

# V E R O N A

by  
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inspired by Shakespeare's  
"ROMEO & JULIET"

NO FADE IN. Just BLOOD SPLATTERING across a MAP OF ITALY.

Moving across this ILLUSTRATED LANDSCAPE, a VOICE guides us. And though we've yet to meet him, this is FRIAR LAURENCE:

FRIAR LAURENCE (V.O.)  
*It is the year of our Lord, 1495...  
Charles the Eighth of France has  
conquered Southern Italy. To combat  
the invasion, The Pope rallies the  
Northern Republics to an alliance.*

SOUNDS OF WAR now audible, the parchment map becomes REALITY:

**EXT. ITALIAN COUNTRYSIDE - DAY**

Quick, visceral VIOLENCE. Various Italian provinces attacked & conquered. KING CHARLES VIII presiding over the CARNAGE.

FRIAR LAURENCE (V.O.)  
*... But it matters not. Our nation  
has been at war with itself for  
centuries... kingdom fighting  
kingdom, family fighting family...*

FRENCH TROOPS gallop, PILLAGING helpless ITALIAN VILLAGES.

FRIAR LAURENCE (V.O.)  
*... And none more fiercely than in  
the northern province of Verona:  
domain of the Capulets & Montagues.*

**EXT. VERONA - DAY**

Soaring over a snow-dusted tableau, we're soon overtaken by

A BATTLEFIELD

dotted with troops. THOUSANDS forming TWO CLEAR SIDES.

FRIAR LAURENCE (V.O.)  
*Behold: two households, both alike  
in dignity... an ancient grudge  
that breaks to new mutiny. From  
forth the fatal loins of these two  
foes... lies the fate of Italy.*

Galloping from the south, a BATTALION OF SOLDIERS...

**THE ARMY OF CAPULET**

Regal, refined, protected by ornate, modern armor. On their breastplates -- their coat of arms: an IBEX motif.

RISING HIGHER reveals a FOREST to the north, defended by...

**THE ARMY OF MONTAGUE**

Notice the crude armor & weaponry. Stitched leather. Animal pelts. Cloaks adorned with a family crest: an etched WOLF.

Moving through this BARBARIC HORDE, we soon find...

A HOODED WARRIOR

kneeled on the outskirts. He's handsome but filthy. Young skin checked with scars. An inner strength and battle-worn exterior. Focused, he tinkers with SOMETHING...

CLOSER, we now understand he's carving...

A WOODEN RING,

shaping the grain into an intricate visage of WOLVES.

Lost in thought, he gathers fallen shavings in his palm -- watching as they're whisked away by the snowflaked breeze.

In the distance, a VOICE breaks his concentration:

VOICE (O.S.)  
*Head in the clouds, Montague?  
 Thought we had a war to fight...*

He turns to find: two MONTAGUE WARRIORS, close in age, approaching on horseback. Meet MERCUTIO & BENVOLIO.

With a faint smile, the Hooded Warrior tucks away the ring, mounting his horse with a kick:

HOODED WARRIOR  
*... Thought we had war to win.*

As he rides away, Mercutio shoots Benvolio a GRIN --

**EXT. BATTLEFIELD - MOMENTS LATER**

Our Hooded Warrior gallops to the head of the Montague formation, Benvolio & Mercutio close behind. Welcoming them is a gruff, grey-bearded patriarch. Meet LORD MONTAGUE, 60s.

Our four men scan the HORIZON: their ENEMY has landed... ARCHERS, CALVARY... all dwarfed by enormous CATAPULTS. An intimidating advantage. But Lord Montague isn't fazed:

LORD MONTAGUE  
*Wretched Capulet. Today they may  
 have us beat in scale... but they  
 will never have us beat in heart.*

ACROSS THE BATTLEFIELD

Centered in the Capulet formation: a clear leader presides. A regal man draped in fine silks & gilded armor, wispy locks blown in winter air. Meet LORD CAPULET, 60s.

LORD CAPULET  
*Barbaric Montague.* We may both hail  
 from Verona... but God put them  
 before us to paint white snow red.

Sneering in agreement is a brooding Capulet General, TYBALT:

TYBALT  
 Couldn't agree more, m'lord...

BACK TO MONTAGUE FORMATION

Lord Montague nods to the Hooded Warrior: *it's time.* Taking  
 the cue, he rides before his TROOPS, trotting to a STOP --

HOODED WARRIOR  
 Many have asked you to kill Capulet  
 for honor... *Others: for country...*

All eyes are glued and attentive. None more than a YOUNG  
 MONTAGUE SOLDIER. He whispers to an OLDER comrade in arms:

YOUNG SOLDIER  
*Who is he...?*

OLD SOLDIER  
 Heir to the Montague throne. They  
 say his name means: *The Man From  
 Rome.*

The Young Soldier is awestruck: *it's him...*

HOODED WARRIOR (CONT'D)  
 ... But as you wield your swords  
 this morning, remember: I ask you  
 to kill Capulet for family. I ask  
 you to kill Capulet for the House  
 of Montague!

As he UNSHEATHES his sword to sky, MONTAGUE TROOPS break into  
 DEAFENING CHANT. And it's now clear who this is:

MONTAGUE TROOPS  
 RO-ME-O! RO-ME-O! RO-ME-O!

SLAM TO TITLE:

V E R O N A

An ERUPTION of galloping horses announces a BATTLE underway:

**EXT. BATTLEFIELD - THAT MOMENT**

*C-CLUNK, C-CLUNK.* OVERCRANKED HOOVES IN BLOOD-SOAKED SNOW....

ROMEO

wields his sword on horseback, dodging catapulted FIREBOMBS -- hacking through CAPULET MEN...

BENVOLIO & MERCUTIO

intercept TORCHED ARROWS with SHIELDS, their arcing blades SHREDDING armor and flesh...

ROMEO

dismounts his horse, joining his brethren. As swift swordplay dusts air with enemy blood, there is no debate: these men were built for war...

CAPULET RESERVES

witness the massacre from afar. With a solemn nod from Lord Capulet, Tybalt signals their TRIBUNES. And with the WAVE of BATTALION FLAGS, the message is clear: RETREAT.

Seeing this, CAPULET INFANTRY scatter like vermin. And as the Montague Army releases a VICTORIOUS ROAR, we RISE...

HIGH ABOVE

the GRAVEYARD of battle, revealing: slaughtered BODIES, fallen HORSES, clouds of BUZZARDS circling the sky... CHEERS grow to PEAK, while on scorched earth below...

ROMEO

relishes the bloodsoaked victory -- backlit by orange flames & purple twilight -- a MYTHIC IMAGE.

CUT TO:

QUIET PATTERING OF HOOVES

Montague troops -- lead by Romeo & Lord Montague -- return to BASECAMP. Shelter, food, and family await...

**EXT. MONTAGUE FORTIFICATION - THAT NIGHT**

... However, they're SHOCKED by what lies in their place: THE ENCAMPMENT has been RANSACKED, PILLAGED, SET AFLAME --

LORD MONTAGUE  
-- *That was no Capulet retreat...*

ROMEO  
(and then it hits him)  
... Rosaline...

Romeo dismounts, sprinting through the BURNING CAMP for --

## A SMOLDERING TENT

Inside, he finds his mother, LADY MONTAGUE, alive, but HYSTERICAL. And Romeo soon sees why...

## DOZENS OF WOMEN &amp; CHILDREN

hang from their necks. NOOSED. Heads limp with death.

Panicked, Romeo SEARCHES -- one-by-one -- collapsing to his knees as he comes upon... a YOUNG WOMAN, HANGING. Dead.

Paralyzed by rage, Romeo takes out THE WOODEN RING, gripping it tight. In this moment, only one thing is certain: he carved this ring for HER. For ROSALINE.

## AT THE TENT ENTRANCE

Lord Montague bears witness to the tragic scene, STUNNED... And as the SCREAMS of Romeo overtake the encampment we

SLAM TO BLACK.

LEGEND: ONE YEAR LATER

**EXT. VERONA - DAY**

A SOARING AERIAL: on one end, a bustling CITY. On the other: sharp, foreboding MOUNTAINS. The connective tissue between the two: a TURBULENT RIVER lined with a VAST FOREST...

**EXT. SYCAMORE FOREST - VERONA - THAT MOMENT**

TWO SOLDIERS on horseback whip past bone-white trees.

By the ibex on their armor, it's clear: they're Capulet. Meet SAMPSON & GREGORY. These men are gruff, intimidating, and clearly have somewhere to be. But --

-- a SUDDEN RUSTLE brings them SKIDDING TO A STOP.

They SCAN the foreboding trees, spooked:

SAMPSON  
-- On my word, ready your sword.  
This be Montague territory...

GREGORY  
The war that wages is between our  
Lords, is it not?

SAMPSON  
And like our Lord we shall kill  
their men and sack their maids.

GREGORY  
 Deflower Montague maids, you say?  
 (an excited sneer)  
*Reckon they enjoy a good bugger?*

SAMPSON  
 They shall enjoy it as long as I  
 can stay stiff...  
 (cupping his codpiece)  
 ... Everybody knows I'm a pretty  
 piece of flesh.

They BURST into laughter. ABRUPTLY silenced by SOMETHING...

A HORSE

Breezing by the trees. And soon, ANOTHER. They're being  
 trailed -- *SHING!* -- they draw their swords. On guard... as --  
 -- a CLOAKED MAN (Montague wolf emblem on cloak) appears from  
 behind a sycamore. Sampson & Gregory BRACE... but are quickly  
 confused by his stillness --

SAMPSON  
 -- I shall bite my thumb at him...  
 see if he bares it...

Sampson's GREY TEETH gnash his THUMB, a medieval "F-you!"

SEEING THIS, the Montague warrior removes his hood and we  
 recognize: Benvolio, hand resting on sword.

BENVOLIO  
 Gentlemen... I hope you do not bite  
 your thumb at me?

Sampson looks to Gregory -- a silent exchange -- then:

SAMPSON  
 I do not bite my thumb at you. I  
 merely bite my thumb.

GREGORY  
 However... if you're looking for a  
 fight, we are your men --

-- He defiantly FLAUNTS his ibex shield... soon realizing his  
 MISTAKE, when: Mercutio strolls in, DAGGERS in each hand.

MERCUTIO  
*Looking for a fight. Us? Never...*

The Montague men share a smirk, COILING to attack. But  
 then... ANOTHER VOICE halts the mounting tension:

VOICE (O.S.)  
*You have pulled your swords on  
 these heartless hinds? Turn around  
 and gaze upon your death.*

Turning, THEY FIND: a familiar Capulet general -- Tybalt -- approaching through the dense trees, sword ATTENTIVE.

BENVOLIO  
 We only try to keep the peace.

TYBALT  
*You pull your swords, then speak of  
 peace?! I hate the word. Like I  
 hate Montague. Like I hate you --*

On these words, BLADES ERUPT in a BLUR OF STEEL. And within a few SWIFT MOVEMENTS -- Mercutio THROWS his dagger --

-- *THWACK!* -- SKEWERING Tybalt's hand against a tree. Finito.

**EXT. SYCAMORE FOREST - MOMENTS LATER**

Sampson & Gregory lie beaten and injured -- Tybalt's hand still PINNED to the tree. Mercutio fixes a threatening blade, while Benvolio SEARCHES Tybalt... *Soon finding* --

A SEALED LETTER

Melted wax forming the CAPULET FAMILY CREST.

Benvolio unscrolls the parchment, absorbing SWIRLED INK... Mercutio senses the importance, goading Tybalt:

MERCUTIO  
*Delivering secret messages, are we?  
 If I was your Lord, I'd punish your  
 error with death. In his absence:  
 I'll happily do the honors --*

-- But as Mercutio moves in for the kill, he is HALTED by

A TRAVELING GARRISON

arriving on the scene. A pack of WATCHMEN led by a stoic, Venetian COUNCILMAN with an AMPUTATED ARM... Meet CONSTABLE ESCALUS, 40s.

ESCALUS  
*Enemies to peace, drop your swords!*

Mercutio RELAXES his blade. Benvolio HIDES the letter...

Dismounting his horse, Escalus surveys the scene, the man's demeanor is clear: *he has bigger fish to fry...*

Approaching Tybalt, he pulls blade from bark. Punctured hand finally unpinned, Tybalt collapses.

ESCALUS

Upon punishment of death, all men depart!

The sneering Capulets mount-up, THUNDEROUS HOOVES departing --

-- But Mercutio has unfinished business. *He gestures for his dagger.* Escalus eyes him, handing it back with suspicion. Satisfied, the Montague men disappear into the foggy forest.

Tension hanging in the air, Escalus stews, looking down to the VALLEY of VERONA... his destination awaiting below:

**EXT. CITY OF VERONA - DAY**

This is not the garish Verona you think you know. Renaissance refinement traded for torch-lit grunge... Cobble streets abuzz with drunken BEGGARS & filthy TROLLOPS.

The GARRISON trots through the dense CROWDS -- headed for an opulent building of Corinthian columns and coffered domes...

**INT. HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT - CITY OF VERONA - DAY**

A large MAP TABLE. MARBLE FIGURINES occupy ITALIAN REGIONS. Escalus regards the map -- surrounded by LOCAL CONSTABLES cloaked in DOUBLETS, stacked in the terraced auditorium...

ESCALUS

I travel with news from the Pope!

His words drop the room to SILENCE. He has their attention.

ESCALUS

His holiness has formed an alliance against King Charles of France. All territories have joined except the Republic of Venice -- and you... the Province of Verona!

The chamber fills with MURMURS. Fighting for attention, Escalus SLIDES a marble figurine towards the north:

ESCALUS

Having sacked Naples, Charles's troops move north for Pisa... and Verona is next. Your Lords must make peace and join the alliance. Verona unifies... or Verona falls!

Murmurs turn to LAUGHTER. An ITALIAN DIGNITARY stands:

ITALIAN DIGNITARY  
*Lord Capulet & Montague unified?!  
 The Pope may grant miracles, but  
 that is a chore for God himself!*

ESCALUS  
 Tell me then: who began this feud?  
 Which household is responsible for  
 generations of such bloodshed?

HUSHED WHISPERS from the assembly. Then silence. No one speaks... because no one knows.

Dead serious now, Escalus grabs a final figurine, displaying it to the room:

ESCALUS  
 If Capulet & Montague cannot forge  
 peace in Verona -- their ignorance  
 will be replaced with despair. Let  
 me be living proof, for the French  
 have already seized my good arm...  
*And if Verona fails to unite --  
 should all of you only be so lucky.*

He slides the MARBLE SOLDIER across the map, landing directly on VERONA. The gesture carries weight, MURMURS returning...

**EXT. MOUNTAINS OF VERONA - DUSK**

Tracing JAGGED TRAILS up TOWERING MOUNTAINS, Benvolio & Mercutio gallop feverishly for --

-- a bustling VILLAGE: bathwater dumped, hens plucked, deer butchered. And looming above it: an epic STONE CASTLE carved into the face of a sharp peak. Behold: CASTLE MONTAGUE...

**EXT. CASTLE MONTAGUE - MOUNTAINS OF VERONA - MOMENTS LATER**

A stitched LEATHER BALL bounces through puddles of mud. And soon... a foot wrapped in rags connects with a KICK.

WIDER, we're on a FIELD OF GAMES... Montague SOLDIERS playing an archaic form of SOCCER. Lord Montague is in the fray -- throwing elbows -- keeping up impressively for his age...

ON THE SIDELINES,

Benvolio & Mercutio are spotted on approach...

Eyeing them, Lord Montague grabs the ball: *pausing the game* --

-- Out of breath, he meets the men at a sideline table overflowing with ALE & CURED MEAT. Grabbing hearty handfuls:

LORD MONTAGUE  
I heard you boys had a run-in with  
Capulet troops?

Benvolio moves to present the LETTER, but Mercutio stalls:

MERCUTIO  
*My Lord... how'd you know?*

Benvolio gets the hint, tucking the letter away. Lord Montague finishes a slug of ale, wiping suds from his beard --

LORD MONTAGUE  
'Tis my land -- *I know everything.*

WITH A HURL of the ball to Mercutio's gut, he lumbers for the castle. *The men know they're in for it...*

**INT. MAIN HALL - CASTLE MONTAGUE - MOMENTS LATER**

Mid-feast, stained-glass twilight spills onto an epic banquet. Mounds of dripped wax form candlelit centerpieces...

Chomping a turkey leg, Lord Montague eyes the boys:

LORD MONTAGUE  
*Forcing your uncle to beg, are we?*

BENVOLIO  
*It's true... Capulets descended on our land. We sought to teach them a lesson, but a Constable parted the rage...*

Lady Montague sits beside her Lord, a shell of her former self. Her pale lips part, air barely behind breath:

LADY MONTAGUE  
*And my boy... Romeo?*

A HANDMAIDEN delicately spoons a powdery dose of LAUDANUM into her wine. Benvolio looks at his aunt, sympathetic:

BENVOLIO  
*He was not involved, m'lady.*

She takes a medicating sip... then struggles to a stand:

LADY MONTAGUE  
*If you'll excuse me, this talk of violence is... unbecoming.*

Helped by her handmaiden, she slinks from the room...

Lord Montague watches, heavy hearted. With the WAVE OF HIS HAND, the festivities are over -- SERVANTS & DINERS exiting.

Alone now with Benvolio & Mercutio, Lord Montague confides:

LORD MONTAGUE

Since Rosaline's passing, her  
Ladyship hasn't been the same.  
*Nor has Romeo, for that matter...*  
That child is a strong tree of oak,  
but inside he's rotted by mites...

(beat)

This war wages on with the  
Capulets, while our most valuable  
solider hides from the day. Please,  
my boys, only you can intervene...

Sharing a look, Benvolio & Mercutio understand the gravity of his request... And soon, we're overtaken by a familiar image:

**ROSALINE**

Rope noosed around neck. A lifeless body hanging.

Yet her eyes are OPEN, staring at --

-- ROMEO... approaching... disturbed by the sight...

... Without warning, her pale lips part with a GASP:

ROSALINE

Ro-me-o...

ROMEO JOLTS AWAKE. *Just a dream...*

**INT. ROMEO'S TOWER - CASTLE MONTAGUE - THAT MOMENT**

Rising from bed, Romeo appears sleep-deprived. Haunted even. But his surroundings paint an upside: he's been busy...

Shelves filled with MANUSCRIPTS, workbenches littered with TOOLS, a drafting table brimming with SKETCHES...

Approaching the desk, he begins DRAWING, deep in thought. But soon his ink PAUSES, SENSING SOMETHING --

-- In a flash -- he spins around -- SWORD FIXED ON:

BENVOLIO

Morning, cousin...

A smiling Benvolio & Mercutio cause Romeo to RELENT... Trading sword for QUILL, he returns to his sketches:

ROMEO

... *Is it morning so soon?*

Ben & Merc share a look of concern: *Romeo's looking rough.*

MERCUTIO

Maybe we get some air, Romeo. Clear  
the cobwebs...

Ignoring the suggestion, Romeo waves his men over...  
Approaching, they peer over his shoulder at the DRAWINGS --

ON CLOSER LOOK, notice a resemblance to the works of DaVinci.  
Detailed BLUEPRINTS of ARMOR, WEAPONRY... MACHINES OF WAR.

ROMEO

My father thinks winning wars is  
about *heart*. But that day we faced  
Capulet, they had *innovation*. We  
either *innovate*, or we surely die.

MOVING IN on a sketched CATAPULT, the ink comes to LIFE as:

A HUGE BOULDER

splinters through a grove of trees -- THWACKKK!

**EXT. BLACKSMITH SHOP - CASTLE MONTAGUE - THAT MOMENT**

Outside the barn doors of a bustling workshop, Romeo  
auditions a scaffolded CATAPULT. Ben & Merc are impressed...

As Montague SERVANTS reload a new BOULDER, Romeo enters this  
laboratory of dancing embers and hammered steel...

Lifting a tarp reveals: more PROTOTYPES of his drawings...  
A TELESCOPING SWORD, a MULTI-ARROW CROSSBOW, a SPRING-LOADED  
DAGGER -- SHINK! -- Romeo demonstrates, ejecting the blade:

ROMEO

The renaissance is upon us, but  
father still clings to the middle  
ages. With these... Verona will  
finally be ours.

In his sleep-deprived eyes, it's hard to tell what burns:  
*vengeance or desperation...*

BENVOLIO

Romeo, we know you miss Rosaline...  
but you must forget this brooding --

Romeo relaxes the blade, thumbing a trinket around his neck.  
We recognize the WOLF RING, strung on twine...

ROMEO

*Then teach me to forget to think...*

Mercutio SCOFFS, sick of listening to this "love" talk.

ROMEO

Do you laugh at me, friend?

MERCUTIO

No, friend, I sigh. This is not  
you. This is not Romeo...

But Romeo doesn't want to hear it, walking back to the catapult. Benvolio smacks Mercutio: *you're not helping...* But Mercutio waves him away, bullish...

