

Romeo and Juliet

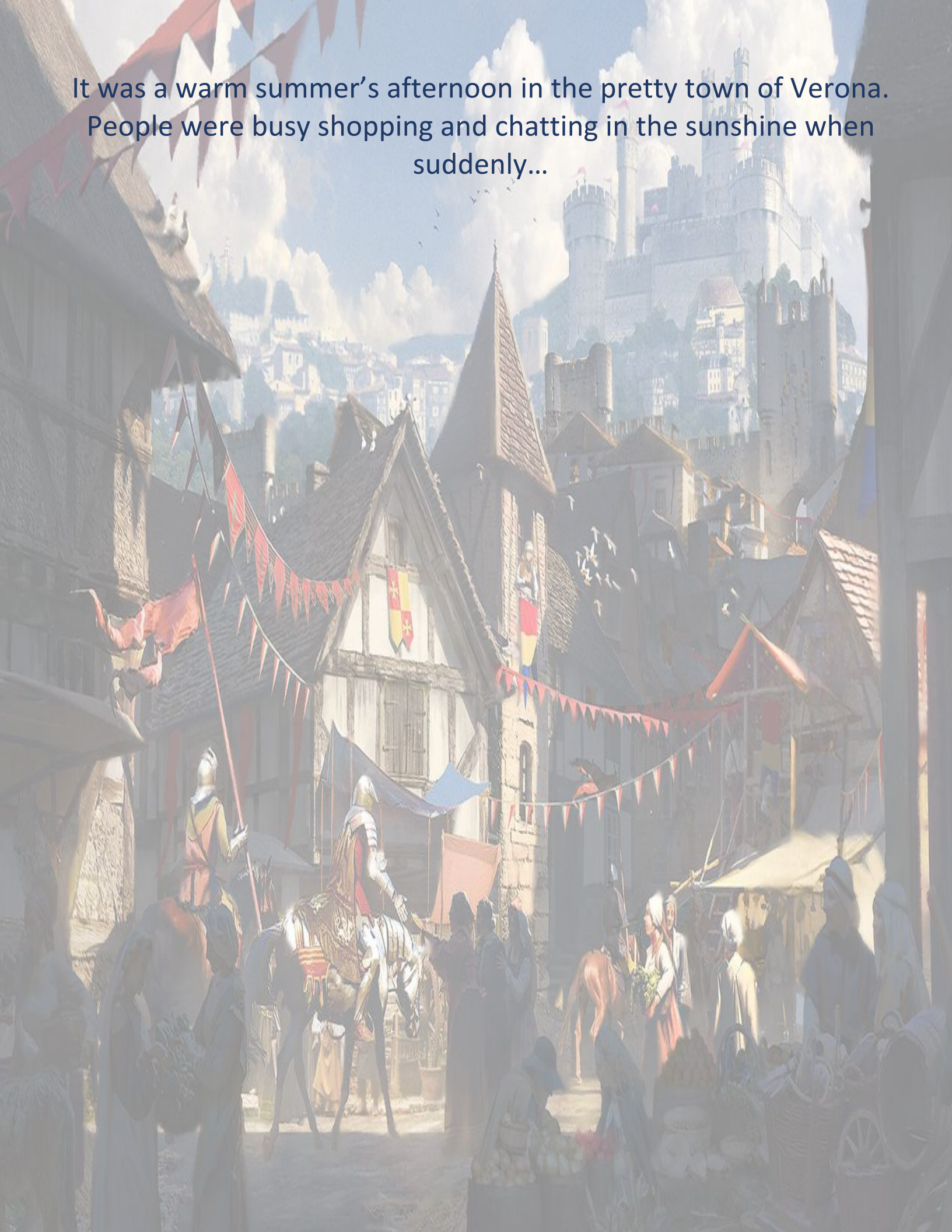
William Shakespeare



A romantic balcony scene with stone arches, a balustrade, lit candles, and flowers. The scene is set on a stone balcony with a balustrade. In the center, a large stone archway is flanked by two smaller arches. The balcony is adorned with lit candles in ornate holders and lush pink flowers. The background is a soft, hazy landscape with more flowers and a warm, golden light. The overall mood is romantic and serene.

Capulets and Montagues

It was a warm summer's afternoon in the pretty town of Verona.
People were busy shopping and chatting in the sunshine when
suddenly...



Two gangs of young men tore across the market square, fighting, kicking and rolling in the dust. The townspeople ran for cover. The gangs belonged to two of Verona's richest families – the Capulet's and the Montagues. The families were sworn enemies, and they were always fighting.



