

# TWENTY MINUTE ROMEO AND JULIET

By Kristen Doherty

With apologies to William Shakespeare

CHARACTERS (In order of appearance)

|              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| NARRATOR 1   | MONTAGUE       |
| NARRATOR 2   | LADY MONTAGUE  |
| TIMEKEEPER   | PRINCE         |
| SAMPSON      | ROMEO          |
| GREGORY      | PARIS          |
| ABRAHAM      | SERVANT        |
| BALTHAZAR    | NURSE          |
| BENVOLIO     | JULIET         |
| TYBALT       | MERCUTIO       |
| ANGRY MOB    | FRIAR LAURENCE |
| CAPULET      | APOTHECARY     |
| LADY CAPULET | FRIAR JOHN     |

8 – 24 + actors

Suggested casting for 8 actors

Actor 1 - Narrator 1

Actor 2 - Narrator 2.

Actor 3 - Gregory/Romeo

Actor 4 - Sampson/Capulet/Benvolio/Friar John

Actor 5 - Balthazar/Paris/Lady Montague/Mercutio

Actor 6 - Benvolio/Nurse/Tybalt/Apothecary

Actor 7 - Timekeeper/Tybalt/Lady Capulet/Servant/Friar Lawrence

Actor 8 - Prince/Juliet

*(Enter Narrator 1 and Narrator 2)*

**NARRATOR 1:** Knaves, Plebs, Dweebs, Cox-Combs and Rat-Catchers. For your viewing entertainment - The greatest love story ever told--

**NARRATOR 2:** And re-told, and retold, again and again and again.

**NARRATOR 1:** Ahem! *(tries again)* The greatest love story ever told--

**NARRATOR 2:** Spoiler alert, Romeo and Juliet is not about love, it's about death, they both die in the end. Lots of people do. It's a tragedy.

**NARRATOR 1:** *(irritated)* Do you mind?

**NARRATOR 2:** Not at all. Please, go ahead, Narrator 1.

**NARRATOR 1:** Thank you, Narrator 2. Ladies and Gentlemen, Romeo and Juliet. And this time, drum roll please.

*(SFX: Drum Roll)*

**NARRATOR 1:** In twenty minutes! Ready timekeeper?

**TIMEKEEPER:** Ready!

**NARRATOR 2:** *(interrupts)* Twenty minutes? Pft! I can do better than that!

**NARRATOR 1:** Oh, can you now?

**NARRATOR 2:** Sure can, watch me. Ready timekeeper?

**TIME KEEPER:** Ready!

*(Narrator 2 launches into the Prologue, super-fast)*

**NARRATOR 2:** 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-cross'd lovers take their life;  
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows  
Do with their death bury their parents' strife.  
The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,  
And the continuance of their parents' rage,  
Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,  
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;  
The which if you with patient ears attend,  
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.  
End!

**TIME KEEPER:** 27 seconds!

**NARRATOR 2:** Yes! 27 seconds... In your face Narrator 1!

**NARRATOR 1:** *(slow clap)* Okay, okay, very clever. The Prologue does tell the entire story... more or less.

**NARRATOR 2:** More or less?

**NARRATOR 1:** Well, who are the characters? What happens to them? How do they meet and fall in love? What leads them to their tragic fate? All the Prologue says was there was a family feud, both families had babies, their kids become star-crossed lovers, they die, and the families make up.

**NARRATOR 2:** Good point... If you can do it better than Shakespeare, please continue.

**NARRATOR 1:** Narrator 2, Nobody can do it better than Shakespeare.

*(SFX: Holy music.)*

*(Both Narrators look skyward with reverence)*

**NARRATORS:** *(together)* Agreed!

**NARRATOR 1:** So, with our sincere apologies to William Shakespeare, 'Twenty Minute Romeo and Juliet.'

**NARRATOR 2:** Ready Time Keeper?

**TIME KEEPER:** Ready!

**NARRATORS:** Act One.

**NARRATOR 1:** Verona, Italy. A public place.

**NARRATOR 2:** Enter Sampson and Gregory, two servants of the House of Capulet, ready for a fight.

**SAMPSON:** A dog of that house shall move me to stand: I will take the wall of any man or maid of Montague's.

**NARRATOR 1:** Then what do you know, along comes Abraham and Balthazar.

**GREGORY:** Draw thy tool, here comes two of the House of Montague.

*(The two rival gangs pass each other growling, Sampson bites his thumb as they pass, Abraham catches him)*

