Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?" He replies that he is not Romeo nor Montague if she dislikes either name. She fears for his safety in the garden, but he is undaunted by the high walls - he fears more the hostility from her eyes than the swords of her kinsmen:

Juliet: How cam'st thou hither, tell me, and wherefore? The orchard walls are high and hard to climb, and the place death, considering who thou art, if any of my kinsmen find thee here.

Romeo: 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: Sshhh! If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

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.

She first asks if he will swear that he loves her. Fearing that she was too forward and "too quickly won," she promises to deny her strong, profuse feelings of love so that he may woo her more formally. She admits that she should have been more restrained about confiding her "true love's passion" but her love is innocent and true. Romeo swears his love for her by the moon, but Juliet doesn't want a variable love characterized by the changing phases of the "circled orb." She only wants him to "swear by thy gracious self."

Juliet: Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say 'Ay,' and I will take thy word; yet if thou swearest, thou mayst prove false; at lovers' perjuries they say Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo, if thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully. (He climbs a tree next to her balcony) Or if thou thinkest 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. (He jumps and hangs onto her balcony) And therefore thou mayst think my behavior light.

Romeo: No.

Juliet: But trust me gentleman, I'll prove more true than those that have more cunning

to be strange. I should have been more strange, I must confess, but that thou overheard'st, ere I was ware, my true love's passion; therefore pardon me, and not impute this yielding to light love, which the dark night hath so discovered.

Romeo: Lady, by yonder blessed moon, I swear.

Juliet: Oh, 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.

Romeo: If my heart's dear love, I swear, oh, Juliet. (They hug and kiss passionately)

Juliet wishes to say good night, so that the bud of their blossoming love will have time to bloom and grow into a "beauteous flower," but Romeo wishes for her to remain a bit longer so they can exchange vows. However, she pleads that she has already given her vows from her boundless bounty:

Juliet: Sweet, good night. This bud of love by summer's ripening breath may prove a beauteous flower when next we meet. (She kisses him goodnight) Good night, good night. As sweet repose and rest come to thy heart as that within my breast.

Romeo: O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

Juliet: What satisfaction canst thou have tonight?

Romeo: Th' exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

Juliet: I gave thee mine before thou didst request it. And yet I would it were to give again.

Romeo: Wouldst thou withdraw it? For what purpose, love? (They join hands)

Juliet: But to be frank and give it thee again (They rush into each other's arms and hug) and yet I wish but for the thing I have, my bounty is as boundless as the sea, my love as deep. The more I give to thee, the more I have, for both are infinite.

When the Nurse calls for Juliet, she can't bear to leave him, so she asks for him to "stay but a little, I will come again." While she is gone, Romeo fears the fleeting, dream-like quality of their love and speaks to the night, both blessing it and fearing it: "O blessed, blessed night! I am afeard, being in night, all this is but a dream, too flattering-sweet to be substantial." After rushing back to the balcony, Juliet whispers in a hasty tone that if Romeo wishes marriage, he should send word (of where and when) the next day by her messenger. If he is not interested in marriage, he should leave her alone:

If that thy bent of love be honorable...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...But if thou meanest not well, I do beseech thee...to cease thy suit and leave me to my grief. Tomorrow will I send.

She bids him goodnight: "A thousand times good night!", kisses his hand, and begins to withdraw. He drops from the tree. She stops again, and asks what time she should send her messenger: "At what o'clock tomorrow shall I send to thee?" He replies: "At the hour of nine." As she leaves, she calls him again and then forgets why she called him back. Romeo laughs at her forgetfulness. They both cannot bear to part and linger together for a few remaining moments:

Romeo: Let me stand here till thou remember it.

Juliet: I shall forget, to have thee still stand there, remembering how I love thy company.

Romeo: And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget, forgetting any other home but this.

Juliet: (He climbs the tree one more time to kiss her. They are still kissing as the early morning dawns and the cock crows. He slips down from the balcony - they extend their hands out to each other.) Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow that I shall say goodnight till it be morrow.