Catching up with Romeo, he puts a chummy arm around him:

MERCUTIO

There are many women in Verona.  
Tonight we shall go out and fix  
your eyes on another!

ROMEO

*A man who goes blind never forgets  
he once could see...*

*WHOOSH!* Romeo catapults another boulder. Trees EXPLODE.

Mercutio slumps: *it's useless.* But Benvolio steps in:

BENVOLIO

Well, cousin -- if lust won't do,  
then perhaps you will settle for  
revenge...

With that, Benvolio reveals: the STOLEN CAPULET LETTER. Romeo takes it in his hands -- reading -- *mind turning...*

CUT TO:

A DAGGER

STABBING through the CAPULET LETTER -- Lord Montague QUIETING a room full of shouting:

LORD MONTAGUE

Must I paint pictures of this  
letter?! A French nobleman plans to  
marry the Capulet heir! That is an  
alliance with the French!

**INT. THRONE ROOM - CASTLE MONTAGUE - AFTERNOON**

Lord Montague eyes a room of ADVISORS, the tone is grave:

LORD MONTAGUE

That makes occupation of Verona all  
but certain! *It could signal the  
end our land! The end of Montague!*

-- Romeo TUGS the dagger from wood, releasing the letter:

ROMEO

*But it won't...*

All eyes turn: Romeo paces the room, a commanding presence.

ROMEO

This letter says there is to be a ball announcing the marriage. I shall attend it... and kill the heir to the Capulet throne. *No bride, no wedding, no union to the French.*

CHATTER erupts. Mercutio grins, stoked, Benvolio thinks, worried. But Romeo nods with assurances, facing his father:

ROMEO

I give you my word: by the light of tomorrow's moon, this one they call Juliet... shall fall upon my sword.

CUT TO:

AN OPULENT CASTLE

From within its regal walls, SCREAMS echo a familiar name:

VOICE (O.S.)  
... JULIET!...

**INT. BALLROOM - CASTLE CAPULET - AFTERNOON**

A TRAIN OF FEET scurry across polished marble: SERVANTS, CHAMBERLAINS, all lead by the owner of the SHRIEKING VOICE: LADY CAPULET, 40s, a haughty MATRIARCH. Searching feverishly, she is flanked by a panicked HANDMAIDEN: MARIA, 30s.

MARIA  
I swear, m'lady, she musn't be far!

They rush by painting ARTISTS, chiseling SCULPTORS -- notice the Capulet refinement -- yet still haven't found:

LADY CAPULET  
JULIET! MARIA  
JULIET!

**EXT. COURTYARD - CASTLE CAPULET - THAT MOMENT**

Enclosed in a MAZE OF HEDGES, two masked FENCERS are mid-practice. The bladework is fierce, elegant, balletic. They PARRY and LUNGE -- expertly commanding basket-hilted SABERS.

Lady Capulet marches across the lush GARDENS, servants barely keeping up, her shrill CALLS soon causing --

-- the fencers to PAUSE mid-strike. And with the shedding of helmets, we're surprised to find -- a BEAUTIFUL GIRL:

JULIET  
I'm here, Madam, what's the matter?

Meet JULIET CAPULET, 17. Strong, stunning... and yet, enigmatic. Not quite a tomboy, not quite a princess.

LADY CAPULET  
 I'll tell you *what's the matter!* --  
 (pausing, to Maria:)  
 -- How old is my daughter to be?

Juliet rolls eyes at her mother's aloofness.

MARIA  
 If memory serves me: Juliet and my daughter -- *God rest her soul* -- were born on the same year...

LADY CAPULET  
*Enough! Just answer the question!*

MARIA  
*Sorry, Madam.* Eighteen tomorrow.

Lady Capulet grips Juliet, practically nose-to-nose:

LADY CAPULET  
That is exactly the matter. Verona has girls younger in age -- *already married* -- and you remain a virgin!

Juliet drops her gaze, embarrassed before dozens of servants.

LORD CAPULET  
 My Juliet, do tell: what is your opinion on the subject?

JULIET  
*It is an honor I dare not dream of?*

Lady Capulet fumes -- *but suppresses it* -- forcing a smile:

LADY CAPULET  
*Dare to dream, Juliet.* For a noble French suitor -- with eyes for you -- will attend your birthday ball.

JULIET  
*A French nobleman in Verona...*  
 Has the Pope not declared war?

LADY CAPULET  
We are at war with no one... *save for Montague!* So come tomorrow, study his face, admire his power... For whomever becomes his bride will be just as admired. And all that he possesses will be yours -- *without losing a thing yourself.*

MARIA  
*Besides your virginity...*

Maria covers her mouth, *surprised that was audible*. Lady Capulet shoots her a stern look, leaving them with a SCOFF...

MARIA  
*Worry not, m'lady, a noble is bound  
 to fair better than a commoner...*

As Juliet stews, the *SOUND OF TRUMPETS* becomes AUDIBLE...

**EXT. CASTLE CAPULET - THE NEXT MORNING**

... POMP & CIRCUMSTANCE greet a GOLDEN CARRIAGE flying the COLORS OF FRANCE. As its horses trot to a halt --

-- A COACHMAN opens the door, unfurling steps to announce  
 TWO PURPLE SLIPPERS

belonging to a chapeau-wearing French Nobleman: PRINCE PARIS, 27. Draped in velour, cradling a TOY POODLE, he is showered in rose petals, waving a silken handkerchief.

BEHIND HIM

Two royal ESCORTS exit as well. First in line: an imposing BODYGUARD. Next up: a mysterious PRIEST... carrying a CRUCIFIED STAFF of IVORY, face obscured by hooded VESTMENT.

The Frenchmen relish the vastness of their greeting: HUNDREDS OF SUBJECTS lining parapets and balconies.

FROM THE CROWD, Lord & Lady Capulet eagerly approach:

LORD CAPULET	LADY CAPULET
Our land welcomes you, your	
Highness --	-- And may we do our finest to meet all your pleasures...

Lord & Lady PART, displaying the first of these pleasures...

Dressed in a lavish, brocaded GOWN, Juliet cleans-up nicely. But it's clear: she hates this clothing -- *these customs* -- and even amongst a kingdom of her own... *Juliet is alone*.

Paris sizes her up -- *unimpressed* -- but gives a formal nod to Lord Capulet... The message is clear: *she'll do*.

CUT TO:

**A DEAFENING WATERFALL**

Rising above this blue plateau -- Romeo is found hiking a cliff-face... headed for: a modest, wooden TEMPLE.

**INT. WATERFALL TEMPLE - MOMENTS LATER**

Passing rows of barren pews, Romeo approaches a latticed  
CONFESSORIAL BOOTH

Taking a seat, an anonymous VOICE can be heard:

VOICE (O.S.)  
*Speak, my child...*

Stripes of light illuminate Romeo in the darkened enclosure.  
He is torn, anxious, voice shaky & hushed:

ROMEO  
Father, I come to ask forgiveness.  
For sins I've committed. For ones  
I'll soon commit...

VOICE (O.S.)  
*Remember, son: the gray-eyed  
morning smiles on the frowning  
night, checkering the eastern  
clouds with streaks of light.*

Confusion grips Romeo's face -- until -- the privacy door  
SLIDES OPEN to reveal: an aging FRIAR, exhaling CLOUDS OF  
SMOKE from a PEARWOOD PIPE. Coughing with laughter --

FRIAR LAURENCE  
-- *Love those words* -- no idea what  
they mean, but it sounds heavenly.

Dressed in a COWLED ROBE, tangled beard, and balding tuft  
shorn to TONSURE, meet FRIAR LAURENCE, offering his pipe:

FRIAR LAURENCE  
Care for a toke, my boy? *It's  
medicinal...*

But with a read of Romeo's expression, he quickly relents:  
*This is serious...*

**INT. GREENHOUSE CAVE - WATERFALL TEMPLE - MOMENTS LATER**

MOVING THROUGH CASCADING WATER reveals: a humid CAVE hidden  
behind the waterfall. Overgrown with moss and plants... this  
wet cavern doubles as a lush GREENHOUSE.

Passing JARS OF MUSTY SEEDS and HANGING LINES of FLOWERS,  
Friar Laurence leads Romeo, pipe puffing, mid-conversation:

FRIAR LAURENCE  
*I chose vows of chastity, but you,  
my son, have choices of your own.  
Will this life on Earth be  
heaven... or a waking hell...*

The Friar comes to a worn WORKTABLE littered with oddities: dried weeds, bizarre plants, stretched skins of fish. And among them... one living specimen:

A PET FALCON

Petting his loyal bird, Friar elaborates:

FRIAR LAURENCE

You ask my forgiveness so that you  
may kill an innocent girl tonight.  
*Either I thought more highly of  
you, or you think very low of me --*

ROMEO

She may carry an innocent soul, but  
her Capulet blood is far from  
clean!

Friar's wise eyes process, glowing seeds pulsing in his pipe. With a hearty inhalation, he moves for a sinister tangle of flora growing from a pot -- a TWO-HEADED VENUS FLYTRAP.

FRIAR LAURENCE

Everything from Earth's womb is  
born with good & evil. For inside  
this little plant, one can find  
both poison... and cure...

The flytrap's MOUTH opens with a soft HISS...

Reaching into its throat, Friar extracts a wet, ovular SACK. Dropped in a MORTAR & PESTLE, it's mashed into green PASTE...

FRIAR LAURENCE

With this specimen, I have cross-  
pollinated nature to become  
*stronger than its predecessors.* The  
result: an elixir of somnus.  
*Medicinal sleep.*

Swirls of green now merge into a BOTTLE OF LIQUID. Collecting a DROP, Friar FEEDS his eager falcon... Romeo watches as the bird's movements SLOW, soon collapsing into peaceful SLUMBER.

FRIAR LAURENCE

Some claim I tamper with God. I  
say: He works in mysterious ways.  
And whether it be *mother nature* or  
*human nature* -- you must choose how  
to use God's gifts.

Friar locks eyes with Romeo. An intense, fatherly gaze:

FRIAR LAURENCE

So, tonight, if you choose to take  
the life of this young Capulet  
(MORE)

FRIAR LAURENCE (CONT'D)  
 girl, remember: *God can forgive...*  
 but *absolution will only come from*  
*here* --

-- Friar gives a caring tap to Romeo's heart. And as threads of smoke envelope our men -- it's clear: *Romeo is torn...*

CUT TO:

THREE MASQUERADE MASKS

in the purple light of dusk. These are no regular masks, rather: menacing busts fastened of horns & hide...

As the masks are removed, identities are revealed: Romeo, Benvolio, and Mercutio -- overlooking the city of Verona...

**E/I. WAGON - VALLEY OF VERONA - NIGHT**

Romeo & his men ride the valley in a horse-dawn WAGON -- its flatbed filled with MOUNDS OF GRAPES and BARRELS of WINE.

Having traded animals pelts for quilted doublets & muffin caps, they look absurd, but they'll fit in. *Undercover.*

BENVOLIO  
 Think we're properly disguised?

UNCORKING the BARREL, Mercutio gulps a FLOW of RED WINE, grinning as he regards Benvolio's HIDEOUS MASK:

MERCUTIO  
 In your case, I'd say it's an improvement.

**EXT. MAIN STREET - CITY OF VERONA - NIGHT**

Torch-lit GONDOLAS row beneath an arched bridge as our three Montagues trot over the VERONA CANAL --

Ahead, the streets are abustle with goatskin drums, flutes awhirl, PARTYGOERS rowdy with drunkenness. All approaching...

CASTLE CAPULET

alive with torched flame, fireworks aglitter. Beckoning...

**EXT. FRONT GATES - CASTLE CAPULET - MOMENTS LATER**

Slowing to a stop, Romeo & his men assess the uninviting landscape: a mountainous perimeter of walls protected by vast MOAT, its arched entrance guarded by a long DRAWBRIDGE...

BENVOLIO  
 One way in, one way out.

*SHINK!* -- Romeo auditions his spring-loaded dagger:

ROMEO  
If this was going to be easy... we  
would've sent somebody else --

With a grin and a crack to the reins: *Here goes nothing...*

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

tracks the wagon across the drawbridge... over the murky  
moat... under fortified walls lined with ARCHERS... SCOUTS...  
TROOPS... soon galloping into the highly guarded

CASTLE COURTYARD

A sprawling labyrinth of TOWERS, TERRACES...

And as the wagon SLOWS, we GLIDE UP, soaring for one, very  
specific BALCONY WINDOW:

**INT. JULIET'S BEDCHAMBER - CASTLE CAPULET - CONTINUOUS**

Juliet looks out to the sparkling city of Verona...

Donning a beautiful gown and stoic stare, she's surrounded by  
HANDMAIDENS. Hair is brushed, girdle laced, her trusted Maria  
choreographing the effort:

MARIA  
Paris may not be handsome in looks,  
but he must be educated in mind.

JULIET  
Wits can bring happy nights to the  
end of happy days. But with him,  
*I'm not holding my breath --*

With a CINCH to Juliet's girdle, her pained gaze multiplies.

**INT. DRESSING CHAMBER - CASTLE CAPULET - THAT MOMENT**

Paris & Lord Capulet sample bowls of figs, sip goblets wine,  
their REFLECTIONS repeated endlessly in a HALL OF MIRRORS...

As FOOTMEN ready them in fine silk and regal tunics,  
discussion is underway:

LORD MONTAGUE  
I hope you're finding the  
accommodations worthy of a prince.

PRINCE PARIS  
It may not be France, but your land  
impresses more than I imagined...  
And as Mother always says: *may your  
Princehood come first... as your  
country will always follow.*

Paris caws a tight-lipped giggle. Lord Capulet fakes a chuckle, then quickly steers back towards business:

LORD CAPULET  
 Your highness, if King Charles arrives in our province... I need assurances of Juliet's safety.

PRINCE PARIS  
*Understandably so. But before the chivalry continues: my council warns of an opposing house in Verona. Will this cause my King any... complications?*

In the refracting mirrors, Paris locks eyes with his wretched Priest -- KICKS OF LIGHT penetrating his hood to tease glimpses of his FACE: a sickening knot of flesh. A LEPER.

LORD CAPULET  
*Your council speaks of the Montagues... Worry not, they are a dying breed. As I like to say: all Italian grapes are not fit for making wine.*

With a smile, their goblets CLINK. *The deal is done...*

CUT TO:

A PILE OF ANIMAL BONES

Gnawed clean by a PACK of GUARD DOGS. Suddenly, a WAGON WHEEL comes CRUNCHING through, scattering the hounds...

**EXT. COURTYARD - CASTLE CAPULET - THAT MOMENT**

On security detail, Sampson & Gregory clock their gaze to:

THE APPROACHING WAGON

slowing to a stop. Ben & Merc pull masks low, while Romeo displays a piece of PARCHMENT to a suspicious Sampson:

ROMEO  
*Vendor papers, sir...*

Sampson gives it a read, eyeing Romeo's travel companions, their faces obscured by long sips from pewter tankards. The moment is tense: *will Sampson recognize the Montague men...?*

SAMPSON  
*To the kitchen, straight-away.*

*Phew... With a nod, Romeo whips the reins. As they depart, another CARRIAGE pulls up, steered by --*

CONSTABLE ESCALUS

Presenting his VENETIAN BADGE, he eyes the castle, attention caught by *CELEBRATORY CHEER* emanating from within...

**INT. GRAND STAIRCASE - CASTLE CAPULET - THAT MOMENT**

APPLAUDING GUESTS announce the noble FAMILY CAPULET: beaming parents flanked by Juliet & Prince Paris. As Lord Capulet leads a TOAST, Juliet tries to play the part...

... but on the inside: nerves claw, eyes welling with tears.

LORD CAPULET

May we all raise a glass to my little girl, who on this day, not only turns the page on another year... but becomes a woman.

As MINSTREL MUSIC erupts, Juliet lowers her GOLD MASQUERADE MASK, hiding all emotion. *Just in time...*

**INT. MAIN HALL - CASTLE CAPULET - MOMENTS LATER**

As FOOD & DRINK flow through the party...

LADY CAPULET

barks at servants, scolding them for dilly-dallying.

ESCALUS

weaves the crowd -- sipping a drink -- suspicious eyes soon narrowing on Prince Paris, mingling with guests...

TYBALT

watches as well -- decked in full battle regalia -- brooding as ever. Dropping his mask, he begins to do the rounds. And just as he exits, we notice an important ENTRANCE...

ROMEO, BENVOLIO, MERCUTIO

Faces hidden by masks, they grab goblets of wine, surveying MASQUERADING PARTYGOERS by the HUNDREDS:

ROMEO  
*Juliet, Juliet... which one shall you be?*

BENVOLIO  
 By the looks of it: a needle in a very big haystack.

MERCUTIO  
 A very posh haystack at that --

Mercutio grabs a passing HORS D'OEUVRE, eyeing the CANNELLE OF TARTARE as if it was a foreign artifact:

MERCUTIO

Damn Capulet, a finicky bunch. And how a bout this sampling of ladies.  
(grabbing his crotch)  
The lusty hand is now pricking midnight.

Slugging wine, the men LAUGH -- but Romeo focuses his team:

ROMEO

Remember: we come first to deliver death. Then we worry about love...

With a knowing nod, they split up. Romeo on a mission...

**INT. BALLROOM - CASTLE CAPULET - MOMENTS LATER**

A RING OF CANDELABRAS. In the center: twirling gowns and ornate masks form a dance floor. Among them, a masked Juliet & Lord Capulet perform a customary waltz --

LORD CAPULET

Juliet, sometimes... drastic deeds are all that may light our darkest hours. As much as it weighs on my heart: aligning with France is the only way the House of Capulet survives.

JULIET

Prince or not, I despise him...

LORD CAPULET

Then in these times: your only love must spring from your only hate...

As the DUET OF MANDOLINS pluck a new tune, Paris CUTS IN -- extending his limp hand -- a dance awaits...

**INT. MAIN HALL - CASTLE CAPULET - CONTINUOUS**

Like a hunter and its prey, Romeo stalks the dense crowd, surveying MASKED WOMEN -- TALL, SHORT, WIDE, SKINNY -- but none are sticking out...

Changing strategy, he bows to a YOUNG DEBUTANTE:

ROMEO

Care for a dance, m'lady?

**INT. BALLROOM - CASTLE CAPULET - MOMENTS LATER**

Clumsily swirling to minstrel strings, this is clearly not Romeo's bag. Eyes alert, he unknowingly waltzes right past...

## JULIET &amp; PARIS

Mid-dance, the body language is clear: *Juliet is repulsed.*

## PRINCE PARIS

When I propose to you, remember: a  
*royal is never to show too much*  
*excitement.* If anything, you should  
 be silent... humbled by the honor.

As Juliet rolls her eyes, the music's *TEMPO increases...*  
 Paris SPINS Juliet, the whole room TWIRLING in unison... And  
 as everyone SWAPS dance-partners, Juliet lands right in

## ROMEO'S ARMS

## JULIET

Don't let me go.

Romeo is surprised by the new, mysterious partner.

## ROMEO

I won't... but that may very well  
 find you cushioning my fall.

Juliet laughs, guiding him through the dance's steps. Holding  
 him close, she is fascinated by his brute masquerade mask:

## JULIET

Having attended many balls, I can't  
 quite say I've seen such a thing...

## ROMEO

It struck me that a manly man  
 should have a mask just as fitting.

She grins, their sparks undeniable. Seeing this, Paris pushes  
 away his new DANCE PARTNER, eyes shooting daggers...

## ROMEO

So, you must be close with Juliet?

## JULIET

(amused he's unaware)  
*Can't say I truly know her...*

## ROMEO

Neither can I. You wouldn't know  
 what she looks like, by chance?

## JULIET

Imagine she's a bit... stuffy, no?

## ROMEO

You read my mind. But I can safely  
 say -- even without seeing your  
 (MORE)

ROMEO (CONT'D)  
 face: you are cut from a very  
 different cloth...

JULIET  
 And I can safely say: you're better  
 with words than you are with dance.

With another smile, she now draws concerned looks from Paris & Lady Capulet. But no one is more suspicious than --

**INT. TERRACE - BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS**

-- TYBALT, overlooking the ballroom, hand fixed on his sword. He whispers to Sampson & Gregory -- instincts sharpening:

TYBALT  
 Find out what masked man dares  
 scorn this celebration by dancing  
 with my cousin...

**INT. BALLROOM - CASTLE CAPULET - CONTINUOUS**

With each dancing rotation, Juliet sees Paris is WAITING. And upon their next spin: the Prince is readied with...

A RING BOX

Seeing this: *Juliet knows what's coming.* Mustering an escape, she GRABS Romeo, WHISKING them away from the dance floor...

ON THE TERRACE

Tybalt finally SPOTS what he was looking for: the WOLF RING hanging from Romeo's neck...

TYBALT  
*By the disgrace of my house, this  
 man be a Montague...*

**INT. GRAND STAIRCASE - CASTLE CAPULET - THAT MOMENT**

Juliet pulls Romeo beneath the grand staircase, out of sight, secluded. Passing SHADOWS dance through the underpass.