**ABRAHAM:** Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

**SAMPSON:** (*nervously backtracks*) No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but I bite my thumb, sir.

**ABRAHAM:** Do you quarrel, sir?

**SAMPSON:** Quarrel sir? No, sir.

**ABRAHAM:** You lie!

(*They fight with swords*)

**NARRATOR 2:** Romeo's cousin, Benvolio enters and tries to break up the fight.

**BENVOLIO:** Part, fools! Put up your swords; you know not what you do.

**NARRATOR 1:** Enter Juliet's cousin, Tybalt - Prince of Cats.

(*SFX: Meow*)

**TYBALT:** (*draws his sword*) Turn thee, Benvolio, look upon thy death.

**BENVOLIO:** I do but keep the peace.

**TYBALT:** Peace. I hate the word, as I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee.

(*They fight with swords too*)

**NARRATOR 2:** And they fight, then others join the fray.

(*An Angry Mob enters*)

**ANGRY MOB:** Down with the Capulets! Down with the Montagues!

(*Enter Capulet and Lady Capulet, Montague and Lady Montague, they size each other up*)

**NARRATOR 1:** Then Romeo and Juliet's parents enter, and they are about to fight each other too, but thankfully, the Prince arrives and breaks up the riot.

**PRINCE:** Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace. Throw your mistemper'd weapons to the ground.

(*Everyone throws their weapons down*)

**PRINCE:** By thee, old Capulet, and Montague, if ever you disturb our streets again, your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.

(*All exit except the Capulets and Benvolio*)

**NARRATOR 2:** Lady Capulet, worried about her son, corners his cousin for information.

**LADY MONTAGUE:** Benvolio, where is Romeo? Saw you him to-day? Right glad I am he was not at this fray.

**BENVOLIO:** See, where he comes: so please you, step aside; I'll know his grievance, or be much denied.

**NARRATORS:** Enter Romeo.

*(Enter Romeo. Exit Lord and Lady Montague.)*

**BENVOLIO:** Good-morrow, cousin. What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?

**ROMEO:** Not having that, which, having, makes them short.

**BENVOLIO:** In love?

**ROMEO:** Out--

**BENVOLIO:** Of love?

**ROMEO:** Out of her favour, where I am in love.

**NARRATOR 2:** Wait! Romeo was in love with someone else?

**NARRATOR 1:** He sure was, the fair Rosalind, but, alas, she wanted to be a nun.

**BENVOLIO:** Come on Cuz, examine other beauties.

*(Exit Romeo and Benvolio. Enter Capulet and Paris)*

**NARRATOR 1:** Meanwhile, Juliet's dad is meeting with this really old guy, Paris, who wants to marry his daughter.

**CAPULET:** 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.

**PARIS:** Younger than she are happy mothers made.

**NARRATOR 2:** Ewh, ewh, ewh. So, Juliet was like 13 and Paris?...

**NARRATOR 1:** Twice her age.

**NARRATOR 2:** So, like 26? Ewh. So old.

**NARRATOR 1:** But Capulet, willing to negotiate, tells Paris to try his luck with Juliet at a party he is throwing that very night.

*(They shake hands)*

*(Enter Servant, Capulet hands him a list)*

**NARRATOR 2:** So, Lord Capulet sends his servant into town with a list of people to invite.

*(Exit Capulet and Paris)*

**NARRATOR 1:** Unfortunately, the servant could not read so he asks the first people he comes across to read the list for him... And who should those two people be?

**NARRATOR 2:** Romeo and Benvolio.

*(Enter Romeo and Benvolio)*

*(Romeo takes the list from Servant)*

**ROMEO:** Ohh, Rosalind is going to be there. Whose house is it at?

**SERVANT:** My master is the great rich Capulet; and if you be not of the house of Montagues, I pray, come and crush a cup of wine.

