

*Romeo &
Juliet*

Romeo and Juliet

Introduction

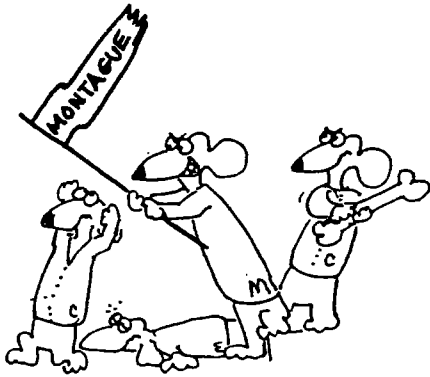
What would happen if you fell in love with someone you knew your parents and friends would not approve?

What would you do if the two people you trusted and counted on most failed you in a crisis?

What would you do if for the rest of your life you had to face the consequences of something stupid you'd done in anger?

No wonder *Romeo and Juliet* is staged so often. Girls still fall in love with the "wrong" boys; boys still fall in love with the "wrong" girls. Adults still fail the young; the young are still naive and impulsive. People haven't changed much since Shakespeare's time, as a reading of *Romeo and Juliet* will attest.

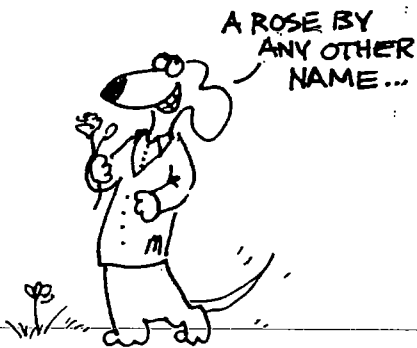
Romeo & Juliet



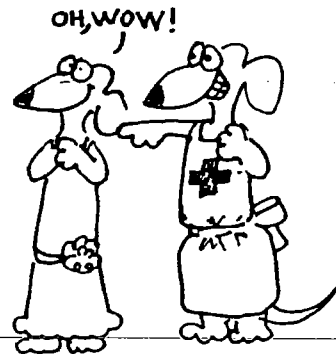
1. The play begins as a peaceful morning is disrupted by a brawl between the servants of the Montagues and the servants of the Capulets. This is not the first time it's happened, either.



2. The Prince of Verona arrives, breaks up the brawl, and summons the heads of the feuding families. He warns that the next brawl will be paid for with their heads.



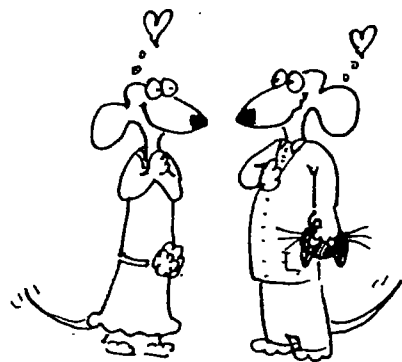
3. Romeo Montague, our hero, isn't in the brawl. He's been out for an early morning walk, sighing over Rosaline, his lady love. (He's never spoken to her.)



4. Meanwhile, Juliet Capulet is being told of her father's plans for her marriage to Paris, the prince's cousin. (Quite a catch!)



5. Romeo, cousin Mercutio, and some friends crash the party the Capulets are giving (where Romeo hopes to see his beloved Rosaline). Tybalt, the Capulets' hot-tempered nephew, spots them—but Capulet refuses to let him start a fight about it. (Guess why.)

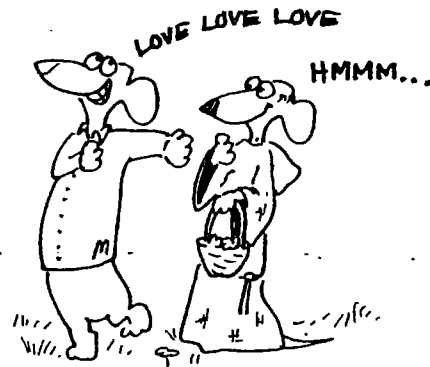


6. Sometime during the dance, Romeo sees Juliet and Juliet sees Romeo—love at first sight! They don't know—until it's too late—that he is the only son and she is the only daughter of the feuding families.