Act II, Scene 3:

Romeo rushes to the garden of the churchyard to speak with Friar Laurence (Milo O'Shea). The priest, an herbalist, is gathering herbs in the early morning hours, and is surprised to see the high-spirited youth so early after a sleepless night: "Young son, it argues a distempered head so soon to bid good morrow to thy bed. Therefore thy earliness doth me assure thou art uproused with some distemperature." The impetuous Romeo informs the priest/confessor that he hasn't been to bed at all although "the sweeter rest was mine." Yet his night was not spent with Rosaline: "I have forgot that name and that name's woe." He "riddles" the priest by mentioning he has been with his enemy, and both have suffered mutual wounds of love. They may be healed by their immediate marriage:

I have been feasting with mine enemy, where on a sudden one hath wounded me...then plainly know my heart's dear love is set on the fair daughter of rich Capulet. As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine, and all combined, save what thou must combine by holy marriage. When, and where, and how we met, we woo'd, and made exchange of vow, I'll tell thee as we pass. But this I pray, that thou consent to marry us today.

The priest chides the elated, "young waverer" Romeo for his sudden change of love object, after seeing the boy cry salty tears for Rosaline just the other day. ("What a deal of brine hath washed thy sallow cheeks for Rosaline! And art thou changed?") While he had encouraged Romeo to bury his former love, he didn't intend for another love to sprout out of the grave so quickly. ("Not in a grave to lay one in, another out to have.") The friar agrees to the marriage that may end the feud between the warring clans - it may establish an alliance between the Montagues and Capulets, but he also cautions Romeo to move less hastily and urgently:

Friar Laurence: For this alliance may so happy prove to turn your households' rancor to pure love.

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

Friar Laurence: Shhh! Wisely and slow, they stumble that run fast.

Act II, Scene 4:

On a balcony, Mercutio and Benvolio wonder about the whereabouts of Romeo since he hasn't been home. As a result of Romeo's unwelcome appearance at the Capulet party, Tybalt has challenged Romeo (through "a letter to his father's house") to a duel. Benvolio believes Romeo "will answer it" - with both a letter and a counter-dare: "He will answer the letter's master, how he dares, being dared." Mercutio thinks that Romeo is "already dead," slain by Rosaline's eyes, a love song, and Cupid's arrow, and the love-sick lad is probably not manly enough to fight Tybalt ("Prince of Cats") with his skillful swordsmanship:

Alas, poor Romeo, he is already dead; stabbed with a white wench's black eye; run through the ear with a love song; the very pin of his heart cleft with the blind bow-boy's butt-shaft.

Romeo appears and they rib him for slipping away from them the previous evening: "You gave us the counterfeit fairly last night, sir...the slip sir, the slip, can you not conceive?" Now in a loving, playful, and happy mood, Romeo returns their punning conversation with his own word-play and witticisms:

Ah, Pardon good Mercutio, my business was great, and in such case as mine a man may strain courtesy...Thy wit is very bitter sweeting, it is most sharp sauce.

With sexual punning, Mercutio is pleased that Romeo has returned to reality and his former, true, free-spirited self - with a sense of humor:

Why, is not this better now than groaning for love? Now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo; now art thou what thou art, by art as well as by nature. For this drivelling love is like a great natural that runs lolling up and down to hide his bauble...

In the town square, they spy Juliet's Nurse, with her servant Peter (Roy Holder) struggling to hold

up her veil - they cry out: "A sail, a sail." In her role as a messenger for Juliet, she adopts the airs of a well-bred lady by discreetly holding a fan up in front of her face. [The Nurse is Juliet's realistic, baser counterpart as Mercutio is Romeo's counterpart.] Mercutio mocks the idea of her use of a fan "...to hide her face, for her fan's the fairer of the two." As they make fun of her, he also greets her as a "fair gentlewoman" but immediately offends her with a bawdy joke about the time of day: "...the bawdy hand of the dial is now upon the prick of noon." She asks to "find young Romeo..I desire some conference..." Before they leave her alone with Romeo, they jeer at her and play tricks, and Mercutio sings a word-play song that compares the Nurse to an aging, undesirable prostitute and "ancient lady":

An old hare hoar, and an old hare hoar is very good meat, in Lent.
But a hare that is hoar is too much for a score, when it hoars ere it be spent.

She sends the carousing rogues on their way, calling Mercutio a "scurvy knave" and "saucy merchant...that was so full of his property." She kicks her servant Peter for not helping to defend her: "And thou must stand by too and suffer every knave to use me at his pleasure."

The Nurse enters into the sanctity of the church where a male choir sings, and Romeo follows. She first warns that Romeo had better be true to Juliet: "...if ye should lead her in a fool's paradise...as they say, t'were a very gross kind of behavior; for the gentlewoman is young; and therefore if you should deal double with her, t'were an ill thing to be offered to any gentlewoman, and very weak dealing." Romeo protests by telling the Nurse that he hopes to meet and marry Juliet "this afternoon...at Friar Laurence's cell." Before the Nurse leaves to deliver the message, she pulls Romeo onto her lap and chatters about the proposed marriage of Paris to Juliet, mentioning that Juliet turns angry when she teases and says "that Paris is the properer man." The Nurse promises to commend Romeo to Juliet "a thousand times."

