

(PROLOGUE)**PROLOGUE**

The setting is a piazza in Verona. It could be an outdoor cafe with a couple of tables and some chairs. There are probably Martini (“Montague”) and Cinzano (“Capulet”) umbrellas in the tables. The set has a stonewashed appearance. It is dark. The music resonates on a single chord like the beginning of "West End Girls" by the Pet Shop Boys. The company enter and stand in a semi-circle across the back of the stage. It is dark. Above the music we hear a voice.

CHORUS: 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-crossed lovers* take their life:
 Whose misadventured piteous overthrows,
 Doth with their death* bury their parents’ strife.
 The fearful passage of their death marked love
 And the continuance of their parents’ rage
 Which, but their children’s end*, naught 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

In the 2005 professional touring production we used a video wall USC and the following titles appeared at the indicated points ...

- * TWO HOUSEHOLDS
- * VERONA
- * ANCIENT GRUDGE
- * TWO FOES
- * STAR-CROSSED LOVERS
- * DEATH
- * ROMEO AND JULIET

THE PIAZZA**(Act 1, Scene 1)**

The mood changes, the light is up, segue straight into the opening song It is midday. The company busy about the stage. They are the people of Verona, and members of the families Montague and Capulet: two noble families divided by an age-old vendetta. Some are seated at the cafe tables in the piazza. There is a tension in the air as BENVOLIO steps forward and sings.

SONG: MONTAGUES & CAPULETS (The Company)

BENVOLIO: **Hi there, signore y signori**
 Welcome to Verona. (BEN VENUTI!)
 This beautiful place in Italy
 Is where we live so happily.
 You see, I know them and they know me.
 It's a friendly, neighbourhood community,
 But if you need immunity,
 You gotta be with the right family.

ALL: **Montague and Capulet -**
 It's a feud they won't forget.
 Make a move and you'll regret,
 So don't you bite your thumb at me!

TYBALT enters with some members of the house of Capulet.

TYBALT: **Ho there, signor Benvolio!**
 If it isn't my kinsmen's ugliest foe.
 Now the only thing you need to know is
 "You better just watch out where you go!"
 You see I hate them, and they hate me
 These Montagues are a tragedy.
 If I kill them, it don't matter to me,
 You see they come from the wrong family.

ALL: **Montague and Capulet -**
 It's a feud they won't forget.
 Make a move and you'll regret,
 So don't you bite your thumb at me!

LORD CAPULET enters followed by LADY CAPULET. LORD MONTAGUE and LADY MONTAGUE enter from the other side.

CAPULET: **What's going on? What's all this noise?**
 Bring me my long sword, now!

LADY CAPULET: (spoken) A sword? You mean a crutch, you old fool.

MONTAGUE: Don't hold me back! Let me go!

BOTH: It's my old foe
And I shall strike a blow
To show him where to go!

ALL: Montague and Capulet -
It's a feud they won't forget.
Make a move and you'll regret,
So don't you bite your thumb at me!

During this next instrumental verse, the company engage in a dance/battle using umbrellas, chairs, tables anything that comes to hand. A closely choreographed, slapstick sequence.

The funnier the better.

BENVOLIO: You see, I know them and they know me.
It's a friendly, neighbourhood community,
TYBALT: If I kill them, it don't matter to me,
You see they come from the wrong family.

ALL: Montague and Capulet -
It's a feud they won't forget.
Make a move and you'll regret,
So don't you bite your thumb at me!

PRINCE ESCALUS enters, the crowd separates, and probably freezes.

PRINCE: Three civil brawls have disturbed
The peace of Verona.
(Are you listening Capulet? Montague?)
You are the cause of these wars
And now the law
Says no more knives
Or you will both pay with your lives

ALL: Montague and Capulet
Montague and Capulet
Montague and Capulet
Now that we've met
Don't ever forget
We're the Montagues and Capulets.

Montague and Capulet
Montague and Capulet
Now that we've met

**Don't you ever forget
We're the Good Guys and the Capulets.**

LADY MONT: Oh Benvolio, have you seen my son, Romeo, today? I'm so glad he wasn't involved in all this.

BENVOLIO: Madam, I saw him this morning. Early. About an hour before dawn.

LADY MONT: Before dawn?

BENVOLIO: Beneath a sycamore grove on the west side of the city.

MONTAGUE: Yes, he's often been seen there in the mornings, all gloomy and moping about. His tears mix with the morning dew; his sighs make new clouds; and as soon as the sun rises, he rushes home and hides in the darkness of his own room.

