

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

ROMEO & JULIET

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FINAL SHOOTING SCRIPT

October 6, 1995

EXT. HIGHWAY. AFTERNOON.

A ribbon of freeway stretching into a blue and pink late afternoon sky. A huge dark sedan, windows tinted gold, headlights blazing, powers directly for us.

CUT TO: A heavy, low-slung, pickup truck traveling toward the sedan.

WIDE SHOT: Sky, freeway, the cars closing.

TIGHT ON: The sedan.

TIGHT ON: The pickup.

Like thunderous, jousting opponents, the cars pass in a deafening cacophony of noise.

INT. TRUCK. AFTERNOON.

TIGHT ON: The fat face of GREGORY, yelling at the disappearing sedan.

GREGORY

A dog of the house of Capulet moves  
me!

He and the pimply-faced front-seat passenger, SAMPSON, explode with laughter.

The red-haired driver BENVOLIO, keeps his eyes on the road.

EXT. EXIT RAMP. AFTERNOON.

The truck spirals down an exit ramp and screeches into busy driveway of a large gas station.

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

Attendants immediately run to the truck. Two clean windshields and duco, the third fills the gas tank.

INT. TRUCK. AFTERNOON.

Gregory in the back seat is boasting outrageously.

GREGORY

A dog of that house shall move me  
to stand. I will take the wall of  
any man or maid of Capulets.

Sampson, sarcastically.

SAMPSON

That shows thee a weak slave. For  
the weakest goes to the wall.

GREGORY

'Tis true; and therefore women,  
being the weaker vessels, are ever  
thrust to the wall. Therefore, I  
will push Capulet's men from the  
wall, and thrust his maids to the  
wall.

Benvolio, disgusted, gets out of the car.

BENVOLIO

The quarrel is between our masters...

GREGORY

(yelling after him)  
...and us their men.

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

FOLLOW: Benvolio as he heads for the bathroom.

PICK UP: A mother wrangling three little boys out of a  
station wagon - the smallest kid carries a toy pistol.

SUPER FAST SCAN TRACK: Past the mother to - the huge black  
sedan pulling up outside the gas station mini-mart.

The front door of the sedan opens. Shiny black boots -  
decorated with tiny, silver, cat-shaped spurs - plant  
themselves on the ground. The boots are joined by two other  
pairs of well-shod feet.

HOLD: The spurred boots move out of frame.

CRANE UP: The other feet belong to a tough-looking Latin youth ABRA - and his goateed side-kick PETRUCHIO.

Abra and Petruchio enter the mini-mart, as four white-clad girls exit.

FOLLOW: The girls as they head for their car.

SUPER FAST SCAN TRACK: Past the girls to:

INT. TRUCK. AFTERNOON.

Sampson is trying to out boast Gregory.

SAMPSON

I will show myself a tyrant. When  
I have fought with the men I will  
be civil with the maids, I will cut  
off their heads.

Gregory; mock outrage.

GREGORY

The heads of the maids?

Sampson leers lecherously at the girls.

SAMPSON

Ay, the heads of the maids, or  
their maiden heads, take it in what  
sense thou wilt.

GREGORY

They must take it in sense that  
feel it.

Gregory and Sampson pump up the song on the sound system and sing out at the girls.

GREGORY/SAMPSON

(singing)

I am a pretty piece of flesh!  
I am a pretty piece of flesh!  
Me, they shall feel while I am able  
to stand;  
I am a pretty piece of flesh!

The girls, pretending not to notice, get into the car.

EXT. GAS STATION - MINIMART. AFTERNOON.

GREGORY'S P.O.V.: The car pulls away revealing... Abra and Petruchio exiting the mini-mart.

INT. TRUCK. AFTERNOON.

CLOSE ON: Gregory.

CLOSE ON: Sampson - Their singing abruptly halts.

SAMPSON

Here comes of the House of Capulet.

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

Abra and Petruchio stare coldly toward the boys.

INT. TRUCK. AFTERNOON.

CLOSE ON: Sampson swallowing hard.

CLOSE ON: Gregory; eyes locked to the Capulets. With fake bravado he nudges Sampson.

GREGORY

Quarrel I will back thee.

CLOSE ON: Sampson trying to quell his rising panic.

SAMPSON

Let us take the law of our sides.  
Let them begin.

SUDDENLY: BANG! Gregory and Sampson jump.

WHIP PAN: It was the garage attendant slamming the hood.

Gregory and Sampson are mortally embarrassed.

EXT. MINI-MART. AFTERNOON.

Abra and Petruchio laugh contemptuously and move to their car:

FOLLOW: The mother and kids exiting the mini-mart.

SUPER FAST SCAN TRACK: To...

INT. TRUCK. AFTERNOON.

Sampson furiously tries to save face.

SAMPSON

I will bite my thumb at them; which  
is a disgrace to them if they bear  
it.

Sampson quickly bites his thumb toward Abra's back as he gets into the sedan.

INT. SEDAN. AFTERNOON.

Abra's eyes flick to the rear view mirror.

E.C.U.: The rear view mirror; Sampson biting his thumb.

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

Suddenly, a blood curdling screech of tires - the sedan, rubber burning, reverses full speed toward Sampson and Gregory.

The mother in the station wagon brakes to avoid collision - a sports car shunts into her vehicle. Mother and children scream.

Attendants scatter.

The Capulet car shudders to a halt inches from the truck, blocking its path.

INT. BLACK SEDAN. AFTERNOON.

CLOSE ON: A scurry of limbs scrabbling across seats and reaching for door handles;

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

Abra hauls Sampson from the truck. Gregory leaps out, Petruchio covers him. Abra slams Sampson against the side of

the vehicle - then, goading him to go for his gun, screams:

ABRA

Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

Sampson's shaking hand hovers - ready to draw.

SAMPSON

I do bite my thumb, sir.

INT. STATION WAGON. AFTERNOON.

CUT TO: The panicked mother in the station wagon. She motions her children to the floor.

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

Customers run for cover.

CLOSE ON: Abra: An hysterical rage; he shrieks:

ABRA

Do you bite you thumb at us, sir?

SAMPSON

(sweating, murmurs to Gregory)

Is the law on our side if I say "Ay"?

GREGORY

No.

INT. BATHROOM. AFTERNOON.

CLOSE ON: The black cowboy boots, trousers down around them. The sound of a toilet flushing.

PAN TO: The next cubicle, the door opens revealing Benvolio.

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

CLOSE ON: Sampson, still sweating.

SAMPSON

No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir - but I do bite my thumb, sir!

CUT TO: Gregory; a ridiculous inquiry.

GREGORY  
Do you quarrel, sir?

CUT TO: Abra; a dangerous smile.

ABRA  
Quarrel sir, no sir.

CLOSE ON: Sampson; unconvincing bravado...

SAMPSON  
But if you do, sir, I am for you. I  
serve as good a man as you.

CLOSE ON: Abra; a lethal question.

ABRA  
No better?

CLOSE ON: Sampson, trapped.

SAMPSON  
Well sir...

INT. STATION WAGON. AFTERNOON.

CUT TO: Inside the station wagon. The mother does not notice her five year old aiming a toy gun toward the boys.

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

CUT TO: Gregory's P.O.V.: Benvolio emerging from the bathroom - he whispers maniacally.

GREGORY  
Here comes our kinsman. Say better!

EXTREME CLOSE UP: Sampson; he screams:

SAMPSON  
YES SIR, BETTER!

EXTREME CLOSE UP: Abra demonically roars:

ABRA

THOU LIEST!

CUT TO: Benvolio. Terror stricken, he sees the boys.

DISTORTED OUT OF CONTROL CLOSE UP: Abra shrieks:

ABRA  
DRAW IF YOU BE MEN!

LIGHTNING CUT: Four hands reaching for guns.

SLAM ZOOM: To Benvolio - weapon outstretched he screams:

BENVOLIO  
Part, fools! You know not what you  
do!

MUSIC STING; A SUPER MARCO SLAM ZOOM along the barrel of  
Benvolio's gun; the engraved gun type reads:

'Sword 9mm series S'

CUT TO: Benvolio. He screams in desperation:

BENVOLIO  
Put up your swords!

Gregory, Sampson, Abra, and Petruchio freeze. A moment -  
then from behind, the unmistakable sound of a gun being  
cocked.

EXTREME CLOSE UP: The black cowboy boots.

CRANE UP: To find the dark cold eyes and feline smile, of  
the wearer of the boots. His name is TYBALT; a cigarette is  
clenched between his teeth and his gun is aimed at Benvolio's  
head.

TYBALT  
What, art thou drawn among these  
heartless hinds?  
Turn thee Benvolio.

Benvolio, a choked explanation:

BENVOLIO  
I do but keep the peace.

A mocking smile.

TYBALT

Peace? I hate the word  
As I hate hell, all Montagues, and...

EXTREME CLOSE UP: Tybalt's finger squeezing the trigger...

Suddenly we hear firing from Tybalt's blind side.

Tybalt redirects his weapon, cracking off a single shot at the surprise attacker.

EXT./INT. MINIMART. AFTERNOON.

It is the five year old from the station wagon. The bullet smacks the toy gun from the child's hand, shattering the wagon's window.

Mother and children scream.

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

A panicked Benvolio falls back, accidentally his gun fires - the bullet whistles past Tybalt's head.

Tybalt combat rolls, and using a screaming car load of girls as cover, returns two quick shots, narrowly missing Benvolio.

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

The gas station attendant hits a button and heavy metal screens slam down.

EXT. GAS STATION. AFTERNOON.

CUT TO: Gregory firing - a bullet rips through Abra's arm.

Petruchio dives for cover; Gregory and Sampson leap into Benvolio's truck. Rubber burns as they smash past the Capulet vehicle.

CLOSE ON: Tybalt taking aim.

EXT. HIGHWAY - SUPERMARKET. AFTERNOON.

His first shot plugs the fuel tank, the second a tire. Out of control and spewing gasoline the Montague truck careens across the highway and through the glass front of a supermarket.

Gregory and Sampson throw themselves from the truck moments before...

EXT. SUPERMARKET. AFTERNOON.

CLOSE ON: The gas tank erupts into an almighty fireball.

The screen fills with flame: the following images combust in front of us:

EXT. HIGHWAY - SUPERMARKET - FROM AIR. AFTERNOON.

NEWS CHOPPER P.O.V.: Citizens run in the streets.

Looters raid shops near the supermarket - security guards return fire.

INT. RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

A table of dark suited men and their wives.

CLOSE ON: The powerful 60 year old face of FULGENCIO CAPULET. Seated next to him is his much younger wife GLORIA.

SUDDENLY: Windows explode in a tidal wave of glass. Diners take cover.

Capulet moves fearlessly toward the window.

CAPULET  
(to a waiter)  
Give me my long sword!

EXT. STREET. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: The word MONTAGUE fills the screen.

PULL BACK: We see the word is the number plate of a large black limousine.

The limousine is stuck in the traffic snarl - bullets bounce off its bullet proof windshield.

INT. MONTAGUE'S LIMOUSINE. NIGHT.

TED MONTAGUE, a 60 year old red-faced bulldog of a man, bursts from the back of the limousine.

MONTAGUE

What noise is this!

As Ted draws an enormous pearl handed revolver, CAROLINE, his conservatively dressed wife, tries to restrain him.

CAROLINE

Thou shalt not stir one foot to  
seek a foe!

MONTAGUE

(shrugging her off)  
Hold me not, let me go!

EXT. STREET. NIGHT.

Crouched behind a truck, Benvolio shakily tries to re-load.

CLOSE ON: The barrel of Tybalt's gun enters frame and presses into Benvolio's forehead. Tybalt whispers sweetly.

TYBALT

Look upon thy death, Benvolio.

CLOSE ON: Tybalt's finger on the trigger. Benvolio screams a scream of mortal horror.

SUDDENLY Tybalt is blinded by a burning shaft of light. A magnificently powerful helicopter gunship hovers above him. A command booms from the chopper's public address system.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

(over PA)

Rebellious subjects, enemies to  
peace,  
Throw your mistempered weapons to  
the ground.

INT. CHOPPER. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: The steely gray eyes of CAPTAIN PRINCE, chief of

the Verona Beach Police Department. He lifts the microphone and repeats the command.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

Throw your mistempered weapons to  
the ground!

EXT. VERONA BEACH. NIGHT.

Tybalt looks up to the chopper. Patrol cars screech to a halt.

An almighty orchestral chord.

EXT. VERONA BEACH - MATTE SHOT. NIGHT.

SUPER WIDE SHOT: A trail of devastation winds up through grid-locked traffic to the burning supermarket.

In the distance looms an enormous statue of Christ flanked by two glass towers. We push toward the towers. One is neon-crowned MONTAGUE, the other, CAPULET.

We hear:

VOICE OVER

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.

A dark chord.

EXT. VERONA BEACH SKYLINE. NIGHT.

A swarm of helicopters thunder into frame. We see compressed, time-lapsed, images of their journey.

SLAM INTO: A coat of arms that labels a large tower - the emblem reads; "Verona Beach Police Department: In God We Trust".

HOLD:

INT. CAPTAIN PRINCE'S PRECINCT OFFICE. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: Captain Prince's grim features. He eyes Capulet and Montague.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

Three civil brawls, bred of an airy  
word  
By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,  
Have thrice disturbed the quiet of  
our streets.

Capulet's lawyer tries to intervene.

LAWYER

My noble Prince I can...

Captain Prince overriding, slams the desk.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

If ever you disturb our streets  
again,  
Your lives shall pay the forfeit of  
the peace.

Hold on Captain Prince's determined gaze.

EXT. VERONA STREET. DAWN.

A majestic sunrise; Ted Montague's limousine sulks through deserted streets. In the distance, Jesus looks out over the now peaceful city.

INT. MONTAGUE'S LIMOUSINE. DAWN.

Ted Montague, his wife Caroline, and nephew Benvolio ride in uncomfortable silence.

Caroline finally speaks her anger.

CAROLINE

O where is Romeo? Saw you him  
today?

(pointedly to Montague)

Right glad I am he was not at this  
fray.

Montague snorts derisively and stares out the window.  
Embarrassed, Benvolio tries to be of assistance.

BENVOLIO

Madam, underneath The Grove of  
Sycamore  
So early walking did I see your son.

Ted Montague speaks with contempt.

MONTAGUE

Many a morning hath he there been  
seen  
With tears augmenting the fresh  
morning's dew.

Caroline struggles to contain her emotion.

CAROLINE

Away from light steals home my  
heavy son  
And private in his chamber pens  
himself,  
Shuts up his windows, locks fair  
daylight out  
And makes himself an artificial  
night.

Montague barks into the car intercom.

MONTAGUE

Westward from this city side.

EXT. STREET. DAWN.

The limousine U-turns heading west.

EXT. BEACH. DAWN.

To the melancholic strains of Mozart's "Serenade for Winds", we see a blond nineteen year old boy sitting alone on an empty beach.

CLOSE ON: The boy, ROMEO. Looking out over the ocean he sucks on the last of a cigarette and then writes intensely in a small worn note book.

We hear his voice over.

ROMEO (V/O)

Love is a smoke made with the fume  
of sighs;  
Being purged, a fire sparkling in  
lovers' eyes;  
Being vexed, a sea nourished with  
lovers' tears.  
What is it else? A madness most  
discreet,  
A choking gall and a preserving  
sweet.

INT. MONTAGUE'S LIMOUSINE. DAWN.

The limo is parked in a cross street that runs down to the beach.

Opposite the limo, young diehard clubbers, faded drag queens and street people, hang outside a dilapidated nightclub. A broken neon sign reads: "The Grove of Sick Amore."

Ted, Caroline and Benvolio sit watching the silhouette of Romeo on the beach.

MONTAGUE

Black and portentous must this  
humour prove  
Unless good counsel may the cause  
remove.

EXT. BEACH. DAWN.

P.O.V.: From the limousine. Romeo rises and listlessly makes his way up the beach - seeing his father's car he turns and heads for the path that hugs the beach front.

INT. MONTAGUE'S LIMOUSINE. DAWN.

BENVOLIO  
So please you step aside.  
I'll know his grievance or be much  
denied.

Benvolio clammers out of the limo.

CLOSE ON: Montague, an encouraging smile.

MONTAGUE  
Come Madam. Let's away.

EXT. STREET. DAWN.

The limousine pulls away and Benvolio heads after Romeo. He pauses. A deck at the rear of "Sick Amore" sprawls onto the beach. At the base of the deck, Benvolio can see Romeo squatting in discussion with an old drunk. Benvolio approaches with a not very convincing casualness.

BENVOLIO  
Good morrow, cousin.

Romeo turns. Sore, red, unfriendly eyes squint back at Benvolio.

ROMEO  
Is the day so young?

BENVOLIO  
But new struck, Coz.

Romeo rises, Benvolio follows.

ROMEO  
Ay me! Sad hours seem long.

Romeo stops as if taking in Benvolio for the first time.

ROMEO (CONT.)  
Was that my father that went hence  
so fast?

BENVOLIO  
(guilty)

It was.

Benvolio chases Romeo down the path which divides the beach from a string of cheap souvenir shops and sleazy bars.

BENVOLIO

What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?

ROMEO

Not having that which having makes them short.

BENVOLIO

In love?

ROMEO

Out.

BENVOLIO

Of love?

ROMEO

Out of her favor where I am in love.

