

ROMEO AND JULIET

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Retold by Helen Street

Language Comparison

In this language comparison, you can see the Real Reads retelling of *Romeo and Juliet* with William Shakespeare's original lines highlighted in bold italic.



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ROMEO AND JULIET

Chorus

*Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge create new rivalry
That leads two star-crossed lovers to their deaths.
See now, two servants from opposing sides
Begin a brawl that will ignite this tale.*

ACT ONE, SCENE ONE A STREET IN VERONA

Montague servant

Do you bite your thumb at me?

Capulet servant

I do bite my thumb, sir.

Montague servant

But do you bite your thumb at *me*, sir?

Capulet servant

And if I do, sir?

Montague servant

Then you insult me, sir.

Capulet servant

And so?

Montague servant

Then draw your sword!

Capulet servant

Gladly! You dog of Montague!

Benvolio

Put up your swords! You know not what you do!

Tybalt

What? Fighting with servants, Benvolio?

Coward, you'll find a better foe in me!

Capulet

Fetch me a sword.

My enemies are drawn against me.

Montague

You villain, Capulet!

Prince

Enough! Throw down your weapons.

Hold, I say!

If ever you disturb our streets again,

Your Prince condemns you to be put to death.

Away! And leave the city streets in peace.

You, Capulet, shall go along with me,

And Montague, come you this afternoon

To hear what else I have to say.

Montague

Who stirred up our old quarrel once again?

Benvolio

I came upon your servant fighting with

The servant of your enemy, my lord.

I drew my sword to part them but alas,

The fiery Tybalt with his own sword drawn
Came on the scene to urge them on.
I had to fight to save myself from him.
Came more and more to fight on either side
Until the Prince arrived and parted us.

Montague

*O where is Romeo? Saw you him today?
Right glad I am he was not at this fray.*
His mood is always sad and secretive.
If only I could know why this was so.

Benvolio

Here comes your son, perhaps he'll talk to me.
If you depart, I'll speak to Romeo.
Good morrow, cousin. Why look you so sad?

Romeo

I am in love with she who loves me not.

Benvolio

Then give her up and seek out other maids.
At Capulet's, tonight, there is a ball,
The beauties of Verona will be there.

Romeo

None fairer than my Rosaline, I swear.

Benvolio

That may be so but let us merry be
And dance and feast and pass the night away.

Romeo

Not I, my heavy heart will weigh me down.

Mercurio

Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance!

Put on your masks, let's not delay, the night

Draws on, and gentlemen, we must away.

ACT ONE, SCENE TWO
CAPULET'S HOUSE

Chorus

Look now within the house of Capulet
The lady wishes conference with her child.

Lady Capulet

Nurse, where's my daughter? Call her forth to me.

Nurse

Juliet! Your mother calls. Juliet!

Juliet

Madam, I am here. What is your will?

Lady Capulet

To talk of marriage now you are fourteen.

Nurse

*Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nursed:
If I might live to see thee married once,
I have my wish.*

Lady Capulet

The brave Count Paris seeks you for his love.

Nurse

A handsome man, young lady, such a man!

Lady Capulet

This night you shall behold him at our feast.
Look well on him and tell me what you think.

Servant

Madam, the guests are come.

Lady Capulet

We follow thee. Come, Juliet.

Nurse

Go, girl, seek happy nights to happy days.

ACT ONE, SCENE THREE CAPULET'S HALL

Chorus

Now come the merry guests in party masks
To Capulet's grand hall to dance and feast,
And in disguise, a certain Romeo
Shall soon discover his true destiny.

Capulet

*Welcome, gentlemen! Ladies that have their toes
Unplagued by corns shall have a dance with you!
More light, you knaves, and turn the tables up
And quench the fire, the room is grown too hot.*
Come musicians, play a lively measure!

Romeo

What lady's that, who glides about the room
Like a rich jewel that sparkles in my sight?
Did my heart love till now? I will say nay
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

Tybalt

I know his voice. He is a Montague.
*Now, by the stock and honour of my kin,
To strike him dead I hold it not a sin.*

Capulet

Young Romeo, is it?

Tybalt

'Tis he, that villain Romeo.

Capulet

Hold back, young cousin, let him well alone.

The people hereabouts speak well of him.

I would not for the wealth of all this town

Here in my house do him a grievous harm.

Tybalt

I will be patient till we meet again.

Romeo

Forgive the roughness of my hand on yours.

My lips are here to smooth it with a kiss.

