

# **ROMEO & JULIET: A TRAGEDY? (CHILDREN'S VERSION)**

Based on the opera *Roméo et Juliette*  
by Charles Gounod and Jules Barbier/Michel Carré  
and  
*Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare

Music by Charles Gounod  
Libretto/Adaptation by Joshua Borths

Originally written for Toledo Opera's Opera on Wheels, Spring 2018  
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## Final Scene

*Juliet drinks the potion. As she becomes drowsy and the scene transforms to the tomb (or back inside the Capulet palace). The cue card changes to "Act 5: The Tomb." As Juliet falls asleep on a bier, other performers enter.*

*Music begins. The MEZZO and the BARITONE gather around Juliet.*

### PERFORMER #2

After Juliet collapsed from the effects potion,  
The Capulet household was filled with commotion.

### BARITONE, MEZZO-SOPRANO (AND TENOR)

*Over the top* OH, DAY OF WOE! OH, DAY OF SADNESS!  
JULIET SLEEPS AND DOES NOT WAKE—WHAT MADNESS!

WHAT BROUGHT THIS ON?  
WHAT CAN BE DONE?

OH, DAY OF WOE! OH, DAY OF SADNESS!  
WHAT I FEAR MOST OF ALL  
IS THE PART I PLAYED IN IT ALL... IN HER FALL.

### PERFORMER #2

[We now have arrived at a critical juncture,  
And *you* must help us conclude our adventure.

### PERFORMER #3

Shakespeare ended *his* story one way,  
But you have the power to change it today.

### PERFORMERS (ALL)

So, we ask *you*, simply by raising your hand,  
How you want your opera to end?

### PERFORMER #2

Raise your hand if you think we should have a sad ending.

*The audience responds.*

### PERFORMER #3

Raise your hand if you want a happy ending!

*The audience responds.*

**PERFORMERS (ALL)**

Thank you for your vote!

*The performers gather quickly and decide which ending won. After the huddle, they address the audience once again.*

**PERFORMER #2**

And so, we resume,  
Where Juliet is sleeping in her family's dark tomb.]

*\*Omit bracketed text if the school chose the ending for their students.*

**NOTE: Both endings are narrated. As the performers speak their lines, they step forward. Particularly for the sad ending, resist any staging that illustrates their suicide, unless you have a specific audience or idea in mind. Since the entire show is meant to be theatrical in construct, this action does not have to be literally depicted.**

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**ENDING #1: SAD**

**PERFORMER #4**

As Juliet continued her magical sleep,  
Friar Lawrence took action. He had a promise to keep.

**PERFORMER #3**

He sent a messenger to find Romeo.  
But his message was twisted, filled *only* with woe.

**PERFORMER #2**

Romeo was told she had died of her grief.  
So, Romeo returned to join her in sleep.

**PERFORMER #1**

But Juliet awoke, right after he died,  
The grief overtaking her right by his side.

**PERFORMER #4**

When the families returned, and discovered them there,  
They were filled with their loss and filled with despair.

**PERFORMER #3**

But out of this tragedy on that fateful, dark night,  
The families realized it was time to unite.

**PERFORMER #4**

They realized—at heart—they were really the same,  
And a new day dawned with this repeated refrain:

*Music Begins (Pg. 133).*

**PERFORMERS (ALL)**

We must always choose love and do what it takes  
To resolve our differences before it's too late.

**PERFORMERS (ALL)**

So, we challenge you all with our *opera* today,  
To bring love to the world in your own special way.

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**ENDING #2: HAPPY**

**PERFORMER #4**

As Juliet began her long, magical sleep,  
Friar Lawrence took action. He had a promise to keep.

**PERFORMER #3**

He sent a messenger to find Romeo.  
And so, he returned to a house filled with woe.

**PERFORMER #2**

The families were shocked and filled with surprise,  
Because, as he kissed her, she opened her eyes.

**PERFORMER #1**

The lovers embraced, and the families rejoiced,  
Both Montagues and Capulets approving the choice.

**PERFORMER #3**

They resolved and agreed—for the first time ever—  
To put aside differences and rejoice there together.

**PERFORMER #4**

They realized—at heart—they were really the same,  
And a new day dawned with this repeated refrain:

**PERFORMERS (ALL)**

We must always choose love and do what it takes  
To resolve our differences before it's too late.

**PERFORMERS (ALL)**

So, we challenge you all in our opera today,  
To bring love to the world in your own special way.

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**ALL**

SO, THIS ENDS OUR PLAY (X 3)  
WITH *YOUR* HELP TODAY.

AND WE'VE LEARNED  
LOVE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD!

**END OF OPERA**

**Contact Opera Classroom for perusal script/piano vocal score!**