In minutes, Verona's ruler Prince Escalus arrived with his soldiers to break up the fight. The prince was furious.

"I've had enough of this feud!" he raged. "It's got to stop. From now on, anyone caught fighting will be put to death!"



Old Montague, the head of the Montague family, hurried into the market square, searching for his son Romeo. But he only found Benvolio, Romeo's cousin.

"Don't worry, uncle," said Benvolio. "Romeo wasn't fighting. He's too sensible."



Soon after that, Romeo himself wandered by. Benvolio was telling him what had happened, when someone spoke behind them.

“Have you heard? Old Capulet is holding a masked ball tonight.”

“Did you hear that, Romeo?” whispered Benvolio. “A party at the Capulet’s house. Let’s go! If we wear disguises, no one will guess who we are.”

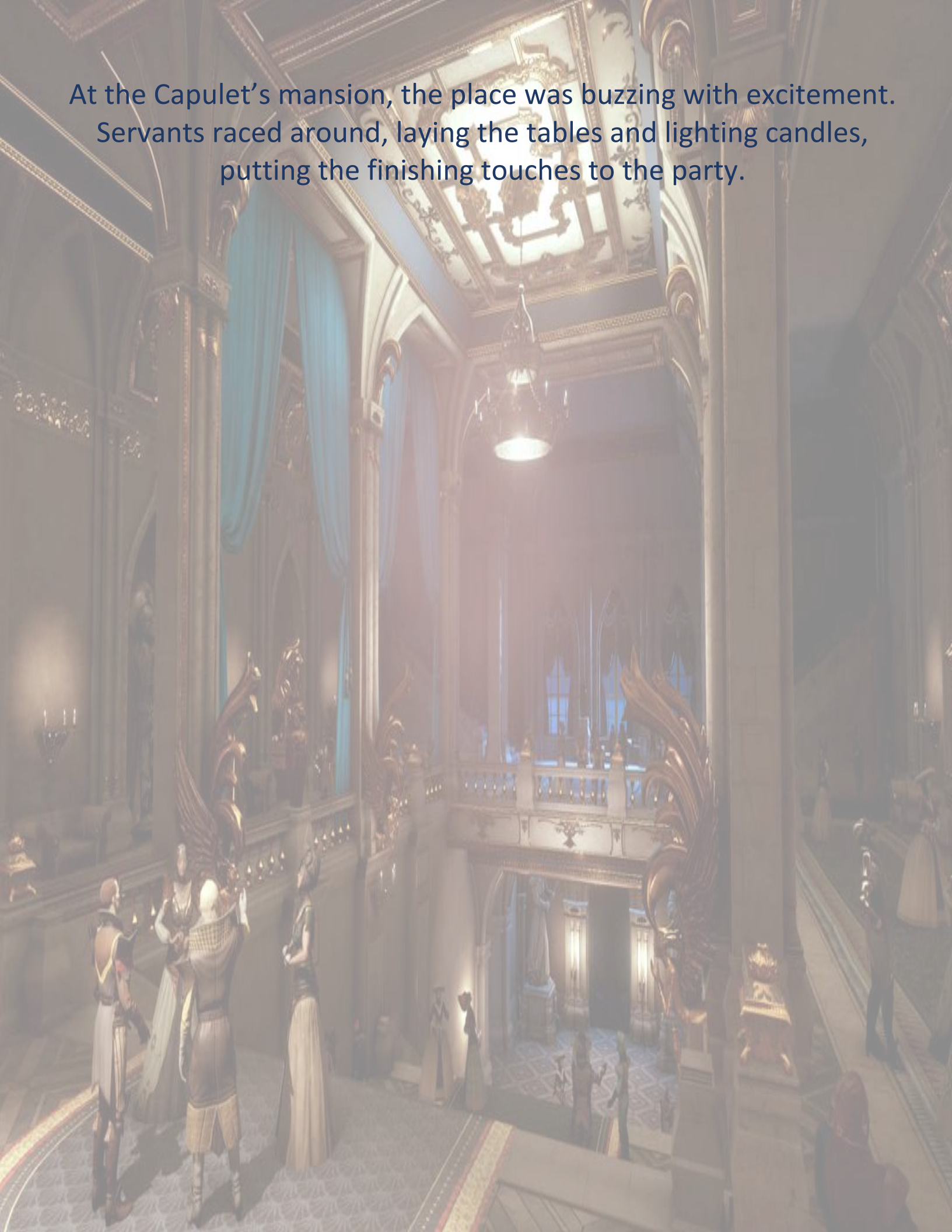
Excitedly, the two young Montagues went to find their friend Mercutio, to invite him along.