BENVOLIO

Alas that love, so gentle in his view,  
Should be so tyrannical and rough in proof!

ROMEO

Alas that love, whose view...

Romeo is halted by the sight of last night's disturbance displayed on a small TV screen in an outdoor bar.

ROMEO (CONT.)

What fray was here?

Benvolio starts to reply.

ROMEO (CONT.)

(angrily)

Yet tell me not, for I have heard it all.  
Here's much to do with hate, but more with love.

Romeo turns the corner away from the beach. He strides along the sidewalk raging.

ROMEO (CONT.)

Why then, O brawling love, O loving hate,  
O anything, of nothing first create!  
O heavy lightness, serious vanity,  
Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms,  
Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire,  
sick health,  
Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!

Romeo screams at a huge bouncer who lounges in the doorway of a sex club.

ROMEO (CONT.)

This love feel I, that feel no love in this!

The bouncer's hand moves to his gun. Romeo, ignoring him, turns on Benvolio. A mocking laughter through tears:

ROMEO (CONT.)

Dost thou not laugh?

Benvolio, nervously eyeing the bouncer, shepherds Romeo out of danger.

BENVOLIO

No, coz, I rather weep.

Romeo smiles.

ROMEO

Farewell, my coz.

Romeo, breaking into a jog, leaves Benvolio behind. Benvolio pursues him down the street.

EXT. ROMEO'S CAR. DAY.

CLOSE ON: The sleeping face of a fourteen year old boy -

BALTHASAR.

PULL BACK: Balthasar sleeps on the hood of a magnificent silver car.

Three or four kids doze on the sidewalk. As Romeo approaches, they jump up and begin vigorously polishing the already gleaming car.

Balthasar wakes. He springs off the hood, chases the kids away, then, producing a huge bunch of keys, opens the car door for Romeo.

Benvolio intercepts Romeo at the car.

BENVOLIO

Tell me in sadness, who is it that  
you love.

ROMEO

In sadness, cousin, I do love...a  
woman.

BENVOLIO

I aimed so near when I supposed you  
loved.

Romeo leans against the car.

ROMEO

A right good marksman; and she's  
fair I love.

Romeo pulls his shirt down to reveal a small shoulder tattoo.

CLOSE ON: The tattooed word; ROSALINE.

BENVOLIO

Rosaline!

(he is impressed)

A right fair mark, fair coz, is  
soonest hit.

ROMEO

She'll not be hit with Cupid's  
arrow.  
She hath Dian's wit,

And in strong proof of chastity  
lives well armed.

Benvolio can't believe it.

BENVOLIO

Then she hath sworn that she will  
still live chaste?

ROMEO

She hath; and in that sparing makes  
huge waste.

Benvolio - a plan.

BENVOLIO

Be ruled by me; forget to think of  
her.

ROMEO

O, teach me how I should forget to  
think!

Benvolio indicates one of the working girls already strutting  
the foot path.

BENVOLIO

By giving liberty unto thine eyes.  
Examine other beauties.

Romeo laughs dismissively. He throws the kids a few coins  
and slides into the drivers seat. Balthasar jumps in back.

ROMEO

Farewell. Thou canst not teach me  
to forget.

BENVOLIO

I'll pay that doctrine, or else die  
in debt.

Benvolio leaps into the passenger seat of the moving vehicle.

INT. CAPULET OFFICE. DAY.

An orchestral fanfare. TRACK DOWN: Past monstrous letters  
that read CAPULET and in through a window to discover  
Fulgencio Capulet. He stares out the window toward the  
other tallest building in Verona; the one crested with the  
word MONTAGUE.

CAPULET

But Montague is bound as well as I,  
In penalty alike;

Capulet turns: on the other side of his desk sits DAVID  
PARIS; a square-jawed young man in a red cashmere sweater.  
Tea has been served from an exquisite silver tea service.

CAPULET (CONT.)

And 'tis not hard, I think, for me  
so old as we to keep the peace.

Dave smiles obligingly.

DAVE

Of honorable reckoning are you  
both,  
And pity 'tis you lived at odds so  
long.

An awkward pause: Dave sips tea, then, with a deep breath...

DAVE (CONT.)

But now, my lord, what say you to  
my suit?

Capulet considers the framed photograph on his desk.

CAPULET

But saying o'er what I have said  
before;  
My child is yet a stranger in the  
world;  
Let two more summers wither in  
their pride,  
Ere we may think her ripe to be a  
bride.

Dave is politely insistent.

DAVE

Younger than she are happy mothers  
made.

CAPULET

(checking him hard)

And too soon marred are those so  
early made.  
Earth hath swallowed all my hopes  
but she;  
She is the hopeful lady of my earth.

Capulet rounds the desk and places a fatherly hand on Dave's  
shoulder.

CAPULET (CONT.)

But woo her, gentle Paris, get her  
heart.

My will to her consent is but a  
part,  
And she agreed, within her scope of  
choice  
Lies my consent and fair according  
voice.  
This night I hold an old Accustomed  
feast.

Capulet leans close.

CAPULET (CONT.)

At my poor house, look to behold  
this night,  
Fresh female buds that make dark  
heaven light.  
Hear all; all see,  
And like her most whose merit most  
shall be.

Capulet smiles knowingly. Dave seems encouraged.

CAPULET (CONT.)

(a hearty slap)  
Come go with me!

Capulet excitedly ushers Dave from the office.

INT. POOL HALL. DAY.

Dim, smoke filled. Benvolio and Romeo play pool.

BENVOLIO

(chalking his cue)  
Take thou some new infection to thy  
eye.

He lines up the six ball top pocket.

BENVOLIO (CONT.)

And the rank poison of the old will  
die.

A hopeless shot that slams the eight ball toward the side  
pocket. Romeo stops it with his hand and hurls it against  
the other balls.

BENVOLIO

Why, Romeo, art thou mad?

Romeo sinks the other balls with his hands.

ROMEO

Not mad, but bound more than a  
madman is;  
Shut up in prison, kept without my  
food,

Romeo stalks away from the table.

ROMEO (CONT.)

Whipped and tormented.

He stops at the gun check, rummaging in his pocket.

ROMEO

Good day, good fellow.

A crusty old man looks up from the small television. His entire face a tattooed shooting target, the bullseye between his eyes.

The old man points to the sign that reads: "No ticket no gun." Romeo finally produces a ticket. Crusty the Target goes out back. Romeo's attention is caught by the television.

INT. T.V. STUDIO SET. DAY

CUT TO: TELEVISION.

An ostentatious woman and her over groomed partner Rich, hosts what looks to be a kind of Entertainment Tonight show. The graphic behind them reads "Solemnity Nights" with Susan Santandiago and Rich Ranchidis.

Susan speaks conspiratorially to camera.

SUSAN

Now I'll tell you without asking.  
The great  
Rich Capulet, holds an old  
accustomed feast;

Rich chimes in:

RICH  
A fair Assembly.

SUSAN  
I Pray you sir can you read?

A list of names begins to scroll across the screen. Rich reads them off.

RICH  
Signor Placentio and his wife and  
daughters,  
Signor Martino, the Lady Widow  
Of Utruvio and her lovely nieces,  
Rosaline and Livia...

INT. POOL HALL. DAY.

CUT TO: Benvolio, he leans into Romeo.

BENVOLIO  
At this same ancient feast of  
Capulet's  
Sups the fair Rosaline; whom thou  
so loves,  
With all the admired beauties of  
Verona.  
Go thither, and with unattained eye  
Compare her face with some that I  
shall show,  
And I will make thee think thy swan  
a crow.

ROMEO  
One fairer than my love?

Crusty returns. He hands the boys their guns.

ROMEO (CONT.)  
The all-seeing sun Ne'er saw her  
match since first the world begun.

CUT TO: TELEVISION.

SUSAN

If you be not of the house of  
Montagues,  
Come and crush a cup of wine!

RICH

Rest you merry!

CUT TO: Romeo, he considers.

ROMEO

I'll go along, no such sight to be  
shown.  
But to rejoice in splendour of mine  
own.

The boys move off.

PUSH IN ON: THE TELEVISION.

EXT. CAPULET STATE. DAY.

An aerial shot of a magnificent island estate. An Italianate wonder of Florentine architecture. Armed guards patrol the grounds. The telecaption reads "Capulet Mansion."

The file tape loses its television quality. We sweep down through manicured gardens, where workers prepare decorations for tonight's celebrations, and into the house. The music darkens and we hear the desperate calling of a girl's name.

VOICE OVER

J U L I E T !

INT. CAPULET MANSION - CORRIDOR. DAY.

CUT TO: A long deserted corridor.

VOICE OVER

J U L I E T !

INT. CAPULET MANSION - DRAWING ROOM. DAY.

CUT TO: An echoey Chinoiserie style drawing room.

VOICE OVER

J U L I E T !

INT. BATHROOM. DAY.

CLOSE ON: The still, serene, submerged features of a beautiful young girl. Dark floating hair gently frames the face. Heavy liquid eyes stare up through the water.

We hear, though faintly, the calling:

VOICE OVER

J U L I E T !

With a rush JULIET surfaces. As she gulps air, we realise that she is in fact, in a bath.

We hear the calling loudly again.

VOICE OVER

J U L I E T !

Juliet listens. For a moment she is very still, then she closes her eyes and slides back beneath the surface of the water.

INT. ENTRANCE HALL CAPULET MANSION. DAY.

A Gothic, unfriendly environment heavy with religious iconography. The entrance hall is crowded with workers and servants preparing for tonight's party.

Gloria Capulet fiddles with a short black wig in the hallway mirror. She is attired in full Cleopatra costume.

Dissatisfied with the wig, she rips it from her head and calls maniacally.

GLORIA

J U L I E T !

Gloria is met by the NURSE, a fat, grandmotherly Hispanic woman.

GLORIA (CONT.)

Nurse, where's my daughter? Call her forth to me.

NURSE

I bade her come. God forbid!

Where's this girl?  
Juliet!

CUT TO: The top of the stairs. As if from nowhere, Juliet has appeared. She wears a bathrobe and her hair is wet.

JULIET  
(coolly)  
Madam, I am here. What is you will.

Gloria, startled, sweeps up the stairs and shuffles her daughter toward a doorway.

GLORIA  
Nurse, give leave awhile, we must  
talk in secret.

INT. GLORIA'S DRESSING ROOM. DAY.

Gloria shepherds Juliet into her opulent dressing room and closes the door. She circles with nervous vexation searching for words, stops, then suddenly opens the door and yells out to the Nurse.

GLORIA (CONT.)  
Nurse, come back again.  
I have remembered me, thou's hear  
our counsel.

The Nurse enters. Gloria, still refusing eye contact, checks her appearance once more in the mirror. She takes a hairbrush and, feigning pleasantness, intensely brushes her hair.

GLORIA (CONT.)  
Nurse, thou knowest my daughter's  
of a pretty age.

NURSE  
(to Juliet)  
Thou wast the prettiest babe that  
e'er I nursed.

The hair brush clatters onto the dresser. A moment of tense silence. Gloria grips herself and pours a sherry.

Back still turned, she speaks to her daughter.

GLORIA

By my count, I was your mother much  
upon these years  
That you are now a maid.

A nembatal twists like a pin in the corner of Gloria's mouth.  
She slugs it down with the sherry and turns abruptly to face  
Juliet.

GLORIA (CONT.)

Thus then in brief, the valiant  
Paris seeks you for his love.

CUT TO: Juliet; an uncomprehending stare.

The Nurse, caught off guard, tries to buoy the situation.

NURSE

A man, young lady! Lady, such a  
man  
As all the world - why, he's a man  
of wax.

The medication takes immediate effect upon Gloria. She  
joins Juliet on the couch and coos in Paris's favour.

GLORIA

Verona's summer hath not such a  
flower.

NURSE

Nay, he's a flower; in faith, a  
very flower.

GLORIA

This night you shall behold him at  
our feast;  
Read o'er the volume of young  
Paris' face  
And find delight writ there with  
beauty's pen.  
This precious book of love, this  
unbound lover,  
To beautify him only lacks a cover.  
So shall you share all that he doth  
possess,

By having him, making yourself no  
less.

Gloria probes Juliet's thoughts.

GLORIA  
Can you like of Paris' love?

Juliet, adept at negotiating her mother's strange moods,  
chooses her words precisely.

JULIET  
I'll look to like, if looking  
liking move,  
But no more deep will I endart mine  
eye,  
Than your consent gives strength to  
make it fly.

PETER the chauffeur enters.

PETER  
Madam. The guests are come.

GLORIA  
(checks the mirror)  
We follow thee.

She exits, Nurse in tow.

CLOSE ON: Juliet stares out the windows and across the water.

Suddenly the Nurse's face leers into shot. She whispers  
enthusiastically into Juliet's ear.

NURSE  
Go girl, seek happy nights to happy  
days.

CLOSE ON: Juliet's face.

EXT. CAPULET MANSION. DAY/NIGHT.

JUMP CUT: Aerial shot of Capulet Mansion. We time lapse  
from late afternoon to night; fairy lights illuminate,  
guests appear, music swells, and a single incandescent  
flare, explodes pink against the inky sky.

EXT. BEACH. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: Romeo: his face glows pink. He is sitting on the grubby shoreline of Verona Bay dressed as a boy King Arthur, with fake chain mail and sword.

Romeo watches the dying flare sink into the bay. The sound of the party drifts across the water. Balthasar, dressed as Frankenstein's monster, touches a lighter to a large bong and Romeo inhales smoke.

Behind them, Benvolio, drunk and dressed as a pizza, is yelling at Gregory, who, dressed as a Viking, is trying to cut slices off his pizza costume. Sampson, also dressed as a Viking, sits in the back of a car. One arm is bandaged and he swigs from a bottle.

Suddenly the darkness is slashed by headlights. A reckless sports car speeds toward the boys. Stereo screaming, the car skids to a halt.

CLOSE ON: Music blares from the sound system. A silver stilettoed foot emerges from the car and plants itself firmly in the dirt.

CUT TO: The boys, eyes wide with amazement.

CUT TO: Another stiletto follows the first. Guitar groans.

PAN: Slowly up a shapely pair of black stockinged legs, past a hint of garter belt to a black sequined mini-skirt and up over a muscular dark skinned stomach and tiny sequined bra top, to discover: the 21 year old male, African American face of MERCUTIO.

CUT TO: The boys. Recovering from the initial shock, they laugh and cat-call raucously.

CUT TO: Mercutio. He roughly jams a short black wig onto his head and yells above the music.

MERCUTIO

Strike drum!

Mercutio magically produces invitations from somewhere within his mini-skirt and dances down the beach to the boys.

Aggressively bumping and grinding, Mercutio distributes the invitations. Reaching Romeo, he declares:

MERCUTIO

We'll on without apology.

Romeo lets the invitation fall to the sand.

ROMEO

I am not for this ambling.  
Being but heavy, I will bear the  
light.

Romeo pulls on the bong once more.

Suddenly, Mercutio is upon Romeo. Hauling him to his feet, he waltzes him through the sand.

MERCUTIO

Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you  
dance.

Romeo pushes Mercutio away.

ROMEO

Not I, believe me. You have  
dancing shoes  
With nimble soles. I have a soul  
of lead.

Mercutio in mock sympathy.

MERCUTIO

Too great oppression for a tender  
thing.

ROMEO

Is love a tender thing? It is too  
rough, too rude, too boisterous,  
and it pricks like thorn.

Romeo lies staring up at the stars.

MERCUTIO

If love be rough with you, be rough  
with love.

Mercutio jumps on Romeo.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Prick love for pricking, and you  
beat love down.

Romeo fights Mercutio off.

ROMEO

Under love's heavy burden do I sink!

CUT TO: Benvolio, impatiently honking the horn.

BENVOLIO

Every man betake him to his legs!

Mercutio heads Romeo toward the car.

MERCUTIO

Come, we burn daylight, ho!

Romeo pulls away.

ROMEO

But 'tis no wit to go.

Mercutio turns, exasperated.

MERCUTIO

Why, may one ask?

ROMEO

I dreamt a dream tonight.

MERCUTIO

And so did I.

ROMEO

Well, what was yours?

MERCUTIO

That dreamers often lie.

ROMEO

In bed asleep, while they do dream  
things true.

Mercutio produces a tiny gold pill case.

MERCUTIO

O, then I see Queen Mab hath been  
with you.  
She is the fairies' midwife, and  
she comes  
In shape no bigger than an agate  
stone  
On the forefinger of an alderman,  
Drawn with a team of little atomies  
Over men's noses as they lie asleep.

Tantalisingly, he passes the case beneath Romeo's nose.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Her chariot is an empty hazelnut,  
Her wagoner a small gray-coated gnat.

With a conjurer's dexterity Mercutio extracts a small, gray  
pill.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

And in this state she gallops night  
by night  
Through lovers' brains, and then  
they dream of love;

He palms the pills. It reappears from behind Romeo's ear.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

O'er lawyers' fingers who straight  
dream on fees;  
O'er ladies' lips, who straight on  
kisses dream,  
Which oft the angry Mab with  
blisters plagues.  
Because their breaths with  
sweetmeats tainted are.

The pill box glints in the moonlight.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Sometime she driveth o'er a  
soldier's neck;  
And then dreams he of cutting

foreign throats.  
And being thus frightened, swears a  
prayer or two  
And sleeps again.