Juliet

Noble sir, there is nothing to forgive.

Nurse

Madam, your mother craves a word with you.

Romeo

Who is her mother?

Nurse

Well, young sir,

Her mother is the lady of this house.

Romeo

She is a Capulet? It cannot be!

Alas, I have fallen for my enemy.

Benvolio

Let's leave this place, the dance is past its best.

Romeo

Yes, that is so – far more than you could know.

Juliet

Good nurse, who is yonder gentleman?

Nurse

His name is Romeo, and a Montague;

The only son of your great enemy.

Juliet

How could I have known? But now too late,

My heart is given to one that I should hate.

Nurse

Come, let's away. The strangers have all gone.

ACT TWO, SCENE ONE
THE GARDEN OF THE CAPULETS

Chorus

In Romeo's heart a new love grows, for now
Is fair Juliet the centre of his world.
But as a Montague, he may not knock
Like suitors do upon the entrance door.
And so, by stealth, he climbs the stony wall
That guards the garden of the Capulets.

Romeo

*But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks?
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun!
See how she leans her cheek upon her hand!
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek!*

Juliet

Ay, me!

Romeo

She speaks.

Juliet

O Romeo, Romeo! Why must you be Romeo!
Deny your father or else change your name,
And if you love me, I'll no longer be
A Capulet. Yet 'tis but a name.
*What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet.*

Romeo

*Call me but love, and I'll be new baptised;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.*

Juliet

*My ears have yet not drunk a hundred words
Of thy tongue's uttering, yet I know the sound:
Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?*

Romeo

Neither, fair maid, if either thee dislike.

Juliet

*How came you here, good Romeo, and why?
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'erfly these walls
For stone defences cannot keep love out.*

Juliet

If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

Romeo

*I have the night to hide me from their eyes,
But let them find me. Here I'd rather die
Than live forever waiting for your love.*

Juliet

*I should be shy and blush with flaming cheeks
For you have overheard my private thoughts,
But gentle Romeo, let us not pretend.
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say 'ay'.*

Romeo

Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear ...

Nurse

Madam!

Juliet

I must go! If thy love is honourable
And if thy purpose marriage, send me word
Tomorrow of when and where we meet.

Nurse

Madam!

Juliet

I will be there.

Good night, good night!

Parting is such sweet sorrow

That I shall say goodnight till it be morrow.

ACT TWO, SCENE TWO OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

Chorus

In dawn's fresh light goes Romeo to the church,
To seek out Friar Laurence for his help.

Friar

*The grey-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night,
Chequering the eastern clouds with streaks of light;
And flecked darkness like a drunkard reels
From forth day's path and Titan's fiery wheels.
Now, ere the sun advance his burning eye,
The day to cheer and night's dank dew to dry,
These herbs and flowers must I gather up
For cures and potions for the healing cup.*

Romeo

Good morrow, father!

Friar

Benedicite!

Such earliness – I think *I hit it right*,
Our Romeo hath not been in bed this night.

Romeo

O father, *know my heart's dear love is set
On the fair daughter of rich Capulet;
We met, we woo'd, and made exchange of vow.*
I pray you, father, marry us right now.

Friar

Holy Saint Francis! What a change is here!

First Rosaline, now Juliet thy dear.
The tears for your first love are barely dry.
But come, young Romeo, come, go with me;
The wedding rites I will perform for thee,
For this alliance may so happy prove,
To turn your households' rancour to pure love.

ACT THREE, SCENE ONE
A STREET IN VERONA

Chorus

Come to Verona's streets where good friends meet,
And pass the time away in idle talk.

Mercutio

*Where the devil should this Romeo be?
Came he not home last night?*

Benvolio

Not to his father's, his servant said.

Mercutio

The cause must surely be this Rosaline.

Benvolio

*Tybalt, the kinsman of old Capulet,
Hath sent a letter to his father's house.*

Mercutio

A challenge, on my life.

Benvolio

Romeo will answer him.

Mercutio

Alas, poor Romeo, he is already dead!
Stabbed through the heart with cupid's arrow.
He has gone soft with love!

Benvolio

But here he is!

Mercutio

My friend, you gave us all the slip last night.

Romeo

Forgive me, good Mercutio, I had
Important things to do.

Mercutio

Yes, I am sure!

Nurse

Good morrow gentlemen. *Can any of you tell me
Where I might find the young Romeo?*

Romeo

I am he.

Nurse

A word in private, sir, I beg of you.