Act II, Scene 5:

Urgently impatient, Juliet waits for the Nurse in her father's orchard garden. Now that the old Nurse hasn't returned for three long hours, she is frenzied that her "unwieldy, slow, heavy" nurse is too old to deliver her passionate news to Romeo. If only her message of love had traveled with the speed of her own thoughts:

The clock struck nine when I did send the Nurse, in half an hour she promised to return, perchance she cannot meet him; aah, that's not so. Oh, she's lame, love's heralds should be thoughts! Had she affections and warm youthful blood she would be as swift in motion as a ball. But old folks, many feign as they were dead, unwieldy, slow, heavy, and pale as lead.

When the Nurse appears, she teases Juliet by stalling, groaning and complaining about her bodily aches, pains, and weary joints. Unsympathetic, Juliet wishes she would hurry up and tell her: "What says my love?" Irritated, she grabs onto the Nurse to have her more quickly divulge her news. The Nurse praises her choice of man as honest, courteous, kind, handsome, and virtuous, but then changes the subject and asks about the whereabouts of Lady Capulet: "Where is your mother?" to further aggravate Juliet. She asks: "Are you so hot?" and wishes that Juliet would show some attention to her age: "Is this the poultice for my aching bones?" Finally, the Nurse describes the plans for their marriage:

Then, hie you hence to Friar Laurence's cell, there stays a husband to make you a wife.
(Juliet laughs and hugs her Nurse) Now comes the wanton blood up in your cheeks.
They'll be in scarlet straight at any news. Hie you to church!

Ecstatic and joyful, Juliet departs for the church.

Act II, Scene 6:

As they wait, Friar Laurence is in his cell with Romeo, discussing the impending marriage. The priest petitions that the heavens smile upon their marriage so that afterwards, it will not be

sorrowful: "So smile the heavens upon this holy act, that after-hours with sorrow chide us not." Romeo speaks of the momentous "exchange of joy" that he experiences with her: "But come what sorrow can, it cannot countervail the exchange of joy that one short minute gives me in her sight." Knowing that passionate, romantic love may be too intense and die prematurely - consuming itself after a brief flame, the Friar cautions Romeo to be moderate so that their love may last longer:

These violent delights have violent ends, and in their triumph die, like fire and powder, which as they kiss consume...Therefore, love moderately. Long love doth so.

He hears the "so light a foot" approach of Juliet, and the two lovers rush to embrace each other. Romeo speaks lovingly of the mutual joy that they share - she answers that her own love is so full that she cannot add up half of its wealth:

Romeo: If the measure of thy joy be heaped like mine that thy skill be more to blazon it, then sweeten with thy breath this neighbor air.

Juliet: They are but beggars that can count their worth. But my true love is grown to such excess I cannot sum up sum of half my wealth.

Realizing he cannot keep them apart any longer ("Come, come with me, and we will make short work. For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone till holy Church incorporate two in one"), the Friar brings them together at the altar, where they kneel. A boy soprano sings their wedding song. [The film's Intermission is placed here.]

Act III, Scene 1:

On the hot afternoon following the wedding, Benvolio and Mercutio walk in the square. Peace-loving Benvolio fears that the hot weather will stimulate another brawl and suggests that they retire: "The day is hot; the Capulets abroad; and if we meet we shall not 'scape a brawl for now these hot days, is the mad blood stirring." Quarrelsome and irritable, Mercutio jests with his friend, suggesting that Benvolio may actually want a fight, provoked by petty excuses: "And thou wilt tutor me from quarreling. Hah!" Just then, Tybalt and other Capulets appear into view. Mercutio shows no care, and sits down in the water fountain to cool off. With a profound dislike for Tybalt, Mercutio taunts him by playfully challenging him to a fight ("a blow"):

Tybalt: A word with one of you.

Mercutio: And but one word with one of us? Couple it with something, make it a word and a blow.

Tybalt uses the "occasion" to make a derogatory comment and accuse Mercutio of consorting with Romeo. Mercutio pretends that Tybalt has called them "minstrels" and draws his sword (with a reference to a fiddler drawing his bow to produce discordant music):

Consort? What dost thou make us minstrels? An you make minstrels of us, look to hear nothing but discords. Here's my fiddlestick. Here's that shall make you dance. Zounds! Consort!

