

SHAKESPEARE IN A SUITCASE PRESENTS -

THE TRAGEDY OF ROMEO & JULIET

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FOR SPLATS ENTERTAINMENT



Primary text

PROLOGUE

All groups stand facing the stage area. Each group creates a tableau for their section of the prologue. One or two of each group say the lines. (could experiment with various ways of delivering this obviously)

- GROUP ONE:** Two households, both alike in dignity
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
- GROUP TWO:** From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
- GROUP THREE:** From forth the fatal loins of these two foes,
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;
- GROUP FOUR:** Whose misadventured piteous overthrows,
Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.
- GROUP TWO:** The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,
And the continuance of their parents' rage,
- GROUP THREE:** Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;
- GROUP FOUR:** The which if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

The groups sit, group one takes the stage.

ACT ONE

SPEAKING CHARACTERS

NARRATOR 1-9
MONTAGUE 1-4
CAPULET 1-3
BENVOLIO
TYBALT
PRINCE

Cast form a large semi circle around the back of the stage, all with aggressive body language. They step forward to play their parts as required.

NARRATOR 1: Two households, both alike in dignity
NARRATOR 2: In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
NARRATOR 3: From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
NARRATOR 4: Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.

MONTAGUE 1,2,3 and 4 step forward, making fun of each other. CAPULET 1 steps forward. MONTAGUE 1 stops and points, they all freeze.

MON 1: A dog of the house of Capulet moves me.
MON 2: Quarrel, I will back thee.

CAPULET 1 is joined by 2,3 and 4. They stare at each other.

MON 3: I will frown as I pass by, let them take it as they list.
MON 4: As they dare!
MON 1: I will bite my thumb at them. Which is an insult to them.
MON 3: If they bear it.

MON 1 bites his thumb at the CAPULETS. They respond instantly.

CAP 1: Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?
MON 1: I do bite my thumb, sir.
CAP 2: Do you bite your thumb at US, sir?
MON 2: No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at your, sir, but I bite my thumb sir.
CAP 3: Do you quarrel, sir?
MON 3: Quarrel sir? No sir.

CAP 4 laughs at them. MON 4 punches him, knocking him down. A push, a shove and they all fight. BENVOLIO bursts onto stage, sword drawn to part them.

BENVOLIO: Part, you fools.

They separate onto their sides, BENVOLIO with the MONTAGUES. Another standoff. TYBALT steps forward.

TYBALT: Look at this. Sword drawn on unarmed men. Turn thee Benvolio, look upon thy death.

He draws his sword and joins the CAPULETS.

BENVOLIO: I do but keep the peace. Put up thy sword.

TYBALT: Peace? I hate the word. As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee.

He attacks, they all fight and the whole group join in. Eventually the PRINCE steps up.

PRINCE: Rebellious subjects! Enemies of the peace.

All freeze

NARRATOR 5: The prince proclaims that from now on, any fighting will be punishable by death.

NARRATOR 6: The Montagues and Capulets agree to keep the peace.

The fighters move to either side. BENVOLIO and TYBALT reluctantly shake hands centrestage.

NARRATOR 7: Romeo, A montague, was not involved in the brawl. He was sad because he had fallen in love with a girl called Rosaline.

NARRATOR 8: Romeo's friends convince him to go to a party. It was a masked ball at the Capulet house.

NARRATOR 9: And the Montagues were not invited.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SPEAKING CHARACTERS

NARRATOR 1-10
MONTAGUE 1-3
LORD CAPULET
BENVOLIO
TYBALT
ROMEO
MERCUTIO
JULIET

ROMEO sits slumped onstage. BENVOLIO and the MONTAGUES are in good spirits.

NARRATOR 1: The Capulet Party was a masked ball. Romeo and his friends, who were not invited, would crash the party in disguise.

BENVOLIO: *(putting on his mask)* What do you think? Am I not more handsome than ever?

MON 1: Only because it covers your face.