**ROMEO/BENVOLIO:** Montagues? Who us?

*(They cross fingers behind their backs)*

*(Exit servant)*

*(Romeo and Benvolio High Five)*

**ROMEO/BENVOLIO:** Party time. Whoop, whoop.

**NARRATOR 1:** Back at the Capulet house we finally get to meet Juliet.

*(Enter Lady Capulet and Nurse)*

**LADY CAPULET:** Nurse. Where is my daughter? Call her forth to me.

**NURSE:** *(calls)* What, lamb. What, ladybird. Juliet.

*(Juliet enters)*

**JULIET:** Madam, I am here. What is your will?

**LADY CAPULET:** Tell me, daughter Juliet, how stands your disposition to be married?

**JULIET:** It is an honour that I dream not of.

**NARRATOR 1:** Lady Capulet tells Juliet that she was already a mother by the time she was her age, so she better get on with it.

**NARRATOR 2:** Ewh.

**LADY CAPULET:** The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.

**JULIET:** (*shrugs*) I'll check him out.

**NURSE:** Go, girl, seek happy nights to happy days.

*(Exit all, enter Romeo, Mercutio, Balthazar and others)*

**NARRATOR 2:** Romeo and his friends are on the way to the Capulet's party. Mercutio speaks of a dream that he had that made no sense.

**MERCUTIO:** O, then, I see Queen Mab hath been with you. She is the fairies' midwife.

*(Everyone looks confused)*

**ROMEO:** Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace! Thou talk'st of nothing.

**ALL/NARRATORS:** Party time. Whoop. Whoop.

*(SFX - Party Music)*

*(They put on masks. All party guests enter masked, they dance and mingle)*

*(Suddenly Romeo and Juliet see each other. Everyone else fades away)*

*(SFX: Tacky romantic song plays)*

*(Romeo and Juliet meet in the middle of the dance floor)*

**ROMEO:** Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight! For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

**NARRATOR 1:** But Romeo is recognised by Tybalt.

*(SFX: Meow)*

**NARRATOR 1:** Tybalt charges Romeo but is stopped by Capulet.

**TYBALT:** Uncle, this is a Montague, our foe.

**CAPULET:** You'll make a mutiny among my guests!

*(Capulet drags Tybalt away)*

**NARRATOR 2:** Meanwhile Romeo and Juliet are flirting up a storm.

**ROMEO:** If I profane with my unworhiest hand. This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this: My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand, to smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

**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.

**NARRATOR 2:** Huh?

**NARRATOR 1:** They are comparing their hands to lips.

**NARRATOR 2:** Ooh...

**NARRATOR 1:** Shakespeare loved his metaphors.

**ROMEO:** Have not saints' lips, and holy palmers too?

**JULIET:** Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

**ROMEO:** O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do; They pray; Thus from my lips, by yours, my sin is purged.

**NARRATOR 2:** And those metaphors seem to be working!

**JULIET:** Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

**ROMEO:** Sin from thy lips? O trespass sweetly urged! Give me my sin again.

*(Narrators hold up a do not disturb sign to hide the kiss)*

**NARRATOR 2:** Whoah! Note to self, woo the ladies with metaphors.

*(SFX – Loud kissing noise)*

**JULIET:** You kiss by the book.

*(Nurse gets in between them)*

**NURSE:** Madam, your mother craves a word with you.

**ROMEO:** *(to Nurse)* What is her mother?

**NURSE:** Her mother is the lady of the house.

**ROMEO:** *(gasps)* Is she a Capulet? O dear account! My life is my foe's debt.

**JULIET:** *(to Nurse)* Come hither, nurse. What is yond gentleman?

**NURSE:** His name is Romeo, and a Montague; The only son of your great enemy.

**JULIET:** My only love sprung from my only hate! Too early seen unknown, and known too late!

**NARRATORS:** Act Two.

*(Romeo and Juliet reposition themselves for Balcony scene)*

**NARRATOR 1:** Romeo sneaks into Juliet's yard to find Juliet at her window, he hides and watches her.

**NARRATOR 2:** Kinda a bit weird and stalkery... But we will move on... For Shakespeare!

**NARRATOR 1:** For Shakespeare!

**ROMEO:** But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun. Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon, who is already sick and pale with grief.

**JULIET:** *(sighs)* Ah me.

**ROMEO:** She speaks, oh, speak again, bright angel.

**JULIET:** O Romeo, Romeo where for art thou Romeo, deny thy father and refused thy name. Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love, and I'll no longer be a Capulet. What's in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name, would smell as sweet.

**NARRATOR 2:** Romeo was pretty sure Juliet was into him, so he climbs up the balcony to reveal himself to Juliet. She is shook!

