

ACT THREE

SCENE 1

MERCUTIO, his page, and BENVOLIO enter with other men.

BENVOLIO

I'm begging you, good Mercutio, let's call it a day. It's hot outside, and the Capulets are wandering around. If we bump into them, we'll certainly get into a fight. When it's hot outside, people become angry and hot-blooded.

MERCUTIO

You're like one of those guys who walks into a bar, slams his sword on the table, and then says, "I pray I never have to use you." By the time he orders his second drink, he pulls his sword on the bartender for no reason at all.

BENVOLIO

Am I really like one of those guys?

MERCUTIO

Come on, you can be as angry as any guy in Italy when you're in the mood. When someone does the smallest thing to make you angry, you get angry. And when you're in the mood to get angry, you find something to get angry about.

BENVOLIO

And what about that?

MERCUTIO

If there were two men like you, pretty soon there'd be none because the two of you would kill each other. You would fight with a man if he had one more whisker or one less whisker in his beard than you have in your beard. You'll fight with a man who's cracking nuts just because you have hazelnut-colored eyes. Only you

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would look for a fight like that. Your head is as full of fights as an egg is full of yolk, but your head has been beaten like scrambled eggs from so much fighting. You started a fight with a man who coughed in the street because he woke up a dog that was sleeping in the sun. Didn't you argue it out with your tailor for wearing one of his new suits before the right season? And with another for tying the new shoes he made with old laces? And yet you're the one who wants to teach me about restraint!

BENVOLIO

If I were in the habit of fighting the way you are, my life insurance rates would be sky high.

MERCUTIO

Your life insurance? That's foolish.

TYBALT, PETRUCHIO, and CAPULETS enter.

BENVOLIO

Oh great, here come the Capulets,

MERCUTIO

Well, well, I don't care.

TYBALT

(to PETRUCHIO and others) Follow me closely, I'll talk to them. *(to the MONTAGUES)* Good afternoon, gentlemen. I'd like to have a word with one of you.

MERCUTIO

You just want one word with one of us? Put it together with something else. Make it a word and a blow.

TYBALT

You'll find me ready enough to do that, sir, if you give me a reason.

MERCUTIO

Can't you find a reason without my giving you one?

TYBALT

Mercutio, you hang out with Romeo.

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE**MERCUTIO**

“Hang out?” Who do you think we are, musicians in a band? If we look like musicians to you, you can expect to hear nothing but noise. (*touching the blade of his sword*) This is my fiddlestick. I’ll use it to make you dance. Goddammit—“Hang out!”

BENVOLIO

We’re talking here in a public place. Either go someplace private, or talk it over rationally, or else just go away. Out here everybody can see us.

MERCUTIO

Men’s eyes were made to see things, so let them watch. I won’t move to please anybody.

ROMEO enters.

TYBALT

Well, may peace be with you. Here comes my man, the man I’m looking for.

MERCUTIO

He’s not your man. Alright, walk out into a field, and he’ll chase you. In that sense you can call him your “man.”

TYBALT

Romeo, there’s only one thing I can call you. You’re a villain.

ROMEO

Tybalt, I have a reason to love you that lets me put aside the rage I should feel and excuse that insult. I am no villain. So, goodbye. I can tell that you don’t know who I am.

TYBALT

Boy, your words can’t excuse the harm you’ve done to me. So now turn and draw your sword.

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ROMEO

I disagree. I've never done you harm. I love you more than you can understand until you know the reason why I love you. And so, good Capulet—which is a name I love like my own name—you should be satisfied with what I say.

MERCUTIO

This calm submission is dishonorable and vile. The thrust of a sword will end this surrender. (*draws his sword*) Tybalt, you rat-catcher, will you go fight me?

TYBALT

What do you want from me?

MERCUTIO

Good King of Cats, I want to take one of your nine lives. I'll take one, and, depending on how you treat me after that, I might beat the other eight out of you too. Will you pull your sword out of its sheath? Hurry up, or I'll smack you on the ears with my sword before you have yours drawn.

TYBALT

I'll fight you. (*he draws his sword*)

ROMEO

Noble Mercutio, put your sword away.

MERCUTIO

(*to TYBALT*) Come on, sir, perform your forward thrust, your *passado*.

MERCUTIO and TYBALT *fight*.

ROMEO

(*drawing his sword*) Draw your sword, Benvolio. Let's beat down their weapons. Gentlemen, stop this disgraceful fight. Tybalt, Mercutio, the Prince has banned fighting in the streets of Verona. Stop, Tybalt. Stop, good Mercutio.

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ROMEO tries to break up the fight. TYBALT reaches under ROMEO'S arm and stabs MERCUTIO.

PETRUCHIO

Let's get away, Tybalt.

TYBALT, PETRUCHIO, and the other CAPULETS exit.

MERCUTIO

I've been hurt. May a plague curse both your families. I'm finished. Did he get away clean?

BENVOLIO

What, are you hurt?

MERCUTIO

Yes, yes. It's a scratch, just a scratch. But it's enough. Where is my page? Go, boy. Get me a doctor.

MERCUTIO'S PAGE exits.