They take in in turns to put on their masks, making fun of each other until its ROMEO'S turn.

MON 2: Romeo, what mask do you have?

MON 3: That is his mask – he is going as a sour faced misery guts.

BENVOLIO: Romeo? Romeo?

ROMEO: I am in no mood for dancing.

MERCUTIO enters.

MERCUTIO: Romeo – we shall have you dance.

They all greet him/her. MERCUTIO drags ROMEO to his feet.

MON 1: He is in love. Again.

MERCUTIO: Who is it this week?

MON 2: Rosaline.

MON 3: And now he is all weighed down with love.

MERCUTIO: Then you shall borrow cupids wings.

ROMEO: Under loves heavy burden do I sink.

MERCUTIO: Love is a tender thing.
ROMEO: Is love a tender thing? It is too rough.
MERCUTIO: If love be rough with you, be rough with love.

They are pushing him around making him laugh.

ROMEO: I am not going. There is nothing you can say to make me.
MERCUTIO: Rosaline will be there.
ROMEO: Fine, but I wont enjoy it.

Cast spread out, dancing and having fun. Freeze.

NARRATOR 2: The Capulet ball was in full swing. Somewhere in the crowd, our star-crossed lovers see each other.

Music comes back, dancing resumes. From amongst the dancing, ROMEO and JULIET walk toward each other slowly and stop, palm to palm, centre stage. The music fades away and the cast freeze.

ROMEO: I ne'er saw true beauty til this night.
NARRATOR 3: By the time they discover that they are from rival families, it is too late.
JULIET: My only love sprung from my only hate.
NARRATOR 4: But Juliet was not the only one who had noticed Romeo.
LORD CAPULET: (*approaches Tybalt*) How now Tybalt, wherefore storm you so?
TYBALT: Uncle, this is a Montague, our foe.
LORD CAPULET: It is young Romeo, let him alone
TYBALT: I shall not endure him.
LORD CAPULET: He shall be endured.
NARRATOR 5: But Tybalt is not the sort to forget this insult.
NARRATOR 6: Later that night, Romeo sneaks back into the Capulet house and sees Juliet.
NARRATOR 7: They arrange to get married the following day.
NARRATOR 8: But before the day is out, Tybalt catches up with Romeo.

MONTAGUES on one side of the stage, CAPULETS the other. TYBALT and ROMEO face each other.

TYBALT: Romeo, thou art a villain.
ROMEO: Villain am I none. I will not fight you.

Tybalt strikes.

TYBALT: Up you coward. satisfied.

He hits him again. And again. MERCUTIO steps forward.

MERCUTIO: Enough. You want to fight someone?

Tableau: ROMEO on the floor. MERCUTIO pushing TYBALT away. The crowd ready to join in - some aggressive, some scared and some holding others back.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

SPEAKING CHARACTERS

NARRATOR 1-12
LADY CAPULET
LORD CAPULET
NURSE
TYBALT
ROMEO
MERCUTIO
JULIET
PRINCE
PARIS

Tableau: ROMEO on the floor. MERCUTIO pushing TYBALT away. The crowd ready to join in - some aggressive, some scared and some holding others back.

MERCUTIO: Tybalt , you Ratcatcher!

MERCUTIO and TYBALT fight with swords. ROMEO intervenes to hold MERCUTIO back. TYBALT stabs him under ROMEO'S arm. MONTAGUES come to MERCUTIO. CAPULETS drag TYBALT away.

ROMEO: Mercutio, art thou hurt? Tis but a scratch.

He slumps down

MERCUTIO: They have made worms meat of me. A PLAGUE ON BOTH YOUR HOUSES!

NARRATOR 1: Romeo had not wanted to fight Tybalt because he was Juliets cousin.

NARRATOR 2: But having just watched his friend Mercutio die, Romeo could only see vengeance.

ROMEO attacks TYBALT, ROMEO full of fury, TYBALT full of arrogance.

TYBALT: I will send you to the grave with Mercutio.