Mercutio now intensely angry:

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

This is that very Mab  
That plaits the manes of horses in  
the night  
And bakes the elf-locks in foul  
sluttish hairs

He screams into the night.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

This is the hag, when maids lie on  
their backs,  
That presses them and learns them  
first to bear,  
Making them women of good carriage.  
This is she, this is she...

CLOSE ON: Mercutio. He breaks off. There is a strange  
stillness amongst the group. Romeo goes to his friend.

ROMEO

Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace.  
Thou talkest of nothing.

Mercutio meets Romeo's gaze.

MERCUTIO

True, I talk of dreams;  
Which are the children of an idle  
brain,  
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy.  
Which is as thin of substance as  
the air  
And more inconstant than the wind,  
who woos  
Even now the frozen bosom of the  
north  
And, being angered, puffs away from  
thence  
Turning his attention to the dew-

dropping south.

CUT TO: Benvolio in the car. The alcohol has caught up with him and he looks a little queasy.

BENVOLIO

This wind you talk of blows us from  
ourselves:  
Supper is done and we shall come  
too late.

Romeo looks toward the distant city.

ROMEO

I fear, too early, for my mind  
misgives  
Some consequence yet hanging in the  
stars  
Shall bitterly begin his fearful  
date  
With this night's revels, and  
expire the term  
Of a despised life closed in my  
breast,  
By some vile forfeit of untimely  
death.

PAUSE: The water turns golden as fireworks explode across the bay. Romeo smiles.

ROMEO (CONT.)

But he that hath the steerage of my  
course  
Direct my sail!

He takes the pill and drops it into his mouth.

ROMEO (CONT.)

On, lusty gentlemen!

With the rush of a mind altering cocktail, we ZOOM IN on Romeo's eyes; they shimmer with the shooting star reflection of exploding fireworks - a bending Eastern chord, we launch into Donna Summer's 'I Feel Love', sung by the vocalist from Soundgarden with orchestration by 'Deconstruction' and sitar by Ravi Shankar.

EXT. MERCUTIO'S CAR - ON FREEWAY. NIGHT.

PULL OUT: From Romeo's eyes. He is lying in the passenger seat of Mercutio's convertible as it rockets along the freeway. The camera is directly above Romeo. He stares up at the fireworks that reflect in the windshield. The car and freeway begin to rotate and the camera follows. We feel that the car is now travelling upside-down. The camera sways through a brilliant explosion of fireworks that fill the screen with a zillion pixilating, colored dots of fire.

INT. CAPULET'S MANSION - BALLROOM. NIGHT.

PULL OUT: To discover the glittering dots of fire refracting from the sparkling domed roof of the magnificently ornate Capulet Ballroom. The camera swoops down over bizarrely costumed revellers cavorting to a driving Latin big band. The camera partners with a drugged Mercutio and Benvolio who shamelessly caper with each other in a mock antic adagio.

CUT TO: Romeo gazing blankly at the dance floor.

CUT TO: Mercutio. He sweeps up a thirty-something sophisticate and twirls her in Romeo's direction.

MERCUTIO

Everyman betake him to his legs!

Romeo moves off through the crowd.

CUT TO: ROMEO'S P.O.V.: Contorted images of costumed guests eat, drink and laugh in a grotesque collision of Yves Saint Laurent cocktail party and Bacchanalian romp.

Suddenly a large arm coils around Romeo's neck.

DISTORTED EXTREME CLOSE UP: A seriously intoxicated Fulgencio Capulet; his puffy red face squeezes against Romeo's.

CAPULET

Ah, I have seen the day that I  
could  
Tell a whispering tale in a fair  
ladies ear.  
Such as would please.

Capulet screams above the music:

CAPULET (CONT.)

Come musicians play!

Blood drums in Romeo's ears. Breaking free from Capulet's grasp as he pushes through the crowd toward the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT.

Silent, underwater shot. Romeo's tranquil features submerged in a basin of water.

BEAT.

With a gasp, Romeo rises. A moment. His breathing calms. Then, smoothing water into his hair, he gazes into the bathroom mirror. He turns:

The entire wall opposite the mirror, is a magnificent salt-water fish tank.

Romeo, drawn by it's submarine beauty, leans against the fish tank. Applause echoes faintly through the bathroom speakers.

INT. BALLROOM. NIGHT.

As the applause dies, a dark-haired Latina Diva takes the spotlight. The band ease into the opening bars of a love ballad.

INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT.

As the music swells, Romeo watches a moustached catfish glide past a medieval castle.

Suddenly, Romeo pulls away. Peering back at him through the castle is a pair of exquisitely beautiful angelic eyes.

The Diva's first pure, achingly beautiful notes soar.

Confused, Romeo looks again. There is no mistake - it is a girl. Through a shimmering curtain of ribbon weed, two dark wide eyes, a childish nose and sumptuous full lips.

Romeo pushes his face closer to the glass. The other face snaps abruptly away.

INT. POWDER ROOM. NIGHT.

CUT TO: Juliet, dressed as an angel, on the other side of the tank. We now realise that the girls' powder room and the boys' bathroom are divided by this watery wonder world.

Juliet warily moves closer to the glass.

INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT.

Romeo leans his face against the glass. The love ballad builds.

SLOW TRACK: From Romeo's profile, in through the water, and...

INT. POWDER ROOM. NIGHT.

...out the other side, to find Juliet in profile, peering into the tank.

INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT.

Romeo presses his nose lightly against the glass.

INT. POWDER ROOM. NIGHT.

Juliet; a tiny smile.

Suddenly, CRASH! The door slams open. Juliet turns, startled. It is the Nurse.

NURSE

Juliet, your mother calls.

The Nurse bustles Juliet out the door. Juliet looks over her shoulder at the mystery boy.

INT. BALLROOM. NIGHT.

Romeo, now without his mask, slams out of the bathroom - Juliet and the Nurse have disappeared into the crowd.

CUT TO: Juliet being dragged along by the Nurse. She glances back toward the mystery boy, but he is gone.

Juliet and the Nurse rejoin Dave Paris, who is dressed as an astronaut, and Gloria, at the side of the dance floor.

Dave, irresistible smile, extends his hand to Juliet.

DAVE

Will you now deny to dance?

Juliet looks to Dave, desperately searching for a reason to decline. Gloria, brushing aside her silly daughter's protests, slugs the last of her champagne and corrals them onto the dance floor.

GLORIA

(whispering to Juliet)

A man, young lady, such a man.

As Juliet is dragged onto the floor her eyes furtively search for the boy.

CUT TO: Romeo in the crowd. Desperate to find the girl, he roughly shunts aside a reveller dressed as Lucifer, Prince of Darkness.

HOLD ON: Lucifer. He removes his mask: it is Tybalt. He turns to Abra, who's dressed as a demon.

TYBALT

What, dares the slave come hither  
to fleer and scorn at our solemnity?  
Now by the stock and honor of my  
kin  
To strike him dead I hold it not a  
sin.

Tybalt moves off aggressively, but is halted as Capulet slams a hand into his chest.

CAPULET

Why how now kinsman, wherefore  
storm you so?

TYBALT

Uncle, this is that villain Romeo.  
A Montague, our foe.

Capulet peers across the ballroom.

CAPULET

Young Romeo is it?

TYBALT

'Tis he.

CAPULET

Content thee gentle coz, let him  
alone.

I would not for the wealth of all  
this town

Here in my house do him  
disparagement.

Therefore be patient; take no note  
of him.

Tybalt can't believe it.

TYBALT

I'll not endure him.

CLOSE ON: Capulet, exploding with rage.

CAPULET  
He shall be endured!  
(slapping Tybalt viciously)  
What, goodman boy! I say he shall!  
Go to.

Capulet violently shoves Tybalt to the ground.

CAPULET  
You'll make a mutiny among my guests!

A middle aged couple look on shocked - Capulet waves to them festively:

CAPULET  
What? Cheerly my hearts!

Capulet snorts at Tybalt in disgust.

CAPULET  
You'll not endure him! Am I the  
master here or you? Go to.

Smoothing his hair into place, Capulet turns back into the ballroom.

CLOSE ON: Tybalt choking back tears of rage.

CUT TO: Romeo moving through the crowd. For a moment the crush clears and he spies the Angel on the dance floor.

CLOSE ON: Romeo whispers:

ROMEO  
Did my heart love till now?  
Forswear it, sight.  
For I ne'er saw true beauty till  
this night.

Romeo begins to circumnavigate the dance floor in an attempt to get closer to Juliet.

CUT TO: Dave slow dancing with Juliet.

Juliet's eyes search the room for the boy.

CLOSE ON: Romeo.

CLOSE ON: Juliet.

Their eyes connect.

Juliet looks quickly back to Dave who, oblivious, returns his most devastating smile.

CUT TO: The songstress, her voice soars.

CUT TO: Juliet. Unable to look away from the boy, she stares over Dave's shoulder.

CUT TO: Romeo. Ignoring the danger, he continues to move toward the Angel.

With the Diva's spiralling final notes, the ballad concludes.

A complete black out. As the crowd break into wild applause, Juliet's eyes search the darkness, but the boy is gone.

The crowd cheers and screams its applause. An avalanche of balloons, tinsel and confetti rains down from the roof; swathes of red silk drop from the ceiling and the space is transformed.

CLOSE ON: Juliet, searching for the boy.

Suddenly: A gasp, Juliet's eyes widen, shocked.

In the dark, a hand has shot out from the drape curtaining off the stage and clasped hers. Juliet barely dares breathe.

She glances furtively to Dave Paris - he watches the stage.

Slowly Juliet turns toward the hand; there through a break in the curtain she can see eye, cheek and lips of the mystery boy. As the Diva reprises the chorus, Romeo gently pulls Juliet behind the curtain.

INT. BEHIND CURTAIN. NIGHT.

Concealed from the party by the red velvet drape, hands still clasped, the teenagers are so close their bodies almost touch.

ROMEO

If I profane with my unworhiest  
hand  
This holy shrine, the gentle sin is  
this.  
My lips, two blushing pilgrims,  
ready stand  
To smooth that rough touch with a  
tender kiss.

Romeo moves his lips toward Juliet's. She stops him.

JULIET

Good pilgrim, you do wrong your  
hand too much,  
Which mannerly devotion shows in  
this.  
For saints have hands that pilgrim's  
hands do touch,  
And palm to palm is holy palmers'  
kiss.

ROMEO

Have not saints lips, and holy  
palmers too?

JULIET

(a gentle scolding)

Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must  
use in prayer.

ROMEO

O, then, dear saint, let lips do  
what hands do,  
They pray: grant thou, lest faith  
turn to despair.

JULIET

Saints do not move, though grant  
for prayer's sake.

ROMEO

Then move not while my prayer's  
effect I take.

He kisses her.

ROMEO (CONT.)

Thus from my lips, by thine my sin  
is purged.

JULIET

Then have my lips the sin that they  
have took.

ROMEO

Sin from my lips? O trespass  
sweetly urged!  
Give me my sin again.

He kisses her.

JULIET

You kiss by th' book.

They kiss again.

Suddenly a harsh light falls across the entwined couple.  
They break apart - Nurse has pulled open the curtain and  
stands eyeing them severely.

NURSE

Madam, your mother craves a word  
with you.

We see that the party is breaking up. But for groups of  
die-hard revellers, the room is nearly empty.

NURSE (CONT.)

Come, let's away.

She takes firm control of her charge.

Juliet furtively motions for the startled Romeo not to  
follow as he trails them across the room.

CUT TO: ROMEO'S P.O.V.: The Nurse and Juliet reach the door,  
but instead of leaving, they turn and ascend the staircase  
that arcs around to the mezzanine level. They join a vexed  
Gloria Capulet who clings to a patient Dave Paris.

Inaudible words are exchanged. Juliet flickers her eyes  
nervously to Romeo.

CUT TO: Romeo. He halts at the foot of the stairs unsure.

CUT TO: Gloria. Catching Juliet's interest in the boy, she indicates to her daughter to 'COME ALONG'.

CUT TO: Romeo; a dawning realisation.

ROMEO  
(under his breath)  
Is she a Capulet?

CUT TO: Juliet. She stops and turns back.

CUT TO: Romeo, comprehending the reality of who she is.

CUT TO: Juliet. The Nurse whispers in her ear.

NURSE  
His name is Romeo, and a Montague,  
The only son of your great enemy.

An orchestral treatment of Joy Division's "Love will tear us Apart" swells;

HOLD ON: Juliet. Like a cloud passing across the sun, a dark coldness descends upon her.

CUT TO: Mercutio. He throws himself upon the shell shocked Romeo.

MERCUTIO  
Away, begone, the sport is at its  
best.

Mercutio shuttles Romeo toward the door.

ROMEO  
Ay so I fear,

A covert glance over his shoulder.

ROMEO (CONT.)  
The more is my unrest.

EXT. CAPULET MANSION. NIGHT.

Mercutio bundles Romeo through the front door and down the stairs to the waiting getaway car.

INT. CAPULET MANSION - STAIRS ALCOVE WINDOW - NIGHT.

CUT TO: Juliet. Manoeuvred by the Nurse up the stairs, she breaks away and rushes to a tiny, windowed alcove.

EXT. CAPULET MANSION - MAIN ENTRANCE. NIGHT.

CUT TO: Mercutio's convertible and its noisy confederacy joining the line of departing limos.

A huge sign combusts into blinding fireworks that write in giant words "CAPULET."

As the convertible passes beneath the blazing words, Romeo turns. Through a deluge of falling sparks, he glimpses the mystery girl high up in the tower.

EXT. CAPULET MANSION - WINDOW. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: Juliet leaning out of the tower window. Brilliant sparkles light in her eyes.

PUSH IN: We hear her secret whisper:

JULIET

My only love, sprung from my only  
hate.

Too early seen unknown, and known  
too late.

Prodigious birth of love it is to me

EXT. CAPULET MANSION - MAIN ENTRANCE DRIVE. NIGHT.

CUT TO: JULIET'S P.O.V.: In slow motion Romeo, through the falling curtain of fiery embers.

JULIET (CONT.)(V/O)

That I must love a loathed enemy.

EXT. CAPULET MANSION - WINDOW. NIGHT.

Warm wind blows the smoke from the expended fireworks. Juliet closes the window and leans against the glass.

CRANE DOWN: The side of the building past revellers who don't know when to leave. Standing in the front doorway is

someone else who cannot take their eyes off the departing Romeo. It is Tybalt. The music darkens as we push through the smoky wind.

TYBALT

I will withdraw. But this intrusion shall,  
Now seeming sweet, convert to bitterest gall.

INT. MERCUTIO'S CAR. NIGHT.

Caught in the jam of departing vehicles, Mercutio's car crawls along the bridge that links Capulet island with the mainland. The boys sing along raucously with the radio.

BOYS

"I am a pretty piece of flesh,  
I am a pretty piece of flesh..."

PUSH IN: On Romeo, he whispers:

ROMEO

Can I go forward when my heart is here?  
Turn back, dull earth, and find thy centre out.

Romeo leaps from the car. Benvolio yells after him.

BENVOLIO

Romeo! Cousin Romeo! Romeo!

EXT. CAPULET BRIDGE. NIGHT.

Romeo runs back along the bridge toward the estate. At the gates, armed guards supervise the exodus of vehicles. Romeo uses the traffic to shield himself from view.

Romeo leaps from the bridge and into the shadows at the base of the high stone wall that borders the compound.

EXT. CAPULET BRIDGE. NIGHT.

Mercutio's car prowls back along the bridge. The last guests have departed and the gates are swinging shut. The convertible halts in front of them.

BENVOLIO

He ran this way. Call, good  
Mercutio.

MERCUTIO

Nay, I'll conjure too.

Mercutio leaps from the car. He postures like a magician in a low-budget variety special. The boys cheer him on.

MERCUTIO

Romeo! Humours! Madman! Passion!  
Lover!  
I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright  
eyes,  
By her high forehead and her  
scarlet lip,  
By her fine foot, straight leg, and  
quivering thigh.  
And the demesnes that there adjacent  
lie,  
That in thy likeness thou appear to  
us!

EXT. CAPULET WALL. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: Romeo's fake chain mail shirt tangled in the  
barbed wire at the top of the wall.

PAN DOWN: Romeo, now on the other side of the wall, pulls up  
his undershirt and gingerly inspects the cuts inflicted by  
the wire.

Mercutio's cavorting echoes from the bridge. Romeo smiles  
ironically.

ROMEO

He jests at scars that never felt a  
wound.

Romeo moves off through the darkened grounds of Capulet  
estate.

EXT. CAPULET BRIDGE. NIGHT.

The boys laugh hysterically as Mercutio staggers around the

bridge in imitation of a love sick fool.

MERCUTIO

O Romeo, that she were, O that she  
were  
An open-arse and thou a poperin pear!

The hilarity is abruptly arrested as a security spotlight blazes to life, pinning Mercutio in its beam. The sound of automatic weapons cocking pierces the night.

CLOSE ON: Mercutio. He's brave but not stupid. He gets back into the car.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Come, shall we go?

EXT. THE BACK OF CAPULET MANSION. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: A pair of stone cherubs on top of the retaining wall of a terraced garden. Romeo's face appears between them.

Romeo hauls himself up onto the wall. Below is a Greco-Roman style pool area. To the right the darkened rear wing of Capulet Mansion. Suddenly the back of the house explodes with light. Romeo takes cover.