Benvolio intervenes, hoping that the two would either go to a less public place, talk more rationally, or leave altogether: "We talk here in the public haunt of men. Either withdraw into some private place, or reason coldly of your grievances, or else depart." Mercutio refuses to "budge for no man's pleasure, I." When newly-married Romeo arrives at the top of the steps and approaches, Tybalt is pleased to see his real enemy: "Here comes my man," and insults him to provoke a duel: "Thou art a villain." Romeo is beyond mere name-calling, and expresses his all-embracing, perplexing love for his new cousin and the Capulets:

Romeo: Tybalt, the reason as 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.

Tybalt: Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries thou hast done me, therefore turn and draw.

Romeo: I do protest I never injured thee, but love thee better than thou canst devise, till thou shalt know the reason of my love. And so, good Capulet, which name I tender as dearly as mine own, be satisfied.

Thinking that a weakened, unmanly Romeo has succumbed to Tybalt because of his love for Rosaline, Mercutio emerges from the fountain, livid that the love-sick Romeo has submitted: "O calm, dishonorable, vile submission!" Referring to Tybalt's appellation as the Prince of Cats, he retaliates and calls Tybalt a "ratcatcher," draws his sword, and threatens to take one of his nine lives: "Good king of cats, nothing but one of your nine lives, that I mean to make bold withal and as you shall use me hereafter drybeat the rest of the eight." Romeo pleads for all to put away their weapons but is ignored and called a "coward."

As Romeo grabs Mercutio, trying his best to bring the feuding and swordplay to an end, he blocks one of Mercutio's parries and Tybalt's blade stabs Mercutio under his arm in the chest. Tybalt withdraws his sword - the tip is covered in blood. As Tybalt flees with his followers, Mercutio groans and clutches his side, claiming that he is "hurt," but it is only a cat's "scratch." However it is a fatal wound - the effects of which will be felt "on both your houses":

No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door, but 'tis enough; you ask for me tomorrow; and you shall find me a grave man. Where is my page? Go villain, and fetch me a surgeon. Fetch me a surgeon! (To Romeo) Why the devil came you between us? I was hurt under your arm...Help me into some house, Benvolio, or I shall faint. (He stumbles up the steps of the church) A plague on both your houses! They've made worms' meat of me. I have it, and soundly too, your houses! (He falls dead)

Stunned by his complicity in the death of his friend, Romeo realizes the blackness of the day, the dark fate which faces him, and the need to avenge Mercutio's death, although that will mean casting "away to heaven respective lenity." He rises from Mercutio's body, enraged and ready to accept the burden of vengeance:

This day's black fate, on more days doth depend; this but begins the woe others must end. He gone in triumph! And Mercutio slain! Away to heaven, respective lenity, fire and fury be my conduct now.

Taking a bloody cloth from Mercutio's slain figure, Romeo rushes after Tybalt and his men and confronts him:

Now, Tybalt, take the villain back again, that late thou gav'st me. Mercutio's soul is but a little way above our heads, staying for thine to keep him company: Either thou or I, or both, must go with him.

Romeo is given swords to fight before his desperate duel with Tybalt. When he loses his sword, he retreats back to the town's square. After rolling around on the ground and wrestling his opponent, Romeo rises and is given a sword, just in time to slay Tybalt as he is attacked. Now that the "citizens are up," Benvolio cries for Romeo to "away, be gone...Stand not amazed, the Prince will doom thee death, if thou art taken. Hence, begone. Away, Romeo!" The Prince's penalty for death is death, so Romeo must flee, knowing: "Oh, I am fortune's fool!"

Act III, Scene 2:

As Juliet awaits Romeo, the Nurse mourns the loss of Tybalt - a tragic loss for the Capulet family. And then Juliet learns that "Romeo's hand shed Tybalt's blood." She is aghast: "Oh, serpent heart, hid with a flow'ring face! Was ever book containing such vile matter so fairly bound?" When the Nurse curses Romeo: "Shame come to Romeo," Juliet comes to her senses and defends her husband, declaring that he was "not born to shame" and refusing to "speak ill" of him:

Blistered be thy tongue for such a wish. He was not born to shame. Upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit...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 wherefore villain, didst thou kill my cousin?

