

This play script is based on one of William Shakespeare's most famous plays – Romeo and Juliet. In this scene, which takes place towards the end of the first act, Romeo, who is a Montague, and his friends are debating whether to enter a rival family's house, even though only one of them possesses an invitation.

Act 1, Scene 4

Romeo and his mischievous friends – Mercutio and Benvolio – are loitering outside of the Capulet's mansion, arguing about how they will gain access to the masked ball. Invited guests are arriving and being welcomed. Mercutio, who is Romeo's best friend and the only one of the men with an invitation, is sitting on the ground humming as he pretends to be above the debate. Eventually, the men approach the mansion dressed as maskers, along with five or six other maskers in order to disguise themselves.

Romeo: (whispering anxiously) *What will we say is our excuse for being here? Or should we just enter?*

Benvolio: *Don't be ridiculous. It is well-known that is unfashionable to give lengthy explanations. We shall just enter, dance and then take our leave.*

Romeo: (still looking uncertain) *Fine but give me the torch as I don't care for dancing, especially tonight. I am far too sad to dance.*

Mercutio: *No Romeo! You must dance. You're the one who believes in love. Take Cupid's wings and fly high. We will not listen to your protests and claims that love is anything but disastrous!*

Benvolio: Come on, let's knock and go in. They won't notice us if we immediately dance upon our entry.

(The men continue to try and persuade a reluctant Romeo to cheer up and dance with them but Romeo, who remains downcast, can't be convinced).

Romeo: (muttering under his breath) Although we mean well by attending this masquerade ball, and we do not wish to cause a nuisance, it is not smart for us to proceed with our plans.

Mercutio: (growing increasingly frustrated with his friend and raising his arms in annoyance) Why, may I ask do you say this?

Romeo: (his cheeks redden and he looks down as if embarrassed by what he is about to admit) I had a dream last night...

Mercutio: (flippantly) So did I.

Romeo: (turning to Mercutio and looking relieved by his friend's admission) Well, what was your dream? Could it be that we both were visited by the same warning?

Mercutio: My dream told me that dreamers often lie!

(With this, Mercutio and Romeo begin to bicker, with Mercutio claiming that Romeo has been visited by Queen Mab – the fairies' midwife. Mercutio continues to criticise Romeo, who he feels is just making excuses to avoid entering the ball, and say that he is foolish to believe in dreams as they cause people to act irrationally for no reason and are nothing but someone's silly imagination.)

Mercutio: (Taking charge and moving towards the entrance) You're talking rubbish and fearful of something that is yet to happen. Come on! Dinner is sure to be over by now and we are going to get in there too late.

(It is apparent from Romeo's body language that he is still uncomfortable about entering but is willing to trust his friends and accompany them inside the Capulet's residence.)

Romeo: I shall enter with you but I am convinced that tonight will be the start of something truly awful; something that will end with my own death! But who am I to try and control my own destiny. Come on...let's enter!

(The men exit the stage.)

Act 1, Scene 5

(Enter Lord Capulet, Tybalt (who is the Lord's nephew), Lady Capulet, Juliet and other members of the house. They greet Romeo, Benvolio, Mercutio and other masked guests.)

Lord Capulet: (in a booming voice) Welcome, gentlemen!

(Lord Capulet continues to joke that the ladies who refuse to dance are afflicted with corns so that they are too embarrassed to refuse any requests from the male attendees. Lord Capulet then takes a seat to one side with his cousin. Meanwhile, Romeo is sat to one side of the dancefloor.)

Romeo: (talking to a servant) Who is that girl on the arm of that lucky knight over there?

Servant: I cannot tell you that sir for she is masked so I am unable to recognise her.

Romeo: (talking to himself as the servant exits off-stage. He continues to watch the girl who has caught his attention.) Oh my! My eyes have never before seen such an individual equipped with such beauty: she stands out like a white dove in the middle of a flock of crows. I am sincere in my assertion that her beauty is too good for this world. When this dance is finished, I shall go to her and try to hold her soft hand with my ugly, rough one. Did my heart ever love anyone before this moment? If so, my eyes are liars because I have never seen true beauty before tonight.

(From the other side of the room, Tybalt has noticed Romeo's presence.)

Tybalt: (angrily) I know that voice belongs to a Montague.

(Tybalt instructs his page to fetch his rapier, determined to teach his enemy a lesson.)

Tybalt: How dare that peasant come here with his face masked so that he can sneer and scorn our celebration. I will not have my family mocked in this way. Out of honour for my family, it is necessary for me to take this opportunity to kill him. Surely, no-one will see this action as a crime for I am just protecting my family?

Lord Capulet: (grabbing at Tybalt's shoulder) Why, what are you doing? Why are you behaving in such an angry manner?

Tybalt: (turning to his uncle) Uncle, this man is a Montague – I am sure of it! He's an enemy, a scoundrel, who deserves to be taught a lesson.

(Capulet speaks in hushed tones and pulls Tybalt back towards the edge of the room, where they will draw less attention to themselves.)

Lord Capulet: I believe that this is young Romeo. From what I can see, he is carrying himself like a dignified gentlemen and has not caused any harm. My sources tell me that he has a good reputation throughout Verona. He is both virtuous and well-behaved. I suggest that you ignore him, calm down and stop frowning. I do not wish for insults to be traded in my house or for my ball to be ruined by your actions.

(Tybalt continues to protest with his uncle which forces Lord Capulet to banish him from the ballroom, where the masked ball is taking place. Tybalt is clearly furious by his uncle's chastisement.)

Tybalt: (under his breath) Forced patience and immense rage are combining to make my whole body tremble! I will follow my uncle's order and leave but Romeo's prank, which seems so sweet to him now, will soon turn bitter. He will live to regret this!

(Tybalt exits the stage)