BENVOLIO: My noble uncle - do you know why?

MONTAGUE: I neither know, nor can I find it out from him.

BENVOLIO: Look! Here he comes. Leave it to me. I'll find out.

Exit MONTAGUE and LADY MONTAGUE, as ROMEO enters in a melancholy state.

BENVOLIO: Good morning, Romeo!

ROMEO: What - is it still early?

BENVOLIO: It's just gone nine.

ROMEO: Is that all? How time drags when you're sad.

BENVOLIO: What sadness makes the time drag, Romeo? Are you in love?

ROMEO: Out -

BENVOLIO: - of love?

ROMEO: Out of favour, with the one I love!

BENVOLIO: And who is that?

ROMEO: Her name is ... Rosaline.

BENVOLIO: Rosaline?

ROMEO: I'm in love - but the love is not returned.

BENVOLIO: Take my advice, Romeo: forget her.

ROMEO: Forget her? Benvolio - teach me how to forget.

BENVOLIO: By letting your eyes roam. Look at some other beauties.
There's plenty of fish in the sea.

ROMEO: Fish? What do you mean - fish? I'm off - you can't teach me -

A STREET IN VERONA, OUTSIDE CAPULET'S PARTY

(Act 1, Scene 4)

ROMEO, BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO are seen on another side of the stage. They are preparing to gatecrash the Capulet Party. (Note: It was the custom when gate-crashing to either recite a witty speech or to perform a ridiculous dance in order to be allowed to stay)

ROMEO: What are we going to say in our gate-crashing speech, Benvolio?

BENVOLIO: Let's have none of that old-fashioned nonsense! Let them take us as we are - we'll do our dance for them - then go.

ROMEO: Can't I carry a torch instead. I'm not into this ambling.

MERCUTIO: No, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance!

ROMEO: Not me, Mercutio. You have dancing shoes with nimble soles, I have a soul of lead that fixes me to the ground so I can't move.

MERCUTIO: You are a lover, aren't you? Borrow Cupid's wings and soar into the sky.

BENVOLIO: Come on, knock and go in. Once inside we'll ALL do the dance.

ROMEO: Can't I just hold the torch?

MERCUT/BENV: NO!

ROMEO: Look, I know we mean well going to this masque, but it's not wise to go.

MERCUTIO: And why is that may we ask?

- ROMEO: I dreamt a dream last night.
- MERCUTIO: And so did I.
- ROMEO: Well, what was yours?
- MERCUTIO: That dreamers often lie.
- ROMEO: Yes. They lie ... in bed - asleep , while they dream things that are true!
- MERCUTIO: Oh - then I see Queen Mab has been with you.
- ROMEO/BENV: Queen Mab?
- MERCUTIO: That's what I said. Queen Mab! She is the fairy - who makes lovers - dream their dreams!

SONG - QUEEN MAB (Mercutio)

- MERCUTIO:** **When you turn out the light
In the still of the night.
You lay down your head
On your cosy, little bed.
You close your eyes,
Goodnight and adieu.
She's boarded her flight
And she's calling on you.**
- MERCUTIO:** **She's Queen Mab (Oh yeah)
Let me tell you, she's bad.
She's the woman of your dreams, if you know what I mean,
She's Queen Mab!**
- This fairy queen
From fairy land
She is no bigger
Than the finger on my hand
She rides the sky
In a hazelnut shell
She'll ride through your mind
While she's weaving that spell**
- She's Queen Mab (Oh yeah)
Let me tell you, she's bad. (She's bad and they call her Queen Mab)
She's the woman of your dreams, if you know what I mean,
She's Queen Mab!**

**Her domain is a dreamer's delight
Through your brain she will gallop all night
She calls on lovers and they can't get enough
She even makes soldiers dream of fighting stuff**

**She's Queen Mab (Oh yeah)
Let me tell you, she's bad. (She's bad and they call her Queen Mab)
She's the woman of your dreams, if you know what I mean,
She's Queen Mab!**

**She's on patrol
With rock and roll
All systems go
Dream Traffic Control**

**She's Queen Mab
Let me tell you, she's bad
She's the woman of your dreams, when you're all alone
She's the one who makes you feel just right at home
She's the one who'll take you straight into the Danger Zone.**

ROMEO interrupts Mercutio's climactic ending ..

**ROMEO: Good Mercutio,
 Please no more.
 I think I've heard all this before.
 There's something waiting for us all**