ROMEO

But soft, what light through yonder  
window breaks?

Romeo's question is answered as out onto the verandah comes Juliet. She is still clad in her angel robe, but without the halo and wings. She slowly descends to pool level.

ROMEO

It is the East, and Juliet is the  
sun!  
Arise, fair sun, and kill the  
envious moon,  
Who is already sick and pale with  
grief  
That thou her maid art far more  
fair than she.  
Be not her maid, since she is  
envious.

Her vestal livery is but sick and  
green,  
And none but fools do wear it.

Juliet stands on the top step of the pool stairs. She is directly below Romeo as he whispers.

ROMEO (CONT.)

Cast it off!

Juliet sits on the edge of the pool, her legs dangle in the water.

ROMEO (CONT.)

It is my lady. O, it is my love!  
O that she knew she were!

Juliet sighs.

JULIET

Ay me!

ROMEO

(whispers)

She speaks.  
O, speak again, bright angel!

Juliet looks longingly toward the stars.

JULIET

O Romeo, Romeo! - Whyfore art thou  
Romeo?  
Deny thy father and refuse thy  
name.  
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn  
my love,  
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

CLOSE ON: Romeo. Incredulous.

ROMEO

Shall I hear more, or shall I speak  
at this?

JULIET

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy.  
Thou are thyself, though not a  
Montague.  
What's Montague? It is not hand  
nor foot  
Nor arm nor face nor any other part

Belonging to a man. O, be some  
other name!  
What's in a name?  
That which we call a rose  
By any other word would smell as  
sweet.  
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo  
called,  
Retain that dear perfection which  
he owes  
Without that title. Romeo, doff  
thy name,  
And for thy name, which is no part  
of thee,  
Take all myself.

Romeo wildly calls:

ROMEO

I take thee at thy word!  
Call me but love, and I'll be new  
baptised.  
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

Romeo jumps down from the wall. Juliet screams, and turns,  
toppling backwards. Romeo grabs her hand but her momentum  
overbalances him and they both plunge headlong into the pool.

EXT. CAPULET MANSION - POOL - UNDERWATER. NIGHT.

Underwater shot: A slow motion phosphorescent tangle of  
arms, legs and bodies.

EXT. CAPULET MANSION - BACK GARDEN. NIGHT.

CUT TO: A security guard. Alerted by the noise he moves  
toward the pool area.

EXT. CAPULET MANSION - POOL GARDEN - NIGHT.

CUT TO: Above water, real time: Romeo and Juliet surface  
spluttering. Juliet thrashes the water in an attempt to get  
distance from her attacker.

JULIET

What man art thou that, thus  
bescreened in night,

So stumblest on my counsel?

Romeo: A calming gesture as he tries to tread water.

ROMEO

By a name I know not how to tell  
thee who I am:  
My name, dear saint, is hateful to  
myself  
Because it is an enemy to thee.

The ferocious barking of a guard dog arrests the teenagers attention. A moment, then they slide beneath the water.

CUT TO: The security guard and dog appearing above the pool area.

GUARD'S P.O.V.: The rippling surface of the water.

CUT TO - UNDERWATER SHOT: Romeo and Juliet submerged, hair streaming, stare at each other like two beautiful fish.

CUT TO: The guard. He can see noisy caterers cleaning up around the other side of the house. Frowning, he returns the way he came.

CUT TO: Romeo and Juliet. Gasping for air, they cautiously surface. A moment - then Juliet, a small smile.

JULIET

Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

ROMEO

Neither, fair maid, if either thee dislike.

Juliet looks nervously toward the house. She drags Romeo toward a small grotto at the end of the pool.

JULIET

How cam'st thou hither, tell me,  
and whyfore?  
The garden walls are high and hard  
to climb,  
And the place death, considering  
who thou art.

ROMEO

(with splashy bravado)  
With love's light wings did I o'er  
perch these walls.  
For stony limits cannot hold love  
out,  
And what love can do, that dares  
love attempt.  
Therefore thy kinsmen are no stop  
to me.

Juliet drags Romeo firmly into the grotto.

JULIET

(a real fear)

If they do see thee, they will  
murder thee.

Romeo slowly pulls Juliet toward him.

ROMEO

I have night's cloak to hide me  
from their eyes.  
And but thou love me, let them find  
me here.  
My life were better ended by their  
hate  
Than death prorogued, wanting of  
thy love.

The lovers kiss long and deep. Then Juliet, suddenly  
fearful, pushes Romeo away.

JULIET

Thou knowest the mask of night is  
on my face,  
Else would a maiden blush bepaint  
my cheek,  
For that which thou hast heard me  
speak tonight.  
Fain would I dwell on form - fain,  
fain deny  
What I have spoke. But farewell  
compliment!  
Dost thou love me?

Romeo tries to speak, Juliet silences him.

JULIET (CONT.)

I know thou wilt say 'Ay', and I  
will take thy word. Yet, if thou  
swearest,  
Thou mayst prove false. O gentle  
Romeo,  
If thou dost love, pronounce it  
faithfully.  
Or if thou think'st I am too  
quickly won,

I'll frown, and be perverse, and  
say thee nay,  
So thou wilt woo. But else, not  
for the world.  
In truth, fair Montague, I am too  
fond,  
And therefore thou mayst think my  
'haviour light.  
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove  
more true  
Than those that have more cunning  
to be strange.

ROMEO

Lady, by yonder blessed moon I vow,  
That tips with silver all these  
fruit-tree tops -

JULIET

O, swear not by the moon, th'  
inconstant moon,  
That monthly changes in her circled  
orb,  
Lest that thy love prove likewise  
variable.

ROMEO

What shall I swear by?

JULIET

Do not swear at all.  
Or if thou wilt, swear by thy  
gracious self,  
Which is the god of my idolatry,  
And I'll believe thee.

She touches his cheek. Romeo moves his lips close.

ROMEO

If my heart's dear love -

Confused, Juliet breaks away.

JULIET

Well, do not swear. Although I joy  
in thee,  
I have no joy of this contract

tonight.  
It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden;  
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be  
Ere one can say 'it lightens.'  
Sweet, good night.  
This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,  
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.  
Good night, good night. As sweet repose and rest  
Come to thy heart as that within my breast.

She rushes up the stairs - Romeo follows desperately.

ROMEO

O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

Juliet - a shocked look.

JULIET

What satisfaction canst thou have tonight?

CLOSE ON: Romeo.

ROMEO

The exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

CLOSE ON: Juliet. She runs joyously to Romeo.

JULIET

I gave thee mind before thou didst request it!

Kissing him passionately.

JULIET (CONT.)

And yet I would it were to give again.

ROMEO

Wouldst thou withdraw it? For what

purpose love?

JULIET

But to be frank and give it thee  
again.

They kiss again. The Nurse calls from inside.

NURSE (O/S)

Juliet!

Juliet looks to the house.

JULIET

(breathlessly)

Three words, dear Romeo, and good  
night indeed.  
If that thy bent of love be  
honourable.  
Thy purpose marriage, send me word  
tomorrow,  
By one that I'll procure to come to  
thee,  
Where and what time thou wilt  
perform the rite,  
And all my fortunes at thy foot  
I'll lay  
And follow thee my lord throughout  
the world.

NURSE (O/S)

Madam!

JULIET

I come, anon - But if thou meanest  
not well,  
I do beseech thee...

NURSE (O/S)

Madam!

JULIET

(to Nurse)

By and by I come!  
To cease thy strife and leave me to  
my grief.  
Tomorrow will I send.

Romeo holds Juliet's gaze.

ROMEO  
So thrive my soul.

NURSE (O/S)  
Madam!

Juliet breaks away.

JULIET  
A thousand times good night!

With a final kiss, Juliet runs inside.

ROMEO  
A thousand times the worse, to want  
thy light.  
Love goes toward love as schoolboys  
from their books;  
But love from love, toward school  
with heavy looks.

Juliet re-appears at the upper balcony.

JULIET  
Romeo! What o'clock tomorrow  
Shall I send to thee?

ROMEO  
By the hour of nine.

Juliet unclasps a delicate silver necklace from around her neck.

JULIET  
I will not fail. 'Tis twenty year  
till then.  
Goodnight, goodnight! Parting is  
such sweet sorrow.  
That I shall say goodnight till it  
be morrow.

She lets the necklace fall from her hand. Romeo catches it and she is gone.

ROMEO

Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace  
in thy breast,  
Would I were sleep and peace, so  
sweet to rest.

INT. GREENHOUSE. DAWN.

Morning sunlight filters through the lush foliage of a  
tropical rainforest.

PAN DOWN: As we hear:

FATHER LAURENCE (O/S)

O mickle is the powerful grace that  
lies  
In plants, herbs, stones, and their  
true qualities.

We discover the intensely concentrating features of FATHER  
LAURENCE. Fifties, wiry and wearing a priest's collar,  
Laurence delicately makes an incision in the bulb of a small  
purple flowered plant.

A pair of fresh faced ten year old boys look on in wonderment  
as a vivid blue sap oozes from the incision.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

Within the infant rind of this weak  
flower  
Poison hath residence, and medicine  
power.

PULL BACK: The Priest carefully gathers the sap into a  
beaker. We discover that we are in a small tropical  
greenhouse.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

(to the boys)

For this, being smelt, with that  
part cheers each part;  
Being tasted, stays all senses with  
the heart.

The boys follow the Father as he moves out of the greenhouse and into an adjoining work area. The walls are lined with bottles of herbs and dried plants and a television flickers in the corner.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

For naught so vile on the earth  
doth live,  
But to the earth some special good  
doth give;

With the precision of a chemist, Father Laurence funnels the sap into a small bottle and places it in the refrigerator. From out of the refrigerator he produces a large jar of candy. He eyes the boys sternly.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

Nor aught so good but, strained  
from that fair use,  
Revolts from true birth, stumbling  
on abuse.

The boys take their candy and scam.

CUT TO: The muted television. A morning news program shows footage of a murder scene cordoned off with police tape. A distraught mother is being restrained.

CLOSE ON: The priest contemplating the television.

FATHER LAURENCE

Two such opposed kings encamp them  
still  
In man as well as herbs: grace and  
rude will;  
And where the worser is predominant,  
Full soon the canker death eats up  
that plant.

A feverish knocking breaks the priest's reverie.

ROMEO (O/S)

Good morrow, father!

Father Laurence snaps off the television and exits the workroom.

EXT. WALL. DAWN.

Romeo, dressed in last night's chain mail, pounds desperately on a wooden door set into a high stone wall.

ROMEO

Good morrow, father!

EXT. COURTYARD. DAWN.

From the workroom, Father Laurence enters a courtyard which encloses a tranquil tropical garden. He opens a door in the wall of the courtyard and smiles as the costumed Romeo bursts in.

FATHER LAURENCE

Benedicite!

What early tongue so sweet saluteth  
me?

Without pausing, the priest continues through the courtyard and toward the church.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

Young son, it argues a distempered  
head  
So soon to bid good morrow to thy  
bed.  
Or if not so, then here I hit it  
right -  
Our Romeo hath not been in bed  
tonight.

The priest enters the back of the church.

INT. SACRISTY. DAWN.

Romeo, on fire to tell of his experience, follows the priest into the sacristy.

ROMEO

The last is true. The sweeter rest  
was mine.

FATHER LAURENCE

(he stops)

God pardon sin! Wast thou with

Rosaline?

ROMEO

With Rosaline, my ghostly father?

No.

I have forgot that name and that  
name's woe.

The Father lays out the cut glass bottles and communion tray  
for mass.

FATHER LAURENCE

That's my good son! But where hast  
thou been then?

Unconsciously, Romeo helps the priest prepare. It is clear  
he knows the routine by heart.

ROMEO

I have been feasting with mine  
enemy,  
Where on a sudden one hath wounded  
me.  
That's by me wounded. Both our  
remedies  
Within they help and holy physic  
lies.

FATHER LAURENCE

(buttoning a long  
black cassock)

Be plain, good son, and homely in  
thy drift.  
Riddling confession finds but  
riddling shrift.

ROMEO

Then plainly know my heart's dear  
love is set,  
On the fair daughter of rich  
Capulet.  
We met, we wooed, and made exchange  
of vow,  
I'll tell thee as we pass. But  
this I pray,  
That thou consent to marry us today.

CUT TO: The Priest, thunderstruck. The two kids, now dressed in red altar-boy robes, enter.

ALTAR BOYS

Good morrow, Romeo.

The apoplectic priest waves the boys away. They get the message and bolt.

FATHER LAURENCE

Holy Saint Francis! What a change  
is here!  
Is Rosaline, that thou didst love  
so dear,  
So soon foresaken? Young men's  
love then lies  
Not truly in their hearts, but in  
their eyes.

ROMEO

Thou chid'st me oft for loving  
Rosaline.

FATHER LAURENCE

(very angry)

For doting, not for loving, pupil  
mine.

ROMEO

I pray thee chide me not. Her I  
love now  
Doth grace for grace and love for  
love allow.  
The other did not so.

FATHER LAURENCE

O, she knew well  
Thy love did read by rote, that  
could not spell.

The Father falls into a chair and considers. He looks through the sacristy door to where a small children's choir has assembled. Their angelic voices soar into the purest of hymns.

CHOIR

How can you just leave me standing

Alone in a world so cold,  
Maybe I'm just too demanding,  
Maybe I'm just like my father, too  
bold,  
Maybe you're just like my mother,  
She's never satisfied.  
Why do we scream at each other?  
This is what it sounds like when  
doves cry...

We recognise the hymn as "When Doves Cry" by Prince.

PUSH IN: On the Priest; moved, he looks to Romeo.

FATHER LAURENCE

But come, young waverer, come, go  
with me.  
In one respect I'll thy assistant  
be.  
For this alliance may so happy  
prove  
To turn your households' rancor to  
pure love.

Romeo hurriedly assists the priest with his vestments.

ROMEO

O, let us hence! I stand on sudden  
haste.

Father Laurence holds Romeo in his powerful gaze.

FATHER LAURENCE

Wisely and slow. They stumble that  
run fast.

The procession is joined by the two little altar boys and  
the mass begins.

EXT. VERONA BEACH. DAY.

As the Angelic voices of the choir soar, we see a pay phone  
etched with hyper-real starkness against the white sand,  
green sea and blue sky.

A single leaning palm tree frames the image like a ridiculous  
tourist postcard.

Benvolio speaks on the pay phone. Mercutio, torso naked but for his holstered Sports Rapier 9mm, drums his fingers on the side of the booth.

MERCUTIO

Where the devil should this Romeo  
be?  
Came he not home tonight?

BENVOLIO

(slamming down the phone)  
Not to his father's. I spoke with  
his man.

Mercutio storms off down the beach.

MERCUTIO

Why, that same pale hard-hearted  
wench, that Rosaline,  
Torments him so that he will sure  
run mad.

BENVOLIO

(running to keep up)  
Tybalt hath sent a letter to his  
father's house.

MERCUTIO

(halts abruptly)  
A challenge, on my life.

CLOSE ON: Benvolio, unsure.

BENVOLIO

Romeo will answer it?

MERCUTIO

Any man that can write may answer a  
letter.

BENVOLIO

Nay, he will answer the letter's  
master, how he dares, being dared.

Mercutio clamps Benvolio into a headlock.

MERCUTIO

Alas, poor Romeo, he is already  
dead!  
Stabbed with a white wench's black  
eye,

He whispers into Benvolio's ear:

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Run through the ear with a love  
song.

(in disgust)

And is he a man to encounter Tybalt?

BENVOLIO

(struggling to break free)

Why, what is Tybalt?

MERCUTIO

(releasing him)

More than Prince of Cats, I can  
tell you.

O, he's the courageous captain of  
compliments.

The very butcher of a silk button.

Lightening fast, Mercutio draws his gun. He twirls it in an  
impressive display of gunmanship which ends with the barrel  
between the startled Benvolio's eyes.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

A duellist, a duellist.

Romeo's car pulls into the beach side parking lot. Benvolio  
heads toward it.

BENVOLIO

Here comes Romeo, here comes Romeo!

EXT. BEACH - PARKING LOT. DAY.

Romeo alights from his car and throws his keys to Balthasar  
who lounges outside the beach side hang. Mercutio saunters  
up the beach with mock nonchalance.

MERCUTIO

Signor Romeo, Bonjour. There's a

French salutation to your French  
slop. You gave us the counterfeit  
fairly last night.

ROMEO

Good morrow to you both. What  
counterfeit did I give you?

MERCUTIO

The slip, sir, the slip. Can you  
not conceive?

Romeo smiles smugly.

ROMEO

Pardon, good Mercutio. My business  
was great, and in such a case as  
mine a man may strain courtesy.

MERCUTIO

(sarcastically)

A most courteous exposition.

ROMEO

Nay I am the very pink of courtesy.

MERCUTIO

(camply)

Pink for flower?

The boys laugh. Romeo feigns anger.

ROMEO

I will bite thee on the ear for  
that jest!

Mercutio, goading Romeo to follow, backs off down the beach.

MERCUTIO

Come between us, good Benvolio! My  
wits faint.

Mercutio flicks sand at Romeo, then sprints off down the  
beach. Romeo, laughing, gives chase.

ROMEO

Switch and spurs, switch and spurs,

or I'll cry a match.