**NARRATOR 1:** And despite only spending a grand total of about ten minutes together Romeo asks Juliet to marry him, and she professes her undying love.

**JULIET:** 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.

**NARRATOR 2:** So, with promises that he will send for her tomorrow, she bids him farewell.

**JULIET:** Good night, good night! parting is such sweet sorrow. That I shall say good night till it be morrow.

*(Barely able to drag themselves away from each other, Romeo and Juliet exit)*

**NARRATOR 1:** The next day Romeo goes to Friar Laurence's cell and tells him that he met the daughter of his enemy last night and he wants to marry her today.

*(Enter Friar Laurence and Romeo)*

**FRIAR LAURENCE:** Holy Saint Francis, what a change is here! Is Rosaline, whom thou didst love so dear, So soon forsaken?

**ROMEO:** *(shrugs)* Haven't you ever heard of love at first sight?

**FRIAR LAURENCE:** Hmm...This might be a good thing. Maybe this alliance will bring your families back together.

*(SFX: Alarm bells, LFX flashing lights)*

**FRIAR LAURENCE:** Ignore those. Great idea kid! I'll do it. Seems foolproof.

*(They shake and exit)*

**NARRATOR 2:** Or maybe proof of a fool.

*(Enter Romeo, Mercutio, Benvolio and the Nurse)*

**NARRATOR 1:** Soon after Romeo is hanging out with his friends. The Nurse finds him to ask if the wedding is on.

**ROMEO:** Sure is! Commend me to thy lady.

*(Exit all)*

**NARRATOR 2:** Meanwhile, Juliet is getting impatient.

**JULIET:** The clock struck nine when I did send the nurse; In half an hour she promised to return. Perchance she cannot meet him: that's not so. O, she is lame! O God, she comes! O honey nurse, what news? Hast thou met with him?

**NARRATOR 1:** And the Nurse teases Juliet, refusing to answer, changing the subject.

**NURSE:** I am a-weary, give me leave awhile: Fie, how my bones ache! what a jaunt have I had!

**JULIET:** Here's such a coil! come, what says Romeo?

**NURSE:** Hie you hence to Friar Laurence' cell; There stays a husband to make you a wife.

*(Juliet squeals and jumps around in excitement)*

*(SFX: Wedding song)*

*(Enter Romeo and Friar Laurence)*

**NARRATOR 2:** And just like that, Romeo and Juliet marry in secret in Friar Laurence's cell.

**NARRATORS:** Act Three.

**NARRATOR 1:** Soon after Benvolio and Mercutio are hanging out in the street, speaking about how the Capulets are on the lookout for a fight. Sure enough...

**NARRATOR 2:** Enter Tybalt, Prince of Cats!

*(SFX: Meow)*

*(Tybalt enters with his gang)*

**NARRATOR 1:** Tybalt is looking for Romeo, and he is mad.

**TYBALT:** \*Growls.

**NARRATOR 2:** And what do you know, here comes Romeo.

*(Romeo enters)*

**TYBALT:** Romeo, thou art a villain.

**ROMEO:** I'm not going to fight you, man. I love you bro. Let's hug it out.

*(Romeo goes to hug Tybalt. Tybalt pushes him away. Mercutio draws his sword and gets in the middle of them)*

**NARRATOR 1:** Then Mercutio gets all protective of Romeo.

**MERCUTIO:** Tybalt, you rat-catcher, will you walk?

*(Tybalt draws his sword)*

**TYBALT:** I am for you.

*(They fight)*

**NARRATOR 2:** Romeo tries to stop them.

**ROMEO:** Tybalt, Mercutio, the prince expressly hath forbidden bandying in Verona streets.

**NARRATOR 1:** But he gets in Mercutio's way and Tybalt stabs Mercutio under Romeo's arm.

**TYBALT:** Stab!

**MERCUTIO:** They have made mincemeat of me. A plague o' both your houses!

*(He dies dramatically in Romeo's arms)*

**NARRATOR 2:** In revenge for his friend's death, Romeo stabs Tybalt.

**ROMEO:** Stab!

*(Tybalt drops dead)*

**ROMEO:** Noooo! I am fortune's fool!

*(Romeo exits, Capulets, Montagues, Angry Mob and Prince enter)*

**NARRATOR 1:** Romeo runs off, and everyone else enters; the Capulets, the Montagues, an Angry Mob, and even the Prince, who seemed to like to show up late after these big street fights and lay down the laws of Verona.