[Action returns to **Act III, Scene 1:**]

As the result of two accidental deaths, the Capulets carry the body of Tybalt, and the Montagues carry the body of Mercutio through the streets to the Prince. The two bodies are laid on the stones for the Prince to make a just judgment. Both sides cry for vengeance. Although Lady Capulet claims that "for blood of ours shed blood of Montague," Benvolio asserts that Tybalt "began this bloody fray." Prejudiced, Lady Capulet asks for Romeo's death: "Romeo slew Tybalt, Romeo must not live." The Prince asks: "Who now the price of his dear blood doth owe?" Lord Montague (Antonio Pierfederici) answers that Romeo punished Tybalt, as the law would repay him, for slaying his friend: "Not Romeo, Prince, he was Mercutio's friend. His fault concludes but what the law should end. The life of Tybalt." After listening to both sides and without any more leniency for the feuding households, the Prince concludes that Romeo should be exiled immediately from Verona -

otherwise he will die if caught: "And for that offence, immediately we do exile him hence. Let Romeo hence in haste, else, when he's found, that hour is his last."

Act III, Scene 3:

In the safety of Friar Laurence's cell, Romeo lies on the ground in despair. He sobs over the Prince's punishment - his banishment - and death to his love for Juliet: "O banishment, be merciful, say death; do not say banishment...There is no world without Verona walls." The Nurse arrives on an "errand" from Lady Juliet, who is also in a pitiful state of "blubbering and weeping, weeping and blubbering." Romeo asks about Juliet and her reactions: "How is it with her? Does she not think me an old murderer? Where is she? How doth she? What says my concealed lady to our cancelled love?" She replies that Juliet is crying over both Tybalt's name and Romeo's name. Miserable over his fate and believing that his own name means death to Juliet ("As if that name did murder her...tell me in what vile part of this anatomy doth my name lodge?") Romeo pulls shears from a gardening basket to stab himself to hasten his own death - the Friar grabs his "desperate hand" and suppresses his morbid desire. The wise priest lectures the young boy on his impetuosity, womanly attitude, and lack of maturity and temperance:

Thou hast amazed me. Art thou a man? Thy form cries out thou art. Thy tears are womanish, thy wild acts denote the unreasonable fury of a beast. Hast thou slain Tybalt? Wilt thou slay thyself, and slay thy lady, that on thy life lives by doing damned hate upon thyself?

Furthermore, he reminds Romeo of his "pack of blessings," that he should be happy that Juliet is alive, that Tybalt is dead (and not himself), and that he hasn't been executed but exiled:

Thy Juliet is alive. There art thou happy!
Tybalt would kill thee, but thou slewest Tybalt. There art thou happy!
The law that threatened death becomes thy friend and turns it to exile. There art thou happy!

His next advice is for Romeo to go to Juliet, comfort her, and then cautiously leave in the early dawn before detection for the nearby town of Mantua. There, he should wait until a time can be found to call him back for a return to his marriage, reconciliation between the families, and a pardon from the Prince:

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 find a time to blaze your marriage, reconcile your friends, beg pardon of the Prince, and call thee home with twenty hundred thousand times more joy than thou wentest forth in lamentation.

He instructs the Nurse to return to the Capulet household, with news for Juliet that "Romeo's coming."

[**Act III, Scene 4:** This short scene was dropped from this version of the Shakespearean film. In the play, Juliet's hand is promised, after an appropriate time of mourning for Tybalt's death, to Paris by Lord and Lady Capulet.]

Act III, Scene 5:

After a night of glorious love to consummate their marriage, Romeo and Juliet lie naked together, still asleep in Juliet's bedchamber. Romeo awakens first with the singing of birds, softly kisses his love, stands naked by the window and prepares to take his leave. She wishes that he would not depart and tries to persuade him that they have only heard the nightingale and not the early morning singing of the lark:

Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day. It was the nightingale, and not the lark, that pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear. Nightly she sings on yond pomegranite tree. Oh,

believe me love, it was the nightingale.

Romeo knows better, and points out that the bright light is already breaking over the tallest mountain tops, warning him to flee. But he would rather stay and be put to death, if his love wishes so:

It was the lark, the herald of the morn, no nightingale. Night's candles are burnt out.
(They kiss) And jocund day stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops. I must be gone
and live, or stay and die... (He returns to her bed and caresses her) Let me be taken, let
me be put to death. I am content so thou wilt have it so. I'll say yon grey is not the
morning's eye, nor that is not the lark whose notes do beat the vaulty heavens so high
above our heads. I have more care to stay than will to go. Come death, and welcome,
Juliet wills it so.