JULIET  
 Your feet may falter in dance, but  
 your hands don't get enough credit.

Juliet finally removes her disguise. For the first time, a SMILE graces her unmasked face. Romeo is stunned by her beauty. He plays along with the flirtatious girl...

ROMEO  
 If you're not offended by the touch  
 of my hand, then my lips await...

He removes his mask, eliciting a similar reaction in Juliet. She takes his hand, tracing the rough lines of his palm:

JULIET

You touch hands on the statues of  
Holy Saints. Holding one's palm  
isn't close enough to a kiss?

ROMEO

Don't saints have lips too?

JULIET

To pray with...

ROMEO

Well saint, let my prayers be  
sealed with your lips....

Leaning in... something happens that surprises them both...

ROMEO & JULIET KISS

As they release, Juliet is overtaken by paralyzing emotion. Romeo's in the same boat, confused by whatever possesses him. Yet moments like this never last -- abruptly INTERRUPTED by:

MARIA

Madam! Lady Capulet looks for you!

Juliet looks beyond Maria to find a dreadful image:

LADY CAPULET & PARIS

searching the room in haste. Juliet releases Romeo, FLEEING up the grand staircase --

Romeo's head is spinning: *do his ears play tricks on him?* He grabs Maria, intense now, desperate to understand:

ROMEO

*What did you just say?! What about  
Lady Capulet?!*

MARIA

Her mother! The Lady of the house!

Maria pulls free, running up the steps. We now CIRCLE Romeo -- utterly stunned -- as his gaze finds the top of the staircase, where...

JULIET

locks eyes with him. And as the room falls SILENT -- Romeo makes the grave realization:

ROMEO

*A Capulet... Juliet...*

Benvolio & Mercutio RUSH IN, snapping Romeo out of it:

MERCUTIO  
When things are most fun is the  
best time to leave!

Romeo finally understands the trouble they're in as TYBALT & HIS SOLDIERS push through the crowd, swords DRAWN:

TYBALT  
The enemy is in our midsts! Romeo!  
A Montague!

The word "MONTAGUE" might as well be a BOMB THREAT. Capulet partygoers ERUPT into a panicked FRENZY.

Lord Capulet, Paris, and Escalus all PAN to find: CHAOS.

Festivities traded for pandemonium, Mercutio CUTS A ROPE -- CHANDELIERS CRASHING to the floor, BLOCKING Capulet men.

**INT. UPSTAIRS - GRAND STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS**

Juliet clocks to Maria, confused by the carnage --

MARIA  
M'lady, Tybalt says he is Romeo!  
Son of our worst enemy: a Montague!

In shock, Juliet looks back down, where...

**BEYOND CASTLE DOORS**

Romeo SEARCHES for his men amongst the FLEEING COMMOTION. Clocking around, he spots Juliet, PAIN gracing her face...

JULIET  
*My only love... sprung from my only  
hate...*

In this moment, Romeo realizes: *Juliet knows who he is...* And as this fleeting glance fades -- Romeo is GONE.

**EXT. FRONT GATES - CASTLE CAPULET - MOMENTS LATER**

Terrorized SCREAMS pierce the air as Tybalt & Lord Capulet SCAN THE PANICKED CROWD, finding no sign of Romeo.

TYBALT  
(to his Guards)  
... Find him.

CUT TO:

**AN AERIAL**

soaring over the castle's complex HEDGE MAZE...

In the center: CAPULET GUARDS fan out...

**EXT. HEDGE MAZE - CASTLE CAPULET - NIGHT**

As they solider by, *someone* slinks from behind the hedges...

ROMEO

Alone, crossbow ready, stalking the moonlit labyrinth...

And when the coast is clear, he finally SPOTS IT from afar:

JULIET'S BALCONY

Window glowing orange. Long curtains blowing in the breeze. A petite FIGURE framed within: *Juliet*...

ROMEO'S EYES

*lock on her -- a battle of heart and mind -- but then... he digs deep -- REMEMBERING -- his hand gripping the WOLF RING. The Romeo we know has returned...*

**EXT. FOOT OF TOWER - HOUSE OF CAPULET - MOMENTS LATER**

Trekking wet mud, Romeo reaches the MOAT'S EDGE. SNAPPING into position, he readies his crossbow, eyes SQUINTING...

IN HIS CROSSHAIRS: Juliet framed in the window.

ROMEO  
*But soft, what light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun...*

CLOSER, his finger hovers over trigger. Honing his aim:

ROMEO  
*Rise up, beautiful sun, and kill the jealous moon...*

And just before SQUEEZING THE TRIGGER, he hesitates...

Another look: the balcony window is NOW EMPTY. SHIT.

CUT TO:

A HAND GRIPPING ROCK

Pebbles skipping down the deadly tower face, Romeo CLIMBS precarious slate footholds. As more rocks RAIN DOWN --

**INT. JULIET'S BEDCHAMBER - CONTINUOUS**

-- Juliet HEARS THE SOUND, TWITCHING her gaze towards the balcony window. Quickly bolting up, she grabs... her SABER.

Adrenaline spiked -- sword readied -- she tip-toes marble, extinguishing candles. The room dimming to moonlit blue...

**EXT. TOWER - CONTINUOUS**

With a final REACH, Romeo GRABS the balcony lip and PULLS --

**INT. JULIET'S BEDCHAMBER - CONTINUOUS**

-- himself over. He quietly creeps forward -- *SHUNK!* -- unfurling his telescoping sword as he descends into the darkened room... Soon halted when, from behind a column...

JULIET POUNCES

with her fencing saber! -- an intense FLURRY of blades -- LUNGES, PARRIES, RIPOSTES -- Romeo BLOCKS, DEFENDS, as -- *BOOM!* -- he CRACKS Juliet with the butt of his sword --

-- sending her SLIDING across the floor... And as she spins to a stand: Romeo is gone. Just a room of sharp shadow...

Saber attentive, Juliet weaves marble columns:

JULIET  
Romeo, Romeo... wherefore art thou  
Romeo?

Behind one column: *no Romeo...* behind the next: *no Romeo...*

JULIET  
I have not heard you utter but a few words, yet I know who you are. A Montague. If my family finds you, you are as good as dead. That is, unless I kill you first...

ROMEO (O.S.)  
*Your family is no obstacle. And I'm afraid, neither are you...*

Juliet freezes, scanning the room -- Romeo's voice echoing -- Trying to place the sound, she approaches a column, when --

FROM BEHIND HER

Romeo steps out from shadow... and with delicate precision -- *SHINK!* -- pins his blade against her throat.

Juliet freezes, saber hitting ground:

JULIET  
Do it, Montague, end my suffering.

Romeo spins her around... blade still fixed on her throat... He stares into her eyes, she back at him, *emotions awhirl*.

ROMEO  
 First you fight for life, then you  
 request to die -- do you change  
 your mind as often as your change  
 your dresses?

But Juliet isn't laughing. She tries to reason with him:

JULIET  
 Your name is my enemy... But you  
 are you -- not just a Montague.  
 (beat)  
 Spare me... and spare your soul.

Before Romeo can think, the DOORS BURST OPEN: Tybalt & his GUARDS enter, swords FIXED.

Romeo grips Juliet -- dagger to throat -- backing his hostage towards the balcony. A tense standoff.

TYBALT  
 Drop her, Montague!

Romeo's feet INCH towards the balcony edge. A DEAD END...  
 Or is it... Looking down below: a welcome surprise awaits --

**EXT. COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS**

-- Benvolio & Mercutio, parked in the WAGON:

MERCUTIO  
 Did you think we were going home  
 without you?!

Romeo grins. And in one swift motion: grabs Juliet, wrapping a firm grip around the balcony CURTAINS -- and with a LEAP --

SWINGS DOWN

Curtains TEARING in half, lowering them to a terrace below -- Feet now planted on a PARAPET of CASTLE WALLS...

Romeo looks down to the wagon -- CLOSER NOW... but still a decent drop. He eyes Juliet, then back down to the FLATBED, brimming with GRAPES...

ROMEO  
 Think those grapes are pretty soft?

JULIET  
 What?!

ROMEO  
 Forgive me later --

-- Romeo SHOVES Juliet off the edge. She PLUMMETS for:

## THE FLATBED

*PSHH!* -- SPLATTERING into a thick mattress of GRAPES.  
Disgusted, she stands drenched in burgundian sludge.

FROM TOWERS ABOVE, Maria & Lady Capulet watch in horror...  
Lord Capulet scouting from a neighboring BASTION:

LORD CAPULET  
*Stop them! They have Juliet!*

But his voice is eclipsed by the violent ringing of --

A BELLTOWER

Deafening GONGS, signaling enemy intruders...

BENVOLIO & MERCUTIO

hear the warning... And then SEE the trouble they're in:

ARCHERS

ready their BOWS atop TOWERS. *SHIT.* And with the drop of a GUARD'S HAND -- *WOOOOSH!* -- a CLOUD OF ARROWS RAIN DOWN...

LORD CAPULET  
*Stop firing! They have Juliet!*

*But it falls on deaf ears.* Juliet hides behind BARRELS as -- *SHINK-SHINK* -- they're PEPPERED with arrows, WINE fountaining into the flatbed. Benvolio & Mercutio surface, unharmed.

As the ARCHERS reload -- DRAWING BACK BOWS -- Romeo eyes the PATHWAY of CASTLE WALLS: a long RUNWAY of turreted paths...

ROMEO  
(yelling down to his men)  
Go! Now! Meet me at the end!

Mercutio whips the reins as -- *SHUNK, SHUNK, SHUNK* -- they OUTRUN the next tidal wave of ARROWS --

Romeo bolts, SPRINTING a parallel path with the wagon -- as TYBALT & CAPULET SOLDIERS

flank on horseback below. A deadly formation SWARMING --

Benvolio DRAWS HIS SWORD as -- *CHING-CHING* -- Tybalt SLICES violently -- wagon wheels LUNGING for pattering hooves as they FIGHT FOR SPACE through narrow courtyard ARCHWAYS --

ABOVE

Romeo TIGHTROPES the narrow ledge, leaping turrets, dodging arrows... while --

BELOW

the wagon RACES -- keeping pace -- now parallel with Romeo...

AHEAD

the castle wall is ENDING -- THIS IS IT -- legs blurring in sprint as -- ROMEO LEAPS -- *a stunned silence* -- LANDING in --

**E/I. WAGON - CONTINUOUS**

-- the FLATBED. Now juiced with wine, Romeo surfaces...

MERCUTIO

I thought we were sent to kill her,  
not keep her?!

ROMEO

It's complicated!

JULIET

*Complicated?!* You danced with me!  
Kissed me! Then tried to kill me!

BENVOLIO

YOU KISSED HER?!

MERCUTIO

YOU KISSED HER?!

ROMEO

I apologize, your ladyship --

-- Romeo is silenced with a slap:

JULIET

I don't!

BENVOLIO

ROMEO! --

-- He's tossed a SWORD as Capulet Horsemen FLANK THE WAGON -- Romeo turns -- ducking BLADES -- when -- *BOOM!* -- the wagon CRUSHES Capulet Guards against a STONE ARCHWAY --

Now CAREENING for the HEDGE MAZE, the carriage --

**EXT. HEDGE MAZE - CONTINUOUS**

-- BLASTS through walls of hedges -- *BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!* -- explosions of leaves and twigs DIG a hallway as --

-- HORSEMEN ARCHERS follow their path -- ARROWS sinking into the wagon -- GAINING on them through this leafy tunnel.

ROMEO

Juliet, get down! You trying to get yourself killed?!

*WHOOSH!* -- Romeo ducks -- sharp branches ZIPPING BY --

JULIET  
-- Says the man sent to kill me!

WHOOSH! -- With ONE LAST IMPACT -- the wagon BURSTS THROUGH a final WALL OF SHRUBS, revealing ahead... their only escape:

THE DRAWBRIDGE

Chunking CHAINS SIGNAL: it's being RAISED. Mercutio WHIPS REIGNS, pushing the steeds to the limit as:

ROMEO BENVOLIO & MERCUTIO  
We're not going to make it! We're going to make it!

But Mercutio's face soon DROPS, seeing the bridge has quickly become: a 45° ANGLE. A gnarly RAMP --

MERCUTIO  
You're right! We're not going to make it!

He SCREAMS, GRABBING Benvolio, BAILING them both

OFF THE CARRIAGE

Where they PLUMMET into the murky MOAT.

UNDERWATER,

arrows STREAK BY -- bubbling projectiles of death -- barely missing Benvolio & Mercutio as they SWIM & DODGE. ABOVE...

ROMEO & JULIET

LAUNCH through the AIR -- *horses hurdling* -- barely CLEARING the gap as -- BOOM! -- they LAND with a creaking THUD...

OUTSIDE THE CASTLE WALLS.

The wagon intact, Romeo & Juliet surface: *they made it!* Romeo takes the reins as the carriage RACES into the night...

**EXT. MOAT - CASTLE CAPULET - THAT MOMENT**

GASP! Crawling from the moat -- panting, caked in muck -- Benvolio & Mercutio look up to find --

TYBALT & HIS TROOPS

standing above, swords FIXED...

Cornered, they surrender -- but it won't be a silent one:

MERCUTIO

*Hey... how's the hand? You know: I  
felt bad about that. Glad I finally  
get a chance to apologize --*

*WHAM!* -- Tybalt silences Mercutio with a KICK to the gut.

SLAM TO BLACK.

INT. THRONE ROOM - CASTLE CAPULET - NIGHT

An air of desperation permeates the room as Tybalt, Sampson, and Gregory nervously eye a pacing Lord Capulet.

TYBALT

Our sentries have searched the city... but they fear entering the Montague forest. Send us, Uncle. We are your most trusted riders --

LORD CAPULET

(grabbing Tybalt's throat)  
-- My trust in you has allowed a Montague to slip in and out of my castle as if he were an invited guest to our occasion! --

A VOICE (O.S.)

-- And must I say: it was quite the occasion...

Lord Capulet releases Tybalt. Clocking to the VOICE, he finds Constable Escalus, leaning against the doorway... with a healthy amount of snark:

ESCALUS

Constable Escalus of Venice. I wish to ask a few questions...

LORD CAPULET

And what gives you the right to interrogate a noble?

ESCALUS

(rapid-fire)

Only the intrinsic fiber of our sovereign government and my elected position as a keeper of the peace.

(smiles, saunters closer)

Checks. Balances. Decisions made by popular vote. Nasty things, these Republics. In a sense, you might say... we're all in this together.

Lord Capulet nods to Tybalt & his men. The room clears...

## ESCALUS

Help me understand: Capulets &  
Montagues wage battle with each  
other in Verona, yet do not care  
that we are at war with France?

## LORD CAPULET

Naples is at war! Rome is at war!  
Verona is not! Yes, I have learned  
of the Pope's proposed alliance.  
And while Venice may want a war, it  
will not get my vote! It will not  
get my army! The troubles of the  
peninsula are none of my concern!

## ESCALUS

You just answered my next question.  
This lack of concern must be the  
motive for hosting Prince Paris,  
cousin to the King of France?

PUSHING IN on Lord Capulet. He stews, a man conflicted...

## LORD CAPULET

Preposterous. Which of my rivals  
clouds your head with such rumors?

Suddenly -- *WHAM!* -- doors SLAP their hinges -- as Prince  
Paris STORMS IN, flanked by his Priest and Bodyguard. Behind  
him, his poodle trails: *YIP! YIP! YIP!*

## PRINCE PARIS

Is this how you treat a prince in  
this God-forsaken country?! Offer  
him your hospitality. Your loyalty.  
Your excuse for a daughter... and  
then, *poof*, it's all gone!

*YIP! YIP!* -- PUNT! -- Paris BOOTS his dog across the marble.

In stunned silence, Escalus clocks to Lord Capulet with a  
knowing look: *Rumor, you say?* But the old man's done  
cooperating. With a NOD to his guards, they flank to remove  
Escalus, but not before he gets his final word:

## ESCALUS

When you hear Pikemen knock on your  
castle walls, France will be your  
concern. And it will be too late...

As Escalus is ushered from the room, Lord Capulet looks to  
Paris, contorting his face into the fakest of smiles:

## LORD CAPULET

Prince Paris, excuse that unseemly  
interruption. I want to assure you,  
tonight's disturbance --

PRINCE PARIS  
Puts our tenuous agreement on even  
thinner ice! Is that understood?

Lord Capulet fidgets, knowing he's powerless...

LORD CAPULET  
Yes, your majesty.

PRINCE PARIS  
After seeking council with my  
cousin, I shall return in three  
days' time. If by then your  
daughter is not perched on an  
altar, awaiting my hand, then I  
won't be able to guarantee your  
protection once French troops reach  
Verona. And mark my words: they  
will reach Verona.

As Paris whirls around, stomping for the door, his dog  
surfaces from behind a servant's robe with a WHIMPER.

PRINCE PARIS  
Keep the dog.

With a SLAM!, Paris is gone. Lord Capulet SLUMPS, stewing...

**EXT. DRAWBRIDGE - CASTLE CAPULET - MINUTES LATER**

Drawbridge clanking to the ground, Paris and his caravan  
GALLOP from the castle gates... And soon, we notice...

... someone following them. Constable Escalus on horseback,  
tracking the caravan's trail...

CUT TO:

*WHUMP!*

Juliet is dropped to the forest floor, hands-bound.

ROMEO  
(pointing a finger)  
Stay.

**EXT. DIRT ROAD - SYCAMORE FOREST - NIGHT**

As Romeo approaches their wagon, Juliet rises, moving to run,  
but she STUMBLES, panting, out-of-breath...

ROMEO  
-- Do you ever listen?

JULIET  
Occasionally...  
(beat, GASPING)  
*Help -- I, can't -- breathe.*

Romeo rolls his eyes. *SHING!* Springing his blade, he grabs her. SLICES at her torso. Juliet SCREAMS, then REALIZES: he simply cut her CORSET.

ROMEO  
Now you can.

Juliet plops to a sit, watching as Romeo throws open the wagon's doors. Unlatches its flatbed...

JULIET  
It's no use, Montague. My cousin  
Tybalt is the finest tracker in all  
of Verona. To him, finding a single  
carriage is but a child's game.

ROMEO  
I should hope so...

*WHAP!* Romeo SLAPS the horses' rears. They gallop off with the wagon, SLUDGY WINE spilling a trail of decoy breadcrumbs.

JULIET  
Clever plan, Montague.

ROMEO  
(offering his hand)  
Romeo.

Juliet shuns it. Another eye-roll from Romeo as he YANKS her up and gives her a light shove towards the dense trees...

**EXT. Sycamore Forest - NIGHT**

Romeo & Juliet trek between towering trunks, like mice at the feet of giants. Juliet soon slows, FREEZING at the sight...

ROMEO  
What is it? Never laid eyes on some  
trees before?

Eyes wide, Juliet takes in the spooky scene: MIST shrouding gnarled trunks and ghostly branches.

ROMEO  
You haven't, have you? An entire  
life spent within castle walls --

JULIET  
-- For my own protection, thanks to  
your family.

ROMEO  
Well, m'lady... you're about to get  
quite familiar.

He pushes her onward, seeping into the dense FOG...

**EXT. SWAMP - Sycamore Forest - NIGHT**

The forest is now denser, wetter... a giant muddy bramble. Romeo uses his SWORD like a machete, HACKING at the branches.

JULIET  
I hope you know, killing me will  
only further enrage my father...

ROMEO  
I don't mean to kill you. Granted,  
that was my original intention, but  
sometimes...  
(eyes her, a faint spark)  
... things change.

*HACK! HACK!* -- Romeo continues clearing the brush.

JULIET  
Seeing that you've had your fill of  
violence and savagery... what are  
your current intentions, then?

ROMEO  
To ransom you...

JULIET  
(scoffs)  
For money.

ROMEO  
No... For my cousins.

CUT TO:

MERCUTIO & BENVOLIO

Faces clenched in grisly pain --

**INT. DUNGEON - CASTLE CAPULET - NIGHT**

-- PULLING BACK, we reveal our Montague boys on "racks" --  
ropes STRETCHING their limbs in opposite directions...

Pulling a LEVER, Sampson & Gregory release the tension.  
Mercutio & Benvolio SLAM to the stone slab. Gasping.

TYBALT  
Again, I ask you... where did Romeo  
take my cousin?!

MERCUTIO  
To bed, if he has half a brain...

Tybalt nods to Sampson, who reaches to re-engage the LEVER, but is HALTED by the sound of FOOTSTEPS...

Lord Capulet and his guards enter the damp dungeon -- passing rusted TORTURE DEVICES, mounds of RATS scurrying across stone tiles, gaunt PRISONERS moaning in agony...

TYBALT  
They won't talk, uncle...

LORD CAPULET  
... *Montagues never have. So it is in these desperate times, nephew, that you get the chance to redeem yourself. Take your men... and find Juliet. Our future depends on it...*

Mercutio & Benvolio swap glances: *what the hell is going on?*

TYBALT  
... I shall not fail you, m'lord...