ROMEO: Either thou, or I, or both must join him.

They fight, ROMEO more calmly. TYBALT is slain.

NARRATOR 3: With Tybalt's blood on his hands, Romeo would face death.
ROMEO: I am fortunes fool.
NARRATOR 4: The prince showed some leniency and declared
PRINCE: Romeo is banished.
NARRATOR 5: On the day of her wedding Juliet receives the news.
JULIET: Nurse, what news?
NURSE: He is dead.
JULIET: Romeo?
NURSE: Tybalt is gone and Romeo is banished.
JULIET: Did Romeo's hand shed Tybalts blood?
NARRATOR 6: But she forgives Romeo, and they spend their wedding night together before he must leave.
NARRATOR 7: The following day Romeo leaves for a place called Mantua and is forbidden, on pain of death, to return.
NARRATOR 8: While Juliet is still mourning for her cousins death, and for her secret husbands banishment, her parents arrange her marriage to Paris.
LORD CAPULET: How now, wife? Have you delivered to her our decree?
LADY CAPULET: Ay, sir, but she will have none.

LORD CAPULET'S body language becomes intimidating

LORD CAPULET: How will she none? Doth she not give us thanks?
Is she not proud that we have wrought
So worthy a gentleman to be her bride?
JULIET: Not proud you have, but thankful that you have.
LORD CAPULET: You will go with Paris to church or I will drag thee there.

He grabs her hair

LADY CAPULET: Are you mad?
NARRATOR 9: She visits Friar Laurence who knows that she is married to Romeo, for confession.
NARRATOR 10: And she meets Paris who is quite pleased to be marrying Juliet.
PARIS: Happily met, my lady and my wife.
JULIET: I am not your wife yet.
PARIS: (*making a joke*) Are you here to confess to the father here that you love me?
JULIET: I would rather confess to *you* that I love *him*.
NARRATOR 11: Friar Laurence comes up with a plan and tells Juliet.
LAURENCE: When you sleep tonight, drink this potion. In the morning you will appear to be dead and you will be taken to the tomb. I will

send word to Romeo, and he will meet us there and when you wake up you can run away to Mantua with him.

NARRATOR 12:

As long as Romeo gets the message in time...

CHORUS:

What could possibly go wrong?

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

SPEAKING CHARACTERS

NARRATOR 1-10
LADY CAPULET
LORD CAPULET
LORD MONTAGUE
NURSE
BALTHASAR
ROMEO
LAURENCE
PARIS
JULIET
PRINCE

NARRATOR 1: The night before her wedding to Paris, Juliet takes the potion and goes to sleep.
NURSE: My lady is dead.
LORD CAPULET: Death lies on her like an untimely frost
LADY CAPULET: Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.
NARRATOR 2: The Friar sends a message to Romeo with Froar John.

He passes a note among the CHORUS

NARRATOR 3: But before it arrives, Romeo's friend, Balthasar brings him the bad news.
ROMEO: How now, Balthasar? How fares my Juliet?
BALTHASAR: Pardon me for bringing ill news. She is dead.

ROMEO stares blankly into space. Then, resolved, starts to walk off.

ROMEO: I will be with her.
BALTHASAR: You are banished, you must not return.
NARRATOR 4: Since he doesn't know of the friars plan, he believes her to be dead.
NARRATOR 5: And he has a plan of his own, so he buys poison.
NARRATOR 6: Outside Juliet's tomb he meets Paris and is recognised as the banished Romeo.
PARIS: Condemned villain. I do apprehend thee.
ROMEO: Tempt not a desparate man.
PARIS: Vile Montague!

ROMEO: Wilt thou provoke me?

They fight, PARIS is slain. CHORUS act out reactions in the fight.

NARRATOR 7: At last, Romeo stands before Juliet.

He kneels next to her, holding the poison.

ROMEO: Eyes look your last. Here's to my love.

