



Romeo and Julie Plot Structure:

Exposition, Complication, Catastrophe, Climax, And Resolution

- The prologue [exposition] introduces the subject of **'star-crossed lovers'** doomed by a **'new mutiny'** springing from an **'ancient grudge'**.

- Act I, scene I shows the explosive enmity between the two families from the servants to the heads of the families, sparked by humorous gestures like biting a thumb and comical remarks:

'my naked weapon is out' and **'Give me my long sword'**.

- Act I, scene I shows the disapproving view of the conflict taken by the rest of the city through the dialogue of the citizens and the Prince who declares it a capital offence.

- Act I, scene I introduces Romeo as a victim of unrequited love from Rosaline: **'She'll not be hit with Cupid's arrow'**.

- Act I, scene II introduces one complication, Paris and his request for Juliet's hand in marriage: **'But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart'**.

- Act I, scene IV sees a second major complication arises as Tybalt sees Romeo at the banquet and determines to challenge him:

'To strike him dead, I hold it not a sin'.

- In Act II the lovers charm each other and secretly marry, but crisis looms as Tybalt has sent a letter to challenge Romeo.

- In Act III the complication of Tybalt's hatred reaches a mid play climax. Tybalt kills Mercutio, Romeo's friend. Romeo kills Tybalt out of revenge, a change in his character. Mercutio spells out the consequence of the **'ancient grudge'**: **'A plague on both your houses'**.



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- Romeo is merely banished because Tybalt provoked the fatal brawl. This leads to a crisis for Juliet as the friar encourages her to fake death in order to elope with the banished Romeo.
- In Act IV Capulet deepens the **crisis** as he orders Juliet to marry Paris: '**young baggage! disobedient wretch! ... get thee to church o' Thursday**'.
- In a further complication Romeo hears a wrong version of events.
- In Act V the climax follows the final complication of Paris's fatal challenge to Romeo. Romeo he commits suicide in the tomb after he wrongly perceives that Juliet lies dead: '**Thus with a kiss I die**'.
- This prompts Juliet to an equally despairing suicide: '**O happy dagger**'.
- The '**ancient grudge**' inflicted a terrible price:
'See, what a scourge is laid upon your hate'.
- The falling action or resolution is as the prologue predicted: '**Do with their death bury their parents' strife**'. The Prince remarks after the two feuding families have reconciled: '**A glooming peace this morning with it brings**'.