**EXT. SWAMP - SYCAMORE FOREST - DAWN**

Romeo continues to HACK vines, Juliet STRUGGLING behind:

JULIET  
Admit it, Montague. You're lost...

ROMEO  
Afraid not, your complainingship.  
This is merely a shortcut home.

JULIET  
And where precisely is this home of yours? No doubt one of these stumps... or perhaps you make rest in this slimy bog itself? --

*HACK!* -- Romeo clears a final batch of branches. As they fall, LIGHT pours in, revealing in the distance...

**AN EPIC MOUNTAIN RANGE**

The rising sun's rays GLOW behind the endless, jagged peaks. Verona's unmatched Dolomite Mountains.

Juliet's eyes trace a TRAIL winding up the canyon. Sharp switchbacks ascend, until the path disappears into clouds.

ROMEO  
I give you... Inferno Pass.

Smiling, Romeo slaps Juliet on the back as he hikes onward. Off her stunned face, we...

DISSOLVE THROUGH:

THICK, MISTY CLOUDS

Soaring up the canyon, we notice TWO FIGURES traversing a NARROW FOOTPATH -- no more than a meter wide -- cut directly into the rock face...

**EXT. INFERNO PASS - MOUNTAINS OF VERONA - MORNING**

Romeo bounds up the pass effortlessly. Behind him, Juliet inches along, hugging the mountainside, eyes glued on...

THE THOUSAND FOOT DROP

JULIET

Inferno Pass. An appropriate name.  
Has it always been called this?

ROMEO

I gave it the name. From Dante's poem. But as you can see, our hell spirals up instead of down.

JULIET

You know Dante?

ROMEO

Of course. While I'm partial to the works of DaVinci, one cannot discount the influence of Dante. From peasants to politicians, he was the toast of Rome during my travels.

JULIET

You... can read?

ROMEO

Astonishingly, I can... I've also managed to walk upright and implement a marvelous invention known as 'the wheel.' I'm afraid your perception of my family is severely misplaced. We do not, in fact, pray to Pagan gods, drink the blood of children, or sacrifice a virgin with every full moon.

Juliet's amusement fades as the pair stops at a LARGE GAP in the path. Romeo LEAPS across with ease, offering a helping hand... But again, Juliet shuns it:

JULIET  
I'm quite capable, Montague.

Romeo backs off. Juliet gathers her courage, JUMPING across the gap. But she LANDS SHORT, FEET SLIPPING, ABOUT TO FALL -- -- but something SNAGS her dress. She looks back: it's Romeo.

JULIET  
(dangling, frantic)  
Don't let me go!

Laughing, Romeo pulls her onto solid ground, entertained:

ROMEO  
You keep saying that...

As he walks away, Juliet follows: annoyed... yet intrigued.

CUT TO:

THE ABANDONED WAGON

With a CREAK, its door opens, light spilling inside... Tybalt peers into the space. Nothing. Empty. Growling, he --

**EXT. DIRT ROAD - Sycamore Forest - AFTERNOON**

-- SLAMS the door shut, looking to Sampson & Gregory, who sit atop horses nearby.

SAMPSON  
No passengers. No horses. No footprints.

GREGORY  
Clever, that Romeo.

Tybalt shoots his men an angry scowl, which shuts them up.

TYBALT  
Onward. They can't be far...

Tybalt mounts up, WHIPPING reigns, the men GALLOPING OFF.

**EXT. ALPINE FOREST - MOUNTAINS OF VERONA - NIGHT**

SPARKS POP from a campfire, casting an eerie red glow on the softly falling SNOWFLAKES...

In a clearing of a tree-lined plateau, Romeo & Juliet eat by the humble fire. Small game roasting on skewers...

Distracted, Juliet is fixed on the stunning mountain vista:

JULIET

I have seen your mountains  
before... in paintings.  
They did not do them justice.

ROMEO

This is the Verona I know.

Juliet bites a small DRUMSTICK. Chews, skeptical...

JULIET

What did you call this again?

ROMEO

*Scoiattolo.*  
(off her confused look)  
Squirrel.

A look: *Gross.* Then... *Screw it.* Juliet DIGS IN, scarfing down the welcome meal. Romeo watches her. Intrigued...

ROMEO

Last night, you asked me to end  
your life. Why? You have  
everything. *Wealth, luxury.* What is  
missing in such magnitude to cause  
you to ask a stranger for death?

Annoyed, Juliet glares at Romeo, matter-of-factly:

JULIET

Love.

For a moment, Romeo is surprised... then he begins to LAUGH:

ROMEO

*Love, she says!* You are but a child  
who knows nothing of love. You may  
be rich in beauty, but you are poor  
in experience. Or do I exaggerate?

JULIET

(blushing, irritated)  
Go to hell.

ROMEO

That may well be my final  
destination... For if hell is the  
resting place of lost souls and  
broken hearts, then mine will feel  
right at home.

JULIET

And what do you know of love?

ROMEO

I know that love can make the sun's rays feel like a cold chill.

JULIET

By your words, Montague, one would think you are in love...

ROMEO

Out... Out of love...

Romeo's eyes are heavy. Weary. A haunted man.

JULIET

*Now I see.* Upon sight of your face, she was not slain by Cupid's arrow?

ROMEO

Not Cupid's... no... she cannot be touched by the weak & childish arrows of love. Nor can she listen to words of love... nor be gazed upon with loving eyes...

JULIET

I see... *she is celibate, then?*

ROMEO

She is dead. Her name was Rosaline.

Beat. Juliet freezes. An awkward silence. Only the crackling of the campfire... Finally:

JULIET

You are right, Romeo...

That gets his attention. Juliet seems haunted as well:

JULIET

... I have never loved. And my father has promised me to a man I do not love. And hearing how you speak of it, I am now certain... I would rather die than know I will never feel love as you have... That is why I asked for death.

ROMEO

Your marriage to Paris was to be your father's final move. An alliance that would exterminate my family once and for all.

Juliet is beyond confused...

ROMEO

Why else do you think we came for  
you? To protect my family's future.

JULIET

You sound just like my father.

Without warning, Romeo LUNGES forward -- *SHING!* -- springing his DAGGER against Juliet's throat, furious:

ROMEO

Your father gave the order to  
murder my entire camp of women &  
children! For the sole purpose of  
ending the Montague bloodline!  
I am nothing like your father.

Juliet glances to the knife digging into her throat:

JULIET

Are you certain...?

Romeo stops. Realizes he's gone too far -- *SHINK*. -- he retracts the blade, retreating to the other side of the fire.

JULIET

There are people in Verona beyond  
Capulet and Montague. Can you not  
see beyond your own family? Beyond  
your own future?

Eyes heavy, Romeo looks to his RING. Its beautifully-carved woodgrain glimmers in the firelight:

ROMEO

I can only see the past...

As he turns the ring on his finger, we PUSH IN on the dancing flames -- closer and closer -- until they're nothing but...

**EXT. ALPINE FOREST - MOUNTAINS OF VERONA - NIGHT**

... glowing embers. DRIFTING from Romeo's sleeping form... we find Juliet, hands tied to a tree -- motionless -- until

HER EYES SPRING OPEN

Awake. Alert. Quietly, she works her ring's sharp JEWEL against her binds. The ropes FRAY... then snap LOOSE.

Juliet rises, moving to flee... but something stops her:

ROMEO'S SLEEPING BODY

She steps forward, eyeing the DAGGER amongst his belongings.

Silently, she GRABS it. And as she does, we reveal...

ROMEO

behind a nearby tree. His sleeping form nothing but a decoy.

JULIET

springs the blade -- raising the dagger above her head...

Romeo watches, eyes widening -- heart pounding -- but then... Juliet lowers the blade. Pity in her eyes. She can't do it.

ROMEO (O.S.)  
*I have seen many things...*

Juliet SHRIEKS. Spins around. Blade out as Romeo approaches:

ROMEO  
... But until this night, mercy  
from a Capulet was not one of them.

Juliet waves the dagger, yet Romeo advances with steely calm. Reaching her, his chest presses against the blade -- no words -- just palpable energy. Unbearable tension. Then...

... Juliet lowers the dagger. As she does, they fall into a

SUDDEN KISS

Primal. Passionate. An outpouring. A release... It goes on for moments. Lips finding lips. Fingers running through hair. Hot GASPS forming in the cold air like steam.

Then... as Romeo's eyes open... something makes him FREEZE:

A PAIR OF PUPILS

flicker in the dark trees. As Romeo slowly turns 360°, more and more EYES appear. Grey fur and glistening fangs approaching from shadow, finally revealing themselves to be:

A PACK OF WOLVES

ROMEO  
Stay behind me. This will get worse  
before it gets better...

Romeo draws his CROSSBOW with one hand, clasping Juliet's with the other -- then -- in a blink -- *SNARL!* --

THE WOLVES BLITZ

*THWICK-THWICK!* -- Romeo manages two KILL SHOTS -- but a wolf broadsides him -- knocking his WEAPON to the snow -- as

MORE WOLVES CHARGE

Juliet cowers back -- *SHINK!* -- Romeo UNFURLS his sword -- but jaws CLAMP onto his calf -- BUCKLING him to the ground -- HIS BLADE SCUTTLING INTO THE FIRE.

Losing strength, Romeo begins to waver as another CHOMPS, teeth STREAKING for his jugular, but just before they SNAP -- A SEARING BLUR

slashes across the wolf's spine. Romeo looks up to find...

JULIET

wielding his sword. Snowflakes HISSING as they fall on the hot blade. Her feet coil into a FENCER'S STANCE, ready, as -- THE WOLF RUSHES HER

Juliet DODGES -- SLICING the beast's hind legs -- Romeo watching her fencing moves unfold like a violent ballet...

Now limping, the wolf CHARGES AGAIN -- LUNGING FOR HER FACE, it LEAPS -- but Juliet sidesteps -- sword SLASHING flesh -- SPLATTERING BLOOD TO SNOW.

The pack YELPS, retreating into the night, soon gone. Juliet exhales, lowering the sword.

Wincing, Romeo struggles up, but COLLAPSES, caught by Juliet, easing him to a delicate sit:

JULIET  
Save your strength.

She pulls back his cloak. It's SOAKED with BLOOD. Turning now to Romeo's face, she sees the color fading from his cheeks:

ROMEO  
Not bad... for a Capulet...

Juliet springs to action: packing Romeo's wounds with snow, slicing bandages from her dress. As she works...

... we slowly PUSH IN on Romeo's eyes. Irises losing focus. Eyelids growing heavy. Soon, they close. Silence...

MATCH CUT TO:

ROMEO'S EYES

flutter open. Looking around, he's alone. JULIET IS GONE.

## EXT. ALPINE FOREST - MOUNTAINS OF VERONA - MORNING

Grimacing, Romeo struggles to his feet. Checks his wounds. They've been sutured. Bandaged. Then suddenly --

-- FOOTSTEPS. Romeo reaches for his dagger... but it's only Juliet. She drops an armful of brambles into the fire pit:

JULIET  
You're awake...

Juliet smiles. Dress tattered, face dirty, hair down... And yet, she looks comfortable. At peace. Perhaps... at home.

ROMEO  
You saved my life. A Montague's life. I am forever in your debt.

Romeo spots a ROSE sprouting from the brambles. Before the fire reaches it, he PLUCKS the flower, struggling to a stand:

ROMEO  
You are no longer my prisoner. Be it to my house or yours, I shall deliver you... and let no harm come to you. I swear it on my family's name...

JULIET  
(frustrated, torn)  
Montague. Capulet. What's in a name?

ROMEO  
A rose by any other name... would smell as sweet.

Gently, Romeo places the flower in her hair, falling into

ANOTHER KISS,

wrapped in the rays of the rising sun. As they release, we see Juliet is crying:

JULIET  
You are... not what I expected...  
(collecting herself)  
But to think we could be together is a fool's wish. With every kiss, we endanger not only ourselves... but our families. We cannot do this. I must return home...

We sense Romeo's heart crack. A mix of pain & agreement --

ROMEO

-- *Then I will keep my promise...*  
 I will take you back, but... we  
 must assure the safe release of my  
 cousins. That is all I ask.

JULIET

You have my word.

Romeo offers his hand. This time, Juliet takes it...

**INT. DUNGEON - CASTLE CAPULET - DAY**

Bolted to the ceiling: a row of dangling METAL CAGES...

Shackled inside, Mercutio paces while Benvolio feeds a FRIENDLY RAT meager crumbs from a crust of bread. Suddenly --  
*CA-THUNK!* -- with a horrible GRIND, the doors open to reveal:  
 DUNGEON GUARDS.

DRAGGED from their cages, Mercutio & Benvolio are DROPPED to the foot of a rusty GUILLOTINE. Its razor-sharp blade GLINTS.

HEAD GUARD

Which of you sad sacks goes first?

MERCUTIO

(stroking his hair)

Just a bit off the top, please --

-- but before he can step forward, Benvolio DOES, offering a WINK. As the guard SHOVES his head for the yoke, Benvolio SHAKES his sleeve, and onto the guard's hand scurries...

THE RAT

Startled -- the guard JUMPS -- a split-second distraction --

*WHAM!* -- Benvolio CLOCKS a guard in the face with his metal cuffs -- *CRACK!* -- Mercutio UPPERCUTS another with his.

More guards CHARGE -- blades OUT -- Mercutio & Benvolio BLOCK slashes with their cuffs, SPARKS flying as metal hits metal.

YANK! PULLING their shackles tight, our boys

CLOTHESLINE THE GUARDS

Bones CRACKING as they TUMBLE DOWN stone steps.

As the Head Guard moves to flee, Mercutio & Benvolio CHASE. THROWING him down -- they SNATCH his KEY RING then -- *BOOM!* -- Mercutio HEAVES the guard into an IRON MAIDEN --

SPIKES PIERCE FLESH

as blood SEEPS from the metal coffin, SCREAMS dying out...

BENVOLIO  
Was that really necessary?

Mercutio just SHRUGS, tossing the KEYS to a chained PRISONER:

MERCUTIO  
The way out?

The prisoner meekly points to a SEWER DRAIN.

**INT. SEWER PIPE - DUNGEON - MOMENTS LATER**

As Mercutio & Benvolio crawl through the SLUDGE:

MERCUTIO  
When we get home... remind me to  
kill Romeo.

CUT TO:

A FLOWING CAPE

fluttering behind Lady Montague as she winds dark halls, eyes moist, passing mounted ANIMAL HEADS: boar, bear, ibex...

Approaching a WOODEN DOOR, two axe-wielding GUARDS block her path -- but she THRUSTS them aside, BURSTING IN --

**INT. THRONE ROOM - CASTLE MONTAGUE - NIGHT**

-- to find: Lord Montague debriefing with a battered Benvolio & Mercutio. She searches the group, finding, to her dismay...

NO SIGN OF ROMEO.

Her lips begins to tremble. Eyes sunken. A wreck:

LADY MONTAGUE  
Where is my son?

BENVOLIO  
We do not know, m'lady. We have  
been separated for two moons...

Lord Montague waves the room to clear, but his wife SNAPS:

LADY MONTAGUE  
You have sacrificed our son to win  
a battle?!

LORD MONTAGUE  
TO WIN A WAR!!!

As his BELLOW fades, Lady Montague nods sheepishly... then approaches her husband, leaning close, whispering in his ear:

LADY MONTAGUE  
 If you don't find my son, you will  
 answer to a fate worse than war.  
 You will answer to... me.

As Lord Capulet's expression falls, PRELAP: GALLOPING HOOVES.

**EXT. CASTLE MONTAGUE - MOMENTS LATER**

Benvolio & Mercutio ROAR through the castle gates, thundering down the mountain, CLOUDS of DUST rising in their wake...

CUT TO:

PRINCE PARIS'S CONVOY

galloping for a RIVERSIDE VILLAGE in the distance. Peaking from the skyline of straw roofs: dozens of long, sharp PIKES.

Seeing this, the Prince's face twists into a VILE GRIN...

**EXT. PEASANT VILLAGE - Sycamore Forest - MORNING**

QUICK CUTS as WOMEN are manhandled. MEN beaten to the ground. CHICKENS lifted from coops. Meager TREASURES pocketed...

... All by steel-armored SOLDIERS in sharp, angular helmets with soulless eye-slits. Medieval stormtroopers. These are...

THE PIKEMEN

All armed with long, deadly, double-edged POLL-AXES...

Suddenly, HORNS SOUND. The Pikemen CLOCK to the sight of PRINCE PARIS, flanked by his entourage, galloping in...

PRINCE PARIS  
 What is the meaning of this?!

The Pikemen fidget, busted. The TOWNSPEOPLE look on, hopeful.

PRINCE PARIS  
 Your orders were not to plunder...  
 ... but to eradicate.

GASPS from the onlookers. We zero-in on a poor, weary farmer, TANNER, and his FAMILY (a MOTHER, a BOY).

PRINCE PARIS  
 This clearing is perfectly positioned for a fortification.  
 Ready it before the King arrives...

Tanner can't take it anymore. He steps forward:

TANNER  
 And what gives you the right?! This  
 is not your land!

SHOUTS of agreement from the townsfolk. Paris's lips curling:

PRINCE PARIS  
 Not yet.  
 (beat, to the Pikemen)  
Burn it.

**EXT. Sycamore Forest - Day**

Romeo & Juliet hike through the dense forest. An awkward, heartbroken silence. But soon the stillness is broken by --

PLUMES OF SMOKE

filtering through the trees...

JULIET  
 What is that -- ?

Romeo hushes her, listening to the sound of CRACKLING FIRE.

**EXT. VILLAGE OUTSKIRTS - Sycamore Forest - Moments Later**

Romeo & Juliet crawl to the edge of an embankment. Their faces show gutted dread as we reveal the village...

ON FIRE

FLAMES BILLOW from humble huts. Children WAIL as their PARENTS struggle to fight. Many are SHACKLED. Others KILLED.

ROMEO  
*Pikemen... Mercenaries from Switzerland... Employed by the French... Already in Verona...*

PUSHING IN on Romeo, gears turning, finally getting it...

ROMEO  
 Turned loose in our country, no one will be safe -- *Montague, Capulet* -- it won't matter. Full occupation...

As Romeo eyes the horrific BLAZE, something inside him burns as well. Violence. Vengeance. He points at Juliet:

ROMEO  
 Stay.

**EXT. PEASANT VILLAGE - Sycamore Forest - Moments Later**

Slipping into the smoldering village, back against an untorched hut, Romeo scans the scene, when suddenly --

-- Juliet slides next to him. Back-to-back.

ROMEO  
Do you ever listen?

JULIET  
Occasionally.

Romeo can't help but smile. He plops his sword in her hand:

ROMEO  
Make yourself useful, then.

Juliet nods, nervous... but inspired. Romeo has that effect. As Romeo loads a battery of arrows, he COCKS his crossbow:

ROMEO  
If it wears metal... kill it.

**EXT. PEASANT VILLAGE - Sycamore Forest - MOMENTS LATER**

Drifting through the THICK SMOKE. Visibility is near zero. Through black plumes, glimpse Pikemen loading CHILDREN into PRISON CARRIAGES

Tears streaming from ash-caked faces. Then, without warning --

ROMEO & JULIET

barrel in -- *SLASH!* -- SHREDDING the row of Pikemen --

Binds are SLICED. Cells OPENED. The children set FREE.

BOY TANNER

runs into his parents' arms. A momentary victory, but --

MORE POLL-AXES

charge -- swinging air -- *CHING!* -- Romeo & Juliet block the BLUR of axe heads -- their movements fluid & synchronized -- Romeo's brutality mixing with Juliet's elegance to form...

A VIOLENT DANCE

*But it matters not...* Soon, they're surrounded by...

A CLUSTER OF POLL-AXES

Romeo & Juliet DROP their weapons, surrendering...

**EXT. MAIN SQUARE - PEASANT VILLAGE - MOMENTS LATER**

Romeo & Juliet are SHOVED before Paris. Grabbing Juliet's bloody cheeks with a gloved hand, he inspects her:

PRINCE PARIS  
 If it isn't my lovely bride-to-be.  
 Now, this look suits you perfectly.

As Juliet snaps free, Paris turns to Romeo:

PRINCE PARIS  
 I remember you...

... *WHAM!* Paris CLOCKS Romeo in the face. Surprisingly hard.

PRINCE PARIS  
 That was for stealing my fiancé.  
 And this...  
 (grabbing his cheeks)  
 ... is for bringing her back.

Paris proceeds to KISS both cheeks -- a *French thank you* --  
 breaking into relieved, laughter:

PRINCE PARIS  
 You have saved me a sizable  
 headache! You see, empires don't  
 build themselves... and our maiden  
 here is the key to a genuine claim  
 on the throne. Thankfully, her  
 father was foolish enough to buy  
 into the ruse...

Now understanding, Juliet shares a grave look with Romeo.

PRINCE PARIS  
 And you, monsieur, have just sealed  
 your country's fate --

-- *THPPP!* -- Romeo SPITS BLOOD on Paris's shoes.