Mercutio

Watch out, my friend, she may invite you home!
But we'll away and meet you at your house.

Nurse

My gentle lady bid me search you out.
But sir, if you should double deal with her,
And she so young, it will go ill with you.

Romeo

Fear not, good nurse, and tell your sweet mistress
To find excuse to go to church today,
And there, this afternoon, shall she be wed.

Nurse

Now god in heaven bless you! She'll be there.

ACT THREE, SCENE TWO A STREET IN VERONA

Chorus

In secret then do Romeo and Juliet
Make holy vows of marriage in the church.
Their feuding parents must not know the truth,
And so they part: she, to her father's house,
And Romeo to find his friends somewhere
Out on Verona's hot and dusty streets.

Benvolio

Good friend Mercutio, let's not stay here.
*The day is hot, the Capulets about,
And, if we meet, we shall not 'scape a brawl.*

Mercutio

A brawl *you're* more likely to begin!

Benvolio

I do protest! Tis you who quarrels more.
But look, here come the Capulets. Beware.

Tybalt

Gentlemen, a word with one of you.

Mercutio

Only a word? Let's make it something more.

Tybalt

Give me some excuse and you shall have it!

Mercutio

Why wait? My sword and I are ready.

Tybalt

Romeo, you are naught but a villain.
And I have come for satisfaction.

Romeo

I will not fight with you, good Capulet.

Mercutio

And let him walk away? That shall not be.
Tybalt, be quick and draw your sword
Or else this fight will be unfair to thee!

Romeo

Gentlemen!
Put down your swords, I beg of you.

Romeo

Tybalt! Mercutio! The Prince himself
Forbids this brawling in Verona's streets.
Hold, Tybalt! Hold, Mercutio!

Mercutio

A plague on both your houses, I am hit.

Benvolio

What, art thou hurt?

Mercutio

Why the devil came you between us?

Romeo

***I thought all for the best.
Courage, man, the hurt cannot be much.***

Mercutio

Help me into some house, Benvolio,

Or I shall faint. A plague on both your houses!

Romeo

My own dear friend has got this mortal wound
On my behalf. My love for Juliet
Has made me gentle and perhaps too soft.

Benvolio

O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio's dead!

Romeo

Tybalt, I will not walk away this time.
Mercutio's soul hovers above us now.
He waits for thee to keep him company!

ACT THREE, SCENE THREE CAPULET'S HOUSE

Chorus

Meantime, inside the house of Capulet,
Juliet waits, impatient and alone.

Juliet

O hurry, sun, and speed across the sky
That night may come and bring me Romeo!
And let the darkness hide my blushing cheeks
Till I have learned the ways of married love.

*Give me my Romeo; and, when he shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with night.*

So tedious is this waiting, it is like
The day before a party to a child
Who has new clothes but may not wear them yet.

Nurse

O dreadful news! Thy cousin Tybalt's dead.
And 'twas Romeo's hand that shed his blood.

Juliet

Romeo! Thou wicked angel! How could
You have deceived me so. I thought you good,
But you had murder in your very heart.

Nurse

There is no trust or honesty in men.

Juliet

What have I said? He is my husband
And must have had good cause to do the deed.
My cousin was the villain in the fight.
My husband lives that Tybalt would have slain.
But what of Romeo? Where is he now?

Nurse

He is banished, and must leave tonight.

Juliet

O woe, then I shall never be a wife.

Nurse

I know where he is hiding, and will go
And bring him to you for a last farewell.

ACT THREE, SCENE FOUR THE CHURCH

Chorus

Though Romeo flees the scene of Tybalt's death,
He can't escape the judgement of the Prince.
Within the friar's church he hides and weeps,
Lamenting his misfortune and his loss.

Romeo

Friar, you say my fate is banishment?
Alas, that word is worse than 'death' to me.

Friar

Be thankful, Romeo, for such mercy.

Romeo

*'Tis torture, and not mercy: heaven is here,
Where Juliet lives; and every cat and dog
And little mouse, every unworthy thing,
Live here in heaven and may look on her;
But Romeo may not.*

Friar

Ungrateful man! Have you not eyes to see?
A pack of blessings lights upon thy back!
Juliet, who loves you, lives, and so do you,
Who Tybalt would have killed, and now the Prince
Has ordered exile instead of cruel death.

Nurse

O sir, my mistress weeps and calls for thee.

Friar

Go to her, Romeo, and comfort her.
And do not stay past dawn but get you gone
To Mantua where you must stay until
I have devised a plan to bring you home.