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7. After the party, Juliet thinks she's alone and speaks of her newfound love for Romeo. He is in the garden and overhears her. They end up pledging undying love and planning marriage.

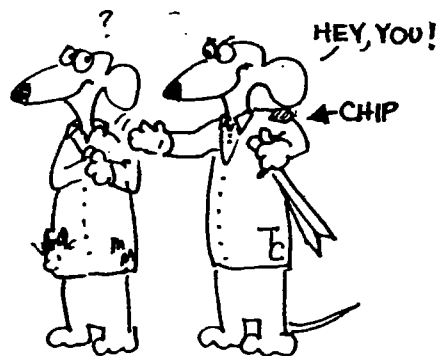


8. Romeo rushes off to tell his friend/mentor Friar Laurence. The friar, at first skeptical, thinks he sees a way of ending the feud: if he can present the only son married to the only daughter, the feud will have to be called off.

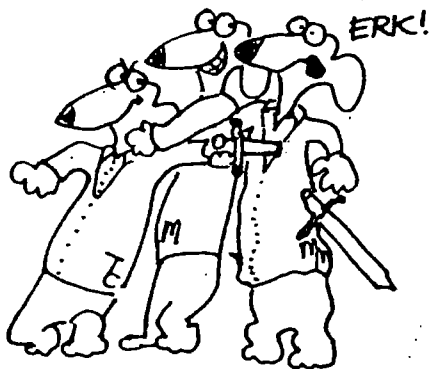
DO YOU, JULIET...



9. Juliet is given a message through her nurse, comes to the church, and Friar Laurence marries the young couple. Nobody but these four knows of the wedding.



10. Meanwhile, Tybalt, still angry about last night's party-crashing, picks a fight with Romeo's cousin Mercutio.



11. Romeo, who is too happy to fight with anybody, tries to separate Tybalt and Mercutio. Tybalt's sword goes under Romeo's arm to fatally wound Mercutio. Mercutio dies with a curse and a pun.

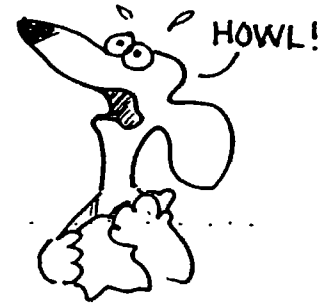


12. Too angry to think straight, Romeo pursues, duels with, and kills Tybalt—Juliet's cousin.

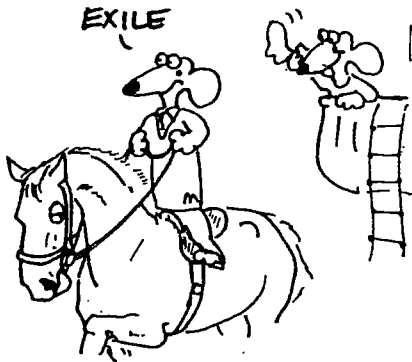
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13. The Prince, furious that his law has been broken, also realizes that both families have lost loved ones. He contents himself with banishing Romeo.



14. Juliet is distraught when she hears that her brand-new husband has killed her cousin. (There is no chance of reconciling the families now.) She carries on and on



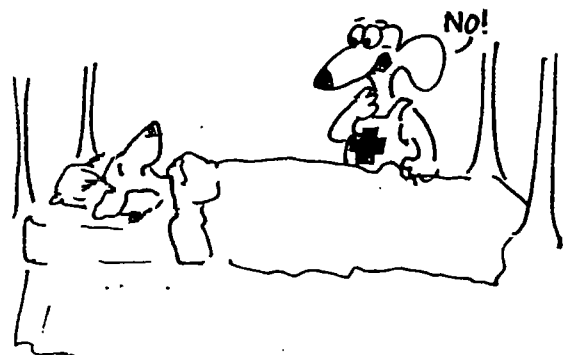
15. The newlyweds spend one night together, then Romeo leaves to begin his banishment.