He drinks poison. He dies. JULIET wakes. Sees ROMEO, reacts.

JULIET: Romeo?

She sees poison

LAURENCE: Poison? Drank all and left none to help me after?
Juliet, the watch are coming. Romeo killed Paris. Come with me!

JULIET: I will not leave this tomb.

FRIAR LAURENCE leaves - she takes his dagger

Oh happy dagger, this is thy sheath.

JULIET stabs herself and dies.

NARRATOR 8: The Prince, Lord Montague and Lord Capulet arrived at the tomb with the watch.

LORD MONTAGUE: My son!

LORD CAPULET: My daughter!

PRINCE: What happened here?

LAURENCE: I will explain. I will be brief.

FRIAR and CHORUS mime and mumble quietly a long story.

NARRATOR 9: He was not brief. He told the whole sad tale of the secret marriage and the poison and the message...

NARRATOR 10: The two families were united in grief at the loss of their children.

CAPULET, MONTAGUE and the CHORUS all shake hands.

LORD CAPULET: We shall raise golden statues of our children.
LORD MONTAGUE: And stand them side by side so we will always remember them
PRINCE: For never was a story of more woe
Than that of Juliet and her Romeo.

END OF ACT FOUR

A LETTER FROM THE PRINCE

Tudor society was a very divided and sometimes dangerous place. People regularly carried weapons around and one of Shakespeare's good friends, the playwright Christopher Marlowe was killed in a bar brawl in 1593. (Shakespeare started writing *Romeo & Juliet* in 1594)

As well as the big gap between the rich and the poor, there were also arguments between Catholics and Protestants which led to many people from both communities being killed. For Shakespeare to write a love story where two people from feuding families came together is sometimes seen as him making a comment on those troubled times.



In the play it is the Prince who is the one who tries to keep the peace. Imagine you can write to the Lords Capulet and Montague. What would you say to them to calm the tension down? Write your letter to them below.

Dear Lords Montague and Capulet,

SCRIPTWRITING: LAYOUT

Writing a playscript means writing in a very different style and format. Playwrights are responsible for writing down not only who says what and when, but also for describing what happens on stage for the actors.

Look at the example below from Act Three of the Splats version of Macbeth.

The scene title is clearly marked

A list of characters is included

Stage Directions - which are the movements of the actors - are included

The character who speaks each line is included

Props which are used are written down

ACT THREE

SPEAKING CHARACTERS

NARRATOR 1-12
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LORD CAPULET
NURSE
TYBALT
ROMEO
MERCUTIO
JULIET
PRINCE
PARIS

