

Photocopy this reading text for use in class

READING

A Shakespearean tragedy

- 1 What do you know about William Shakespeare?
- 2 Look at the list of characters in the story of *Romeo and Juliet*. What do you know about the story? How did people at that time decide who to marry? Who made the decision?

- 3 Read 1–6 in the story. Answer the questions.
 - 1 Why did the Montagues and the Capulets hate each other?
 - 2 Why wasn't it a good idea for Romeo to go to the Capulet's party?
 - 3 What happened when Romeo and Juliet first met?
 - 4 'Wherefore art thou Romeo?' (= *Why are you Romeo?*) Why was Juliet upset about Romeo's name?
 - 5 How long had they known each other when they decided to get married?
 - 6 Why did Friar Laurence agree to marry them?
 - 7 Why did Romeo try to stop the fight?
 - 8 Why was Juliet desperate?

- 4 Read 7–12 in the story. Answer the questions.
 - 1 What couldn't Juliet tell her father?
 - 2 What was the Friar's plan?
 - 3 Which part of the plan worked?
 - 4 What went wrong with the plan?
 - 5 Why did Romeo kill himself?
 - 6 Why did Juliet kill herself?
 - 7 How did their families feel at the end?

- 5 **13.14** Listen to actors speaking Shakespeare's lines, and follow them in the story. Read the lines in more modern English on p78.

- 6 Retell the story using the pictures.

What do you think?

- Whose fault was the tragedy?
- In the play, Juliet was just thirteen. Do you think this is too young to fall in love?
- Shakespeare wrote comedies, tragedies, and history plays. What titles do you know? Do you know any of the stories?

▶▶ WRITING TELLING A STORY (1) p57

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare



1 Many years ago, in the ancient Italian city of Verona, there were two very rich but warring families, the Montagues and the Capulets. They had hated each other for so long that no one could remember how the feud had started. Fights often used to break out in the streets.

2 Lord Capulet was planning a celebration for his daughter, Juliet. Romeo, Lord Montague's son, went to the party uninvited. He saw Juliet and fell instantly in love! They touched hands. They talked. They kissed. Only then did they discover their families were enemies!

3 That night Juliet stood on her balcony and declared her love for Romeo. Romeo had climbed up a wall and was listening. They swore eternal love to each other, and promised to marry in secret the next day.



4 As dawn broke, Romeo raced to Friar Laurence and begged him to marry them. The Friar agreed, hoping this would unite the families. That afternoon, Juliet joined Romeo, and the lovers were wed. They parted, but planned to spend that night together.

5 Returning to Verona, Romeo found his friends, Benvolio and Mercutio being attacked by Tybalt, Juliet's cousin. Romeo tried to stop the fight. He failed, and Mercutio was killed. Romeo had to take revenge! He fought Tybalt and killed him.

6 The Prince, hearing of the deaths, banished Romeo from Verona. Poor Juliet! Her husband had killed her cousin, and now he was exiled. She was desperate. Her nurse brought Romeo to Juliet so they could be together one last time.



7 Next morning the lovers could hardly bear to part. When would they meet again? More disaster was to come. Juliet learned that her father had agreed to give her in marriage to a nobleman, Paris. How could she tell her father she had already married Romeo?

8 Juliet ran to Friar Laurence for help. The Friar gave her a sleeping potion to make her appear dead for forty-two hours, so she couldn't marry Paris. The Friar would tell Romeo the plan, and he would arrive as she was waking up. They could then escape together.

9 Juliet returned home and pretended to agree to the marriage. She took the drug. The next day, everyone thought she was dead. She was carried to the family tomb, from where, according to the Friar's plan, Romeo would rescue her.



10 But Romeo never received the Friar's letter. Thinking that his beloved Juliet had died, he bought poison and went to the tomb. He saw his beautiful, lifeless Juliet. He would never leave her side. He kissed her, and drank the poison.

11 Juliet woke up to see Romeo lying dead beside her. She wept and kissed him again and again, hoping that the poison on his lips would kill her too. Finally she took his dagger and, stabbing herself, fell dead upon her husband's body.

12 The families of the Montagues and the Capulets arrived at the tragic scene. They were overwhelmed with grief, and horrified at the pain that their families' hatred had caused. Thus they buried their feud, along with their precious children, Romeo and his sweet Juliet.