PRINCE PARIS  
 (to the Pikemen)  
Kill him. She comes with us.

JULIET  
 ROMEO!!!

As Juliet's screams ECHO, our scene ramps to SLOW-MO:  
 Romeo's head is FORCED upon a tree stump, STRUGGLING as a  
 Pikeman RAISES HIS AXE. Romeo fixes his eyes on Juliet as

THE AXE FALLS FOR HIS NECK

But just before it HITS, a WHISTLING SHRIEK cuts through the  
 air -- shocking us back to REAL-TIME as -- *THUNK!*

AN ARROW

snap into the eye of the executioner. He crumbles to death.

Romeo blinks, somehow... alive. Everyone spins 360° as  
**THUNK! THUNK! THUNK!**

More ARROWS find Pikemen. Paris CLOCKS to the sight of --  
MERCUTIO & BENVOLIO

riding in -- GUTTING Pikemen in their wake...

ROMEO BEAMS

Breaking free, he grabs a SWORD -- CUTTING DOWN Juliet's captor -- and as he GRABS HER HAND -- mayhem erupts:

PIKEMEN CHARGE

our Montague warriors -- who fall into formation: back-to-back-to-back... to-back -- Mercutio steals a confused glance at Juliet -- her hand clasping Romeo's:

MERCUTIO  
Romeo, I hope we survive long  
enough for you to explain this.

With the Pikemen regiment scattered, VILLAGERS take up arms. FARMERS grab makeshift WEAPONS, joining the FIGHT.

ROMEO

hacks & slashes -- not noticing a Pikeman's axe --

RUSHING HIS BLIND-SIDE

But wait -- at the last second -- Tanner SKEWERS the soldier with a RUSTY SICKLE. Romeo clocks around, stunned. This humble farmer just saved his life.

Atop his horse, Paris watches as THE BATTLE RAGES. Villagers fall. Pikemen fall. A bloody stalemate... Paris looks to his Bodyguard, who flashes a grave look. Paris nods, furious:

PRINCE PARIS  
Retreat! Retreat!

As Paris GALLOPS OFF, his men FOLLOW. Wounded Pikemen scramble for horses, climbing into departing carriages as the battalion disappears into the forest...

CUT TO:

A DEAD MAN'S BODY

gently lowered into a shallow grave...

## EXT. PEASANT VILLAGE - Sycamore Forest - Day

Romeo, Mercutio, and Benvolio back away from the body as Boy Tanner kneels, wiping soot from the man's face, revealing

HIS FATHER

The boy breaks down, tears flowing.

Across the way, Juliet tends to injured villagers, watching as Romeo kneels beside the devastated child:

ROMEO

Do not stifle your sadness. Your father was brave. Weep until your tears run dry, and then honor him. Honor him with your bravery.

Romeo RISES, but not before placing something in the boy's hands. The boy looks: it's his father's SICKLE.

ROMEO

For too long, people like you have lived in fear of two names... Montague and Capulet. To come between us was to ask for death. I tell you now... that time is over! We now face a common enemy. You may believe this is the darkest day you've ever faced... but it isn't.

Romeo now has the entire village's attention. Juliet rises, making her way through the crowd...

ROMEO

Today, I make you a promise. When the Pikemen return, and they will, I will not fight for the House of Montague. Or the House of Capulet. I will fight for you. I will fight for Verona!

As Juliet reaches the front, her eyes lock with Romeo's...

The survivors muster a CHEER. Boy Tanner thrusts his sickle in the air. Mercutio & Benvolio look on:

BENVOLIO

What's gotten into him?

MERCUTIO

What else? A woman.

BENVOLIO

I can see why he likes her...

MERCUTIO  
... I can see why you're an idiot.

Shaking his head, Benvolio steps away, approaching Romeo:

BENVOLIO  
Romeo, half the Capulet Guard is  
searching for us. Every moment  
spent here endangers these people.

A conflicted beat, then Romeo nods. PRELAP THUMPING HOOVES --

**EXT. DIRT ROAD - SYCAMORE FOREST - DAY**

-- as Prince Paris's convoy GALLOPS in retreat. From a carriage, a SLAIN SOLDIER is heaved overboard. Dead weight. The body TUMBLES to the dirt, a rag doll.

Soon, the convoy is gone... but we linger as...

CONSTABLE ESCALUS

emerges from the trees. Dismounting his horse, he inspects the dead Pikeman, gears spinning...

MINUTES LATER

Escalus is now disguised in the Pikeman's ARMOR. Mounting his horse, he WHIPS his reigns, GALLOPING for Paris's convoy.

**EXT. CANOE - RIVER - DAY**

A snaking RIVER framed by broccoli-crown forests...

Mercutio & Benvolio paddle oars against the gentle current. At the bow, Romeo's gaze is fixed on the village's still-billingowing SMOKE in the distance. Juliet leans against him.

MERCUTIO  
So... Romeo... friend... question:  
did you feel any need rescue us? I  
mean, I've lost count on how often  
we've done so for you.

ROMEO  
I had my hands full...

MERCUTIO  
(sarcastic pelvic thrusts)  
Your hands full, eh?!

BENVOLIO  
Mercutio. She deserves our  
courtesy.

MERCUTIO

The courtesy of my sword, perhaps!  
She is a Cap-u-let!

ROMEO

None of that matters anymore.

MERCUTIO

Ha! Her father means to destroy our  
bloodline and you weaken our  
efforts by bedding the enemy?!

JULIET

I have been bedded by no one! And  
as for my father: he has been  
manipulated by Prince Paris, who  
means to rule us all once the  
alliance is complete. This is no  
longer about petty feuds. This is  
about Verona. Your home. My home.

(gesturing to the smoke)

Their home. If we cannot unite, our  
country will fall just like that  
village.

Romeo is weary... but inspired. Juliet has that effect.

Mercutio scoffs... but we see his gears turning. A lifetime  
of hate... challenged.

BENVOLIO

So what do we do?

ROMEO

I don't know... but I know someone  
who will.

Romeo's eyes drift up the canyon... to a distant WATERFALL.

**EXT. TEMPLE GROUNDS - WATERFALL - DAY**

Friar Laurence exits an OUTHOUSE, 'newspaper' in hand...

... Soon startled by Romeo, Mercutio, and Benvolio, waiting.

FRIAR LAURENCE

My boys! --

But his cheer is halted by Juliet, smiling as only she can.

FRIAR LAURENCE

-- And girl?

JULIET

Hello, Friar...

As she curtsies, our Friar's heart is already melted...  
 But as he bows and takes her hand, he pauses at the sight of  
 HER CAPULET RING.

FRIAR LAURENCE  
 (turning to Romeo)  
 Clearly you are in need of  
 confession...

**INT. WATERFALL TEMPLE - NIGHT**

CANDLELIGHT FLICKERS as Romeo, Juliet, Mercutio and Benvolio  
 rest in pews, passing around a loaf of leavened bread.

BENVOLIO  
 I say we assassinate Paris. No  
 Prince, no war.

ROMEO  
 The Prince is but a pawn of the  
 King, who surely has another play.

MERCUTIO  
 I say we return Juliet. Lighten  
 ourselves of this load.  
 (flashes her a fake smile)  
 No offense.

JULIET  
 Much taken.

ROMEO  
 Mercutio may be right. What if I  
 returned you to your father? Surely  
 when he sees you unharmed -- and  
 learns of the Prince's plan -- he  
 will reconsider.

FRIAR LAURENCE (O.S.)  
*It won't be enough...*

They all clock to Friar, who enters holding a flaming TORCH.

FRIAR LAURENCE  
 Tell me. This ancient grudge  
 between your families: who do your  
 fathers say cast the first stone?

ROMEO  
 The Capulets...

JULIET  
 The Montagues...

FRIAR LAURENCE  
 You are both wrong.  
 (gesturing)  
 There's something you need to see --

**INT. GREENHOUSE CAVE - WATERFALL TEMPLE - MOMENTS LATER**

Silhouetted against falling water, our group carries torches, following Friar Laurence...

PUSHING a KNOB OF LOOSE ROCK pivots a SECRET DOOR of slate -- revealing: a STAIRWELL descending deep into the mountains.

CUT TO:

## A PRAYING FRIAR

Pulling back, we see he is one of a HUNDRED... a sea of black wool and sun-starved skin forming ROWS of skeletal faces.

Led by Friar Laurence, our group gazes in awe at the ancient, subterranean city: a MONASTERY buried deep below the temple.

## FRIAR LAURENCE

*Ordo Fratrum Minorum.* The Order of Friars Minor. A sacred brotherhood dating back centuries...

Stacked in scaffolded levels, the cavern is a brimming ant-farm of ROBED FRIARS. Some pray, others tend to work: milking COWS, harvesting CROPS, sharpening SPEARS.

## FRIAR LAURENCE

... At one time, every Capulet and Montague had a Friar like me... until allegiances grew dangerous and they were forced underground by your families' bloody feud. Ever since, they've kept a hermetic life, sealed off from Verona...

TILTING UPWARD, the space spirals into a DOME of chiseled bedrock, the only LIGHT pouring from an OCULUS high above.

## FRIAR LAURENCE

Below ground, they stay unified by a divine calling: *peace*. Their other calling: *finding you two*.

Everyone turns to Romeo & Juliet: *they're just as confused*.

**INT. SANCTUARY - HERMETIC MONASTERY - MOMENTS LATER**

Led further into the torch-lit space, hushed WHISPERS bounce the acoustics, the holy cavedwellers curious, watchful...

MOVING ACROSS SUSPENDED PLANKS,

the Friar leads our team to the center of the dome: a lush SANCTUARY overgrown with flowers and plantlife, where a BEAM OF SUNLIGHT falls from the oculus above, pooling onto...

## A PETRIFIED TREE TRUNK

Resting on top: a GLASS COFFER protects an OBJECT within...  
As the Friar lifts the humid glass, air exhales, revealing...

## AN ANCIENT BOOK

As the Friar peels the pages, our team eyes the scrawled  
CURSIVE accompanied by ornate RENAISSANCE DRAWINGS...

## FRIAR LAURENCE

In the age of your grandfather's  
grandfather... a friar, like me,  
served both Capulet & Montague...  
and left behind this account...

Friar begins thumbing the parchment, the drawings FLUTTERING  
TO LIFE, like an animated FLIP-BOOK...

## FRIAR LAURENCE

*A Capulet boy, a Montague girl...*

## EXT. VERONA - VARIOUS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

## UNDER TOWERING SYCAMORES

The BOY and GIRL embrace...

## FRIAR LAURENCE (V.O.)

*... Two souls, in love...*

## IN AN ANCIENT CHURCH

The pair visits with an OLD FRIAR, asking for his blessing...

## FRIAR LAURENCE (V.O.)

*Two families, to be joined...*

## WITHIN TWO CASTLES

Opposing LORDS pace, conflicted...

## FRIAR LAURENCE (V.O.)

*Two Lords, gripped by fear...  
A marriage... to unite their  
resources... their armies... their  
destiny. But as it has always been,  
men wish to decide their own...*

## IN THE ANCIENT CHURCH

A MONTAGUE SPY slinks in, slipping POWDER into one goblet  
before it's placed on a platter, bound for the ALTAR...

## FRIAR LAURENCE (V.O.)

*Two cups, poisoned...*

A CAPULET USHER

Stealthily pours LIQUID into the other glass...

AS THE WEDDING BEGINS

The boy and girl DRINK from their goblets. Smiles soon fading as they CHOKE. COLLAPSE. SEIZE on the floor.

As they reach their DYING HANDS for each other, men SHOOT UP in their pews, SHOUTING, DRAWING SWORDS.

FRIAR LAURENCE (V.O.)  
*Two deaths, requiring justice...*

ON A BATTLEFIELD

The ominous sequence CRESCENDOES as ARMIES BATTLE ARMIES.

FRIAR LAURENCE (V.O.)  
*Two families to blame. Equal sin.  
 Equal guilt. A feud never-ending...*

Blood SPILLS. Bodies PILED into graves as --

**INT. SANCTUARY - HERMETIC MONASTERY - NIGHT**

-- *WHAM!* Friar SHUTS the book. Our group is affected deeply. The entire Brotherhood looks on with eager eyes...

FRIAR LAURENCE  
 As long as your families carry this lie, there can be no peace. And soon, they will bow to a foreign King because of it...  
 (beat)  
 However... hope is still alive. In this book, it speaks of a man from Rome. A man that will unite Verona. For centuries our brotherhood has searched for a man by his city, *instead of a man by his name...*

BENVOLIO  
 ... Romeo. The man from Rome.

The Friar nods with confirmation, staring at Romeo: he is the one. Turning to the Brotherhood, he RAISES his torch:

FRIAR LAURENCE  
 L'uomo da Roma! L'uomo da Roma!

The brotherhood REJOICES... overwhelmed by the revelation!

ROMEO  
 Friar... Now would be a good time to explain what's going on.

The Friar turns to Romeo, one of many overcome with hope:

FRIAR LAURENCE

*Don't you see, Romeo -- days ago  
you came to me, intent on killing  
your mortal enemy. And days  
later... here she stands, alive.  
This is not only love... but divine  
order. The two of you standing  
before us... this is bigger than  
Capulet & Montague... this may  
unite all of Verona...*

As the Friar's words register, we PUSH IN on Juliet -- gears spinning -- then, in her beautiful eyes... it all clicks:

JULIET

We must be married...

The room drops to SILENCE, the Brotherhood turning to Juliet.

JULIET

*If Romeo and I were married, our  
families would be joined under the  
eyes of God. A forced truce to  
unite Verona against its invaders.*

Realization washes over Friar. He nods: *this is the answer.*

FRIAR LAURENCE

*Yes, my child... a new union. One  
so happy, that even the age-old  
rancor between Capulet and Montague  
becomes something sweet...*

Benvolio & Mercutio swap glances, soon speaking up:

MERCUTIO

*Whoa, whoa, whoa -- I know this is  
the age of enlightenment and all...  
but this is crazy!*

BENVOLIO

Mercutio's right. Romeo can't risk  
the future of our family -- all for  
some ancient words in a book!

The Friar turns to Juliet, gravely serious now:

FRIAR LAURENCE

*They both must risk it. For  
together as man & wife... only then  
can Romeo & Juliet unite Verona...*

The room fills with hopeful MURMURS, soon halted by a voice:

ROMEO (O.S.)  
Uh...do I have a say in the matter?

They all spin to Romeo -- clearly beside himself -- until:

JULIET  
You do...  
(dropping to a knee)  
Romeo of the House of Montague...  
will you marry me?

Romeo glances to his cousins. Benvolio's jaw is on the floor. Mercutio just laughs, CACKLING at the surreal moment:

MERCUTIO  
Any woman that forward is fine by  
me... *Welcome to the family!*

Romeo turns to Juliet. Sees the purpose behind her smile.

AS MUSIC SWELLS, he takes her hand... and...

**INT. SANCTUARY - HERMETIC MONASTERY - MOMENTS LATER**

... THEY KISS.

Framed by beautiful flowers in this underground oasis, LIGHT spills down from the heavenly oculus, wrapping our bride & groom in a BEAM OF SUNLIGHT.

The Friar presides over the ceremony, all of the Brotherhood watching as Romeo & Juliet embrace. Their 'groomsmen' -- Mercutio & Benvolio -- APPLAUD as our pair releases...

We notice they've been cleaned-up: a fresh ROSE in Juliet's braided hair. And now, they exchange RINGS... his WOODEN BAND sliding onto her finger. Her JEWELLED RING around his.

As their eyes meet, sound FADES AWAY... and they KISS AGAIN.

*HOOTS & HOLLERS* soon filter in as Mercutio wraps Romeo & Juliet in a big BEAR HUG. Benvolio strums a MANDOLIN. Friar and the Brotherhood bop to the heavenly tune...

PULLING BACK from the happiness, we RISE HIGH INTO THE DOME,

DISSOLVING TO:

A MOUNTAIN COTTAGE

Dusted in snow, smoke rises from the humble dwelling...

**INT. MOUNTAIN COTTAGE - TEMPLE GROUNDS - NIGHT**

Romeo throws kindling into the hearth, fire growing... Juliet enters in a bodiced petticoat -- ready for bed.

The newlyweds exchange looks: Juliet is clearly nervous. Romeo tries to playfully extinguish the tension --

ROMEO  
*Good evening, my wife.*

JULIET  
*A good evening to you, my husband.*

ROMEO  
My father always said: the key to a happy marriage is separate beds --

-- Juliet eyes Romeo's makeshift bedding of animal pelts: his effort is appreciated. The bed all hers, she gets in.

On opposite ends of the room, they lie in silence, just the sound of wet wood crackling. Juliet speaks up, anxious:

JULIET  
Knowing my father, he scours every inch of Verona looking for me...

ROMEO  
For now, the darkness will hide us.  
*Good night, Juliet...*

Juliet finds comfort in the thought, nestling to slumber...

And as Romeo closes his eyes, dancing shadows of fire become:

**ROMEO'S DREAM**

A hanging woman. Neck NOOSED. As Romeo approaches, her limp head TURNS... yet it is no longer Rosaline... but Juliet...

JULIET  
Ro-me-o...

**INT. MOUNTAIN COTTAGE - TEMPLE GROUNDS - NIGHT**

Romeo jolts awake, panicked, sweating -- surprised to find: Juliet on the ground beside him, nestled beneath the pelts...

JULIET  
... It was warmer by the fire.

Juliet looks to her new husband... Romeo to his wife. A silent exchange amidst blue moonlight and pale flame... And in this moment -- they make love...

CUT TO:

TWO MEADOWLARKS

chirping on the windowsill...

INT. MOUNTAIN COTTAGE - TEMPLE GROUNDS - DAWN

Pale skin wrapped in furry pelts, Romeo & Juliet awaken to the sounds of these delicate songbirds...

ROMEO  
*Meadowlarks... Dawn must be near.*

Juliet turns from Romeo's chest, the sunrise causing concern:

JULIET  
I worry for the light of day. Even  
as man & wife, we are still Capulet  
& Montague.

ROMEO  
A wise and beautiful woman once  
asked me: *What's in a name?*

She smiles, comforted... Just then, there's --

## A KNOCK ON THE DOOR

Romeo bolts up, grabbing his sword. Robed in furs, he CREAKS the door open to find:

FRIAR LAURENCE  
Morning, my son. Have you and your  
bride consummated the act...?

Friar raises his brow as Juliet approaches, barely robed...

ROMEO  
I know we're close, Friar, but you  
have some serious boundary issues.

BENVOLIO MERCUTIO  
We told him to leave you be. He's a stubborn one...

FRIAR LAURENCE  
I ask not for you, but for Verona.  
Today you will ride for the city,  
delivering news of your marriage.  
And Verona will finally be united!

Romeo & Juliet share a look of concern:

ROMEO

Friar, you have such unwavering  
faith, but what do we do about the  
French? *The impending invasion* --

FRIAR LAURENCE  
-- *What about the French, he says!*  
With this union now complete, we  
have God himself to take care of  
the French...

As Romeo and Juliet swap hopeful glances, we --

CUT TO:

A LEANING TOWER

Familiar columns of white, surrounded by an ARMY CAMP...

HIGH ABOVE this impressive cluster of tents, troops, and battalions... the FRENCH FLAG flutters in morning breeze...

**EXT. LEANING TOWER OF PISA - PISA, ITALY - MORNING**

Three HORSES soon gallop through waking activity: Paris & his royal escorts entering the camp. Riding past FRENCH TROOPS and rowdy PIKEMEN, they approach a massive TENT...

CLOSE BEHIND, Escalus follows, unnoticed in allied armor.

**INT. ARMY TENT - TOWER OF PISA - MOMENTS LATER**

Peeling a flap, Paris enters the lavish, torch-lit space...

In the center: a MAN bathes, steam rising from his clawfooted bathtub as -- *CLINK* -- he tosses SNAIL SHELLS into a basin.

With his smooth face, curled pageboy hair, and piercing eyes, we recognize this regal man: KING CHARLES VIII of France...

KING CHARLES

*Bienvenue, cousin. If I could only illustrate the pain it is to find proper snails in this intolerable country...*

*CLINK* goes another shell. Digging his pinky into a fresh one, Charles SLURPS the slithery escargot.

PRINCE PARIS

*Certainly a French-occupation makes it almost tolerable, your majesty.*

With a smug smile, Charles reaches for a towel, drying off...

**EXT. ARMY CAMP - TOWER OF PISA - MOMENTS LATER**

Now dressed in battle regalia, Charles & Paris walk the camp:

KING CHARLES

What news do you bring from Verona?

PRINCE PARIS

*Vows of matrimony with Capulet's heir are proving... complicated. But, worry not: their weakness is less elusive. I wager we can sack Verona without such a union...*

ON THE OUTSKIRTS, Escalus walks the camp -- blending in amongst the morning bustle, listening to them strategize...