But as the light increases, Juliet also realizes the unpleasant reality that the singing bird is the lark with a song that divides them, and encourages Romeo to leave quickly to save his life. She pushes him away, turns to get out of bed (and reveals her breasts for a brief moment), and reaches for her nightshirt:

It is, it is, hie hence, be gone away. Romeo, it is. It is the lark that sings so out of tune,
straining harsh discords, and displeasing sharps. Some say the lark makes sweet
division. Oh, this doth not so, for she divideth us. So now be gone, more light and light
it grows.

To Romeo, the light means the darkness of painful parting and separation: "More light and light, more dark and dark our woes." The Nurse knocks and warns that Lady Capulet is coming to Juliet's chamber. As the two lovers part, Juliet insists that Romeo (her "husband-friend") send frequent messages: "I must hear from thee every day on the hour." He promises to "omit no opportunity that may convey my greetings, love to thee."

As Romeo begins to climb back over the balcony, Juliet pulls him back, wondering if they will ever be together again: "Oh, think'st thou we shall ever meet again?" He assures her that they will be together again, to talk about their days of separation: "I doubt it not, and all these woes shall serve for sweet discourses in our time to come." With one final hug and kiss, he bids her farewell. After descending into the garden, he looks back at her. She leans over the balcony, watches him disappear, and then sinks down on the balcony ledge and sobs. Romeo mounts his horse and rides to Mantua.

Ignorant of Juliet's secret marriage, and mistaking Juliet's tear-stained face and weeping as grief for Tybalt's death and not for Romeo's departure, Lady Capulet vows vengeance against Tybalt's murderer by means of poison:

I'll send to one in Mantua, where that same banished runagate doth live, shall give him
such an unaccustomed dram, that he shall soon keep Tybalt company.

To soothe her daughter's pain, Lady Capulet tells Juliet the real reason for her appearance. To bring her joy, her father has arranged and decreed that she shall be married to Paris in only a few days:

But now I'll tell thee joyful tidings girl. Well, then, thou hast a careful father, one who
to put thee from thy heaviness hath sorted out a sudden day of joy...Marry my child,
early next Thursday morn, the gallant, young and noble prince, the County Paris, at
Saint Peter's Church, shall happily make thee there a joyful bride.

Juliet retorts that Paris "shall not make me there a joyful bride. No! No!" Outside the bedchamber, Lord Capulet asks Lady Capulet if she has delivered "our decree." Lady Capulet explains how Juliet has thanklessly refused, adding ironically and fatefully: "I would the fool were married to her grave." Lord Capulet is confounded, irritated, and increasingly infuriated that his daughter is so ungrateful. He is unrelenting in his insistence that she obey - she is to appear at the church! If she doesn't, he will disown her and never look at her again - and his "fingers itch" to slap her for her

insolence:

Does she not give us thanks? Is she not proud? Does she not count her blessed, unworthy as she is, that we have wrought so worthy a gentleman to be her bridegroom? Wretched fool, let me see her! Ungrateful baggage! (In Juliet's bedchamber, he addresses his "disobedient wretch" of a daughter)...I tell thee what, get thee to church a Thursday, or never after look me in the face...Speak not, reply not, do not answer me. My fingers itch. (He throws her from her bed)

The Nurse, who has overheard the conversation, intervenes on Juliet's behalf and accuses Lord Capulet of losing his temper and being unfair: "You are to blame, my Lord, to rate her so." He sarcastically calls her "my lady wisdom," snapping that she should save her words for "gossips." Spitefully, he also calls her a "mumbling fool." Even Lady Capulet realizes he is rash and "too hot." As Juliet hides herself behind the Nurse's skirts, Capulet is set in his decision and warns her that she must marry Paris without objection: "Thursday's near, lay hand on heart, advise. An you be mine, I'll give you to my friend." But if she refuses to obey him, he will throw her out of his house forever: "An you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets, for by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee, for what is mine shall never do thee good!"

After her father has abruptly departed following his final ultimatum, Juliet grabs at her mother to delay the marriage: "...cast me not away, delay this marriage for a month, a week, oh!" But it is to no avail - her mother refuses to talk any further: "Talk not to me, for I'll not speak a word. Do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee."