A romantic scene on a stone balcony. The balcony features a balustrade with ornate balusters and is flanked by three large stone arches. Each archway contains a set of lit candles in brass holders. The background is a soft, hazy landscape with pink flowers and green foliage. The text "Falling in Love" is centered in the middle of the image.

Falling in Love

At the Capulet's mansion, the place was buzzing with excitement. Servants raced around, laying the tables and lighting candles, putting the finishing touches to the party.



Upstairs, Juliet Capulet's nurse was helping her dress, when Juliet's mother came in. "Now Juliet," she said.

"A man named Count Paris is coming tonight. I hope you like him. Your father and I want you to marry him." "Oh Juliet, sweetheart," squealed her nurse. "You're to be married! How exciting!"

Juliet was horrified. She was only thirteen. She wasn't ready to get married. And what if she didn't like Count Paris?



But there was no time to argue. The party was about to start. Straightening her dress, Juliet went down the grand marble staircase to the banqueting hall.



A little later, three surprise guests arrived. Benvolio stood still. He had spotted a beautiful girl in a pink and cream dress and he couldn't take his eyes off her.



Juliet's cousin Tybalt recognized the three friends and went straight to Old Capulet. "Uncle, there are Montagues here!" he declared. "Let's kick them out."

"No, Tybalt," said his uncle. "Remember the prince's warning. No fighting."



Romeo saw the girl leave the hall and followed. Shyly, he went up to her. "I don't know who you are," he said, "but I've fallen in love with you. You're beautiful!" And he kissed her.

Juliet had left the hall to escape from Count Paris. She didn't like the Paris at all. But when Romeo kissed her, she felt her heart fluttering. She fell in love with him at once.



“Who are you?” Juliet murmured.

“He’s Romeo Montague!” snapped Juliet’s nurse. Who had come to look for her. “And Old Capulet would have a fit if he saw his daughter with a Montague. Come on,” she urged, taking Juliet away. “Count Paris want to dance with you.”

Romeo groaned. “She’s a Capulet? What am I going to do?”



When the party ended, Romeo sneaked outside and hid in the Capulet's garden.

As the moon rose, he saw Juliet step onto a balcony. "Oh, Romeo!" she sighed. "It's you I love. If only you weren't a Montague!"

"Juliet," Romeo called to her. "I'm here in the garden. And I love you."

"You do?" said Juliet.

"With all my heart," Romeo replied. "I'd marry you, if I could."



“But my parents are going to make me marry Count Paris,”
Juliet wailed.

She frowned. “Our only hope is to get married in secret,” she
said at last. “Then we will,” said Romeo.

“I’ll ask my nurse to help us,” Juliet decided. “Send me a
message tomorrow.”

“I will,” Romeo promised, “but now I’d better go,
Goodbye Juliet!”



A romantic stone balcony with arches, candles, and flowers. The scene is set on a stone balcony with a balustrade. In the foreground, there are lit candles in ornate holders. The background features a stone wall with arches and lush greenery with pink flowers. The overall atmosphere is soft and romantic, with a light blue and pink color palette.

A Secret Wedding

The next morning, Romeo went to visit Friar Laurence. The friar was a wise monk who made medicines and helped people with their problems.

“What can I do for you, Romeo?” Friar Laurence asked.

“I’m in love with Juliet Capulet,” Romeo explained. “I know our parents won’t like it, but we really want to get married.”

“Then I’ll help you,” the friar said, kindly. “When you parents find out you’re married, it might help stop the fighting. If you both come to my house this afternoon, I’ll marry you in secret.”



Romeo was delighted. He ran to the market square to find Juliet's nurse and give her the message.

The nurse rushed off to tell Juliet what Romeo had said. She hated to see her beloved Juliet unhappy.



Juliet couldn't stop smiling. "I'll tell my parents I'm going to see the friar about my wedding to Count Paris," she decided.



As the clock struck two, Juliet arrived at Friar Laurence's house. Romeo was waiting for her and the friar performed the secret wedding at once.

Romeo and Juliet were married. But Juliet's parents were expecting her back and she had to go straight home.



So Romeo went to look for Benvolio and Mercutio. He found them in the market square, arguing with Tybalt Capulet. "What's the problem?" Romeo asked.