16. The Capulets are upset by Juliet's moping around and wrongly attribute it to her mourning Tybalt. They decide to cheer her up by marrying her to Paris—the day after tomorrow.



17. Juliet refuses to marry Paris. After a terrible fight with her parents, they tell her to marry Paris or get out (whichever suits her). Remember, nice girls couldn't marry without a dowry, and besides, Juliet is already married. To marry Paris would be the crime (if not the sin) of bigamy. Friar Laurence offers one hope—a catatonic potion.

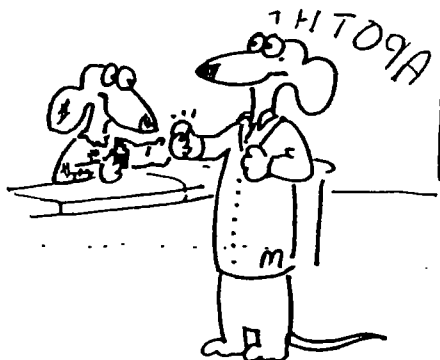


18. Juliet takes the potion and is discovered "dead" on the morning of her wedding. The celebration changes to mourning as Juliet is buried in the family vault. The plan is that Friar Laurence will be there to let her out when she wakes up, and will spirit her out of the city to join Romeo But . . .

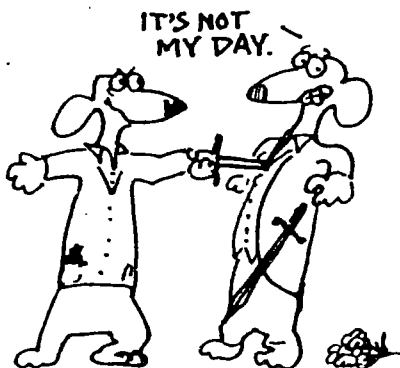
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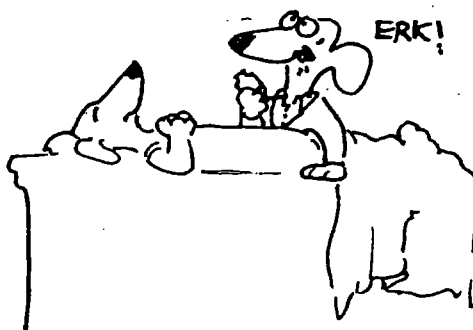
19. . . . Romeo's servant sees Juliet's funeral and rides to tell his master. Friar Laurence's messenger is delayed, so the servant reaches Romeo first.



20. Convinced that life without Juliet is meaningless, Romeo buys poison from a down-and-out apothecary. Then he goes to join Juliet.



21. At the Capulet family tomb, he meets Paris, who is also mourning Juliet. They fight, and the hapless Paris is killed. Then Romeo breaks into the vault.



22. There, by Juliet's bier, he makes a short tragic speech, takes his poison, and dies.



23. Friar Laurence arrives too late. When Juliet wakes up, she sees Romeo's body. They hear the watchmen coming, but Juliet refuses to leave. (Friar Laurence runs away.) Juliet joins her Romeo by committing suicide with his dagger.



24. The next morning, the Montague-Capulet feud ends as the families bury their only children.

"Romeo and Juliet" Scene Summaries

Prologue: The Chorus tells us the plot of the play, and what kind of play it is.

Act 1, Scene 1: Sampson and Gregory, servants of the house of Capulet, go out looking for trouble. . . . Sampson and Gregory almost pick a fight with Abraham and Balthasar, servants of the house of Montague. . . . Seeing a Capulet kinsman, Sampson and Gregory start to fight with Abraham and Balthasar. Benvolio tries to stop the fight, but Tybalt enters and attacks Benvolio. The citizens of Verona attack both the Capulets and Montagues. Capulet and Montague try to join the fight, but are restrained by their wives. . . . Prince Escalus stops the riot, threatens everyone with death, and takes Capulet with him, leaving Benvolio alone with Montague and Lady Montague. Lady Montague asks where Romeo is, and Benvolio answers that he was up before dawn, wandering in the woods. The Montagues say that Romeo is afflicted with strange sorrows, and Benvolio offers to find out what's wrong with him. . . . Seeing Romeo coming, Montague and Lady Montague leave Benvolio alone to speak with their son. Benvolio soon discovers that Romeo's problem is that he loves a woman who doesn't return his love. Benvolio tries to get Romeo to say who it is he loves, but Romeo won't. Benvolio also tries to get Romeo to solve his problem by looking for another woman, but Romeo seems determined to love and suffer.