KING CHARLES  
 (slowly removing a glove)  
 Cousin... I've found there are  
 three kinds of minds. One:  
 understands things on their own.  
 The next: discerns things from  
 others. The third: *fails at both*.  
 I'm afraid you fall into the third  
 category --

*CRACK!* -- King Charles brutally BACKHANDS his cousin...  
 Paris whimpering, lip now split, blood smeared across his chin.

KING CHARLES  
 I've charged you with one simple  
 task: *absorb a noble title in*  
*Verona!* And I will not invade  
 without assurances!

Surrounding TROOPS pause mid-meal, observing this lashing unfold. Among them -- *Escalus* -- now aware of France's greater plan. *His mind turns...*

Calming, Charles grabs a HOT IRON from the blazing campfire -- embers sparking into the breeze...

KING CHARLES  
 When an archer's target is too  
 distant -- *what do they do?* They  
 aim higher. That is what I need  
 from you: to aim higher. And once  
 you've helped me take Verona, we  
 will take all of Venice. I will  
 dispatch forces, but you must marry  
 this Capulet by the time I arrive.  
 And if you fail me again, cousin --  
*know that I've never let my family*  
*stand in the way of my country.*

As Charles lifts the hot iron inches from Paris's face, *the stakes couldn't be more clear*. And Paris is terrified:

PARIS  
 I assure you... no one in Verona  
 will stand in your way either.

CUT TO:

A SOARING AERIAL

Tracing switchbacks, Romeo, Juliet, Ben, and Merc walk horses down the mountain. In the distance: the city of Verona...

## EXT. INFERNO PASS - MOUNTAINS OF VERONA - DAY

BENVOLIO

Married or not, entering Capulet territory with Juliet in-tow: *bad idea*. When it's cold like so, our enemy is moved to be cold-blooded.

MERCUTIO

(playful, tipsy)

As soon moved to be moody, and as soon moody be moved...

Mercutio flashes a FLASK. Benvolio just rolls his eyes.

MERCUTIO

What? It's a time for celebration!

Paces ahead, Romeo & Juliet are more introspective:

ROMEO

What do you think of all this...?

JULIET

Our trust must stay with the Friar.

(beat)

For sometimes drastic deeds are all that may light our darkest hours.

Yet this statement already proves untrue. AHEAD: a razor thin

SUSPENSION BRIDGE

spans a deep chasm. On the opposite side, awaiting them:

TYBALT, SAMPSON, AND GREGORY

MERCUTIO

(joyous mood vanishing)

Well, well, well...

BENVOLIO

So much for vows of peace.

Tybalt spots Juliet -- yelling from across the bridge:

TYBALT

Romeo! There is only one thing I can call you -- and that is a villain! Now hand her over!

Romeo keeps his cool while Juliet thinks of options:

JULIET

They will kill you if I don't go. And if you kill them... any chance we have at peace is lost.

ROMEO

Then we must tell them of our vows.

JULIET

Tybalt will refuse to believe. We must break such news to my father. But if I go with them now, I can tell him -- *safely* -- then we can be united. It's the only way... *Promise me it will be the only way.*

With a hesitant nod: *Romeo promises*. As the lovers step onto the bridge, Mercutio stews, vengeful glare fixed on Tybalt...

**EXT. SUSPENSION BRIDGE - INFERO PASS - MOMENTS LATER**

Romeo & Juliet trek across the bridge... two specs dwarfed by the epic canyon. Beneath their feet: a thousand foot drop. Halfway across, they share one last look...

ROMEO

I promise you: in due time the light will not bring such darkness.

With a loving smile, Juliet turns and walks away, reaching the other side.

Distraught, Romeo can only watch as Sampson & Gregory mount horses -- with Juliet in tow -- and **GALLOP** into the forest.

Romeo begins to turn, but then stops, realizing: Tybalt does not flee... he just stands, waiting on the other side.

ROMEO

We handed her over, be on your way!

TYBALT

This does not excuse the pain you've dealt my family! Draw your sword, villainous Montague!

Tybalt inches onto the bridge, **HAND ON SWORD**. Romeo gestures back to Benvolio & Mercutio: *I have this under control...*

ROMEO

Trust me when I say: one thing I am not -- is a villain to you! Nor shall any Montague ever be again...

TYBALT

That is all you are! All you will ever be! Now I demand restitution!

Suddenly, from behind -- Mercutio steps onto the bridge:

MERCUTIO

*Restitution!* Such fancy words!

*SHINK!* -- Tybalt draws his sword -- inching closer to Romeo.  
*SHINK!* -- Mercutio draws his, yelling past Romeo:

MERCUTIO  
Come on Tybalt, let's see your  
fancy swordplay! Your *PASSADO*!

ROMEO  
MERCUTIO! THROW DOWN YOUR SWORD!

MERCUTIO  
I shall... Straight through his  
heart!

With that, Mercutio & Tybalt **CHARGE!** Stuck between them,  
Romeo is bookended by blades as a 3-WAY SWORDFIGHT erupts:

ROMEO

blocks Mercutio's SWORD from behind -- as -- *SHINK!* --

TYBALT

attacks from ahead, SLICING air -- but Romeo spins -- *CHING!*  
defending, working both men. Behind him, steel cuts air as --

MERCUTIO

thrashes past Romeo -- CONNECTING with Tybalt's blade --

ROMEO

spins around again -- *SHINK!* -- swords LOCKED with Mercutio --

ROMEO  
Mercutio, STOP! He is my FAMILY!

-- On these words, Mercutio's face **CONTORTS** in pain -- his  
sword going **LIMP...** Romeo looks down to see --

TYBALT'S BLADE

buried in Mercutio's RIBS.

Mercutio STUMBLES, caught by Romeo -- stunned. Tybalt turns  
tail, FLEEING, leaving Romeo to cradle his dying friend...

**EXT. INFERNO PASS - MOMENTS LATER**

*THUD!* Mercutio collapses to land, Benvolio rushing in,  
panicked by the sight of shredded flesh...

MERCUTIO  
It's a scratch... Just a scratch...

Romeo LOCKS EYES with Mercutio... his cousin, his friend.  
*Knowing it will be the last time.*

## MERCUTIO

*Why did you come between us, Romeo?*  
 A plague on both your houses...  
 (last breaths of air)  
 A plague... on both your houses...

Mercutio dies in Romeo's arms. Soon, SCREAMS echo the canyon:

## ROMEO

TYBALT! Enough with mercy, call me  
 villain as you did before!

But Tybalt has other plans. Across the bridge, he works knife  
 against rope, CUTTING --

## THE BRIDGE'S SUPPORT CABLES

Romeo jumps to action -- mounting his horse as -- CLUNK-CLUNK  
 -- deafening hooves RACE across the unstable bridge...

SHH-SHH-SHH -- Tybalt SAWS braids of rope -- POP! -- strands  
 begin to UNCOIL -- the bridge now hanging by a THREAD...

Romeo races faster -- hooves hammering dusty planks -- and  
 just as -- POP-POP-POP -- the final STRAND gives away --

## ROMEO LEAPS

The limp bridge SWINGING to a thunderous CRASH against the  
 mountain face as -- C-CLUNK -- Romeo barely sticks a landing.

## INT. SYCAMORE FOREST - MOMENTS LATER

TREES BLUR as Romeo RACES after Tybalt through the dense  
 forest. From his satchel, he unsheathes his CROSSBOW --

SHHP! -- an ARROW grazes Tybalt, PLUNGING into bark. Faster  
 now, Tybalt weaves trees as -- SHHP! -- another near miss --

## EXT. VALLEY OF VERONA - MOMENTS LATER

Damp mud EXPLODES as the horses RACE through the valley --

## ROMEO

kicks his steed, crossbow steadied -- AIMED -- as --

## TYBALT

looks over his shoulder, the relentless Romeo gaining, when --  
 SHHP! -- an arrow GRAZES his neck -- a bloody GASH pooling --

CRANING UP... tree coverage is a thing of the past... just  
 pure grass now -- their horses blazing a trail towards:

**EXT. CITY OF VERONA - MOMENTS LATER**

WHIPPING REINS, a bleeding Tybalt GALLOPS into a packed MARKETPLACE: spice tents, food stalls, bartering PEASANTS...

Romeo, close behind, steadies his LAST ARROW -- aiming --  
*SHHP!*

It cuts a LINE OF ROPE, collapsing a MARKET STAND in Tybalt's path -- *BOOM!* -- an explosion of seeds and grain as Tybalt is THROWN from his horse -- scraping across the pavement --

HOOVES skid dirt, as Romeo dismounts -- *SHUNK!* -- unfurling his telescoping sword, he CALLS to his scurrying enemy:

ROMEO  
*Tybalt! Tybalt!*

Glimpse Tybalt -- battered and bruised -- surfacing from the leveled market stand. Desperate, limping, he dodges vendors, carriages, looking back: horrified by the armed Romeo...

**EXT. CANALS - CITY OF VERONA - CONTINUOUS**

Reaching the water's edge, Tybalt spots his escape...

**A PASSING GONDOLA**

He LEAPS aboard, but Romeo SPLASHES behind, hopping onto a neighboring boat, two vessels navigating the dense traffic...

As Tybalt BOUNDS from boat-to-boat -- Romeo GAINS -- lilypadding the trail of longboats -- finally landing on:

**TYBALT'S GONDOLA**

Screaming PASSENGERS leap from the boat. On the bow: Tybalt's hit a dead end. Panting, finished. He turns, facing...

... Romeo, who aims his sword, vengeance palpable:

ROMEO  
Mercutio's soul floats above,  
waiting to drag you to hell!

Holding his shredded neck, Tybalt gurgles with laughter:

TYBALT  
I remember this rage of yours,  
Montague. It was alive that day we  
met in battle. I also remember  
Rosaline. She begged me for her  
life, Romeo. Hanging there... neck  
noosed. And like a dying fish...  
she savored every last breath.

Romeo struggles to absorb: *Rosaline died by Tybalt's hands?*

And when it finally SINKS IN -- *FSHHH* -- Romeo's sword SLICES air. Fast. Precise. A high-pitched ECHO left *RINGING...*

Tybalt just stares, motionless, stunned: *did Romeo connect?*

And then: an ANSWER -- as his head TOPPLES from his body...

LANDING with dead weight at Romeo's feet. And with a slight breeze -- his body follows, TUMBLING limp into the canal.

Romeo stares -- satisfied -- blue water now flowing red...

CUT TO:

A WOVEN BASKET

Carefully carried by CAPULET FOOTMEN...

**INT. THRONE ROOM - CASTLE CAPULET - NIGHT**

Behind a column, Juliet's handmaiden, Maria, watches from afar as the footmen approach...

Lord & Lady Capulet await on their thrones, eyeing the peculiar basket as it's placed before them:

LADY CAPULET  
With Juliet safely home, I haven't  
the stomach for anymore surprises --

-- She THRUSTS aside the burlap cover, revealing...

TYBALT'S HEAD

Horrific expression frozen mid-death.

In this moment, no corner of the castle is immune to Lady Capulet's SCREAMS...

**EXT. COURTYARD - CASTLE CAPULET - MOMENTS LATER**

As Lord Capulet organizes TROOPS, his wife FORCES HER WAY IN:

LADY CAPULET  
(hysterical)  
If you are honorable, avenge this  
Capulet death! The house of  
Montague shall pay! Romeo killed  
Tybalt! Now Romeo must die!

Lord Capulet stews. *Knows she's right.* Nodding to Sampson, HUNDREDS OF TROOPS begin to MOBILIZE. *And so it begins...*

## INT. MAIN HALL - CASTLE MONTAGUE - NIGHT

Romeo stares at MERCUTIO'S CORPSE, lying on a STONE ALTAR, surrounded by Montague servants, subjects, soldiers...

Angered and broken, Lord Montague lowers a TORCH, IGNITING the body. Flames ERUPT violently for all to see...

LORD MONTAGUE  
This aggression will not stand!  
We will storm Capulet walls and  
destroy them once and for all!

MONTAGUE SOLDIERS break into ravenous CHEER. But Romeo stays silent. And as the room quiets, he finally speaks:

ROMEO  
I won't allow it.

Silhouetted in burning flame, Lord Montague clocks his gaze:

LORD MONTAGUE  
You won't allow it...?

ROMEO  
You can't attack Capulet -- for I  
am now married to their daughter.

BEAT. Benvolio's head sinks: *this is a complete disaster...*

Lord Montague storms from the altar, unsheathing a SWORD to Romeo's chest... but Romeo doesn't flinch:

ROMEO  
If you kill Capulet... you kill me.

LORD MONTAGUE  
One of your own is dead by Capulet  
hands! And now *this*?! Siding with  
mortal enemies?! I should kill you!

Lady Montague watches, deep emotion puncturing her frosty exterior, lips quivering with agony...

LORD MONTAGUE  
Wretched son, I am now deaf to your  
pleas! No tears, nor excuses shall  
wash away your sins!

Relaxing his sword, Lord Montague turns his back on his son:

LORD MONTAGUE  
Romeo is to leave Verona at once!  
And if he returns, he shall be hung  
by the neck until dead! This man is  
no longer a son of Montague!

Romeo looks to his mother. She is gutted. Powerless...

**EXT. COURTYARD - CASTLE MONTAGUE - MOMENTS LATER**

Montague SOLDIERS line a long HALLWAY stretching to the castle gates. Stoic stares fall on Romeo -- once their leader in battle, now their sworn enemy...

But Romeo stays strong, walking through this corridor of armor... At the end: Benvolio waits with his horse...

ROMEO

Wait for my word. And until it comes... watch over Juliet for me.

As Romeo mounts up, Benvolio gives a solemn nod: *he will...*

**EXT. MOUNTAINS OF VERONA - NIGHT**

Castle Montague looming behind him, Romeo GALLOPS away, just a spec in the icy moonlight...

CUT TO:

LADY MONTAGUE

watching from a balcony. Her son riding into the darkness.

Her face is a statue, but tears collect. And with a final sip of laudanum -- she closes her eyes -- and TAKES A STEP...

... GOWN FLUTTERING through the air -- she PLUMMETS from the tower -- gracefully falling to her death.

**INT. JULIET'S BEDCHAMBER - CASTLE CAPULET - NIGHT**

Eyes of equal despair. Juliet. Gazing out her balcony to the expansive city of Verona: *out there somewhere... is Romeo.*

But her gaze is soon broken by Maria, BURSTING into the bedchamber, panicked, stuttering nonsense --

MARIA

-- He's -- been killed! Saw it -- with my own eyes! Pale -- as ash!

JULIET

*Romeo...?/?!*

MARIA

*No, Tybalt!* Tybalt lies dead at hands of that vile Montague!

Juliet is quickly relieved. Maria now even more confused:

MARIA

M'lady, I may not be the sharpest  
spindle... but did you just mourn  
the sound of Romeo's death?

Caught red-handed. Juliet takes Maria by the arm, desperate:

JULIET

I need you to listen, Maria...  
I need you to understand over all  
disbelief. During my absence, I was  
never in danger with Romeo... *nor*  
*will I ever be* -- for our houses  
are now one, by the grace of God.

Eyeing the MONTAGUE WOLF on Juliet's RING FINGER -- Maria's hand COVERS a dropped jaw. Juliet pulls away, walking towards her balcony window, tears welling, an utter wreck:

JULIET

I was meant to tell my father  
tonight -- but now with Tybalt's  
blood on Romeo's hands... *how can*  
*I*? If only the Friar was here,  
he'd know what to do!

Maria sees Juliet's pain, shares it, taking her hand:

MARIA

M'lady, there's a good chance Lord  
Capulet may never understand. Nor  
her Ladyship, for that matter. But  
I had a husband once... a father to  
the child I lost. The poor man died  
of a broken heart soon after. So  
even if Romeo *is* a Montague, you  
must cherish him while he's here.  
Now tell me: *who is this Friar you  
speak of?* We must act fast...

Juliet looks up to Maria, HOPE now shining through her tears.

**EXT. CASTLE CAPULET - NIGHT**

Atop a horse, Maria GALLOPS from the castle. As she does...

PRINCE PARIS

returns, entering the gates, flanked by his ESCORTS...

**INT. MAIN HALL - CASTLE CAPULET - MOMENTS LATER**

Lord & Lady Capulet bow to Paris as he enters -- but the warmth is not shared. By the look of it, his journey was rough: clothes soaked with rain, dried blood still crusted on his face.

LADY CAPULET  
*My god, your highness -- what ever  
happened? --*

Paris raises a forceful hand, silencing her:

PRINCE PARIS  
*What happened...? I have now made  
this vile trip for the second time.  
Trotting through the filth of  
Verona, tolerating your bourgeois  
customs... all to grace your  
daughter with my throne. So what  
happens now? I demand answers. Not  
in a day, or a fortnight -- but  
now. So... do I have a Capulet  
bride? Or do you lack such control  
over a petulant girl that your  
entire province will fall?*

Lady Capulet is shocked by this disgusting display:

LADY CAPULET  
*We've had a tragedy on our hands!  
And you dare come into our home --*

-- With a simple gesture, Lord Capulet quiets his wife.

LORD CAPULET  
*Tonight my wife shall visit Juliet.  
She will tell her of your love...  
And come tomorrow... you are to be  
married. I cannot make desperate  
promises of Juliet's affections --  
but believe me when I say: *she will  
do exactly as I say.**

Lord Capulet bows to Paris, who now grins, satisfied:

PARIS  
*My lord, if only tonight were  
tomorrow... .*

**INT. GREENHOUSE CAVE - WATERFALL TEMPLE - NIGHT**

LARVA writhes in a dish. Friar Laurence reaches in, feeding his hungry FALCON -- but freezes at the sound of *FOOTSTEPS...*

... Looking up, RIBBONS OF DUST fall with each STEP... Panicked, Friar grabs a WOODEN MALLET from his worktable.

**INT. WATERFALL TEMPLE - MOMENTS LATER**

Mallet in hand, Friar searches the darkened temple... soon flinching at a SOUND:

ROMEO (O.S.)  
*You were wrong, Friar...*

Friar clocks to find... Romeo -- seated on a pew -- stewing:

ROMEO  
 You said our marriage would wash  
 away the sins of my father -- but  
 it has only brought more bloodshed.

FRIAR LAURENCE  
 Death may have knocked on our  
 door... but it has not yet shut it.

Suddenly -- the church doors BURST OPEN. Romeo spins -- SWORD READIED -- but as the fog PARTS... he sees it's only:

MARIA  
 Are you Friar Laurence?

FRIAR LAURENCE  
 And who the hell would you be?

Maria displays something in her hand: JULIET'S RING.

MARIA  
 I bring word from Lady Juliet --

**EXT. JULIET'S BEDCHAMBER - CASTLE CAPULET - THAT MOMENT**

From her balcony, Juliet looks to the courtyard: hundreds of Capulet TROOPS stand on-guard. The castle now her prison...

JULIET  
*The same window that once let in  
 the day, let not life slip away...*

Hearing someone on approach, Juliet quickly snaps out of it --

-- BOOM! -- Lady Capulet storms through the doors with usual frenzy, soon struck by Juliet's somber mood:

LADY CAPULET  
 I know you mourn cousin Tybalt, but  
 tears will only bring more sorrow.

Lady Capulet takes her daughter's hands. Juliet playing coy:

JULIET  
*Great loss deserves great weeping.*

LADY CAPULET  
 Worry not -- Capulet men search for  
 his killer as we speak. And when  
 this Romeo joins Tybalt in death,  
 you can dry those tired eyes...

This development hits Juliet hard. And to make matters worse: Lord Capulet ENTERS -- drink in hand -- clearly tipsy:

LORD CAPULET  
Have you told her the joyous news?!

Juliet is confused, looking to her cheerful parents:

LADY CAPULET  
*I was just getting to that...*  
Juliet, come tomorrow morning...  
the noble Paris will make you his  
joyful bride!

BEAT. Juliet is horrified:

JULIET  
Tomorrow...? This seems so...  
*strangely rushed* --

LORD CAPULET  
-- *It is not rushed!* I have been  
more than patient, Juliet. And I am  
no longer asking. I am insisting.

JULIET  
Well then... I refuse! I refuse!

LORD CAPULET  
You refuse. You wretched,  
whimpering fool. You refuse?!

*CRACK!* -- Lord Capulet STRIKES Juliet across the face.  
Hitting the ground, she cowers from her belligerent father...

HANDMAIDENS rush to Juliet's aid, but Lord Capulets SWATS them -- and his wife -- away...

LORD CAPULET  
While you're under my roof, I will  
marry you to whomever I wish! And  
if you do not like my roof -- you  
can beg and starve in the streets!  
Now you may not be *thankful* -- but  
come tomorrow you will marry Paris.  
And if you won't go on your own,  
then I'll drag you there myself!

Lord Capulet finally relents... stumbling from the room... leaving Juliet distraught, clawing at her mother's feet:

JULIET  
Please, I beg you! Just delay this  
marriage a week! A day! And if you  
will not, then make my bridal bed  
in the tomb where Tybalt lies dead!

LADY CAPULET  
 Child, do as you please. From this  
 day forth... I am through worrying  
 about you...