"You Montagues are the problem," snarled Tybalt, turning to Romeo. "You sneaked into our party and I'm going to make you pay. I challenge you to a duel!"



“I refuse,” Romeo replied. “You know the prince said no fighting.”

“You’re afraid to fight!” Tybalt taunted him.

“Don’t speak to my friend like that!” said Mercutio. “Oh, so you want to fight instead, do you?” Tybalt shouted, drawing his sword. Mercutio drew his too, and they stared fighting.

“Stop it!” yelled Benvolio. He and Romeo frantically tried to pull pair apart. They were too late. Tybalt stabbed Mercutio, who slumped to the ground – dead.



Romeo was so upset, he grabbed Mercutio's sword. Without thinking, he ran at Tybalt and stabbed him too. Benvolio stared in horror as Tybalt sank to the ground. "Romeo, what have you done?" he gasped.

"Quick, go before the prince comes!" Romeo dropped the sword and ran for his life.



The background image is a romantic, ethereal scene of a stone balcony. It features three large, arched openings in a stone wall, supported by columns. The balcony has a decorative balustrade with balusters. On the balcony, there are several lit candles in ornate holders. Lush greenery and pink flowers are visible on the left and right sides. The overall atmosphere is soft and dreamy, with a light, hazy glow. The text "Escape to Mantua" is centered in the middle of the image in a dark blue, serif font.

Escape to Mantua

When Prince Escalus arrived, Benvolio told him about the fight. The prince was angry but he could see that Tybalt was mostly to blame.

“Romeo shall not die,” he said. “I’ll banish him instead.”

Being banished meant Romeo would have to leave Verona and never come back. It was better than being put to death – but not much.



Gossip spread fast in Verona and the nurse soon heard what had happened. With tears in her eyes, she went to tell Juliet.

Juliet was heartbroken. "Cousin Tybalt is dead," She sobbed, "and I'll never see my Romeo again!"

"Don't cry," begged the nurse. "I'll bring Romeo to see you before he leaves. He's hiding at the friar's house."

"Yes, please find him," Juliet said, wiping her eyes. "Ask him to come and say goodbye."



The nurse went straight to the friar's house. Romeo looked as if he'd been crying too. "Romeo, you should be grateful," said Friar Laurence. "The prince has spared your life."

"But I'm banished," Romeo said. "And I want to be with Juliet."

"Go and see her tonight," said the friar, "but make sure you leave Verona by dawn. Head for the city of Mantua. After a while, I'll talk to the prince. I'll ask him to forgive you and let you come home."

The nurse smiled at Romeo. "And I'll tell Juliet you're on your way."



That night, Romeo went again to the Capulet's garden and climbed the ivy to Juliet's balcony. But before dawn, he had to leave. "It's not day yet," Juliet pleaded. "It was the nightingale you heard and not the lark." Romeo sighed. "I must go," he said. "If I stay here, I'll die."

Giving his new wife one last kiss, he climbed down the balcony, sped from the garden and set off for Mantua.



All that morning, Juliet cried and cried. Her nurse tried to comfort her, but she couldn't stop her. Suddenly, her mother and father swept in.

"Poor Juliet," said her mother, going over to her. "You're still upset about Tybalt. But his will cheer you up. You're to marry Count Paris. The wedding's on Thursday!"

"Thursday?" Juliet gasped. It was so soon. "But I don't want to marry Count Paris. Please don't make me." Her father scowled. "I won't marry him," Juliet shouted. "No, no, no!"



“What do you mean, no?” said her father angrily. “You’ll marry Count Pairs on Thursday and that’s that!” And her parents left.

“But I’m already married,” wept Juliet. “What am I going to do?”

“Well, you can’t tell your parents about Romeo,” said her nurse.

The nurse bustled away and Juliet realised only one could help her.

“I must go and see Friar Laurence,” she thought.



The background of the image is a lush, magical garden scene. It features a stone wall with three large, arched openings. In front of the wall is a white stone balustrade with decorative balusters. On the balustrade, there are four lit candles in ornate holders, two on each side of the central arch. The garden is filled with green foliage and pink flowers. The overall atmosphere is serene and enchanting, with soft lighting and a misty background.

The Magic Potion

Friar Laurence was planting herbs in his garden when Juliet arrived.
“Oh friar, please help me,” she begged. “My father says I have to marry Count Paris on Thursday!”

“But you can’t,” said the friar.

“You have to help.” Juliet was desperate.