EXT. BEACH - SHORELINE. DAY.

Romeo is gaining on Mercutio, who runs headlong into the sea. With a yell, Romeo dives in after him.

EXT. BEACH - AT SEA. DAY.

Mercutio splashes the laughing Romeo.

MERCUTIO

Why, is not this better now than  
groaning for love?

Romeo tries to dunk Mercutio.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Now art thou sociable.

Mercutio, evading, heads for shore.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Now art thou Romeo. Now art thou...

EXT. BEACH - SHORELINE. DAY.

Romeo tackles Mercutio on the wet sand. Mercutio falls suddenly serious.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

(quietly)

What thou art, by art as well as by  
nature.

A moment between the boys. A shadow falls across them. Romeo looks up.

ROMEO

Here's goodly gear.

Standing above the boys is the Nurse. She wears a ridiculous, all red, "Jackie O" style disguise of sunglasses, scarf and parasol.

MERCUTIO

(bemused)

God ye good e'en fair gentlewoman.

The nurse, ignoring Mercutio, speaks dramatically to Romeo.

NURSE

I desire some confidence with you.

She turns and walks back to the parking lot where Peter the chauffeur waits beside the limousine.

Benvolio and the other boys look on curiously.

MERCUTIO

A bawd, a bawd, a bawd! So ho!

But Romeo rises and to the amazement of Mercutio actually follows this woman. Mercutio looks questioningly to Benvolio, who shrugs.

BENVOLIO

She will endite him to some supper?

Even more strangely, Romeo gets into the limousine.

MERCUTIO

(taken by surprise)

Romeo, will you come to your  
father's?  
We'll to dinner thither.

ROMEO

(as he closes the door)

I will follow you.

MERCUTIO

Farewell, ancient lady. Farewell.

The car pulls away.

EXT. STREET. DAY.

The limousine drives through Verona Beach.

INT. MOVING LIMOUSINE. DAY.

CLOSE ON: Romeo jammed into the corner of the seat. The Nurse's face is pressed alarmingly close to his. She speaks

in cold deadly earnest.

NURSE

If ye should lead her in a fool's  
paradise, as they say, it were a  
very gross kind of behavior, as  
they say. For the gentlewoman is  
young; and therefore, if you should  
deal double with her, truly it were  
an ill thing and very weak dealing.

BEAT: Romeo chooses his words carefully.

ROMEO

Bid her to come to confession this  
afternoon,  
And there she shall at Friar  
Laurence's cell  
Be shrived and  
(PUSH IN ON: Romeo)  
married.

INT. JULIET'S BEDROOM. DAY.

CLOSE ON: Juliet's face peering out her bedroom window.

JULIET

O God she comes!

EXT. CAPULETS MANSION - DRIVEWAY. DAY.

PULL BACK: JULIET'S P.O.V.: The limousine pulls up at the  
front door, the Nurse alights.

Juliet bolts from the room.

INT. LANDING. DAY.

Juliet hurries down the stairs - the Nurse, a way ahead,  
disappears into a doorway.

INT. STAIRWAY. DAY.

Juliet races down a dark stairwell that leads to the bowels  
of the house.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

The kitchen, obviously the Nurse's domain, is decorated with a mixture of religious iconography and travel posters. Most of the posters depict a strange city of decadent, decaying, beauty.

Juliet bursts breathlessly into the room.

JULIET

O honey nurse, what news?

The Nurse, buried up to her ample hips inside the refrigerator, does not turn around.

Juliet cries impatiently.

JULIET

Nurse!

The nurse emerges from the ice box laden with food. Moving to the counter she starts to make a sandwich.

NURSE

I am awear, give me leave awhile.  
Fie, how my bones ache. What a  
jaunce have I.

Juliet under her breath.

JULIET

I would thou hadst my bones and I  
thy news.

Juliet goes to the nurse.

JULIET

Nay come, I pray thee, speak: good;  
good  
Nurse, speak.

Sandwich made, the nurse shuffles over to a corner couch.

NURSE

Jesu, what haste. Can you not stay  
awhile?  
Can you not see I am out of breath?

Juliet cannot stand the suspense any longer.

JULIET

How art thou out of breath when  
thou hast breath  
To say to me that thou art out of  
breath!  
Is the news good or bad? Answer to  
that.

The Nurse takes a big bite from her sandwich and answers  
through thoughtful chews.

NURSE

Well, you have made a simple  
choice.  
You know not how to choose a man.  
Romeo? No, not he.  
Though his face be better than any  
man's, yet his leg excels all men's  
and for a hand and a foot and a  
body, though they be not to be  
talked on, yet they are past  
compare.  
He's not the flower of courtesy,  
but I'll warrant him as gentle as a  
lamb. Go thy ways, wench, serve  
God. What, have you dined at home?

Juliet is flabbergasted.

JULIET

No, no. But all this I did know  
before. What says he of our  
marriage? What of that

NURSE

Lord how my head aches! What a  
head have I:  
My back -

This is a game that Juliet knows well. She moves behind the  
Nurse and begins massaging her back.

NURSE (CONT.)

o' t'other side - ah, my back!  
Beshrew your heart for sending me

about  
To catch my death with jauncing up  
and down.

With sublime self control, Juliet coo's sweetly.

JULIET

I'faith I am sorry that thou art  
not well.  
Sweet, sweet, sweet Nurse, tell me,  
what says my love?

NURSE

Your love says like an honest  
gentleman,  
And a courteous, and a kind, and a  
handsome,  
And I warrant a virtuous - Where is  
your mother?

Juliet cracks.

JULIET

Where is my mother? How oddly thou  
repliest!  
'Your love says, like an honest  
gentleman, "Where is your mother"'

The nurse sulks.

NURSE

O God's lady dear are you so hot?  
Henceforth do your messages yourself.

Juliet's frustration explodes.

JULIET

Here's such a coil! COME WHAT SAYS  
ROMEO?

PAUSE: The Nurse considers Juliet.

NURSE

Have you got leave to go to  
confession today?

JULIET

I have.

NURSE

Then hie you hence to Father  
Laurence cell.  
There stays a husband to make you a  
wife!

Juliet, with a scream of joy, hugs the Nurse to her.

HOLD ON: Juliet's ecstatic features.

INT. CHURCH. DAY.

TIGHT ON: FATHER LAURENCE:

FATHER LAURENCE

These violent delights have violent  
ends!

PULL BACK: Father Laurence is preaching energetically from  
the pulpit. Hidden from the congregation, Romeo waits in a  
small alcove chapel at the side of the altar.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

The sweetest honey  
Is loathsome in its own  
deliciousness,  
Therefore love moderately.

The Father glances toward Romeo.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

Long love doth so.  
Too swift arrives as tardy as too  
slow.

Juliet pushes through the double doors at the far end of the church.

Father Laurence motions to the middle-aged choir master who leads the choir into a choral version of Led Zeppelin's "A Whole Lot of Love" with Latin lyrics.

Father Laurence hurries from the altar over to Romeo.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

Here comes the lady.

Juliet bursts into the tiny chapel. Trying to observe a vestige of decorum, she greets Father Laurence.

JULIET

Good afternoon to my ghostly confessor.

But before the priest can reply, the two lovers embrace, kissing passionately.

FATHER LAURENCE

(dryly)

Romeo shall thank thee, daughter, for us both.

The choir completes the hymn and the priest, realising it is his cue, rushes back to the altar. He quickly delivers a prayer to the congregation while eyeing the increasingly amorous smooching of the young couple.

The choir launch into a joyous chorus and the priest returns to Romeo and Juliet. He delicately parts the couple.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

Come, come, and we will make short work.  
For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone  
Till Holy Church incorporate two in one.

A young boy with a voice like Jamiroquai steps forward. He launches into a wailing solo.

MACRO CLOSE UP: A simple silver ring. Engraved on the

inside of the band are the words 'I love thee.'

PULL BACK: Romeo slips the ring onto Juliet's finger as the priest executes the formal sacrament of marriage.

INT./EXT. CHURCH. DAY.

CRANE UP: Through the majestic patterning of stained glass, and out of the church to find Peter, the chauffeur, cradling a small camera as he waits nervously beside the limo.

EXT. CHURCH. DAY.

The music swells in celebration. Romeo and Juliet, now newly-wed, rush from the side door of the church. The priest follows, throwing handfuls of rice. Peter studiously takes a snap as the bride and groom kiss.

Peter holds the door of the limousine open. Reluctantly Juliet gets into the car.

As the car pulls out of the driveway, Romeo runs alongside.

HOLD: On Romeo as he watches the big black car speed away.

EXT. UNDERWATER. DAY.

FISH-EYE VIEW: From the bottom of the ocean; Mercutio's distorted features. Gun aimed, he stares intently into the water.

A muffled BANG! and a bullet whizzes past the camera.

EXT. VERONA BEACH. DAY.

We see that Mercutio - wading in knee deep water close to the beach - is hunting fish.

Benvolio shelters in the shade of an unmanned life guard tower.

A shimmering heat haze blankets the deserted beach and the horizon is stacked with purple storm clouds.

BENVOLIO

I pray thee, good Mercutio, let's  
retire.

The day is hot,

Mercutio, ignoring him, plugs away at another fish. Benvolio nervously looks to see if there is any reaction to the sound of the shot.

BENVOLIO (CONT.)

The Capels are abroad. And if we  
meet we shall not 'scape a brawl.

Mercutio strides out of the water.

MERCUTIO

Thou art like one of these fellows  
that, when he enters the confines  
of a tavern, claps me his sword  
upon the table and says 'God send  
me no need of thee!'

(he hands Benvolio  
his gun)

and by the operation of the second  
cup draws him on the drawer, when  
indeed there is no need.

Another incredible sleight of hand routine and Mercutio has  
managed to draw Benvolio's pistol, retrieve his own gun, and  
trap Benvolio with a barrel at each temple.

The joke has worn thin for Benvolio; he pushes past Mercutio  
toward where Balthasar, Sampson and Gregory lounge in the  
shade of the beach-side hang.

Suddenly he stops dead - a monstrous black sedan prowls into  
the beach side parking lot.

BENVOLIO

By my head, here comes the Capulets.

MERCUTIO

By my heel, I care not.

EXT. BEACH - PARKING LOT. DAY.

The sedan mounts the curb and slides to a halt only metres  
from Benvolio and Mercutio.

Tybalt, Abra and Petruchio alight from the sedan and walk  
menacingly toward Mercutio and Benvolio.

TYBALT

Gentlemen, good day. A word with  
one of you.

The boys from the hang, drawn the Capulet car, converge - eyes dart nervously, hands stray towards guns.

Mercutio smiles mockingly.

MERCUTIO

And but one word with one of us?  
Couple it with something. Make it  
a word and a...

Leaning close to Tybalt, he camps the implication.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

...blow.

Mercutio scores. The boys laugh.

TYBALT

(furious)  
You shall find me apt enough to  
that, sir,  
(clutching at his  
side arm)  
And you will give me occasion.

CLOSE ON: Mercutio. He stops, eyeing the hand on the gun.  
No one moves.

MERCUTIO

(a breathy, coquettish  
voice)  
Could you not take some occasion  
without giving?

The boys fall about again. Tybalt cracks.

TYBALT

Mercutio, thou consortest with Romeo.

The accusation stings - Mercutio's anger flares.

MERCUTIO

Consort? What, dost thou make us  
minstrels? And thou make minstrels  
of us look to hear nothing but  
discords. Here's my fiddlestick.

Indicating his holstered gun.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Here's that shall make you dance.

(barking at Tybalt)

Zounds,

(goadng him to go

for his gun)

consort!

CLOSE ON: Tybalt.

CLOSE ON: Mercutio. He will not back down. Benvolio tries to diffuse things.

BENVOLIO

Either withdraw unto some private place.

Or reason coldly of your grievances.

Here all eyes gaze on us.

MERCUTIO

Men's eyes were made to look, and let them gaze.

I will not budge for no man's pleasure, I.

At that moment, Romeo's car pulls into the lot. Tybalt smiles.

TYBALT

Well sir, here comes my man.

Tybalt moves toward Romeo who bounds from his car full of happy news.

TYBALT

Romeo, the love I bear thee can afford

No better term than this:

CLOSE ON: Tybalt. He clears his jacket from his side arm and issues the challenge.

TYBALT (CONT.)

Thou art a villain!

CLOSE ON: Mercutio.

CLOSE ON: Benvolio.

All eyes are on Romeo.

Romeo calmly approaches his now cousin.

ROMEO

Tybalt, the reason that I have to  
love thee  
Doth much excuse the appertaining  
rage  
To such a greeting: villain am I  
none,  
Therefore farewell. I see thou  
knowest me not.

Romeo turns, and to the amazement of all, walks back to his car. Tybalt, unable to shoot him in the back, is confused. He hurls himself into his sedan.

Kicking it into a sand spraying U-turn, he careens the short distance to Romeo's car. Slamming into the back of it he blocks Romeo in.

Tybalt leaps out, maniacally kicking at bumper, door and headlights. Romeo flicks the locks down. Tybalt shatters the side window and hauls Romeo through the door, slamming him against the savaged fuselage.

TYBALT

Boy, this shall not excuse the  
injuries  
That thou hast done me!

He smashes Romeo across the face, Romeo crashes to the roadway.

TYBALT

(yelling)  
Turn and draw.

A cut has opened in the side of Romeo's mouth. He unsteadily lifts himself up, and meeting Tybalt's gaze, speaks through bloodied teeth.

ROMEO

I never injured thee,  
And so, good Capulet, which name I  
tender  
As dearly as mine own...

Romeo cautiously extracts his gun...

ROMEO (CONT.)

...be satisfied.

...and throws it at Tybalt's feet.

Storm clouds obscure the sun as Romeo turns and walks from  
the parking lot.

Mercutio, Benvolio and the others cannot believe their eyes.

MERCUTIO

O calm, dishonourable, vile  
submission!

EXT. BEACH - VACANT LOT. DAY.

Tybalt's anger must be answered. He ceremoniously disarms,  
gives his weapon to Abra, and sprints after Romeo who is now  
passing a beach side lot that houses an abandoned grand  
hotel. A bone-cracking kick sends Romeo crumbling into the  
vacant lot. The boys swarm toward the fray.

Romeo, still refusing the fight, scrambles up the stairs of the deserted hotel. Tybalt trips him and Romeo careens into an ornamental wooden railing, smashing it to pieces.

Tybalt kicks savagely at the helpless Romeo.

Suddenly, Mercutio appears running full tilt down the concrete terrace. He plucks up one of the splintered wooden palings and yells...

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Tybalt, you ratcatcher,

...as he bludgeons him across the face. Tybalt goes down.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Will you walk?

Tybalt leaps to his feet grabbing a lump of wood.

TYBALT

What wouldst thou have with me?

He swipes at Mercutio.

MERCUTIO

(avoiding)

Good King of Cats, nothing but one  
of your nine lives.

Mercutio jabs, Tybalt sidesteps.

TYBALT

I am for you.

Tybalt aims a double-handed blow to Mercutio's head. Mercutio blocks, hooking Tybalt's stick away.

Unarmed, Tybalt throws his full body weight upon Mercutio, slamming him against a window that shatters in a storm of glass.

Lightning fast, Mercutio jackknives to his feet. He raises his weapon to deliver a skull-crushing final blow to the trapped Tybalt. Romeo rushes between them.

ROMEO

Forbear this outrage, good Mercutio!

Seizing the opportunity, Tybalt lunges at Romeo with a lethal triangle of broken glass. He misses, gouging instead a slash of flesh from Mercutio's stomach.

A scream of excruciating pain as Mercutio grabs at his bloodied side. Everyone is still. In the abrupt silence, sirens are heard closing in the distance. Abra tugs at Tybalt.

ABRA

Away Tybalt!

They bolt for their vehicle.

Benvolio goes to Mercutio.

BENVOLIO

Art thou hurt?

But Mercutio, covering his wound with his hand, laughs.

MERCUTIO

Ay, ay, a scratch.

He turns to his assembled fans at the bottom of the stairs. With outrageous bravado he plays at being Caesar the conqueror.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

A scratch!

The boys cheer their conquering hero. Romeo helps Mercutio down the stairs.

ROMEO

Courage, man. The hurt cannot be much.

Mercutio holding his bleeding side, jokes through the pain.

MERCUTIO

'Twill serve. Ask for me tomorrow  
and you shall find me a grave man.

He turns the next thought to the assembled audience.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

(through crazy laughter)  
A plague o' both your houses!

Mercutio turns from the cheering boys to Romeo who is

struggling to support his weight.

Mercutio - through weak and desperate breathing.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

Why the devil came you between us?

I was hurt under your arm.

Romeo starts to register the panic in Mercutio's eyes.

ROMEO

I thought all for the best.

Like an animal trying to break free from a mortal trap, Mercutio pushes Romeo away. He screams in horror, as if falling in the dark:

MERCUTIO

A plague o' both your houses!  
They have made worms' meat of me.

Mercutio staggers down the stairs and collapses in the dirt. Romeo is there instantly, cradling his friend's head out of the dust. The dying boy stares back at Romeo, smiling through the chilling cold.

MERCUTIO (CONT.)

(a silent whisper)

Your houses!

Everything stands still, everything is quiet. The storm finally breaks.

EXT. BEACH - RAIN. DAY.