As Lady Capulet leaves, Juliet breaks down: all hope lost...

**INT. WATERFALL TEMPLE - NIGHT**

Romeo, Friar Laurence, and Maria huddle, strategizing...

MARIA  
 I'm afraid time is not on our side.  
 Prince Paris has returned to Verona  
 -- *probably to marry Juliet*. And  
 Lord Capulet has sent out search  
 parties -- *probably to kill Romeo*.

ROMEO  
 This just keeps getting better.

FRIAR LAURENCE  
*Stay hopeful...* Tonight, I will  
 visit Juliet. Meanwhile, it is not  
 safe for you in Verona. You must  
 ride for Mantua and await my word --

-- Suddenly, a SOUND RUMBLERS from outside... Our group PANS  
 their gaze for the noise -- *TH-THUMP...* *TH-THUMP...*

THROUGH THE WINDOW: Capulet Guards are on approach. DOZENS.

FRIAR LAURENCE  
*She's been followed...* Romeo, take  
 her down to the Monastery. You will  
 be safe there. Go! Now!

Romeo jolts up, readying his sword as -- *GONG-GONG* -- Friar  
 tugs a rope, the STEEPLE BELL ringing, reverberating down...

... THROUGH LAYERS OF BEDROCK, where --

**INT. HERMETIC MONASTERY - TEMPLE GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS**

-- an ALARM SOUNDS! The Brotherhood SPRINGS to action,  
 grabbing swords, staffs, spears. A well-oiled machine.

Suddenly they HEAR something, aiming all weapons at:

**THE SECRET STAIRWELL DOOR**

As it CREAKS open, Romeo & Maria are now face-to-face with a  
 forest of DEADLY SPEARS. Seeing it's only Romeo, they relax:

THE BROTHERHOOD  
*L'uomo da Roma! Protect Romeo!*

The Brotherhood clicks into swift FORMATION, ready to fight.

**EXT. WATERFALL TEMPLE - THAT MOMENT**

Sampson's troops SURROUND the temple, FLAMING ARROWS primed.

SAMPSON  
Come out! Or we will burn you out!

Just as they asked, the temple door CREAKS open, revealing:

FRIAR LAURENCE  
*Do you come to confess, gentlemen?*

Sampson & troops let out a guttural LAUGH.

SAMPSON  
This is your last chance, old  
man... where is Romeo?! --

THE BROTHERHOOD (O.S.)  
-- *He's with us...*

The troops PAN to find: a hundred swarming Friars AND...

**DEADLY SPEARS**

cutting air as -- *SHOOK-SHOOK-SHOOK* -- the Capulets are  
brutally IMPALED, breaking rank, loosing their GRIPS on:

**FLAMING ARROWS**

A HELLSTORM OF FIRE now ARCS for the temple -- and with a  
BOMB OF FLAMES -- *WHOOOSH!* -- the temple is engulfed.

Seeing this, Friar Laurence jumps into action. Weaving the  
carnage, he CRACKS men with his mallet, entering the burning

**WATERFALL TEMPLE**

Passing pews, he scurries for the confession booth just as  
the doors BURST OPEN -- a Guard enters, bow AIMED -- *FWIP!* --  
the ARROW flies through the air -- Friar TURNS...

**FLAMING DEATH**

inches from his face -- and just as it's about to HIT -- he

**PULLS A WOODEN LEVER**

opening a TRAP DOOR -- *F-TOOM* -- tumbling to safety into the:

**GREENHOUSE CAVE**

Scanning his worktable, he finds what he came for: his  
FALCON. But then SOMETHING ELSE catches his eye...

## THE BOTTLE OF SOMNUS

Grabbing both... he races for a rocky TUNNEL -- *But wait...*

A SEISMIC RUMBLE SHAKES FROM ABOVE

The temple now COLLAPSING in a fiery INFERNO...

IN THE MONASTERY

the destruction above SHAKES THE ROOM. Romeo & Maria LISTEN as -- *CRACK-CRACK-CRACK* -- the domed rock is now hot as a kiln... and as a seismic fracture SPIDERWEBS -- *BOOM!* --

THE CEILING CAVES IN,

burning masses of Guards & Friars falling to their deaths FROM THE TEMPLE ABOVE.

All that remains: a flaming SINKHOLE. The Monastery exposed.

**INT. HERMETIC MONASTERY - TEMPLE GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS**

Capulet men SWARM, firing down ARROWS as -- *SHOOP-SHOOP-SHOOP* -- Friars FIRE SPEARS. Both sides EVISCERATED by projectiles.

As Romeo leads Maria through the carnage, they're spotted by:

A YOUNG FRIAR  
*Run, Romeo! The waterfall! Run! --*

-- Until he's SILENCED by -- *SHINK!* -- a flaming arrow in the chest. Collapsing, his dying eyes focus on SOMETHING: the ANCIENT BOOK burning in the rubble. A *hopeless image...*

IN THE SECRET STAIRWELL

Capulet Guards GAIN... Romeo & Maria CLIMBING STEPS FOR THE GREENHOUSE CAVE

Entering the damp room, they finally see it: the WATERFALL. But as they SPRINT for the rushing tide... a Capulet guard ENTERS -- drawing back his bow -- and just as he RELEASES --

Romeo & Maria JUMP through the WALL OF WATER. Gone...

**EXT. COVE - WATERFALL - NIGHT**

*GASP!* Romeo & Maria surface in a calm cove. Safe, alive... But as they look high above, they see it:

THE TEMPLE GROUNDS ABLAZE

A solemn image of death and destruction...

ROMEO  
 (crossing himself)  
 Farewell Friar...

Prayer concluded, Romeo fixes his gaze on the dancing flames,  
 vengeance RETURNING...

CUT TO:

A FRENCH CORPORAL

riding through the Pisa army camp, approaching:

**INT. KING CHARLES'S TENT - ARMY CAMP - NIGHT**

King Charles pauses mid-meal, greeting the corporal, who  
 delivers: a SCROLL. Charles slices it open, reading...

KING CHARLES  
*Putain de merde, cousine idiote...*  
*He actually did it...*  
 (looking to the Corporal)  
 Have my reserves arrived?

FRENCH CORPORAL  
 Miles away, your highness...

OUTSIDE THE TENT

we find... Constable Escalus, ears against canvas -- he's  
 heard everything. Panicked, he BOLTS OFF, headed for:

THE LEANING TOWER OF PISA

Desperately climbing its spiraling stairwell, he soon exits  
 onto the rooftop -- leveled to the core by what he sees...

THE FULL FRENCH ARMY

30,000 strong. CATAPULTS, SIEGE ENGINES, and the deadly  
 PIKEMEN leading the charge. A battalion of marching death.

CUT TO:

A FAMILIAR FALCON

Soaring high above the lights of Verona... trailing a HOODED  
 FIGURE, who RIDES for Castle Capulet...

**INT. JULIET'S BEDCHAMBER - CASTLE CAPULET - NIGHT**

Falcon perched on shoulder, the hooded figure slinks into  
 Juliet's room. Unhocking, Friar Laurence is revealed --  
 muddied, battered, but determined. He searches the room:

FRIAR LAURENCE  
 Juliet? I come with a plan --

PRINCE PARIS (O.S.)  
 -- *And what plan would that be?*

The Friar turns to find: Prince Paris flanked by his Bodyguard and Priest. Juliet at their side... unsettled:

JULIET  
 The Friar was simply coming to bless me before I marry tomorrow.

Friar looks to Paris, playing along:

FRIAR LAURENCE  
*A pleasure, your majesty. But as tradition requires, we must ask you to leave us alone...*

PRINCE PARIS  
*Of course. God forbid we should prevent sacred devotion. Let me just bid adieu to my lovely bride -- then we shall be on our way...*

Paris turns his back on the Friar, inching Juliet behind...

A DRESSING PARTITION

Hidden from view, he caresses Juliet's face:

PRINCE PARIS  
*Poor soul. Your face has suffered too many tears.... but remember: come tomorrow, it will be my face as well --*

-- Juliet's disgust turns to fear when she feels something PRESS against her ribs: a SMALL DAGGER gripped by Paris --

Juliet understands the threat, nodding with dread...

PRINCE PARIS  
*I'm glad we agree. Until tomorrow, I leave you with this holy kiss...*

He kisses her forcefully, tongue slithering into her mouth.

Finished, Paris appears from behind the partition, bowing to the Friar with an innocent smile...

**EXT. JULIET'S TOWER - COURTYARD - MOMENTS LATER**

Passing Capulet Guards, Paris marches from the castle, giving a nod to his Bodyguard:

PRINCE PARIS  
 Keep an eye on her...

Like a trained dog, he stays back, watchful eyes CRANING TO:

**INT. JULIET'S BEDCHAMBER - CONTINUOUS**

Juliet sobs, pleading to Friar Laurence:

JULIET

Father, this mess is beyond hope!  
Beyond cure! An army of troops  
surrounds the kingdom. I have no  
way out... and Romeo has no way in!

FRIAR LAURENCE

I question my own faith in these  
times. And thus, perhaps in *science*  
hope still remains. So if you  
choose to place your faith in me...  
know that you must wrestle with  
death... in the name of love...

From his tunic, Friar produces the BOTTLE OF SOMNUS, pouring  
murky DROPS into...

A GLASS VIAL

Juliet eyes the swirling liquid. Senses its power...

Friar moves to a desk, grabbing a QUILL, beginning to write a  
LETTER. As he speaks, we see similar words are SCRIBBLED...

FRIAR LAURENCE

Tonight, make sure that you are  
alone in your chamber. And before  
bed, drink this down... Cold sleep  
will run through your veins. Your  
body will lay stiff... And in *this*  
*borrowed likeness of death*... your  
family will mourn, place you in a  
casket, and carry you to the  
catacombs. When you wake, we will  
sneak you from the castle gates and  
reunite you with Romeo.

Friar rolls his LETTER, knotting it to his falcon's leg:

FRIAR LAURENCE

Meanwhile, my trusted friend will  
carry our plan to Romeo. So, if you  
can bear the strength to knock on  
death's door, this -- and only this  
-- will finally grant you life...

Juliet grips the vial, her eyes resolute:

JULIET

Love shall give me the only  
strength I need...

Friar nods, moving for the open balcony... and with their hope rekindled -- he releases the falcon. It GLIDES over:

THE CASTLE COURTYARD

Flapping between towers, soaring high above troops... a plan in motion... an image of hope... until --

*SHUNK!*

An ARROW IMPALES the bird. With spastic flutters, it FALLS to the ground in a THUD of dust... And soon --

-- Two armored feet step in, strong hands untying the SCROLL. And as eyes squint the ink, we see who intercepted it:

PARIS'S BODYGUARD... now aware of their plan.

*As a haunting CHOIR rises... a foreboding MONTAGE UNFOLDS:*

JULIET

stands in her room as HANDMAIDENS descend upon her...

FEET STOMP

as the MONTAGUE ARMY descends from the mountains with their finished tools of battle: Romeo's WAR MACHINES...

A CORSET

is fitted around Juliet, TIGHTENED with a TUG...

ROCKS CLATTER

as Benvolio makes hairpin turns down Inferno Pass, LEAPING over GAPS in the rock...

AN ORNATE WEDDING GOWN

wraps around Juliet, as she stares emptily into space...

POLL-AXES

slam the ground with every step, the FRENCH ARMY marching in perfect unison. From a hilltop, Charles watches, satisfied...

PERFECT WHITE GLOVES

slide over Juliet's hands. Her icy stare doesn't waver...

ESCALUS'S HORSE

blasts through a shallow stream. He checks his six. A look of dread. He knows what's coming...

POWDER

dusts Juliet's cheeks. Warm skin turning ghost white...

HOOVES THUMP

the earth as Romeo -- Maria clutching his waist -- WHIPS his horse's reigns -- GALLOPING for the city...

And as the CHOIR VOICES reach a CRESCENDO, we SLAM TO utter SILENCE, revealing...

JULIET

fully dressed, staring at her REFLECTION in a mirror...

**INT. JULIET'S BEDCHAMBER - CASTLE CAPULET - NIGHT**

... Lady Capulet admires the image, tears of pride welling:

LADY CAPULET

Heaven knows if there is anyone more beautiful than you. Oh, how far you've come. I still remember when you were just a little girl, wishing to play with the boys --

JULIET

(forcing a fake smile)  
Mother... please let me be tonight.  
I have many grateful prayers to say... for a blessing such as this.

Lady Capulet is overtaken, wrapping Juliet in a hug:

LADY CAPULET

Tomorrow is the most important day of your life. May you sleep sounder than the departed.

JULIET

I will, mother.

Behind her back, Juliet clutches...

THE VIAL OF SOMNUS

As Lady Capulet leaves, Juliet raises the VIAL. Removes its cork. Eyes the vicious liquid inside. A deep breath, then --

JULIET

Romeo... I drink to thee.

-- she DOWNS the liquid. For a moment, nothing. Then...

JULIET GASPS

The vial SLIPPING from her hands, SHATTERING to marble. STAGGERING across the room, Juliet COLLAPSES onto her bed. Choking. Contorting. Body SEIZING. Eyes ROLLING back...

And then we HEAR Juliet's HEARTBEAT slow, almost to a stop:

*BEAT..... Beat..... beat..... Then --*

**EXT. COURTYARD - CASTLE CAPULET - THE NEXT MORNING**

-- a SHOCK OF MUSIC blasts our ears: a MINSTREL BAND practicing the wedding march. A cacophony of drums & horns...

SERVANTS swarm the courtyard: carrying flowers, caged doves, wine barrels, suckling pig. Amid the bustle...

BENVOLIO

slinks amongst the CROWD -- cloaked in a hood -- unnoticed. He glances to the castle walls.... perched atop them:

A HUNDRED PIKEMEN

stand watch -- POLL-AXES ready -- an occupation force... A grave look washes over Benvolio, when:

LADY CAPULET (O.S.)  
No, no, no! This is all wrong!

The band STOPS. Lady Capulet stomps in, frazzled, impatient:

LADY CAPULET  
It should sound more regal...  
momentous... lasting. Begin again.  
(music resuming...)  
... Now where is my Juliet?

**INT. DRESSING CHAMBER - CASTLE CAPULET - THAT MOMENT**

TAILORS and STYLISTS prepare Prince Paris. Cuffs are hemmed. Hair curled. The Prince admires himself in a hand-mirror as Lord Capulet enters, passing PIKEMEN with an uneasy glare...

PRINCE PARIS  
Lord Capulet. To what do I owe  
this... disruption?

LORD CAPULET  
Your highness, I have come to  
remind you of our agreement.

PRINCE PARIS  
And what about our agreement  
concerns you?

LORD CAPULET  
(motioning to the Pikemen)  
They do.

Paris moves close, putting an arm around him, creepily friendly:

PRINCE PARIS  
My Lord... I assure you they are  
merely here for our protection.  
Certainly we both agree... *the  
wedding must go on.*

**INT. PRIEST'S CHAMBER - CASTLE CAPULET - DAY**

Paris's Priest prays, murmuring incomprehensible gibberish at the foot of a CROSS, when --

THE BODYGUARD ENTERS,

eager to speak... but the Priest holds up his LEPROUS HAND, finishing his prayer. Now done, he CLOCKS to the sight of...

THE FRIAR'S SCROLL.

CUT TO:

CURTAINS

thrusting open, sun shooting into the darkened bedchamber --

**INT. JULIET'S BEDCHAMBER - CASTLE CAPULET - THAT MOMENT**

LADY CAPULET  
(sing-songy)  
-- Madam, daughter, bride! Have you  
nothing to say on your wedding day?

She stops, noticing Juliet splayed across the bed, still clothed in her WEDDING DRESS. As Lady Capulet approaches:

LADY CAPULET  
How much beauty sleep does one --

-- *CRUNCH!* -- she looks down: BROKEN GLASS -- then sees it:

JULIET'S LIFELESS FACE...

CUT TO:

DEAFENING SCREAMS

echoing across the courtyard, sending a pack DOVES fluttering into the cloudless sky...

## INT. JULIET'S BEDCHAMBER - CASTLE CAPULET - DAY

Lady Capulet WEEPS amongst a crowd of handmaidens.

Lord Capulet stands over Juliet's body, feeling for a PULSE... Nothing... Air on her LIPS... Nothing... He then looks to something curious on the ground:

## THE BROKEN VIAL

Turning it over in his hand, its last DROPS drip out:

LORD CAPULET  
Poison. Our beautiful flower,  
plucked by her own hand...

His eyes glass over as the guilt weighs on him. In a state of pure shock, he addresses the room with eerie calmness:

LORD CAPULET  
All that was prepared for the wedding will now be used for a funeral. Celebration hymns will become funeral marches. Bridal flowers will now drape her sweet corpse. Our child will be buried... and so will our joys.

Just then... Prince Paris enters, flanked by Pikemen, FREEZING at the sight of --

## A LIFELESS JULIET

Paris is shocked. Perhaps even saddened. Then slowly... he begins to tremble -- teeth clenched -- eyes filled with rage:

PRINCE PARIS  
Have I waited so long for this day,  
only to find this!?

LORD CAPULET  
Dishonor my daughter with another word and I will run you through!

Lord Capulet draws his SWORD. The Pikemen ready their AXES. But just then, Paris's Priest & Bodyguard RUSH IN:

PRIEST  
Your majesty! --

-- The Priest flashes Paris a knowing look.

Paris nods, signaling his men to back off. He then turns to Lord & Lady Capulet, offering an apologetic BOW:

## PRINCE PARIS

Lord & Madam... I am only torn apart by the passing of your beloved daughter. I thought selfishly. It is not just I whom am deprived of her radiance, but the world itself...

*Damn, he's good. Swiftly, Paris exits with his advisors...*

CUT TO:

## HANDWRITTEN WORDS

scrawled on parchment. The Friar's message...

## INT. MARBLE HALLS - CASTLE CAPULET - MINUTES LATER

In a darkened corner, Paris finishes reading the scroll:

## PRINCE PARIS

Juliet lives? Clever, clever girl... Dare I ask how one combats a *betrayal* such as this?

## PRIEST

*With another...*

CUT TO:

## GOLDEN HARPS

strummed in unison as we FLOAT DOWN from ornate STAINED GLASS to an OPEN COFFIN on the church's altar. Inside...

## JULIET'S BODY

is laid to rest on a BED OF FLOWERS... We PUSH IN on Juliet's face... once so vibrant... now pale as a ghost.

## INT. CATHEDRAL - CASTLE CAPULET - CONTINUOUS

In the shadows of the balcony, Friar Laurence observes rows of CAPULETS paying respect: Sampson & Gregory, Lord Capulet stifling tears... Lady Capulet SOBBING with pain... And soon:

## PRINCE PARIS

Slowly climbing the steps, he leans over the coffin... at the sheer sight of Juliet, his lips tremble:

## PRINCE PARIS

To think you favored death over my hand. Dear Juliet, forgive me...

Tears drop from his eyes as he softly rests his head on her chest. Lord & Lady Capulet look on, touched...

But soon, we understand what Paris is up to -- ear to Juliet's chest -- he LISTENS: for a moment... *Nothing...* Another moment... *Still nothing...* Then finally...

A SINGLE HEARTBEAT

Paris's lips curl into a slimy grin...

**EXT. RIVERBANK - Sycamore Forest - DAY**

Benvolio SLOWS his horse. Dismounting, he leads the restless animal to the shoreline:

BENVOLIO  
Easy boy... easy...

As the horse drinks, so does Benvolio... but as he rises -- -- *SHING!* -- he finds a blade to his throat.

A VOICE (O.S.)  
So much as a squeak and I will  
spill your throat into the river.

Hands up, Benvolio points to his cloak. On it, a WOLF EMBLEM. The assailant sees it, dropping the blade:

ROMEO  
Benvolio!

The cousins BEAR HUG with hearty slaps on the back.

BENVOLIO  
I feared the worst.

ROMEO  
I don't blame you. Worst fears tend  
to come true these days.

Benvolio notices Maria.

ROMEO  
This is Maria, Juliet's handmaiden.

Taking her hand, Benvolio plants a chivalrous kiss.

BENVOLIO  
Benvolio, of the House of Montague.

ROMEO  
Cousin, ride with us for Castle  
Capulet. Help me retrieve Juliet.  
Help me retrieve my wife.

Inspired, Romeo steps for his horse... but Benvolio is weary:

BENVOLIO

It may be too late...

(off Romeo's confusion)

I come from the castle. The city is occupied. Pikemen line the walls. A hundred strong, swarming the grounds. They are there to ensure... the wedding goes through.

ROMEO

A... wedding?

(intense, temper boiling)

Prince Paris. We must go. Now.

But Benvolio's words stops him in his tracks:

BENVOLIO

Your father already marches our army for the castle walls... Every man, every boy of fighting age... with your machines in tow...

Benvolio nods. Romeo is discouraged, torn...

ROMEO

And does he know of the Pikemen?

BENVOLIO

No.