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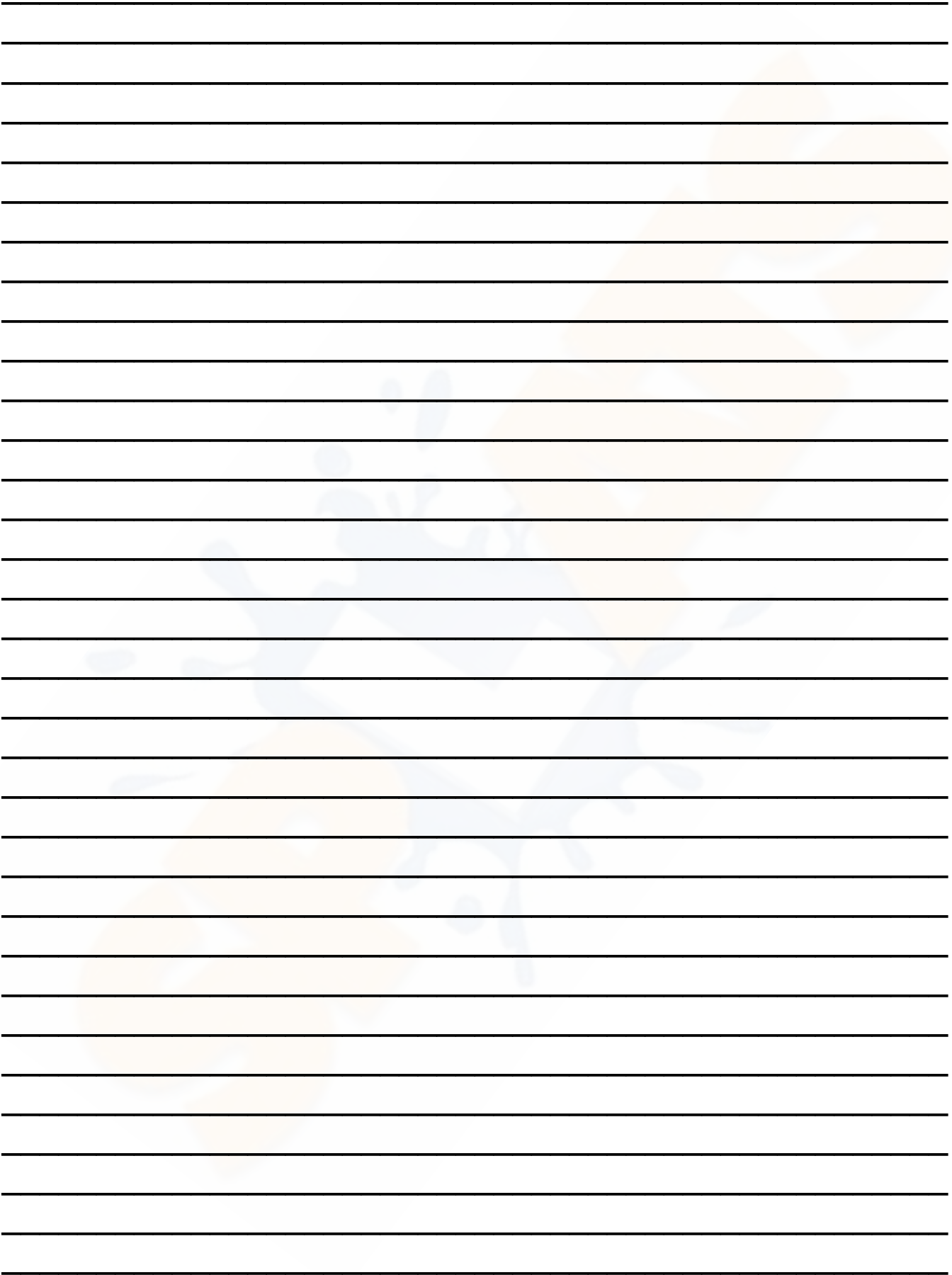
SCRIPTWRITING: JULIET & THE FRIAR

In Shakespeare's story, Juliet goes to confession to speak to the Friar and tells him all about Romeo's banishment for killing Tybalt but in our abridged (shortened) version this conversation is cut short. Try to imagine what the scene would look like and write it below.

Think about these questions -

- *Where will your scene take place?*
- *Will anyone else be there when they meet?*
- *What do the characters have in common that they can talk about?*
- *What are they wearing, holding or using when the scene happens?*
- *Are there any sound effects or music that are heard during your scene?*

Write the opening of your scene below - try and stick to the layout of the Splats playscript wherever you can.

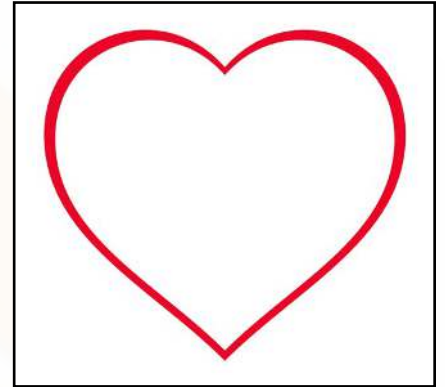


READING COMPREHENSION: A TIMELESS LOVE STORY

TWO HOUSEHOLDS

Romeo and Juliet was written by Shakespeare early in his career (probably around 1593) and is about what he describes as two young 'star-crossed' lovers who come from feuding families. Although we never find out what it is that the Capulets and Montagues are fighting over - their hatred for one another is clear from the very start of the play.