ROMEO

Have courage, man. The wound can't be that bad.

MERCUTIO

No, it's not as deep as a well, or as wide as a church door, but it's enough. It'll do the job. Ask for me tomorrow, and you'll find me in a grave. I'm done for in this world, I believe. May a plague strike both your houses. Goddammit! I can't believe that dog, that rat, that mouse, that cat could scratch me to death! That braggart, punk villain who fights like he learned swordsmanship from a manual! Why the hell did you come in between us? He struck me from under your arm.

ROMEO

I thought it was the right thing to do.

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MERCUTIO

Take me inside some house, Benvolio, or I'll pass out. May a plague strike both your families! They've turned me into food for worms. I'm done for. Curse your families!

MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO exit.

ROMEO

This gentleman Mercutio, a close relative of the Prince and my dear friend, was killed while defending me from Tybalt's slander—Tybalt, who had been my cousin for a whole hour! Oh, sweet Juliet, your beauty has made me weak like a woman, and you have softened my bravery, which before was as hard as steel.

BENVOLIO enters.

BENVOLIO

Oh Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio is dead! His brave spirit has floated up to heaven, but it was too early for him to leave life on earth.

ROMEO

The future will be affected by today's terrible events. Today is the start of a terror that will end in the days ahead.

TYBALT enters.

BENVOLIO

Here comes the furious Tybalt back again.

ROMEO

He's alive and victorious, and Mercutio's dead? Enough with mercy and consideration. It's time for rage to guide my actions. Now, Tybalt, you can call me "villain" the way you did before. Mercutio's soul is

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floating right above our heads. He's waiting for you to keep him company on the way up to heaven. Either you, or I, or both of us have to go with him.

TYBALT

Wretched boy, you hung out with him here, and you're going to go to heaven with him.

ROMEO

This fight will decide who dies.

They fight. TYBALT falls and dies.

BENVOLIO

Romeo, get out of here. The citizens are around, and Tybalt is dead. Don't stand there shocked. The Prince will give you the death penalty if you get caught. So get out of here!

ROMEO

Oh, I have awful luck.

BENVOLIO

Why are you waiting?

ROMEO exits.

The CITIZENS OF THE WATCH enter.

CITIZEN OF THE WATCH

The man who killed Mercutio, which way did he go? Tybalt, that murderer, which way did he run?

BENVOLIO

Tybalt is lying over there.

CITIZEN OF THE WATCH

(to TYBALT) Get up, sir, and come with me. I command you, by the authority of the Prince, to obey me.

The PRINCE enters with MONTAGUE, CAPULET, LADY MONTAGUE, LADY CAPULET, and OTHERS.

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PRINCE

Where are the evil men who started this fight?

BENVOLIO

Oh, noble prince, I can tell you everything about the unfortunate circumstances of this deadly fight. Over there Tybalt is lying dead. He killed your relative, brave Mercutio, and then young Romeo killed him.

LADY CAPULET

Tybalt was my nephew! He was my brother's son! Oh Prince, oh nephew, oh husband! Oh, my nephew is dead! Oh Prince, as you are a man of honor, take revenge for this murder by killing someone from the Montague family. Oh cousin, cousin!

PRINCE

Benvolio, who started this fight?

BENVOLIO

Tybalt started the fight before he was killed by Romeo. Romeo spoke to Tybalt politely and told him how silly this argument was. He mentioned that you would not approve of the fight. He said all of this gently and calmly, kneeling down out of respect. But he could not make peace with Tybalt, who was in an angry mood and wouldn't listen to talk about peace. Tybalt and Mercutio began to fight each other fiercely, lunging at one another and dodging each other's blows. Romeo cried out, "Stop, my friends. Break it up." Then he jumped in between them and forced them to put their swords down. But Tybalt reached under Romeo's arm and thrust his sword into brave Mercutio. Then Tybalt fled the scene.

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But pretty soon he came back to meet Romeo, who was overcome with the desire for revenge. As quick as lightning, they started fighting. Before I could break up the fight, Tybalt was killed. Romeo ran away when Tybalt fell dead. I'm telling you the truth, I swear on my life.

LADY CAPULET

Benvolio is part of the Montague family. His loyalties to the Montagues make him tell lies. He's not telling the truth. There were twenty Montagues fighting in this awful riot, and together those twenty could only kill one man. I demand justice. You, Prince, are the man who can give me justice. Romeo killed Tybalt. Romeo must die.

PRINCE

Romeo killed Tybalt. Tybalt killed Mercutio. Who should now pay the price for Mercutio's life?

MONTAGUE

Not Romeo, Prince. He was Mercutio's friend. His crime did justice's job by taking Tybalt's life.

PRINCE

And for that crime, Romeo is hereby exiled from Verona. I'm involved in your rivalry. Mercutio was my relative, and he lies dead because of your bloody feud. I'll punish you so harshly that you'll regret causing me this loss. I won't listen to your pleas or excuses. You can't get out of trouble by praying or crying, so don't bother. Tell Romeo to leave the city immediately, or else, if he is found, he will be killed. Take away this body, and do what I say. Showing mercy by pardoning killers only causes more murders.

They exit.