Tiny drops of water fall from the sky and bespeckle Mercutio's lifeless body. The droplets grow to a heavy rain. Romeo can hear the faint sound a thousand miles away of Benvolio whispering:

BENVOLIO

Mercutio is dead!

Tears streak Romeo's face. He cries out.

ROMEO

Oh sweet Juliet,  
Thy beauty hath made me effeminate  
And in my temper softened valor's  
steel!

The sound of Tybalt's vehicle starting brings back cold reality. Romeo's sorrow turns to uncontrollable rage.

Shrugging aside Benvolio's attempts to restrain him, Romeo

runs to his car.

EXT. BEACH - PARKING LOT. DAY.

Up ahead Tybalt's sedan screeches into a fishtailing U-turn and powers away.

Romeo jumps into his vehicle. In an effort to head Tybalt off, he guns his damaged machine down a one way street.

The rain is now blinding. Romeo stops for nothing; pedestrians flee, cars spin out of control.

EXT. VERONA BEACH STREETS - FROM AIR. DAY.

AERIAL SHOT: The two cars speed along parallel roads toward Plaza Jesu. Romeo is gaining.

EXT. VERONA STREET - CHRIST ROUNDABOUT. DAY.

CUT TO: Tybalt's car negotiating the immense roundabout at the foot of the statue of Jesus.

EXT. CHRIST ROUNDABOUT. DAY.

CUT TO: Romeo's car firing out of the one way street and slamming into Tybalt's car. Tybalt's car careens out of control up the stairs of the statue, clips the fountain, flips, and slides upside down onto the roadway.

CUT TO: Tybalt scrambling from his upturned vehicle.

CUT TO: Romeo running toward him.

SUDDENLY Romeo is halted by Tybalt's drawn gun. Fearlessly marching toward it, he screams through tears.

ROMEO

Mercutio's soul  
Is but a little way above our heads,

Romeo grabs the barrel of the gun; forcing it between his own eyes, he growls insanely at Tybalt.

ROMEO (CONT.)

Staying for thine to keep him  
company.

Tybalt, unnerved, tries to back off.

TYBALT

Thou, wretched boy, shalt with him  
hence.

Romeo, refusing to let go of the gun, forces Tybalt backward through the torrential rain.

ROMEO

(with frightening intensity)

Either thou or I, or both, must go  
with him.

Cars swerve, Romeo is relentless. He grips Tybalt's hand trying to force him to shoot.

ROMEO (CONT.)

Either thou or I, or both, must go  
with him.

Panicked, Tybalt wrenches free and lurches onto the roadway. Blinded by the headlights of an oncoming car he thuds onto its hood as it skids to a halt. The impact catapults his gun high into the air.

Romeo coldly follows its slow motion, spinning trajectory.

Real time stretches as the gun dances high above his head. Police sirens, cars swerving, people screaming, and the yelling of panicked commands fade to a nothingness.

Romeo stands calmly considering the gun in the air. A harrowing symphonic tone and the echo of Mercutio's voice can be heard.

MERCUTIO (V/O)

Why the devil came you between us?

CUT TO: Patrol cars sliding to a halt.

CUT TO: The spinning gun slowly falling to earth.

CUT TO: Tybalt rising from the ground.

CUT TO: Cops leaping from their cars.

CUT TO: The gun landing in Romeo's hand. His eyes full of rage.

CUT TO: Cops levelling their revolvers.

COP

(Romeo in his sights)  
Put up thy weapon.

CUT TO: Real time - Romeo fires three deliberate shots. Tybalt's body convulses backwards against the car, hitting it with a thud, bloodying the shattered windscreen.

The cop fires. A bullet grazes Romeo's arm - his gun drops as he screams.

ROMEO  
O, I am fortune's fool!

At that moment a roaring hurricane wind hits; blinding police.

CLOSE ON: The scaffolding surrounding the Jesus statue. Part of it's canvas covering rips away. Scaffold rains down as the insanely flapping material tries to smash free from it's moorings.

Through the mayhem, a rusty Ford driven by Balthasar, slides to a halt.

Balthasar screams out at Romeo.

BALTHASAR  
Romeo, away be gone! Stand not  
amazed!

Romeo collapses into the front seat.

The cops open fire as Balthasar speeds off into the storm.

INT. BALTHASAR'S CAR. AFTERNOON.

Romeo is bleeding from the bullet graze.

EXT. CAUSEWAY. AFTERNOON.

The gale-force winds throw waves across the causeway as the fugitives disappear into the black afternoon.

CRANE UP: In the distance we see Montague and Capulet towers. Divided by the statue of Christ, they suffer the storm's rage.

EXT. MONUMENT. AFTERNOON.

Away, below the outstretched arms of Christ, lights from emergency vehicles pulse red through the downpour.

THE CAMERA: Falls through heavy rain toward a woman crouched over the lifeless body of Tybalt.

She cries:

GLORIA

Tybalt!

Cops nervously eye Fulgencio Capulet and Ted Montague, who, both flanked by body guards, face each other across the crime scene. Medics stand by helplessly as Gloria clings to Tybalt's body. A handcuffed Benvolio looks on.

GLORIA (CONT.)

Tybalt, my cousin, O my brother's  
child!  
O, the blood is spilled of my dear  
kinsman.

Police lines part as Captain Prince arrives.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

Where are the vile beginners of  
this fray?

Benvolio struggles forward.

BENVOLIO

O noble Prince I can discover all  
The unlucky manage of this fatal  
brawl.

Gloria appeals hysterically:

GLORIA

Prince as thou art true,  
For blood of ours shed blood of  
Montague!

CAPTAIN PRINCE

Benvolio, who began this bloody fray?

BENVOLIO

(pointing to Tybalt's corpse)  
There lies the man, slain by young  
Romeo,  
That slew thy kinsman brave Mercutio.

Gloria interjects savagely.

GLORIA

He speaks not true! Affection  
makes him false!

BENVOLIO

Romeo, that spoke him fair, could  
not take  
Truce with the unruly spleen of  
Tybalt  
Deaf to peace!

GLORIA

He is a kinsman to the Montague!  
I beg for justice which thou Prince  
must give.  
Romeo slew Tybalt, Romeo must not  
live!

Captain Prince turns to Gloria.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

Romeo slew him, he slew Mercutio.  
Who now the price of his dear blood  
doth owe?

Ted Montague pleads:

MONTAGUE

Not Romeo, Prince, he was Mercutio's  
friend; His fault concludes but  
what the law should end,  
The life of Tybalt.

Captain Prince eyes Montague coldly.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

And for that offence  
Immediately we do exile him.

Montague, body guards in tow, surges forward.

MONTAGUE

Noble Prince...?

Prince silences him.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

I will be deaf to pleading and  
excuses;  
Nor tears nor prayers shall purchase  
out abuses.  
Therefore use none.

The Captain turns and addresses his assembled officers.

CAPTAIN PRINCE (CONT.)

Let Romeo hence in haste,  
Else, when he is found that hour is  
his last.

CLOSE ON: Captain Prince.

CAPTAIN PRINCE (CONT.)

Bear hence this body and attend our  
will.  
Mercy but murders, pardoning those  
that kill.

INT. JULIET'S BEDROOM. AFTERNOON.

An acoustic guitar version of Joy Division's 'Love Will Tear Us Apart.' Juliet traces the path of a raindrop on the window pane as she speaks her thoughts to the storm.

JULIET

Come gentle night, coming loving  
black browed night,  
Give me my Romeo. And when I shall  
die,  
Take him and cut him out in little  
stars,  
And he will make the face of heaven  
so fine  
That all the world will be in love  
with night,  
And pay no worship to the garish  
sun.  
O, I have bought the mansion of a  
love  
But not possessed it, and though I  
am sold,  
Not yet enjoyed. So tedious is  
this day  
As is the night before some festival  
To an impatient child that hath new  
robes  
And may not wear them.

EXT. CAPULET'S MANSION - DRIVEWAY. AFTERNOON.

Juliet's P.O.V.: The limousine pulls into the driveway.

PULL OUT: Of the window and CRANE DOWN: Juliet runs from the room.

EXT. CAPULET MANSION. AFTERNOON.

Through the open doorway we see an excited Juliet meet the Nurse at the bottom of the stairs.

The music surges.

TRACK IN: The Nurse's words are lost in the storm.

Juliet buckles.

INT. CAPULET MANSION. AFTERNOON.

We are close enough now to hear Juliet's words.

JULIET

Oh God! Did Romeo's hand shed  
Tybalt's blood?

NURSE

It did, it did! Alas the day, it  
did!

JULIET

Oh serpent heart, hid with a  
flowering face.  
Was ever book containing such vile  
matter  
So fairly bound? O, that deceit  
should dwell  
In such a gorgeous palace!

NURSE

There's no trust, No faith, no  
honesty in men. All perjured,  
All forsworn, all naught, all  
dissemblers.  
Shame come to Romeo.

JULIET

Blistered be thy tongue  
For such a wish! He was not born  
to shame. Upon his brow shame is  
ashamed to sit.

NURSE

Will you speak well of him that  
killed your cousin?

JULIET

Shall I speak ill of him that is my  
husband?  
Ah, poor my lord, what tongue shall  
smooth thy name  
When I, thy three-hours wife have  
mangled it?

But whyfore, villain, didst thou  
kill my cousin?  
That villain cousin would have  
killed my husband.  
All this is comfort, wherefore weep  
I then?  
Some word there was worser than  
Tybalt's death:  
I would forget it fain - exiled.  
Tybalt is dead, and Romeo exiled.  
To speak that word is father,  
mother,  
Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet, all slain,  
All dead.

Juliet sinks to the floor, overwhelmed by tears.

JULIET (CONT.)

Nurse, I'll to my wedding bed,  
And death, not Romeo, take my  
maidenhead.

Nurse looks down at Juliet. She goes and comforts her.

NURSE

Hie to your chamber. I'll find  
Romeo  
To comfort you. I know well where  
he is.  
Hark ye, your Romeo will be here at  
night.

Juliet looks up through tears.

JULIET

O find him, give this ring to my  
true knight,  
And bid him come to take his last  
farewell.

SLAM MACRO ZOOM: Into the ring. The screen fills with the  
words 'I love thee'.

INT. PRESBYTERY BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Romeo lies on the bed shirtless and crying. His wound has

been bandaged and Balthasar crouches frightened in the corner.

The priest leads the Nurse into the room.

Romeo looks up.

ROMEO

Nurse!

She goes to him.

NURSE

Ah sir! Ah sir! Death's the end  
of all.

ROMEO

Speakest thou of Juliet?  
Where is she? And how doth she?  
And what says  
My concealed lady to our cancelled  
love?

NURSE

O, she says nothing, sir, but weeps  
and weeps,  
And then on Romeo cries, and then  
falls down again.

Romeo is wailing inconsolably.

ROMEO

As if that name,  
Shot from the deadly level of a  
gun,  
Did murder her, as that name's  
cursed hand murdered her kinsman!

Father Laurence shakes the hysterical boy.

FATHER LAURENCE

I thought thy disposition better  
tempered!  
Thy Juliet is alive, There art thou  
happy.  
The law that threatened death  
becomes thy friend  
And turns it to exile. There art  
thou happy.  
A pack of blessings light upon thy  
back.

Romeo calms. The Nurse gives him the ring.

NURSE

Here sir, a ring my lady bid me  
give you.

Romeo enfolds the ring in his hand.

ROMEO

How well my comfort is revived by  
this.

The priest goes to his wardrobe, removes a clean white shirt  
and helps Romeo put it on.

FATHER LAURENCE

Go, get thee to thy love, as was  
decreed.  
Ascend her chamber. Hence and  
comfort her.  
But look thou stay not till the  
Watch be set,  
For then thou canst not pass to  
Mantua where thou shalt live till  
we can find a time  
To blaze your marriage, reconcile

your friends,  
Beg pardon of the Prince and call  
thee back,  
With twenty hundred thousand times  
more joy  
Than thou wentst forth in  
lamentation.

Father Laurence ushers Romeo from the room.

INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT.

They hurry down the hallway.

The priest opens the front door.

FATHER LAURENCE

Go hence. Be gone by the break of  
day  
Sojourn in Mantua. Give me thy hand.

Romeo embraces him.

ROMEO

Farewell.

The priest and Balthasar watch as Romeo and the Nurse sprint  
for the car.

INT. CAPULET MANSION. NIGHT.

Sobs echo through the house.

Dave Paris stands in the entrance hallway clutching a huge  
bunch of flowers.

Fulgencio Capulet stands beside him, whisky glass in hand.

CUT TO: Gloria on the upper landing. There is a strange  
faraway quality about her as she descends to Dave and  
Capulet.

GLORIA

She'll not come down tonight.

Dave, an understanding smile.

DAVE

These times of woe afford no times  
to woo.

Capulet guides Dave into the house.

CAPULET

Look you, she loved her kinsman  
Tybalt dearly.

GLORIA

(joining)  
And so did I.

CAPULET

(a cold glance at Gloria)  
Well, we were born to die.

Capulet takes a large slug of whisky. Gloria leans close to Dave.

GLORIA

I'll know her mind early tomorrow.  
Tonight she's mewed up to her  
heaviness.

As Gloria, Dave and Capulet exit down the hallway we CRANE  
UP: toward Juliet's bedroom door.

INT. JULIET'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: Juliet's face. Tears stream onto the pillow.  
Without warning a hand lightly touches her cheek. Juliet's  
eyes dart up to discover Romeo standing above her.

A still moment of disbelief. Leaning down, Romeo kisses  
away the tears that fall from her dark, wide eyes.

Juliet's lips find Romeo's and they gently sink back onto  
the bed.

INT. SITTING ROOM. NIGHT.

Capulet sits in an armchair drinking. Dave and Gloria sit  
opposite as Capulet whips himself into a frenzy of drunken  
excitement.

CAPULET

We'll keep no great ado - a friend  
or two.  
For, hark you, Tybalt being slain  
so late,  
It may be thought we held him  
carelessly,  
Being our kinsman if we revel  
much -  
But soft what day is this?

DAVE

Monday my lord.

CAPULET

Well Wednesday is too soon - what  
say you to Thursday?

Gloria looks up alarmed; Dave is stunned.

DAVE

My lord I...

CAPULET

(leaning close)  
I will make a desperate tender of  
my child's love.  
(a drunken good humour)  
I think she will be ruled in all  
respects by me;  
(exploding with  
hearty laughter)  
Nay, more, I doubt it not!

CUT TO: Gloria, her face hardens.

CAPULET

(to Dave)  
But what say you to Thursday?

Dave is trying to catch up.

DAVE

My lord I...

CUT TO: Capulet he eyes Dave intently.

DAVE (CONT.)

I would that Thursday were tomorrow.

Delighted, Capulet jumps to his feet.

CAPULET

A Thursday let it be then!

Capulet holds out his glass in toast. Dave and Gloria rise.

CAPULET

Wife, go you to Juliet ere you go  
to bed.  
Tell her, a Thursday she shall be  
married  
To this noble sir!

CLOSE ON: The glasses clink.

EXT. CAPULET ESTATE. DAWN.

A pink and gold dawn breaks over Capulet Mansion.

INT. JULIET'S BEDROOM. DAWN.

A tangle of young limbs.

Romeo and Juliet blissfully asleep. The dawn light creeps into the room.

EXT. CAPULET ESTATE. DAWN.

Balthasar's car covertly pulls into a side road near the estate.

INT. JULIET'S BEDROOM. DAWN.

Romeo and Juliet still asleep.

CRANE DOWN: Toward the sleeping innocence of the faces.

HOLD: A shadow of fear passes across Romeo's features.

With a cry of panic, he sits bolt upright.

Wide awake, but disorientated, Romeo stares around the room - as Juliet stirs, he remembers where he is.

Slipping quietly from the bed, Romeo begins to dress.

CLOSE ON: Romeo. A pair of lips enter frame and find his neck. It is Juliet. She hugs herself to him.

JULIET

Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet  
near day.

Romeo turns - softly he strokes her cheek.

ROMEO

I must be gone and live, or stay  
and die.

Juliet kisses his finger-tips.

JULIET

Yond light is not daylight,

And then his cheek...

JULIET (CONT.)

I know it, I  
It is some meteor that the sun  
exhales  
To light thee on thy way to Mantua.  
Therefore stay yet. Thou needest  
not to be gone.

Romeo, feverishly returning the kisses, throws himself on Juliet.

ROMEO

Let me be taken, let me be put to  
death.  
I have more care to stay than will  
to go.  
Come, death, and welcome! Juliet  
wills it so.

Juliet is suddenly still. Romeo kisses her gently.

ROMEO (CONT.)

How is't, my soul? Let's talk. It  
is not day.

Juliet pulls Romeo to his feet.

JULIET

It is, it is! Hie hence, be gone,  
away!  
O, now be gone! More light and  
light it grows.

Frantically she helps him into his clothes.

ROMEO

More light and light: more dark and  
dark our woes.

There is an urgent knocking on the door. They freeze.

NURSE (O/S)

Madam!

JULIET

Nurse!

NURSE (O/S)

Your lady mother is coming to your  
chamber.

JULIET

Then, window, let day in, and let  
life out.

Desperately Juliet pulls Romeo out onto the balcony.

EXT. BALCONY. DAWN.

The storm, now past, has left a morning achingly pure.

ROMEO

Farewell, farewell. One kiss, and  
I'll descend.