Act 1, Scene 2: Paris asks Capulet for Juliet's hand in marriage. Capulet thinks she's too young, but tells Paris to woo her, and invites him to a feast that night. Capulet sends the servant out to invite other guests to the feast. . . . Benvolio is still trying to talk Romeo into considering other ladies when they are interrupted by the Capulet servant, who asks Romeo to read something for him. It is a list of guests at Capulet's feast that night. Thus Romeo discovers that Rosaline, his beloved, will be at the feast. Benvolio challenges Romeo to go to the feast and compare Rosaline with other beauties. Romeo says he will go, but only to rejoice that Rosaline is most beautiful of all.

Act 1, Scene 3: Lady Capulet wants to have a serious conversation with Juliet, but the Nurse interrupts with a long reminiscence about Juliet's weaning and what Juliet said about falling on her back. Lady Capulet tells Juliet that Paris wants to marry her, and urges her to look him over and see that he is the husband for her. Servants come to call everyone to the feast.

Act 1, Scene 4: Mercutio tries to persuade Romeo to dance at Capulet's feast, but Romeo insists that he is too sadly love-lorn to do anything but hold a torch. Then Romeo says that it's not wise to go to the feast at all, because of a dream he had. . . . Mercutio mocks Romeo's belief in his dream by going on and on about "Queen Mab," but Romeo is sure that some terrible fate awaits him. Nevertheless, he goes into the feast with his friends.

Act 1, Scene 5: At Capulet's house, Romeo and his friends enter as preparations are being made for the dancing. The musicians are tuning up, and the servants are hurrying to clear away the remains of the feast. . . . Capulet enters, greets the masked strangers, and invites them to dance. Romeo sees Juliet and says to himself that this is the first time he's seen true beauty. Tybalt recognizes Romeo and sends for his sword, but Capulet orders Tybalt to do nothing. Saying that he'll make Romeo pay, Tybalt leaves. . . . Romeo holds Juliet's hand, and begs a kiss, which she gives him. They kiss again, and then both are called away. As everyone is leaving, they each learn the name of the other, and they each exclaim upon the fate that has made each fall in love with his/her enemy.

Act 2, Prologue: The Chorus tells us that Romeo and Juliet are suffering because they can't meet, but that passion gives them power to find a way to see each other:

Act 2, Scene 1: On his way home from Capulet's feast, Romeo turns back and jumps the wall of Capulet's garden. Benvolio calls for Romeo and Mercutio bawdily conjures Romeo, but he will not appear, and his friends depart.

Act 2, Scene 2: In Capulet's garden Romeo sees Juliet come to her window. He is entranced by her beauty and listens as she tells the night that she loves Romeo and wishes that he had another name. Romeo surprises her by offering to take another name for her love. At first, Juliet worries for Romeo's safety and then she worries that he may be a deceiver, but he wins her over with passionate vows of love. They pledge their love to one another and then Juliet is called away by the Nurse. . . . Answering the call of the Nurse, Juliet goes into the house, then comes right back out and tells Romeo that the next day she will send a messenger to find out when and where she is to meet and marry him. Juliet is again called back into the house, and Romeo starts to leave, but Juliet

again comes back out, to set a time that her messenger should go to Romeo. Romeo tells her that the messenger should come at nine in the morning. They say a long goodbye, and after Juliet is gone, Romeo says that he will go to the cell of Friar Laurence to get his help.

Act 2, Scene 3: At dawn Friar Laurence gathers herbs and comments on how – in both plants and people – everything has some good, and every good can be abused and turned to evil. . . . Romeo appears and tells Friar Laurence that he has fallen in love with Juliet and wants him to marry them. The Friar criticizes Romeo for jumping so quickly from love of Rosaline to love of Juliet, but agrees to perform the ceremony because he thinks that the marriage may end the hatred between the Capulets and Montagues.