Juliet turns for comfort from her Nurse and asks: "How shall this be prevented?" The Nurse offers her a very unpleasant solution: since Romeo is banished and cannot return to openly challenge the marriage, she advises that Juliet marry Count Paris. She extols him as "a lovely gentleman" who is "so quick, so fair" when compared to the "dishclout" that Romeo is. And because Romeo is as good as dead ("your first is dead") and useless to her because of exile, this second marriage ("match") will be better than her first marriage ("for it excels your first") and will make Juliet happy. Juliet cannot believe her Nurse's repugnant attitude: "Speakest thou from thy heart?" However, she shrewdly masks her feelings and deceives the Nurse by claiming that she is somewhat comforted: "Well, thou hast comforted me marvellous much." Alienated from everyone, Juliet will go alone to Friar Laurence's cell "to make confession and to be absolved" after displeasing her father - she asks that the Nurse tell Lady Capulet "I am gone."

Act IV, Scene 1:

As this new Act opens, it is Paris, not Juliet, who is speaking to Friar Laurence, confiding that he hasn't been able to get Juliet's consent for their coming marriage due to her grief: "Immoderately she weeps for Tybalt's death, and therefore have I little talked of love, for Venus smiles not in a house of tears." When Juliet appears in the cell, she is taken aback as Paris greets her as "my lady and my wife." Behind her veil, however, she demurely and cautiously answers him: "That may be, Sir, when I may be a wife." To avoid talking to Paris but without arousing suspicion in her suitor's mind, she asks if she may see the "holy father" now or later "at evening mass." The Friar asks that Paris leave them for "time alone." As Paris parts to avoid disturbing their "devotion," he promises Juliet that he will come for her early Thursday, lifts her veil, and gives her "this holy kiss" on her forehead.

In the Friar's chambers, she passionately weeps for her awful, helpless situation: "Come weep with me, past hope, past care, past help," entreating him to assist in preventing the marriage. With a desperate, suicidal "kind of hope," the Friar contemplates whether she may have "the strength of will." Juliet eagerly answers that to live, she would jump off a tower, or as fate would have it, allow herself to be shut up in a death house while hidden within the burial cloth of a dead person:

O bid me leap, rather than marry Paris, from off the battlements of any tower, or bid me go into a new-made grave, and hide me with a dead man in his shroud.

He outlines a plan for her. She is to go home (it is Tuesday), "be merry," and "give consent to marry

Paris" as planned (on Thursday, two days hence). On the next night (Wednesday), she is to sleep alone in her chamber and drink from a vial "this distilling liquor" which will produce a temporary, death-like sleep for almost two days:

...through all thy veins shall run a cold and drowsy humor, for no pulse shall keep his native progress, but surcease. No warmth, no breath shall testify thou livest, and in this borrowed likeness of shrunk death though shalt continue two and forty hours, and then awake as from a pleasant sleep.

In the meantime while she is put in the Capulet family tomb, the Friar will send a letter through a courier to Romeo to explain the deception ("know our drift"). He will come back to Verona to join the Friar, and they will be there in the tomb by Juliet's side when she awakens. Afterwards, Romeo will take Juliet with him to Mantua. Juliet greedily reaches out for the potion in the vial: "Give me, give me! Tell me not of fear!" She kisses the Friar's hand and leaves.

Act IV, Scene 2:

As instructed, Juliet returns home and acts repentant before her father's presence, asking for his apology for her willful behavior:

Lord Capulet: How now, my headstrong! Where have you been gadding?
Juliet: Where I have learnt me to repent the sin of disobedient opposition. Pardon me, henceforward I, I am ever ruled by you.

Act IV, Scenes 1 and 3:

But then, in the quiet of her bedroom where she has contrived to be alone, Juliet overcomes her fear and drinks the potion from the vial, vowing with a toast to be granted strength to greet symbolic death: "Love give me strength!" Friar Laurence sends his letter to Romeo in Mantua through a courier.

Act IV, Scene 5:

The Nurse's screams are heard throughout the Capulet household after entering Juliet's chamber to awaken her: "My lord, my lord. She's dead." Lord Capulet mourns the passing of his daughter as she lies extended across her bed, cold and stiff before her time: "O lamentable day! Death lies on her like an untimely frost. Upon the sweetest flower of all the field."

The scene changes to a funeral procession as Juliet's bier is brought to the Capulet burial chamber - a children's choir sings. Friar Laurence accompanies the mourners. As a white gauze veil is placed over her and flowers are thrown, Romeo's servant Balthasar watches in hiding.