Romeo climbs down from the balcony and into the shadows.

JULIET

O, think'st thou we shall ever meet  
again?

Romeo smiles up at her.

ROMEO

I doubt it not;

Juliet's face darkens.

JULIET

O God, I have an ill-divining soul.  
Methinks I see thee, now thou art  
so low,  
As one dead in the bottom of a tomb.

Romeo scrambles back up to the balcony.

ROMEO

Trust me, love, all these woes  
shall serve  
For sweet discourses in our times  
to come.

From Juliet's bedroom comes the brittle sound of Gloria  
Capulet's voice.

GLORIA

Ho daughter! Are you up?

Juliet spins around. Gloria has parted the curtains and is  
staring directly at her daughter.

GLORIA

Well, well.

CUT TO: Romeo sheltered just below the lip of the balcony.

FOLLOW: His hand, as it slowly reaches up and touches  
Juliet's fingers hidden behind her back.

Gloria returns to the room. Juliet steals a glance toward  
Romeo as he silently mouths:

ROMEO

Adieu, adieu!

As Romeo's face disappears into the shadows Juliet whispers a little prayer to herself.

JULIET

O Fortune, Fortune! Be fickle,  
Fortune,  
For then I hope thou wilt not keep  
him long  
But send him back.

INT. JULIET'S BEDROOM. DAWN.

Juliet is trying not to cry as she goes in to her mother. Gloria turns to her.

GLORIA

Thou hast a careful father, child:  
One who, to put thee from thy  
heaviness,  
Hath sorted out a sudden day of joy  
That thou expects not nor I looked  
not for.

Juliet plays along.

JULIET

Madam, in happy time. What day is  
that?

Gloria takes a deep breath.

GLORIA

Marry, my child, early next Thursday  
morn  
The gallant, young, and noble  
gentleman,  
Sir Paris, at Saint Peter's Church,  
Shall happily make thee there a  
joyful bride.

CLOSE ON: Juliet. She can barely speak.

JULIET

Now by Saint Peter's Church, and

Peter too,  
He shall not make me there a joyful  
bride!

Fear passes across Gloria's face.

GLORIA  
Here comes your father. Tell him  
so yourself.

Capulet - whisky glass in hand - ebulliently bursts into the  
room.

CAPULET  
How now, wife?  
Have you delivered to her our decree?

GLORIA  
Ay, sir. But she will none, she  
gives you thanks.  
I would the fool were married to  
her grave!

Capulet - a dangerous calm.

CAPULET  
How? Will she none?  
Is she not proud? Doth she not  
count her blest,  
Unworthy as she is, that we have  
wrought  
So worthy a gentleman to be her  
bride?

JULIET  
Not proud you have, but thankful  
that you have.  
Proud can I never be of what I hate.

PAUSE: Capulet considers his daughter, then -

BAM! He hurls his glass against the wall, shattering it  
into a thousand pieces.

CAPULET  
Thank me no thankings, nor proud me  
no prouds,

But fettle your fine joints 'gainst  
Thursday next ...

Capulet advances. Juliet, terrified, retreats into the hallway.

JULIET  
Hear me with patience but to speak  
a word...

INT. LANDING. DAY.

The Nurse appears as Capulet picks his daughter up and shakes her like a rag doll.

CAPULET  
Speak not, reply not, do not answer  
me!

He throws her to the floor. His fist thuds as it slams into her face.

GLORIA  
(screaming)  
Fie, fie! What are you mad?

Gloria tries to restrain Capulet. He back-hands her, sending her flying against the wall - bellowing insanely, he advances on his cowering daughter.

CAPULET  
Hang thee, young baggage!  
Disobedient wretch.

The Nurse throws herself between Capulet and Juliet.

NURSE  
God in heaven bless her!  
You are to blame, my lord, to rate  
her so.

Furious, Capulet shunts her aside.

CAPULET  
Peace, you mumbling fool!

Capulet yanks his daughter's face close to his.

CAPULET (CONT.)

I tell thee what - get thee to  
church a Thursday  
Or never after look me in the face.  
And you be mine, I'll give you to  
my friend.  
And you be not, hang, beg, starve,  
die in the streets,  
Trust to it. Bethink you. I'll  
not be forsworn.

Capulet storms off down the hall.

CLOSE ON: Juliet. She huddles, shaking at the top of the  
stairs.

JULIET

O sweet my mother, cast me not  
away!  
Delay this marriage for a month, a  
week.  
Or if you do not, make the bridal  
bed  
In that dim monument where Tybalt  
lies.

A trickle of blood issues from Gloria's cut lip. She checks  
her appearance in the hall mirror.

GLORIA

Talk not to me, for I'll not speak  
a word.  
Do as thou wilt, for I have done  
with thee.

Gloria leaves.

JULIET

O God! - O Nurse, how shall this be  
prevented?

The Nurse doesn't reply.

JULIET (CONT.)

What sayest thou? Hast thou not a  
word of joy?

Some comfort, Nurse.

A heavy silence.

The Nurse goes to Juliet.

NURSE

Faith, here it is.  
I think it best you married with  
this Paris.  
O, he's a lovely gentleman!  
I think you are happy in this  
second match,  
For it excels your first; or if it  
did not,  
Your first is dead - or 'twere as  
good he were  
As living here and you no use of him.

Juliet is very still.

JULIET

Speakest thou from thy heart?

NURSE

And from my soul too. Else beshrew  
them both.

JULIET

Amen.

NURSE

(unsure)

What?

Juliet is matter of fact.

JULIET

Well, thou hast comforted me  
marvellous much.  
Go in; and tell my lady I am gone,  
Having displeased my father, to  
Friar Laurence,  
To make confession and to be  
absolved.

The old woman nods. She strokes Juliet's hair.

NURSE  
This is wisely done.

Juliet does not look up.

A disturbing choral chant:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHURCH. DAY.

Sunlight pierces stained glass - the chant a sinister underscoring. We hear Dave Paris' voice:

DAVE (O/S)  
Immoderately she weeps for Tybalt's  
death...

CRANE DOWN: Father Laurence and Dave Paris stand at the front of the church.

DAVE (CONT.)  
...Now, sir, her father counts it  
dangerous  
That she doth give her sorrow so  
much sway,  
And in his wisdom hastes our  
marriage  
To stop the inundation of her  
tears...

Father Laurence turns. Juliet stands framed in the white glare of the doorway.

Dave smiles.

DAVE  
Happily met, my lady and my wife.

CLOSE ON: Juliet's hand concealed beneath her coat - we can just see the handle of a gun.

Juliet advances slowly, an icy calm:

JULIET  
That may be, sir, when I may be a

wife.

DAVE

That 'may be', must be, love, on  
Thursday next.

Juliet stares past Dave.

JULIET

What must be, shall be.

Father Laurence, a forced cheerfulness.

FATHER LAURENCE

That's a certain text.

DAVE

Come you to make confession?

Juliet forces a smile.

JULIET

Are you at leisure, holy father,  
now?  
Or shall I come to you at evening  
mass?

FATHER LAURENCE

My leisure serves me, pensive  
daughter, now.

(to Dave)

We must entreat the time alone.

DAVE

God shield I should disturb  
devotion! - Juliet, on Thursday  
early will I rouse ye;

Dave bends.

CLOSE ON: Juliet; she stares stonily ahead as Dave kisses  
her cheek.

DAVE (CONT.)

Till then, adieu, and keep this  
holy kiss.

Dave leaves.

TRACK WITH: Juliet; she runs for the sacristy.

The priest follows.

INT. SACRISTY. DAY.

Juliet, shaking with sobs takes refuge in the shadows of the small room.

The priest goes to her.

FATHER LAURENCE

O Juliet, I already know thy grief.

Juliet pulls away.

JULIET

Tell me not, Father, that thou  
hearest of this,  
Unless thou tell me how I may  
prevent it.

FATHER LAURENCE

It strains me past the compass of  
my wits.

JULIET

(desperately)

If in thy wisdom thou canst give no  
help  
Do thou but call my resolution  
wise,  
And with this I'll help it presently!

She pulls the gun, pointing it towards herself.

Horrified, Father Laurence moves to her.

Juliet, panicked, levels the gun at him.

FATHER LAURENCE

Hold daughter!

JULIET

(through tears)

Be not so long to speak. I lone to  
die!

Father Laurence holds out a soothing hand.

FATHER LAURENCE

I do spy a kind of hope,  
Which craves as desperate an  
execution  
As that is desperate which we would  
prevent.  
If, rather than marry Paris,  
Thou hast the strength of will to  
slay thyself,  
Then it is likely thou wilt  
undertake  
A thing like death...

We hear the distended chords of Fauré's Requiem.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

to chide away this shame...

It continues throughout as;

The entire screen fills with a glinting tear drop of blue  
liquid.

Reflected in the fluid's convex surface, the face of Father  
Laurence.

The face disappears as the tear drop falls and splashes into  
a clear water solution.

Like a comet in slow motion, the drop stains the water a  
cobalt hue.

INT. GREENHOUSE WORKROOM. DAY.

PULL BACK: The blue liquid fills a tiny glass vial held by  
Father Laurence.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

No warmth, no breath shall testify  
thou livest.  
Each part, deprived of supple  
government,

Shall stiff and stark and cold  
appear, like death.  
Now when the bridegroom in the  
morning  
Comes to rouse thee from thy bed,  
there art thou, dead.  
Thou shalt be borne to that same  
ancient vault  
Where all the kindred of the  
Capulets lie.  
In the meantime, against thou shalt  
awake,  
Shall Romeo by my letters know our  
drift,  
And hither shall he come.  
And that very  
Night shall Romeo bear thee hence  
to Mantua.

The priest cautiously hands Juliet the vial.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

Take thou this vial, being then in  
bed,  
And this distilling liquor drink  
thou off.  
I'll send my letters to thy lord  
with speed to Mantua.

EXT. CHURCH. DAY.

As Father Laurence speaks, the screen fills with an express envelope addressed "Romeo - Mantua." The envelope pulls away from the camera and falls into a canvas bag brimming with hundreds of like envelopes.

TRACK: With the canvas bag. It continues its journey into the back of an express delivery van.

Heavy double doors slam shut, filling the screen with the slogan 'Speed Express.'

The van pulls away.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MANTUA. DAY.

A burning red sun is setting over an endless vista of ragged wasteland.

CRANE DOWN: A weathered sign reads - Mantua: Behind it a vast colony of permanent trailer homes stretches into the distance.

The rap, rap, rap of knocking echoes through the park...

CUT TO: The source of the knocking. An express delivery man, envelope in hand, raps vigorously on the door of an unremarkable trailer.

INT. TRAILER. DAY.

TOPOGRAPHICAL SHOT: Romeo lies flat on a single bed in the crumpled trailer.

The rap, rap, rap is very loud now. We move toward Romeo and realise he cannot hear the knocking because he has Walkman headphones on.

EXT. TRAILER. DAY.

Unsuccessful, the delivery man is filling out a "WE CALLED" card. He pushes it under the door.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CAPULET MANSION. NIGHT.

The heraldic 'Wedding Chimes' by JS Bach. Juliet stands resplendent in a radiant bridal gown. The image floats ethereally in a towering slab of mirror.

PULL OUT: From the mirror. The wedding dress is in fact being held in front of Juliet by two members of the house staff. Juliet is dressed in her night gown. The Nurse suggests various pairs of shoes.

JULIET  
(disinterested)  
Ay, these attires are best.

The fuss dispensed with, the staff leave.

JULIET

But, gentle Nurse,  
I pray thee leave me to myself  
tonight.

NURSE

Why Bride?

Juliet navigates the Nurse toward the door.

JULIET

(almost in tears)  
To move the heavens to smile upon  
my state,  
Which, well thou knowest, is cross  
and full of sin.

Juliet holds the Nurse in a pleading stare. She leaves.

Alone now, Juliet hurries to her bedside drawer. She cautiously removes a rolled piece of cloth from which she produces the glass vial.

JULIET

(whispers)  
What if this mixture do not work at  
all?  
Shall I be married then tomorrow  
morning?

She cautiously begins to unscrew the tiny black lid. Suddenly, a knock at her door. Palming the vial, Juliet swings around to meet the arrival of her mother. Gloria probes her daughter's uneasiness.

GLORIA

What, are you busy, ho? Need you  
my help?

JULIET

(makes light of it)  
No, madam. We have culled such  
necessaries  
As are behoveful for our state  
tomorrow.  
So please you, let me now be left  
alone,

And let the Nurse this night sit up  
with you.

Juliet begins to pull down the covers on her bed.

JULIET (CONT.)

For I am sure you have your hands  
full all  
In this so sudden business.

Gloria, sensing Juliet's distress, moves cautiously toward her. Taking hold of the bed covers she helps her daughter into bed.

GLORIA

Good night.

Juliet slides into bed. Gloria covers her with the blanket.

GLORIA (CONT.)

Get thee to bed, and rest, for thou  
hast need.

A brief moment between mother and daughter. Gloria, unable to cross that final barrier, moves to the door; but she is stopped by the urgency in Juliet's voice.

JULIET

Farewell!

Gloria turns to Juliet.

JULIET (CONT.)

God knows when we shall meet again.

CLOSE ON: Gloria. A faint perplexity, and then with an almost warm smile she turns out the light and leaves.

The room is in darkness but for patterns of moonlight through windows.

TRACK: Toward Juliet. The sombre tones of Fauré's Requiem seep into our consciousness.

JULIET

I have a faint cold fear thrills  
through my veins

That almost freezes up the heat of  
life.

She brings the vial her mouth.

JULIET (CONT.)

Come, vial. Romeo, I drink to thee.

Juliet drinks, a sudden violent convulsion, her face contorts  
in fear.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CAPULET ESTATE. DAY.

The sky is filled with green and grey clouds. A gusty rain  
blows the flower arrangements across the lawn. Large white  
wedding marquees flap in the wind.

Through blurring rain, we see ambulances and police vehicles,  
lights flashing. Father Laurence, accompanied by a dour  
looking man in black, alights from his car. We follow their  
P.O.V.: We hear snatches of radio calls.

MEDIC ONE (OVER RADIO)

Mortal drugs?

MEDIC TWO (OVER RADIO)

Of lethal quantity as 'twould  
render death.

INT. CAPULET MANSION - DINING ROOM. DAY.

They enter the house and pass the vast dining room, bedecked  
with wedding decorations.

Capulet sits at the large mahogany table. In the background  
Gloria stares vacantly.

Moving swiftly toward a doorway, the music builds.

INT. CAPULET MANSION - JULIET'S BEDROOM. DAY.

The door opens. On the bed Juliet's still body. Father  
Laurence closes the door. The priest kneels and hastily  
examines Juliet's pupils. He looks to the man in black who  
retrieves the glass vial from the floor and pockets it.

FATHER LAURENCE  
(to the man in black)  
As the custom is,  
In all her best array bear her to  
church.

When the man in black allows two other dark suited men into the room, it becomes clear he is the undertaker.

UNDERTAKER  
She shall be borne to that same  
ancient vault  
Where all the kindred of the  
Capulets lie.

INT. MAUSOLEUM. DAY.

A thousand voices proclaim the 'Song of Ascension.'

PAN DOWN: From the vaulting glass ceiling of the Capulet mausoleum.

On view, enshrined in literally thousands of lit candles, is Juliet's peaceful body.

We move through lines of Capulet mourners. In the shadows of the front door a young man hides.

CLOSE ON: The young man. We recognise the distressed face of Balthasar.

PUSH IN: Balthasar rushes from the Mausoleum.

EXT. MANTUA. DAY.

We are high above Mantua. Beyond the trailer park stretches a long ribbon of black highway.

As a Speed Express van turns off the highway and into the park, we hear Romeo's voice over:

ROMEO (V/O)  
If I may trust the flattering truth  
of sleep  
My dreams presage some joyful news  
at hand...

CRANE DOWN: The Express van pulls up at the front office.  
The driver alights and goes inside.

INT. TRAILER. DAY.

Romeo sits at the trailer's small kitchen table smoking and writing in his notebook. The "WE CALLED" card lies next to an overflowing ashtray.

His voice over continues.

ROMEO (V/O)

And all this day an unaccustomed  
spirit  
Lifts me above the ground with  
cheerful thoughts.  
I dreamt my lady came and found me  
dead  
And breathed such life with kisses  
in my lips  
That I revived and was an emperor.  
Ah me, how sweet is love itself  
possessed  
When but love's shadows are so rich  
in joy.

Stubbing out his cigarette, Romeo gazes through the trailer window to see Balthasar's speeding car turn off the highway and into the trailer park.

ROMEO

News from Verona!

An excited Romeo rushes from the trailer.

EXT. TRAILER PARK. DAY.

CRANE HIGH: Romeo sprints across open ground to intercept Balthasar's car. We see, but Romeo cannot, the Express van approaching from the office. The car slews to a halt and Balthasar jumps out.

Romeo yells joyously.

ROMEO

How now, Balthasar?

Balthasar cannot speak.

ROMEO (CONT.)

Dost thou not bring me letters from  
the Priest?  
How doth my lady? Is my father  
well?  
How doth my lady Juliet? That I  
ask again,  
For nothing can be ill if she be  
well.

Balthasar does not know how to say what he has come to tell.  
He looks away.