**PRINCE:** Romeo slew him, he slew Mercutio; And for that offence, immediately we do exile him hence.

*(Exit all, Enter Juliet)*

**NARRATOR 2:** Meanwhile, poor Juliet is blissfully unaware of these tragic events.

**JULIET:** Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds. Bring me my Romeo.

**NARRATOR 1:** But her happiness is short lived when her Nurse enters in despair.

*(Enter Nurse)*

**NURSE:** Ah, well-a-day! He's dead, he's dead, he's dead! We are undone, lady, we are undone!

**NARRATOR 1:** I said “Her Nurse enters in despair”

*(The Nurse tries again)*

**NURSE:** Alack the day! he's gone, he's kill'd, he's dead!

**NARRATOR 2:** This is a tragedy, man. You have to do better.

*(Nurse tries again. It's way over the top)*

**NURSE:** Ah, well-a-day! he's dead, he's dead, he's dead! We are undone, lady, we are undone! Alack the day! he's gone, he's kill'd, he's dead!

*(Narrator's cheer and clap)*

**NARRATORS:** Bravo. Bravo!

**JULIET:** Um excuse me... I'm right here, innocent and clueless. Who is dead?

**NURSE:** O Romeo, Romeo! Whoever would have thought it? Romeo! Blood, blood, gore and blood.

**JULIET:** *(cries)* Oh no. Not Romeo.

**NURSE:** O Tybalt, Tybalt, the best friend I had! That ever I should live to see thee dead!

**JULIET:** *(stops)* Hang on a second, is Tybalt dead or is it Romeo.

**NURSE:** Tybalt is gone, and Romeo banished; Romeo that kill'd him, he is banished.

**JULIET:** (*gasps*) O God! Did Romeo's hand shed Tybalt's blood?

**NURSE:** It did, it did; alas the day, it did!

(*Juliet dissolves into tears. She stops, addresses the audience before continuing*)

**JULIET:** Now that's what you call despair. (*sobs again*)

**NARRATORS:** (*cheer*) Bravo. Bravo!

**NARRATOR 2:** Feeling sorry for her, the Nurse agrees to go and find Romeo and bring him to Juliet for a final goodbye.

(*All exit. Enter Romeo and Friar Laurence*)

**NARRATOR 1:** Meanwhile, Friar Laurence is breaking the bad news to Romeo.

**FRIAR LAURENCE:** Bad news. You're banished.

**ROMEO:** (*sobs*) Banishment! be merciful, say 'death. There is no world without Verona walls, but purgatory, torture, hell itself.

**FRIAR LAURENCE:** Overreaction much?

**NARRATORS:** (*cheer*) Bravo. Bravo.

(*Romeo bows, blows kisses etc*)

**NARRATOR 2:** The Nurse shows up and tells Romeo that Juliet is in actual despair and he needs to stand up and be a man.

(*Nurse enters*)

**NURSE:** Suck it up, princess.

**NARRATOR 1:** The Friar convinces Romeo to run away to Mantua while things settle down in Verona. But first go to Juliet to say goodbye.

(*Romeo waves them goodbye and they all exit*)

(*Enter Capulet and Paris, they shake hands*)

**NARRATOR 1:** Meanwhile, unbeknownst to Juliet, her dad decides that a family wedding will cheer everyone up, and plans to marry Juliet to the old dude, Paris, in three days.

**NARRATOR 2:** Ewh.

*(Exit Capulet and Paris. Enter Romeo and Juliet)*

**NARRATOR 1:** Romeo and Juliet spend their first and last night together but all too soon it is time to say goodbye.

**JULIET:** Art thou gone so? Love, lord, ay, husband, friend! I must hear from thee every day in the hour, for in a minute there are many days.

**NARRATOR 2:** Clingy much?!

**NARRATOR 1:** Romeo tears himself away just in time, because here comes Lady Capulet to tell Juliet that she is going to marry Paris.

*(Enter Lady Capulet and Nurse)*

**LADY CAPULET:** The County Paris, at Saint Peter's Church, shall happily make thee there a joyful bride.

**JULIET:** *(tantrum, bawling)* Now, by Saint Peter's Church and Peter too, He shall not make me there a joyful bride.

**\*\*End Preview\*\***

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