Act 2, Scene 4: Mercutio wonders where Romeo is. Benvolio says that Tybalt has sent a challenge to Romeo, and Mercutio scornfully describes Tybalt as an conceited killer. . . . Mercutio kids Romeo about love, and Romeo joins in the bawdy repartee. . . . Mercutio bawdily mocks the Nurse, who tells Romeo that she wants a word in private with him. . . . The Nurse complains about Mercutio, receives from Romeo the information about time and place of the wedding, then chatters on about how sweet Juliet is.

Act 2, Scene 5: Juliet impatiently awaits the return of the Nurse with news from Romeo. . . . The Nurse teases Juliet by finding all kinds of ways to not deliver the joyful news, but finally tells her that she is to go Friar Laurence's cell to be married to Romeo.

Act 2, Scene 6: Just before the wedding, Friar Laurence advises Romeo to love moderately. . . . Romeo and Juliet tell each other how much they love one another, and Friar Laurence leads them off to be married.

Act 3, Scene 1: On the streets of Verona Benvolio tries to persuade Mercutio that it's best to stay out of the way of the Capulets and a quarrel, but Mercutio jokingly claims that Benvolio is as much of a quarreler as anyone. . . . Tybalt, looking for Romeo, is challenged to a fight by Mercutio, but then Romeo appears. . . . Tybalt challenges Romeo to fight. Romeo refuses, but Mercutio steps forward and fights Tybalt. As Romeo is trying to stop the fight, Tybalt gives Mercutio a wound, then runs away. Mercutio dies. Romeo is ashamed of himself for letting Mercutio do the fighting, and when Tybalt returns, Romeo kills him. Benvolio has a hard time getting the dazed Romeo to leave the scene. . . . Benvolio tells the Prince what happened. Lady Capulet wants Romeo's life, but the Prince levies fines and exiles Romeo.

Act 3, Scene 2: Juliet longs for the coming of night and Romeo. . . . The Nurse appears; she has seen Tybalt's corpse and heard that Romeo has been banished. The Nurse is so overwrought that her words first make Juliet think that Romeo is dead. When the Nurse finally makes it clear that Tybalt is dead and Romeo is banished, Juliet first turns against Romeo for killing her cousin, then defends him for killing the man who would have killed her. Then Juliet remembers that the Nurse said Romeo has been "banished," which drives her to despair. The Nurse promises Juliet that she'll make arrangements for Romeo to come that night for a farewell visit.

Act 3, Scene 3: Learning from the Friar that he is to be banished, Romeo declares that the Friar is torturing him to death, then throws himself on the floor, moaning and weeping. . . . The Nurse brings news that Juliet is in just as bad shape as Romeo. Romeo, wild with guilt at the pain he has caused Juliet, tries to stab himself. Friar Laurence lectures Romeo and tells him what to do – go to Juliet, then to Mantua until the Prince can be persuaded to pardon him. The Nurse gives Romeo the ring that Juliet asked her to take to him. These things put Romeo into a better frame of mind and he leaves Friar Laurence's cell to go to Juliet.

Act 3, Scene 4: On a sudden impulse, Capulet promises Paris that Juliet will marry him the day after tomorrow.

Act 3, Scene 5: Just before dawn Romeo is preparing to leave, but Juliet declares that it's still night, so he can stay. Romeo offers to stay and die, but Juliet urges him to leave. . . . The Nurse hurries in with the news that Juliet's mother is coming. Romeo kisses Juliet and leaps out the window. Juliet asks if they will ever see each other again; Romeo is sure they will, but Juliet is full of foreboding. . . . Lady Capulet, assuming that Juliet is weeping for Tybalt, tells her that she's grieving too much, then decides that Juliet must be weeping because revenge has not been taken upon Romeo. Lady Capulet expresses her hatred of Romeo and Juliet appears to agree with her, though what she really means is that she loves Romeo. Lady Capulet then delivers news which she thinks ought to cheer up Juliet – she is to be married to Paris. Juliet declares that she will not. Lady Capulet replies that Juliet's father is coming, so Juliet ought to tell him that she won't marry Paris, if