BALTHASAR

Then she is well and nothing can be  
ill.  
Her body sleeps in Capels' monument,  
And her immortal part with angels  
lives.  
I saw her laid low in her kindred's  
vault.

For a long moment Romeo is profoundly still. When he  
speaks, it is with a chilling calm.

ROMEO

Is it e'en so?

Balthasar nods.

Romeo turns and stares into the distant wasteland.

CLOSE ON: He speaks with bitter determination.

ROMEO

Then I defy you stars.

Romeo moves to the car.

ROMEO

I will hence tonight.

Balthasar tries to restrain him.

BALTHASAR

Have patience...

Exploding with fury, Romeo throws Balthasar against the vehicle.

ROMEO

Leave me!

CUT TO: The Speed Express messenger. Returning to his truck, the priest's undelivered envelope in his hand, the messenger looks toward the two boys.

CUT TO: The boys. Balthasar pleads with Romeo.

BALTHASAR

Your looks are pale and wild and do  
import  
Some misadventure.

ROMEO

(with cold serenity)  
Tush, thou art deceived.  
(a niggling thought)  
Hast thou no letters to me from the  
Priest?

Balthasar shakes his head.

Romeo smiles.

ROMEO

No matter - I will hence tonight.

Romeo climbs into the passenger seat of the car. Balthasar reluctantly gets behind the wheel.

As silent tears begin to flow, Romeo turns his face to the setting sun.

PUSH IN: As he whispers:

ROMEO

Well Juliet, I will lie with thee  
tonight.

Balthasar's car roars out of the park.

CUT TO: The delivery man. He looks to the envelope in his hand, then gets back into his truck.

EXT. HIGHWAY. NIGHT.

Balthasar's car speeds along the night-time highway.

CRANE UP: In the distance the glow of city lights.

EXT. ALLEYWAY. NIGHT.

Balthasar's car pulls into an alley and stops outside a decrepity apartment block.

INT. APARTMENT BLOCK. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: A bespectacled eye peers through the crack of a partly open doorway. Below the face, the barrel of a shotgun protrudes menacingly.

CUT TO: Romeo in the dark, paint peeling hallway.

ROMEO

Let me have  
A dram of poison, such soon-  
speeding gear  
As will disperse itself through all  
the veins  
That the life-weary taker may fall  
dead.

The eye considers, a voice rasps back.

APOTHECARY

Such mortal drugs I have, but  
Verona's law  
Is death to any he that utters them.

Romeo speaks with fury.

ROMEO

The world is not thy friend, nor  
the world's law.  
Then be not poor, but break it and  
take this.

Romeo shoves a wad of money at THE APOTHECARY'S face.

BEAT. The rattle of a latch chain and the door swings open.

Standing in the doorway is The Apothecary. Sixty something, he has a face scarred with age and abuse.

APOTHECARY

My poverty, but not my will consents.

CLOSE ON: Romeo.

ROMEO

I pay thy poverty and not thy will.

INT. PRESBYTERY. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: Father Laurence. He speaks into the telephone with concern.

FATHER LAURENCE

Who bore my letter then to Romeo?

INT. SPEED EXPRESS DEPOT. NIGHT.

A bored clerk is on the other end of the line. The priest's letter is on the counter beside him.

CLERK

I could not sent it - here it is again.

INT. PRESBYTERY. NIGHT.

Father Laurence is worried.

FATHER LAURENCE

By my brotherhood, unhappy fortune!  
The letter was of dear import.

(PAUSE: the priest listens)

Adieu.

He hangs up the receiver and looks at the wall clock.

FATHER LAURENCE (CONT.)

Now must I to the monument alone.  
Within this hour will fair Juliet  
awake.

DISSOLVE FROM: The clock to...

INT. APOTHECARY'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: A cat skitters across a stained formica table.

PULL BACK: The Apothecary's apartment is filled with cats. Dozens of feline eyes glow in the dim room. Romeo stands nervously. The Apothecary extracts a small chemist's vial from inside a 'Statue of Our Lady' table lamp - he now speaks with cool professionalism.

APOTHECARY

Drink it off and if you had the  
strength of twenty men it would  
dispatch you straight.

Romeo takes the vial and hands over the money.

ROMEO

There is my gold - worse poison to  
men's souls  
Than these poor compounds that thou  
mayst not sell.

INT. BALTHASAR'S CAR. NIGHT.

Motor running, Balthasar waits in the alley outside the  
apartment building. He checks the rear view mirror and  
freezes. At the end of the alleyway a police car crawls to  
a halt.

EXT. ALLEYWAY. NIGHT.

Romeo exits the building, and as he does so, the streetlight  
catches his face. The Cop's and Romeo's eyes meet.

INT. POLICE CAR. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: The cop.

COP

This is that banished haughty  
Montague.

INT. BALTHASAR'S CAR.

Balthasar cracks; he guns the engine and the car lurches  
forward.

EXT. ALLEYWAY. NIGHT.

Tires screech as Romeo dives into the passenger seat of  
Balthasar's moving vehicle.

Siren blaring, the police car gives chase.

AERIAL SHOT. NIGHT.

Balthasar's car winds through traffic - the patrol car

gaining.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF TOWN. NIGHT.

A police car U-turns over a median strip.

EXT. BALTHASAR'S CAR. NIGHT.

TIGHT ON: A rusted brown hood.

The tortured engine screams as Balthasar negotiates the speeding car through city traffic.

CRANE UP: Red and blue police light approach fast.

INT. PRECINCT OFFICE. NIGHT.

Captain Prince barrels through the corridors of police headquarters pulling on his flying jacket.

EXT. STREET. NIGHT.

TIGHT ON: A smoking tire as it lays rubber to the asphalt.

Balthasar grits his teeth as he weaves the car through the impossibly tight space between a container truck and a bus.

WHIP PAN: The patrol car is almost upon them when... in a seemingly suicidal manoeuvre Balthasar throws his car into a right-angle turn across four lanes of oncoming traffic. Horns blare.

CUT TO: A skidding, squealing, out of control sedan, braking to avoid collision.

Miraculously, Balthasar's vehicle shoots out of its path and onto the other side of the roadway.

The sedan slams into the following patrol car.

EXT. DRIVEWAY. NIGHT.

Balthasar's car speeds into the driveway of the Verona Beach Eternal Rest Cemetery.

INT. CHOPPER. NIGHT.

Captain Prince scans the night time city below. He speaks to the pilot and the chopper banks sharply.

EXT. CEMETERY. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: A stone angel etched against the night sky.

PAN DOWN: Romeo pulls a crowbar from the trunk of the parked car. Police sirens sound in the distance.

Romeo eyes Balthasar intently.

ROMEO

Upon thy life, whatever thou  
hearest  
Or seest, stand all aloof. Give me  
the light -

Balthasar stands motionless - Romeo rips the torch from his hands and strides into the cemetery. Balthasar follows.

BALTHASAR

I do beseech you...

Romeo turns, punching Balthasar hard; he goes down, blood spurting from his nose.

ROMEO

Do not interrupt me in my course or  
By heaven I will tear thee joint by  
joint  
And strew this hungry churchyard  
with thy limbs!

Balthasar slowly rises. Both boys are trying hard not to cry.

ROMEO (CONT.)

The time and my intents are savage  
wild,  
More fierce and more inexorable far  
Than empty tigers or the roaring sea.

BALTHASAR

I will be gone and not trouble ye.

Romeo smiles.

ROMEO

So shalt thou show me friendship.

They embrace as Romeo whispers.

ROMEO (CONT.)

Live, and be prosperous; and  
farewell, good fellow.

EXT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: A crowbar wrenches at ornate glass and iron doors.

PULL BACK: The Gothic structure of the mausoleum rears  
against the night sky. Romeo frenziedly attacks the gates  
of the small side chapel.

ROMEO

Thou detestable maw, thou womb of  
death,  
Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to  
open.

With a final heave the doors scrape open.

Silence.

ROMEO'S P.O.V.: An endless marble corridor lit by hundreds  
of tiny flickering eternal flames.

CLOSE ON: Romeo. He murmurs:

ROMEO

In despite I'll cram thee with more  
food.

Suddenly a hurricane wind and whirr of machinery: like a huge black insect, Captain Prince's chopper swoops down over the mausoleum.

Romeo is caught in the glare of the chopper's burning arc light. Sirens scream, police units race through the cemetery.

Blinded, Romeo fires wildly toward the chopper.

The police cars screech to a halt.

CLOSE ON: A police marksman in the chopper. His finger squeezes the rifle trigger.

BANG! A bullet slams into Romeo's shoulder. The other cops open fire and Romeo is sent reeling backwards into the mausoleum in a fusillade of bullets.

INT. CHOPPER. NIGHT.

An angry Captain Prince bellows into the radio.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

Hold! Hold!

The police hold their fire.

INT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

Bleeding from the shoulder wound, Romeo drags shut the heavy double doors of the chapel. He bangs off three shots through a pane of broken glass and screams at the police.

ROMEO

Stand all aloof!

EXT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

Outside the chopper hovers. Police take up siege positions. Captain Prince's voice echoes through the bullhorn.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

Romeo, come forth, come forth.

INT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

Romeo uses the crowbar to wedge the doors shut. He bangs off another shot as he yells out at the Police.

ROMEO

Tempt not a desperate man!

Romeo waits. There is no response from the cops.

INT. CHOPPER. NIGHT.

As the chopper settles to earth, Captain Prince speaks into the radio.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

Bring forth these enemies Montague  
and Capulet.

INT. PRIEST'S CAR. NIGHT.

Orange rescue lights reflect through the windshield of the priest's car as it crawls past the crashed sedan and police vehicle.

Father Laurence thumps the steering wheel in frustration.

FATHER LAURENCE

Saint Francis be my speed tonight!

Across the road Police swarm around the entrance to the cemetery.

FATHER LAURENCE

Fear comes upon me.  
O, much I fear some ill unthrifty  
thing.

HOLD ON: The green glow of the car clock as the seconds pulse away.

INT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

TRACK: Down the marble corridor lit by the eternal flames.

DISCOVER: Romeo. He weakly stands at the entrance to the

viewing chapel.

The chapel is dark.

As Romeo's eyes adjust he can just see, picked out by a shaft of blue moonlight, the glowing figure of a sleeping girl. He moves down the aisle past the tombs of long-dead Capulets.

Romeo is close now. He halts as if in the presence of an unbelievable vision. He lights a match and the room glows gold. The warm light reveals a Juliet even more beautiful in seeming death.

Romeo lights some of the hundreds of candles that surround her.

ROMEO

O my love, my wife,  
Death, that hath sucked the honey  
of thy breath,  
Hath had no power yet upon thy  
beauty,  
Thou art not conquered. Beauty's  
ensign yet  
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy  
cheeks,  
And death's pale flag is not  
advanced there.

Romeo kneels close, as if not wanting to wake a sleeping child. Unconscious tears fall from his eyes as he whispers.

ROMEO (CONT.)

Ah, dear Juliet, why art thou yet  
so fair?  
Shall I believe that unsubstantial  
death  
Is amorous and keeps thee here in  
dark  
To be his paramour? For fear of  
that  
I still will stay with thee. Here,  
oh here  
Will I set up my everlasting rest  
And shake the yoke of inauspicious  
stars

From this world-wearied flesh.

He lays himself close.

ROMEO (CONT.)

Eyes, look your last.  
Arms, take your last embrace. And,  
lips, O you  
The doors of breath, seal with a  
righteous kiss...

Gently Romeo kisses Juliet's lips. Ever so slightly,  
Juliet's hand moves - Romeo does not notice.

ROMEO (CONT.)

A dateless bargain to engrossing  
death.

Romeo drinks from the vial; the power of the compound is  
immediate. He convulses and falls, his head resting on  
Juliet.

ROMEO (CONT.)

(fighting for breath)

O true apothecary, thy drugs are  
quick.

Behind Romeo's head we can see Juliet's eyes opening. Romeo  
sucks the last few breaths of life into his lungs. Through  
a blurry consciousness Juliet becomes aware of Romeo.

JULIET

Oh Romeo, what's here?

Forcing herself up, she cradles his head in her arms.  
Romeo's clear wide eyes stare back, he is completely still  
but for the sound of weak breaths desperately drawn across  
motionless lips.

Juliet finds the vial clenched in Romeo's hand. Tears slip  
from her eyes.

JULIET (CONT.)

Drunk all, and left  
No friendly drop to help me after.  
I will kiss thy lips.  
Haply some poison yet doth hang on

them  
To make me die with a restorative.

She delicately kisses Romeo's lips.

JULIET (CONT.)  
(a heart-broken whisper)  
Thy lips are warm.

Desperately the lovers cling to each other. With all his desire to stay alive, Romeo whispers:

ROMEO  
Thus with a kiss I die.

There is no breath. He is still. Silence. Sobbing, Juliet hugs the lifeless Romeo to her.

JULIET  
Romeo. O' my true love Romeo.

She looks to the gun in his hand.

EXT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

TRACK: Quickly past Captain Prince and the Capulets taking cover behind a patrol car.

Two police officers urgently convey Montague and his wife toward them.

Discover Father Laurence arriving.

CUT TO: Father Laurence's P.O.V.: Patrol cars, lights flashing, surround the mausoleum.

He sees, through the open door of a police car, a handcuffed youth. It is Balthasar. Father Laurence hurries to him.

It is dawning on Father Laurence.

FATHER LAURENCE  
Balthasar?

BALTHASAR  
(desperately)

I brought news of Juliet's death...  
And then in post came Romeo from  
Mantua  
To this same place... to this same  
monument.

CLOSE ON: Father Laurence.

FATHER LAURENCE  
How long hath he been there?

BALTHASAR  
Full half an hour.

Father Laurence turns towards the mausoleum.

FATHER LAURENCE  
Romeo.  
(a shock of realisation)  
The lady stirs...

INT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

TRACK SLOW TOWARD: Juliet: Sobbing uncontrollably she prises  
the gun from Romeo's hand.

EXT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

Father Laurence, desperate, breaks through the police line  
and runs toward the mausoleum.

CUT TO: The parents and Captain Prince.

CAPTAIN PRINCE  
Hold! Go not forth!

INT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

Juliet turns the gun on herself.

EXT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

CLOSE ON: Father Laurence, he screams as he mounts the  
mausoleum stairs.

FATHER LAURENCE  
The lady stirs!

CRACK! The sound of a single gun shot rips through the night.

CUT TO: Captain Prince.

CUT TO: The parents, a look of cold shock.

CUT TO: The priest - his cry echoes through the night.

INT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

Juliet lies peacefully on Romeo's chest. Her eyes awake. A wash of deep red blood floods across them both. As we move away from the forms of the two young lovers lit by a ring of candles, the police burst in, guns ready to resolve what has already been resolved. Continuing up, we pass through the glass dome of the viewing chapel, and over the building.

EXT. MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

There, huddled at the base of the Mausoleum steps, are the Montague and Capulet parents and Father Laurence.

From high up we see Captain Prince emerge from the Mausoleum and speak to the group. A moment, then their cries float gently up.

EXT. SKY. NIGHT.

We are travelling high into the sky now. The cries of the parents and the buzz of radio calls fade to nothing.

EXT. VERONA BEACH STREET - CHRIST ROUNDABOUT-FROM AIR.  
DAWN.

As the sun struggled to rise, we push toward the figure of Jesus silently surveying the city.

EXT. VERONA BEACH - CHRIST ROUNDABOUT. DAWN.

As Jesus' face fills the screen, droplets of water begin to streak his cheeks.

HOLD: Music swells; the droplets grow to a torrent, and a heavy rain begins to fall.

For a long beat, we stay with this image.

CRANE DOWN: From the Jesus. A sea of black umbrellas stretches back from the steps of Freedom Tower.

EXT. FREEDOM TOWER. DAY.

At the top of the steps are a pair of flower strewn caskets. Before the caskets stand Fulgencia and Gloria Capulet, and Ted and Caroline Montague. They stare with blank, uncomprehending sorrow.

Among the crowd we see the distraught faces of Benvolio, Balthasar, Father Laurence and the Nurse.

The caskets are gently slid into a pair of long black cars. Montague and Capulet descend the stairs. Captain Prince blocks their path. He holds them in his gaze.

CAPTAIN PRINCE

See what a scourge is laid upon  
your hate,  
That heaven finds means to kill  
your joys with love;  
And I, for winking at your discords  
too,  
Have lost a brace of kinsmen. All  
are punished.

The Prince steps aside. The procession moves off. Montague and Capulet look to one another, a moment, and then the two adversaries together follow the bodies of their dead children.

AERIAL SHOT: The rain falls. Two black cars lead the people of Verona Beach in a sorrowful parade.

As the cars pass beneath the towering effigy of Jesus, the image pixilates into a television picture.

PULL OUT: A TV anchor woman watches the image on a studio monitor.

She turns:

ANCHOR WOMAN

(to camera)

A glooming peace this morning with  
it brings:  
The sun for sorrow will not show  
his head.  
Go hence, to have more talk of  
these sad things.  
Some shall be pardoned, and some  
punished,  
For never was a story of more woe  
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

The anchor woman changes beat to the next story; but her  
dialogue fades, and her image gets smaller as the television  
recedes into a black distance.

The music that reminds us most of these two lost lives  
swells. When the television is very small it is switched  
off.

BLACK SCREEN. HOLD A BEAT.

END CREDITS

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popupPage();  
  
// Ad Banner-->  
</script>
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