It was among Shakespeare's most popular plays during his lifetime and along with Hamlet, is one of his most frequently performed plays. Even though the play is often described as a 'romance' the play is actually filled with a lot of violence and death - making it more more like what theatre writers like to call a 'revenge tragedy'.



A BORROWED STORY

Just like many of his plays Shakespeare took a classic tale that was already well known in Tudor times and put his own spin on it to create a new play. Being an educated man he will have read the poetic verse called '*The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*' by Arthur Brooke which was published in 1562 and the story version called '*Palace of Pleasure*' which was written by William Painter In 1567. Both of these follow the same story of two lovers broken apart by their families.

When Shakespeare came to the story however, he wrote it as a play, adding some key supporting characters like Mercutio and Paris to the original story. These characters, along with Shakespeare's romantic poetry have made it a favourite for generations.

ADAPTATIONS

The story itself has been adapted many times since Shakespeare's play was written into many different art forms. As well countless pictures painted of the star crossed lovers there has been lots of other types of performance. The ballet of Romeo & Juliet complete by the Russian composer Prokofiev is seen as a masterpiece of dance and won numerous awards.

In 1957 the play was adapted into a musical theatre piece called *West Side Story* by composer Leonard Bernstein and the Lyricist Stephen Sondheim. *West Side Story* replaces the lead characters with new lovers Tony & Maria who are also from feuding families.

The silliest of adaptations came in 2011 however when the story was told through Red & Blue Garden gnomes. With a soundtrack from singer Elton John - the cartoon version called *Gnomeo and Juliet* was a hit with families all around the world!

READING COMPREHENSION: LADY MACBETH

QUESTIONS

1. Roughly which year was Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* written in?

2. What are the names of the two families in the play?

3. What was another popular play by Shakespeare mentioned in the report?

4. What do you think 'feuding' means?

5. Some writers disagree that the play is a romance. What else might it be described as?

6. Can you name at least one of the other versions that Shakespeare might have based his play on?

7. Which two characters did Shakespeare add to the story'?'

8. Who composed the Ballet version of the story? _____
9. What new names do Romeo and Juliet get in West Side Story?

10. What was silly about the 2011 retelling of the story?

READING COMPREHENSION: ANSWERS

1. About 1593
2. Montagues and Capulets
3. Hamlet
4. Fighting or arguing.
5. A 'revenge tragedy'
6. *The tragical history of Romeus and Juliet or Palace of Pleasure'*
7. Mercutio and Paris
8. Prokofiev.
9. Tony and Maria.
10. It was told using Blue & Red Garden gnomes!

WORDSEARCH

These fifteen words are all important to the story of *Romeo & Juliet* - can you find them in the wordsearch?

R D Y R A C E H T O P A K L N D T
S D D H G A D N A O N E U J I R E
D I M F G P A A B O L L O T T H I
F M E R E U M U R D E R R E Y T L
A M R G L L E E L S O H R I I O U
W Y C E D E V I E N T O E M I A J
J E U A N T K W I E E U V S E I P
J T T P R U R I U A G S U R T O R
E V I N I H O O I A H E K O L E I
F R O N D E M Y T D E H T I G A N
B A R E I N E N S Y Z O C G S H C
A S G N I I O D T F K L A K N T E
L A W A R M S A R F W D W N I O B
C E C R S T Y B A L T S I M E N L
O R B I A F A T E L U C Y N U E O
N O B S T A R C R O S S E D E O J
Y T R A P S T E L U J M O R D F Y

ROMEO
MONTAGUE
HOUSEHOLDS
PARTY
BALCONY

JULIET
TYBALT
VERONA
MERCUTIO
PRINCE

CAPULET
APOTHECARY
STAR-CROSSED
DAGGER
MURDER