ACT THREE, SCENE FIVE
CAPULET'S GARDEN

Chorus

One night to be a husband and a wife,
One night alone before the last goodbye,
For, if the Prince's men should capture him,
Young Romeo this day will surely die.

Juliet

Wilt thou be gone? The dawn is still far off.
It was the nightingale, and not the lark
That sang in yonder pomegranate tree.
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

Romeo

It was the lark, the herald of the morn.
Night's candles are burnt out, and joyous day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountaintops.
I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

Juliet

Stay yet awhile. Do not be gone so soon.

Romeo

Let me be put to death! I am content
To stay if Juliet wills it. 'Tis not day.

Juliet

It is, it is! Be off, be gone, away!
It is the lark that sings so out of tune.
O, now be gone; more light and light it grows.

Romeo

*More light and light;
More dark and dark our woes!*

Nurse

Madam!

Juliet

Nurse?

Nurse

Your lady mother is coming to your chamber.
The day has broken. Be careful, *look about.*

Romeo

Farewell, farewell! One kiss and I will leave.

Juliet

O think'st thou we shall ever meet again?

Romeo

We shall, my sweet, *and all these woes some day*
Will be but stories *in our time to come.*

Lady Capulet

Daughter, are you up? I bring you good news.

Juliet

What is it, I beseech your ladyship?

Lady Capulet

You have a caring father, Juliet,
Who has arranged for you a joyful day,
For Thursday next shall be your wedding day.
Noble Paris has sought you for his bride.
Your father has consented, happy child.

Juliet

He shall not make me then a joyful bride.

This is too soon to wed. Pray tell my lord
And father I will not marry yet.

Lady Capulet

*Here comes your father; tell him so yourself,
And see how he will take it at your hands.*

Capulet

Ah, wife. Have you delivered our good news?

Lady Capulet

Aye, sir, but mark, she will have none of it.
I would the fool were married to her grave.

Capulet

She will have none of it? And thanks us not
For such a worthy match? I tell thee what,
Get thee to Saint Peter's church on Thursday
Or never after look me in the face.

Juliet

*Good father, I beseech you on my knees
Hear me with patience but to speak a word.*

Capulet

*Speak not, reply not, do not answer me:
My fingers itch. Wife, we scarce thought us blest
That god had lent us but this only child;
But now I see this one is one too much,
And that we have a curse in having her.*

Nurse

My lord, you are to blame to scold her so.

Capulet

Quiet! You hold your tongue, you mumbling fool.

Lady Capulet

Be calm, dear sir, you grow too hot and vexed.

Capulet

Be you my child, then marry who I say;
If not, *then beg, starve, perish in the streets,*
For by my soul I'll ne'er acknowledge thee.
Nor what is mine shall never do thee good.

Juliet

Is there no pity sitting in the clouds
That sees into the bottom of my grief?
O! Sweet my mother, cast me not away!
Delay this marriage for a month, a week.

Lady Capulet

Talk not to me, for I'll not speak a word.
Do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee.

Juliet

Have you some words of comfort for me, nurse?

Nurse

Since Romeo is banished and dare not
Come to your defence on pain of death,
I think it best you marry with the Count.

Juliet

Speak'st thou from thy heart?

Nurse

And from my soul, too.

Juliet

Well, thou hast comforted me marvellous much!

Go in and tell my lady I am gone,

Having displeased my father, to Friar Laurence,

To make confession and to be absolved.

ACT FOUR, SCENE ONE THE CHURCH

Chorus

Poor Juliet without her Romeo,
Forsaken by an angry family
And doomed to wed a man she does not love,
Turns now for guidance to her only friend.

Friar

Ah, Juliet, I already know thy grief.
I hear you must be married Thursday next.

Juliet

O father, tell me how I may prevent it,
Or else this knife shall put an end to me.
Be not so long to speak, I long to die
If what thou say'st cannot put things right.

Friar

Hold, daughter! I do spy a kind of hope.
If, rather than to marry the Count Paris
Thou hast the strength of will to slay thyself,
Then it is likely you will undertake
A thing like death to remedy this ill.

Juliet

*O! Bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,
From off the battlements of yonder tower!*

Friar

*Hold, then; go home, be merry, give consent
To marry Paris: Wednesday is tomorrow.*

Tomorrow night when you have gone to bed
Drink of this vial and through thy veins shall run
A cold and drowsy sleep. No pulse shall beat,
No warmth, no breath, shall testify thou livest.
Thy family will think you dead and take you
To the family tomb. Meanwhile shall Romeo
Know of my plan and come to rescue thee.