“I’d rather die than marry Paris. Is there anything you can do?”



The friar thought for a while.

“Well,” he said finally, “there is one thing that might work.”

“I’ll give you a magic herbal potion,” the friar said. “When you drink it, you’ll go into a coma. Your body will be cold and it will look as if you’re dead. But really, you’ll just be in a very deep sleep, which will last for two days.”



“Drink the potion tonight. In the morning, your parents will find you and think you’re dead. They’ll put your body in the Capulet family tomb while they arrange your funeral.”

“Then what?” asked Juliet. “I’ll send a messenger to Mantua to tell Romeo the plan,” the friar went on. “Two nights from now, you’ll wake up. Romeo can come to Verona to rescue you – and you can run away together!”



“I’ll do it,” said Juliet, bravely. She held the bottle in a trembling hand. “Thank you, Friar Laurence.”

Clutching the potion tightly, she turned and ran home.



Back at the Capulet mansion, Juliet went to talk to her parents.
“I’m sorry I was rude to you,” she said sweetly. “I was upset about Tybalt. Of course I’ll marry Count Paris on Thursday.”

“Good girl,” said her mother.



That night, Juliet sat in her bed. Carefully. She uncorked the bottle Friar Laurence had given her and drank every last drop of the bitter potion. A few moments later, she fell into a deep, deep sleep.



A romantic balcony scene with stone arches, a balustrade, and lit candles. The scene is set on a stone balcony with three large arches. A balustrade with decorative balusters runs across the foreground. On the balcony, there are several lit candles in ornate holders. The background is a soft, hazy landscape with greenery and flowers. The overall mood is romantic and nostalgic.

Romeo Returns

It was just as the friar had promised. The next morning, Juliet's nurse found her cold body lying on the bed and screamed. "She's dead! Juliet's dead!"

"There'll be no wedding for my daughter," said Old Capulet, trying to hold back his tears. "Instead, we must prepare for a funeral. Carry her body to the family tomb."



Meanwhile, Friar Laurence wrote a letter to Romeo, explaining everything. He sealed up the letter and gave it to his friend, Friar John, to deliver. "This letter must reach Romeo tomorrow. Hurry to Mantua."



But the news spread fast. Soon, people for miles around had heard about Juliet's death. In Mantua, a servant told Romeo that Capulet's daughter had died.

"I'll go back to Verona and find Juliet on the tomb," Romeo sobbed. "Then I'll lie beside her and drink poison, so I die too. That way, we can be together."



Romeo went to find an apothecary.

“I need the strongest poison you have,” he said.

“You can’t buy poison in Mantua. It’s against the law,” the man told him. But Romeo saw he was poor and offered him forty gold coins. The apothecary quickly handed over a tiny bottle.

Romeo put the poison in his bag and headed for Verona as fast as his horse could carry him.



By the time Friar John arrived in Mantua, Romeo had already left.
So the friar set off back to Verona, without delivering the letter.



Late that night, Romeo arrived in Verona. He crept to the Capulets' house and found the entrance to the tomb. But someone else was already there: Count Paris.

“What are you doing here, Montague?” Paris demanded. “Juliet is dead because of you. You killed her cousin, Tybalt and she died of grief.”



“That’s not true!” Romeo cried. “I loved her more than you did.”

“You’re trespassing,” snapped the count, drawing his dagger.

“Get out.” He lunged at Romeo.

Romeo drew his dagger too and fought back. Count Paris gasped and fell to his knees, dying.

Romeo stepped over the body and went to find Juliet.



She was lying inside, as cold as the stone beneath her, but as beautiful as ever. Romeo took her hand and wept as he kissed her cheek.