Act V, Scene 1:

On a speedy horse, Balthasar rides to Mantua to tell Romeo of what he thinks is Juliet's death, passing the courier sent with a message from the Friar. Expectant, Romeo asks: "How fares my Juliet. For nothing can be ill, if she be well." Sorrowfully and reluctantly, Balthasar explains: "She's dead, my lord, she's dead. Her body sleeps in Capulet's monument. I saw her laid low in her kindred's vault." Romeo bursts out against the treacherous, double-crossing stars which have determined and influenced his fate up until then: "Then, I defy you, stars!" Romeo and Balthasar mount and ride all day to reach Verona, passing the courier on their way. It is night by the time Romeo enters the graveyard of the Capulet tomb. First he bids farewell to Balthasar: "Live and be prosperous. Farewell, good fellow."

Act V, Scene 3:

After smashing the iron door to the tomb with a rock, Romeo enters the vault of the Capulet household. Holding a torch aloft in the darkness of the tomb, he finally sees his beloved's form - seemingly dead. After removing her veil, he is puzzled that she still has color on her cheeks:

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, death's pale flag is not advanced there.

He sees Tybalt's corpse - he thinks that by joining Juliet in death and eternal rest (by killing himself), he will be doing Tybalt a favor by avenging his cousin's own "enemy" and murderer:

Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet? What more favor can I do to thee, than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain to sunder his that was thine enemy? Forgive me, cousin.

Turning back to Juliet, he wonders a second time about her fairness, and whether the force of Death is in love with her - keeping her there in the dark as its beloved:

Ah, dear Juliet, why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe that unsubstantial Death is amorous, and that the lean abhorred monster keeps thee here in dark to be his paramour?

Instead of letting Death be Juliet's paramour, Romeo vows to never depart again from Juliet in "this palace of dim night...Here will I remain with worms that are thy chamber maids!" He sobs, takes one last look at Juliet, one last embrace, and a final kiss to seal his "dateless bargain to engrossing death":

Eyes look your last. Arms, take your last embrace. And lips, o you the doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss a dateless bargain to engrossing death.

He removes poison that he has brought, toasts to his love, swallows the kiss of poison, and kisses her hand before falling beside her: "Here's to my love! Thus with a kiss, I die."

Outside, the Friar is walking in the cemetery where he meets Balthasar, who has been there for "half an hour." When the young boy is fearful of joining the Friar, he proceeds alone to the vault, fearing that something has gone wrong: "Fear comes upon me. O much I fear some ill unlucky thing." At the tomb, he finds it open and lit from within by a torch. He rushes inside and finds Romeo pale and dead at the side of Juliet's bier: "Pale! Oh what an unkind hour is guilty of this lamentable chance?"

Juliet stirs, her hand opens, and she slowly awakens from 'death' and notices the Friar's presence, but she has not seen Romeo: "O comfortable friar, where is my lord? I do remember well where I should be, and there I am. Where is my Romeo?" When the Friar hears approaching noises, he urges her to leave quickly with him:

Oh, Lady, come from this nest of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep. A greater power than we can contradict hath thwarted our intents. Come, come along, the watch is coming.

She is incomprehensible when she sees Romeo's body on the floor. When he hears the approach of others, the Friar "dare no longer stay" for fear of being discovered (and frightened by society's blame for his own involvement and responsibility) - he flees the tomb, leaving Juliet behind. She finds the poison vial in Romeo's hand, and chides him for not leaving enough poison for her. When she kisses his lips to see if there is any remaining poison left on them, she finds that his lips are "warm." Pathetically, she cries out: "Oh, no, no!" - due to ill-timing, she knows he died only a few moments earlier:

What's here? Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end. (She drinks from it) O churl! 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. Thy lips are warm. Oh, no, no!

Hearing more sounds of the watchmen, Juliet comes to her own triumphant, tragic and fateful end.

Faithful till death, she picks up Romeo's dagger, stabs herself in the chest, and inevitably joins her love in marriage-death - she crumbles over his body:

Then I'll be brief. O happy dagger! This is thy sheath. There rust and let me die.

Now, the two feuding families share a funeral procession to mourn the two 'star-crossed lovers' - the bodies of Romeo and Juliet are carried up the church steps and laid before the Prince for his final judgment. In this final, somber scene of grief, he accuses them of killing the loving couple, and admonishes the assembly of Capulets and Montagues about the fruits of their mutual hate:

Where be these enemies? Capulet! Montague!
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. All are punished! (ECHO: punished!)

The off-screen narrator closes the film:

A glooming peace this morning with it brings.
The sun for sorrow will not show his head,
For never was a story of more woe
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.