Juliet

Give me then the potion. I have no fear.

Friar

I'll send a friar with speed to Mantua

To take a letter to Romeo. Now go.

Juliet

Love give me strength. Farewell, dear father.

Chorus

Juliet returns and gives the welcome news
That she consents to wed her father's choice.
So happy is Lord Capulet that he
Brings forward by a day the marriage rites.

Juliet

*I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins
That almost freezes up the heat of life.*

Tonight I must this potion drink, or else.

What if this mixture does not work at all?

Shall I be married then tomorrow morn?

What if it be a poison, which the friar

Has given me to drink to have me dead

Because he married me before to Romeo?

But no, I know he is a holy man.

I will do it. Romeo, I drink to thee.

ACT FIVE, SCENE ONE MANTUA

Chorus

Alas, for these poor lovers fate is cruel.
The letter telling Romeo the plan
Is not received, and from another source
He hears the dreadful news: his wife is dead.

Romeo

Well, Juliet, I'll lie with thee tonight.

A deadly poison will I bring with me,
To sleep forever in your company.
Here is the wretched apothecary.

*Hold, here is forty ducats, man; let me have
A dram of poison, for I'm tired of life.*

Apothecary

Such fatal drugs I have, but Mantua's law
Forbids their sale on pain of death, good sir.

Romeo

But I can see you live in poverty.
The world is not your friend, nor is the law.
Then be not poor, but break it and take this.

Apothecary

I do this only of dire need.
*Put this in any liquid thing you will
And drink it off; and, if you had the strength
Of twenty men, you'd die immediately.*

Romeo

*There is thy gold, worse poison to men's souls,
Doing more murders in this loathsome world,
Than these poor mixtures that thou mayst not sell.
Go, buy some food and put weight on your bones.
Come, cordial – not poison – go with me
To Juliet's grave; for there must I use thee.*

ACT FIVE, SCENE TWO
CAPULET'S FAMILY TOMB

Chorus

In grief rides Romeo from Mantua,
To be with Juliet and say goodbye.

Romeo

Here is the tomb. Here is my love! my wife!
*Death, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath,
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty.*
Your lips are crimson still. Your glowing skin
Shows not death's pale appearance on your face.
Here will I stay with thee. *Eyes, look your last.*
Arms, take your last embrace! And, lips, seal now With this
faithful kiss an eternal vow.
Here's to my love!
Thus with a kiss, I die.

Friar

Saint Francis be my speed! Juliet will wake
Amongst the dead, alone. I must make haste.
Romeo! So pale in death upon the ground.
How can this be? But wait, *the lady stirs.*

Juliet

Good friar, you are here – but where is my lord?

Friar

I hear some noise. Come, lady, come away!
Our plans have all gone wrong, I know not how.
Thy husband there lies dead, and we must flee.

Juliet

Go, get thee hence, for I will not away.

Friar

Here come the guards. I dare no longer stay.

Juliet

Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end.

Have you drunk all and left no friendly drop

To help me follow thee? I'll kiss thy lips.

Perhaps some poison still remains on them.

Thy lips are warm. More noise! I must be quick!

O happy dagger, hide yourself in me

And let me die.

Prince

What misadventure is so early up,

That calls our person from our morning rest?

Capulet

What can it be that all do shriek so loud?

Lady Capulet

The people in the street cry 'Romeo',

And some cry 'Juliet', and then all run

In great distress towards our family tomb.

Prince

What fear is this which startles in our ears?

Attendant

Sovereign, here lies Romeo dead by poison,

And by his side is Juliet, still warm,

Though we had thought her dead two days ago.

Capulet

O, heaven! O wife, look how our daughter bleeds!

Montague

What cruelty is this, that Romeo
Should go before me to his grave?

Friar

My liege, this sorry tale I will explain
That you may judge my actions right or wrong.
*Romeo, there dead, was husband to that Juliet;
And she, there dead, that Romeo's faithful wife.
I married them,* and their secret wedding day
Was Tybalt's death day. Then came banishment.
They could not live without the other one.

Prince

*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.*

Capulet

*O brother Montague, give me thy hand;
My daughter sweet would wish it so.*

Montague

And here is mine, my son would want it too.

Prince

A gloomy *peace this morning with it brings.*
The sun for sorrow will not show his head.
*Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things,
For never was a story of more woe
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.*