she dares. . . . Lady Capulet tells Capulet that Juliet has refused to marry Paris. Enraged, Capulet threatens to throw her out of the house if she doesn't change her mind. Juliet pleads with her mother to intervene, but Lady Capulet refuses. . . . Juliet asks the Nurse for advice, and she tells Juliet that she ought to marry Paris because Romeo can never come back and Paris is better looking, anyway. Juliet pretends to accept the Nurse's advice but decides that she will go to Friar Laurence for his advice. If he can't help her, she will kill herself.

• **Act 4, Scene 1:** As Paris is making arrangements with Friar Laurence to perform the wedding ceremony between himself and Juliet, she appears. Paris tries to tease some sign of affection out of Juliet and reminds her that they are to be married on Thursday. . . . Juliet says that she will kill herself rather than marry Paris, and the Friar comes up with the plan for her to take the drug which will make her appear dead for 42 hours, so that the wedding will be called off and Romeo can come and take her to Mantua.

• **Act 4, Scene 2:** Capulet is making arrangements for the wedding feast when Juliet appears, begs her father's pardon, and tells him that she will marry Paris. This makes Capulet so happy that he moves the wedding up to the very next day, Wednesday.

• **Act 4, Scene 3:** Juliet persuades her mother and the Nurse to leave her alone. She agonizes over everything that could go wrong, is terrified by visions of the grave, and drinks to Romeo.

• **Act 4, Scene 4:** The Capulets and their servants are busily preparing for the wedding. Paris' musicians are heard, and Capulet sends the Nurse to awaken Juliet.

• **Act 4, Scene 5:** The Nurse tries to awaken Juliet, but finds that she is (apparently) dead. Lady Capulet and Capulet come running, then lament their daughter's death. . . . The rest of the wedding party arrives, only to find that Juliet is dead and hear the clamor of lamentation. Capulet, Lady Capulet, Paris, and the Nurse go nearly wild with grief, but Friar Laurence takes command of the situation by reminding everyone that Juliet is now in a better place, and telling them proceed with her funeral. . . . As the musicians are starting to leave, Peter rushes in and demands that they play a sad song to cheer him up. They refuse, Peter insults them with a riddle, and they all leave to wait for lunch.

• **Act 5, Scene 1:** Romeo expects good news from Verona, but receives the news that Juliet is dead. He buys poison of an apothecary and says that he intends to return to Verona and join Juliet in death.

• **Act 5, Scene 2:** Friar John explains to Friar Laurence why he was unable to deliver Friar Laurence's letter to Romeo. Friar Laurence sends Friar John to get a crowbar and makes plans to be there when Juliet awakes, write again to Romeo in Mantua, and hide Juliet in his cell until Romeo arrives.

• **Act 5, Scene 3:** Paris comes to Juliet's grave to strew flowers and weep. He sends his Page a ways off, to act as a look-out. Paris promises to visit Juliet's grave every night, then the Page whistles to warn him that someone is coming. Paris sees a torch and withdraws into the darkness to see who else has come to Juliet's grave. . . . Romeo sends Balthasar away with a letter for Romeo's father, and starts to open the tomb. Paris comes forward and tries to arrest Romeo. They fight, and Romeo kills Paris. As he is dying, Paris asks to be laid next to Juliet. Romeo does this, pledges his love to Juliet, takes the poison, and dies. . . . Friar Laurence comes and finds Romeo and Paris dead. Juliet awakes and Friar Laurence tries to persuade her to come out of the grave, but being afraid of being found there by the watchmen, he runs away. Juliet kills herself with Romeo's dagger. . . . Paris' Page brings the watchmen to the monument of the Capulets. Watchmen find Balthasar and Friar Laurence. Prince Escalus arrives, then Capulet, Lady Capulet, and Montague. Friar Laurence tells his story, which is confirmed by Balthasar, Paris' Page, and the letter from Romeo to his father. Montague promises to build a golden statue of Juliet, and Capulet promises to build one of Romeo.