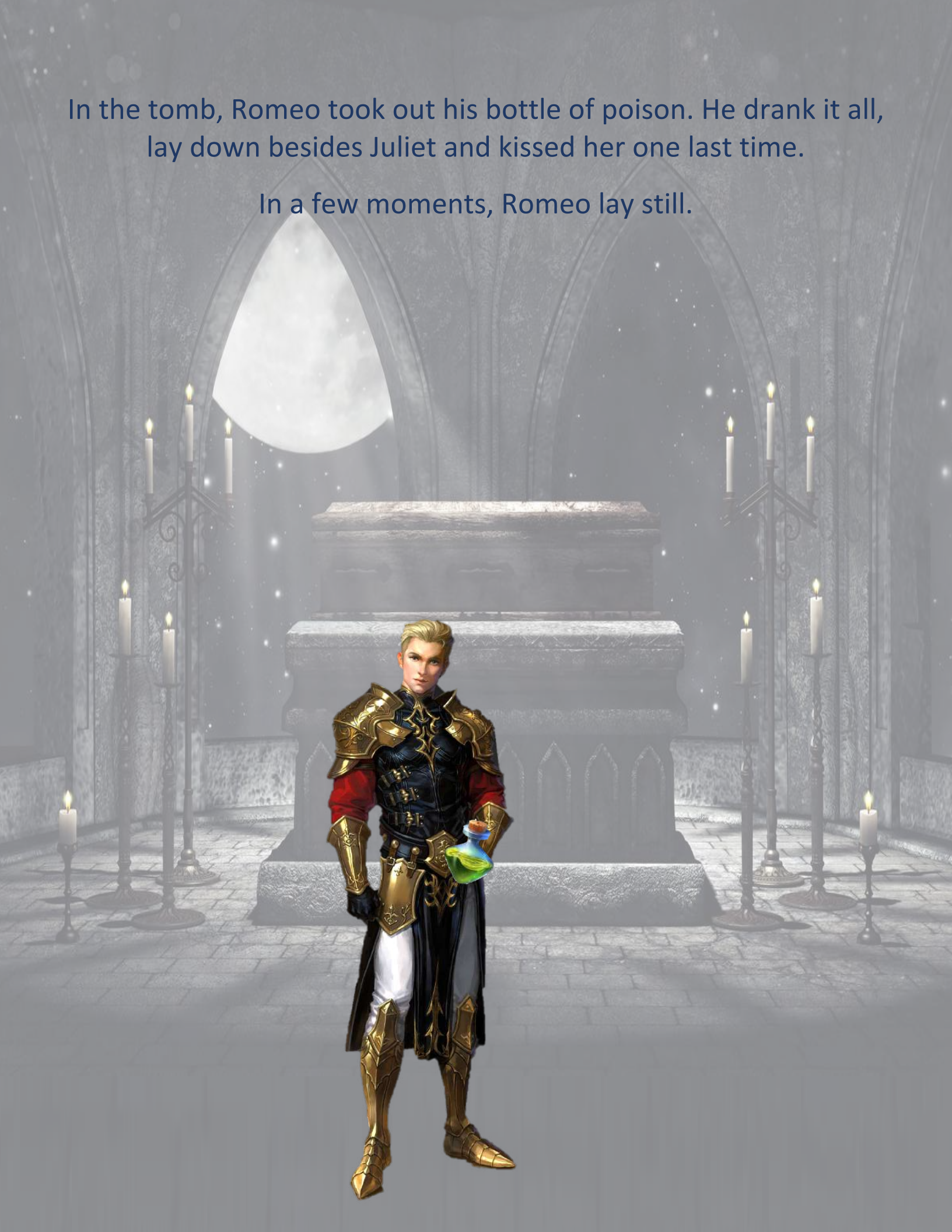
Back at Friar Laurence's house, Friar John had returned. "I went to Mantua, but I couldn't deliver the message," he announced. "Romeo wasn't there."

Friar Laurence felt sick. "But Juliet will wake up alone in the tomb," he said. "I must rescue her!" And he rushed from his house, heading for the Capulet tomb.



In the tomb, Romeo took out his bottle of poison. He drank it all,
lay down besides Juliet and kissed her one last time.

In a few moments, Romeo lay still.



Not long after that, Juliet awoke. She rubbed her eyes and sat up. “Where am I?” she wondered. Then she remembered the magic potion and Friar Laurence’s plan. “Romeo?” she called. “Oh no!” she cried, as she saw his still body. She noticed the poison bottle in his hand and shook his shoulders. He didn’t stir.



Juliet realized what he'd done. "Oh Romeo," she sobbed. "I can't live without you. I'll kiss your lips and poison myself too."

Just then she heard a noise. Someone was coming.

Juliet grabbed Romeo's dagger. Before anyone could arrive to stop her, she plunged it into her heart and collapsed on top of Romeo.



Friar Laurence burst into the tomb, followed by soldiers and servants. They were too later. Romeo and Juliet were dead.



The friar summoned the Capulets, the Montagues and Prince Escalus and told them the whole sad story.

The prince turned to the two families. "See what your hatred has done," he said. "Romeo and Juliet have paid the price for your feud."

Old Capulet and Old Montague agreed to bury Romeo and Juliet side by side. Wiping away their tears, they promised that their families would never fight again.