ROMEO

My father is bold... but no tactician. He'll only throw men at the castle. Countless Montagues will die. And if they break through, they'll slaughter the Capulets... along with my bride. No matter how it ends... there will be no one left when the French arrive. This wedding must be stopped.

(beat)

Benvolio, ride with Maria for Castle Capulet. Do what you can. I will warn my father...

Romeo HUGS Benvolio tight, quickly mounting his horse:

MARIA

Romeo.... will you not be a man? Come now, save the one you love!

ROMEO

And leave my people to die? Then what kind of man would I be...

(WHIPPING the reins)

YAH!!!

Benvolio & Maria watch as Romeo GALLOPS away...

CUT TO:

THE MONTAGUE ARMY MARCHING

Lord Montague in the lead, dwarfed by lumbering WAR MACHINES.

**EXT. SYCAMORE FOREST - DAY**

But suddenly, SHOUTS are heard -- the party tensing, drawing swords... but as the crowd PARTS:

ROMEO APPEARS

As he trots before his army, he sees his sketches realized:  
An UBER-CATAPULT... A GIANT CROSSBOW... a BATTERING TANK...

... And as he finally reaches his father:

ROMEO  
I see you've taken some of my  
suggestions...

LORD MONTAGUE  
(cold)  
Why have you returned to Verona?

ROMEO  
To reason with you, father. To  
beseech you to look beyond your own  
sword, beyond your own future.

LORD MONTAGUE  
Our future is why I fight! To end  
this war before it begins.

ROMEO  
This war has already begun!  
(off the crowd's silence)  
King Charles's army occupies  
Verona. When you reach the city,  
you'll find more than Capulet  
warriors... you'll find trained  
assassins in far greater numbers.

MURMURS throughout the party. Nervous chatter...

ROMEO  
Father... we have lived our entire  
lives by a twisted story, passed  
down by ancestors we cannot even  
remember. A river of blood unjustly  
spilled in our family's name! We  
have fought for nothing... and  
there is no honor in that!

LORD MONTAGUE  
Lies! Remove him at once!

Montague warriors SEIZE Romeo, but he BREAKS FREE, intense:

ROMEO  
It is not a lie! I swear it on my  
mother's soul.

*SHING!* Lord Montague draws his sword -- pointing it at Romeo:

LORD MONTAGUE  
Your mother's dead! Because of you!

This leaves Romeo floored. Speechless. He turns to the ARMY. Grave looks from familiar faces: friends, family. *It's true.*

LORD MONTAGUE  
You disobey my banishment. Insult  
me in front of my troops. Does your  
loathing run that deeply, son?

Lord Montague readies himself as -- *SHINNNNNNG* -- Romeo slowly DRAWS his blade. But then --

ROMEO  
No...

-- he TOSSES it to the ground. Then takes a knee, head bowed:

ROMEO  
... my love does.

Lord Montague looks to his own sword. With shock. With guilt. Trembling, he drops it as well.

The crowd looks on. Each man touched by the display. Approaching Romeo -- he pulls him up -- and EMBRACES his son:

LORD MONTAGUE  
What would you have me do, son?

ROMEO  
Let me lead you.

Releasing him, Lord Montague nods. Romeo CLIMBS his battering tank, now addressing the entire army, VOICE BOOMING:

ROMEO  
I am Romeo of the House of Montague... husband to Juliet of the House of Capulet. Beyond those castle walls, a foreign tyrant seeks to marry my wife. If he does, he will have a blood-claim on our land... and on your freedom. King Charles does not see us as Capulet  
(MORE)

ROMEO (CONT'D)  
 or Montague... he sees us as his  
 subjects. Farmers to grow his food.  
 Warriors to fight for his whims.  
 Slaves... to be ruled.

The men SHOUT. Riled up. Inspired:

MONTAGUE SOLDIER  
 We will defend your honor, Romeo!

ROMEO  
 I can defend my own honor. I ask  
 you... to defend your own. Not as  
 Montagues, but as men of the  
 peninsula. Men of Verona! Do not  
 march for the city to destroy it...  
 (locking eyes with his father)  
 ... but to save it!

The army bursts into a CHEER, SLAMMING their spears. THUMPING  
 their shields. A CHANT RISES...

MONTAGUE ARMY  
 RO-ME-O! RO-ME-O! RO-ME-O!

Romeo mounts his horse:

ROMEO  
 IF IT WEARS METAL... KILL IT!

**EXT. DRAWBRIDGE - CASTLE CAPULET - DAY**

As Benvolio & Maria GALLOP up, Pikemen guards CROSS their  
 AXES. Their horse REARS, SNORTS, tension building... until:

Maria reveals the IBEX EMBLEM on her cloak....

**EXT. COURTYARD - CASTLE CAPULET - MOMENTS LATER**

TROTTING INSIDE, the pair swaps a look: *that was close...*  
 But their levity is soon snuffed. Rounding a corner, they see

JULIET'S OPEN CASKET

carried down the cathedral steps...

Amidst a gathered crowd, Maria SOBS against a stunned  
 Benvolio. And in this shocking moment, only one thing is  
 certain: *they're too late...*

CRANING UP

reveals: Friar Laurence -- sneaking along castle walls --  
 eyes on the FUNERAL PROCESSION as it winds its way...

**EXT. CEMETERY - CASTLE CAPULET - CONTINUOUS**

... towards the castle's opulent TOMB: an arresting assemblage of marble & gold framing a thick OAK DOOR.

Friar watches: *his plan in motion*. But soon spots a WRINKLE:

BENVOLIO & MARIA

distraught, eyes tracking the noble family Capulet -- along with Paris -- leading the procession, already winding down...

AN ORNATE STAIRCASE

Passing carved MARBLE BUSTS and mounted WAR BLADES, we FOLLOW Juliet's casket as it's carried into:

**INT. THE TOMB OF CAPULETS - CONTINUOUS**

TORCHES flicker, illuminating REGAL HEADSTONES, STRIKING STATUES... and beyond them: a 360° oil-painted MURAL.

As Juliet's casket is laid upon a marble DAIS, a CAPULET BISHOP begins reading the LAST RITES...

CUT TO:

THREE PIKEMAN GUARDS

scouting the dense, wooded forest...

**EXT. SYCAMORE FOREST - DAY**

PEERING through thick trunks, they spot...

THE MARCHING MONTAGUE ARMY

The Pikemen rush to grab their HORNS, as --

*THWICK-THWICK!*

two Pikeman DROP. The last one blows a BELLOW just before --

*THWICK!*

-- he's cut CUT DOWN by an arrow. Yet the damage is done:

THE HORN'S ECHO

has reached another Pikemen UNIT, playing a card game on a tree stump. They SPRING UP, BLOWING their HORNS, the sound

REACHING THE CASTLE GROUNDS

Benvolio & Maria freeze at the ALARM -- but before they can react -- they're GRABBED -- SPUN AROUND by a familiar face:

FRIAR LAURENCE  
Juliet... she's alive.

**INT. BURIAL CHAMBER - TOMB - THAT MOMENT**

As the alarm ECHOES through the tomb, the procession PANICS:

BODYGUARD  
The castle is under attack, m'lord!

PARIS processes -- a split second decision -- now or never --  
clocking to his Priest, a NOD seals their fate --

*SLICE!*

Paris's Priest SLASHES the Bishop's throat -- his Bodyguard  
KILLING pallbearers as Pikemen SEIZE Lord & Lady Capulet.

LORD CAPULET  
What is the meaning of this?!

PRINCE PARIS  
(an evil smirk)  
*The wedding must go on...*

**EXT. CEMETERY - CASTLE CAPULET - MOMENTS LATER**

Lord & Lady Capulet are DRAGGED topside, THROWN out of the  
tomb. And with a THUNK, it's LOCKED from the inside.

LORD CAPULET  
Guards! Take arms!

Capulet Guards UNSHEATHE their weapons... but in a blink

POLL-AXES

are drawn -- Pikemen SURROUNDING. The city is theirs...

CUT TO:

THE CASTLE WALLS

Pikemen ARCHERS fanning out, taking position...

**EXT. DRAW BRIDGE - CASTLE CAPULET - CONTINUOUS**

... as countless more POUR OUT of the DRAW BRIDGE, creating a  
mighty PHALANX around the castle -- a perfectly formed

SHIELD OF POLL-AXES

Ready, they wait... and wait... until... they FEEL it --

THE EARTH VIBRATING

from some kind of seismic quake -- and then... with a ROAR --  
THE MONTAGUE ARMY

bursts from trees. Romeo on horseback, leading the charge.

The Pikemen ready their axes to absorb the RECKLESS BLITZ,  
but at the last moment, Romeo SIGNALS --

ROMEO  
*UNO!*

-- The CHARGING Montague army suddenly PARTS, revealing...

THE UBER-CATAPULT

A lever is THROWN -- ropes TWIST -- wooden gears SPINNING as  
A CLUSTER OF BOULDERS

are launched into the air, DROPPING LIKE BOMBS...

PIKEMAN ARCHERS

dive away as the walls are EXPLODED by STONE CANNONBALLS.  
Rocky shrapnel RICOCHETING across the castle.

THE MONTAGUE ARMY

charges... horses & men RACING at FULL SPEED...

THE PIKEMEN

hold steady, AXES OUT, a splintering WALL OF DEATH...

AS BOTH SIDES COLLIDE

Blood SPLATTERS THE LENS -- Montagues are SLASHED down by  
axes -- but they continue their ASSAULT -- CIRCLING the  
Pikemen -- FUNNELING them like dogs herding sheep.

ROMEO

hacks through the carnage -- and as he sees his Montague  
troops FALLING around him -- he gives the NEXT SIGNAL:

ROMEO  
*DUE!!!*

Every Montague HITS THE DECK, bellies on the GROUND.  
As the Pikemen look AHEAD -- another MACHINE is revealed...

THE GIANT CROSSBOW

launches MASSIVE ARROWS -- whizzing over Montague heads, for

THE PIKEMEN,

who are SKEWERED like kabobs -- half their numbers FALLING from the vicious barrage...

ROMEO

surfaces to find... a HORN sounding from the castle walls...

THE ARCHERS

have regrouped -- arrows are LIT -- strings PULLED -- twine TIGHTENING -- and then it happens...

ROMEO

gives his FINAL SIGNAL:

ROMEO  
*TRE!!!*

Montagues HEAVE, pushing the last machine onto the bridge...

THE BATTERING TANK

Romeo & his army DIVE beneath it just as -- *BAP-BAP-BAP* --

FLAMING ARROWS

pepper the protective SHELL.

ROMEO  
*NOW!!!!*

Montagues -- Lord Capulet included -- ROLL the tank for the

CASTLE GATES

RAMMING the doors over-and-over -- *WHAM!... WHAM!... WHAM!...*

**INT. BURIAL CHAMBER - TOMB - THAT MOMENT**

Paris's Priest REMOVES HIS HOOD, finally revealing his wretched face in entirety, decomposed by boils and lesions...

His hand on a BIBLE, he blesses Paris beside Juliet's body:

PRIEST  
Do you, Prince Paris, take this woman --

**EXT. DRAWBRIDGE - CASTLE CAPULET - THAT MOMENT**

-- *WHAM!!!* -- the gates FALL -- Montagues streaming in -- Romeo leading the charge -- the BATTLE spilling into...

THE COURTYARD

Servants SCREAM. Pikemen SCRAMBLE. A frenzied madhouse.

LORD CAPULET

climbs a rampart, seeing the troops, finally understanding:

LORD CAPULET  
*Montagues...*

Capulet Guards TAKE UP ARMS. As a SWORD is placed in Lord Capulet's hand, he looks to the blade in a dreamlike trance... then back to his men, intense:

LORD CAPULET  
 Today... we end this.

ACROSS THE FRAY

running for cover, Benvolio, Maria, and Friar spot...

ROMEO

weaving the madness, searching for:

ROMEO  
 Juliet!!! Juliet!!!

He GRABS a passing a CAPULET SERVANT, panicked, desperate:

ROMEO  
 Where is she?! Where is Juliet?!?!

Amid screams, the servant POINTS across the grounds, to...

THE TOMB DOOR

Romeo SPRINTS OFF -- SLASHING Pikemen in his path -- as

BENVOLIO, MARIA, AND FRIAR

sprint for Romeo -- SCREAMING -- almost within earshot, when

THE CAPULET ARMY

blindsides the Montagues -- SWINGING their swords -- hatred re-ignited -- a CAPULET-MONTAGUE BATTLE ROYALE!

**EXT. CEMETERY - CASTLE CAPULET - CONTINUOUS**

Romeo reaches the tomb entrance, moving forward with haste...

WINDING DOWN THE STAIRS,

he readies his SWORD. Eyes focused. Vengeance alive...

CUT TO:

JULIET'S UNMOVING LIPS

kissed by Prince Paris -- a sick, slobbering display...

**INT. BURIAL CHAMBER - TOMB - CONTINUOUS**

Satisfied, he looks to his Priest, ceremony nearly finished:

PRIEST

Now, in the name of the Father, the  
Son, and the Holy Spirit --

ROMEO (O.S.)  
Get your hands off my wife.

All eyes clock to the stairs... shocked to find:

ROMEO

Bloody. Battered. Eyes on fire. When out of nowhere --

PARIS'S BODYGUARD

streaks in, SWORD RAISED. Romeo DUCKS the SLASH -- SPARKS flying as steel SLAMS marble. Springing to a stand -- Romeo lands a LEAPING WHACK on the Bodyguard's blade -- CLANGGG!

PRINCE PARIS  
For God's sake, finish it!

Nervous, the Priest composes himself:

PRIEST  
By all that is holy... under the  
eyes of God --

CLANG! CLANG! CLANG! Romeo doesn't stop -- HACKING again and again -- until the bodyguard CRUMPLES into a SHREDDED MESS.

Romeo clocks to the ceremony. WINDS UP. HURLS his SWORD as...

PRIEST  
... I now pronounce you man and --

-- THUNK!

The blade LANDS in the Priest's chest like a javelin. He GAGS. BLOOD spilling from his scarred lips, dripping onto pages of his bible... as he SLUMPS to death.

PARIS

rises, drawing his sword as Romeo takes the Bodyguard's blade, readying it. The two men CIRCLE each other:

PRINCE PARIS  
 You truly have no shame, Montague.  
 First, you kill her cousin... then  
 come seeking more Capulet blood.  
 How noble of you...

ROMEO  
 A noble man would know better than  
 to come between a desperate husband  
 and his wife. And since this is a  
 lesson you've yet to learn, it will  
 be my pleasure to teach you.

Romeo STRIKES -- the men trade BLOWS -- *CLANG-CLANG!* -- their swords a STREAKING METALLIC BLUR...

**EXT. BATTLEGROUNDS - CASTLE CAPULET - CONTINUOUS**

We WIND THROUGH the devastation in a single, unbroken SHOT:

FIRE BURN

engulfing horrified women and children...

LORD MONTAGUE

guts a Capulet guard...

LORD CAPULET

beheads a Montague warrior...

BOTH ARMIES

battle the remnants of the Pikemen...

CATAPULTED STONES

rain down -- ARROWS flicking through the air...

BENVOLIO

protects Maria, FENDING off Montague & Capulet alike...  
 as we finally land on...

FRIAR LAURENCE

watching the mayhem -- GUILT upon his face: *he has FAILED...*

CUT TO:

*CLANG-CLANG!*

Blades MEET as Romeo & Paris's DUEL traverses the tomb --

**INT. BURIAL CHAMBER - TOMB - CONTINUOUS**

-- PAINTINGS are slashed in half. STATUES used as cover.

Romeo FIGHTS with passion... but is soon caught off-guard as  
PARIS

unsheathes his KNIFE -- BLITZING with a FLURRY of close JABS  
-- and with a SLICE -- Romeo BLEEDS -- STUMBLING back...

CUT TO:

HOOVES THUMPING EARTH

a familiar face RIDING into view... CONSTABLE ESCALUS --

**EXT. BATTLEGROUNDS - CASTLE CAPULET - CONTINUOUS**

-- surveying the carnage: dead Pikemen... smoke billowing  
from inside the castle walls... *nothing but death.*

WHIPPING REINS, he GALLOPS for the castle... where

LORD MONTAGUE

screams, PLUNGING his sword through a Pikeman's breast plate.  
RIPPING it loose, he turns, as across the battlefield...

LORD CAPULET

emerges from the smoke. The Lords' gazes LAND on EACH  
OTHER... a lifetime of hatred behind their eyes...

**INT. BURIAL CHAMBER - TOMB - THAT MOMENT**

Romeo CATCHES HIMSELF against a statue, barely keeping grip  
on his sword. Paris saunters forward, laughing:

PRINCE PARIS  
Oh, mighty Romeo... why do you  
still fight? I refuse to believe  
one girl could inspire such action.  
Is it wealth? Power? Is it fame?  
Immortality?  
(truly aggravated now)  
Why?! Why do you still fight?

Romeo glares at Paris... then, matter-of-factly...

ROMEO  
... Love.

Paris rolls his eyes, a disgusted chuckle --

PRINCE PARIS  
*Romeo and Juliet?* In time, no one  
 will remember your names.

Paris PLANTS a forward FOOT, WINDING UP for the kill --

PRINCE PARIS  
But they will remember mine.

-- as he LUNGES -- Romeo gets there first --

STRIKING PARIS'S FOOT INSTEAD

The Prince TIGHTENS, giving Romeo an opening --

*SLASH!*

Stumbling back, the Prince SLAMS against the mural wall --  
 HANDS GRIPPED around his BLEEDING NECK -- unable to speak...

ROMEO  
 I have killed many men. And how  
 often are they happy right before  
 they die? I've heard it's called...  
 the light before death. Do you see  
 such a light, Prince? Do you?

Paris GURGLES, and maybe, just maybe, he shakes his head: No.

Soon, the Prince's trembling STOPS... He SLIDES down the  
 mural, BLOOD mixing with PAINT, finally SLUMPING... DEAD.

#### EXT. BATTLEGROUNDS - CASTLE CAPULET - CONTINUOUS

ESCALUS rides into the MAELSTROM... but before the havoc can  
 register, he's TACKLED off his horse by the last surviving

PIKEMAN

Escalus SCRAMBLES up stone stairs, FENDING him OFF, ascending  
 a RAMPART... while, below them...

LORD MONTAGUE & LORD CAPULET

lock SWORDS, inches from each other, then PART with a GROWL!

BLADES SWING AGAIN

*CLANG!* Two graybeards locked in a DEATH MATCH.

ACROSS THE WAY

Benvolio rushes Maria safely behind a stone wall, then  
 gathers the Friar as they SPRINT for the TOMB...

## INT. BURIAL CHAMBER - TOMB - CONTINUOUS

Romeo limps towards Juliet's body. Soul ripped to pieces.

Slumping onto the dais, he gently clasps his wife's hand, trembling as he pulls something from his pocket:

## THE WOODEN RING

He gently places it back on her finger. *Where it belongs...*

## ROMEO

Death may have taken the air from  
your breath... but your beauty will  
never be conquered. From this world-  
wearied flesh, my eyes look to you  
last. My arms take your last  
embrace. And lips, the doors of  
breath, seal with a righteous kiss,  
my death... beside yours.

Romeo leans in and lays the softest KISS upon Juliet's lips.

He now RISES, brandishing his SPRING-LOADED DAGGER...  
Stoic, he places the hilt against his HEART, finger hovering  
over the SWITCH --

## ROMEO

Come, bitter steel...  
Come, unsavory guide...

Suddenly -- we hear an audible *GASP!* -- Romeo STARTLES at the  
sound -- SPRINGING his dagger --

*THNK!*

In complete shock, he watches Juliet's eyes FLUTTER... OPEN.  
His disbelief soon overtaken by joy, until... he looks down:

## BLOOD POURS

from his chest... the DAGGER buried in his HEART...

And as a HAUNTING CHOIR swells... we find ourselves...

## HIGH IN THE BLUE SKY

Beautiful clouds DRIFTING by. *Maybe we're in Heaven?* THEN:

## A BOULDER ENTERS FRAME

lofted by the catapult -- we FOLLOW as it PLUMMETS from the  
heavens --

## SLAMMING INTO A TOWER

and as STONES FALL... we FOLLOW them too -- RAINING down upon

## THE MOAT'S DAM

As stone CRUMBLES -- the dam EXPLODES -- water RUSHING...

UNDERGROUND,

flooding the TUNNELS -- a deadly TIDAL WAVE headed right for:

**INT. BURIAL CHAMBER - TOMB - THAT MOMENT**

Juliet COMES TO... groggy... confused to find...

ROMEO

collapsing into her arms. As she catches him, her face shows shock. Disbelief. But her attention is soon stolen by...

## THE TIDAL WAVE

rushing into the chamber -- Juliet SCREAMS -- the tomb beginning to FILL like an hourglass. Panicked, she clocks back to:

ROMEO

who seizes, gasping. Juliet looks to his WOUND. Mortal.

JULIET  
Romeo... What's happening?!

Eyes fixed on her, Romeo manages the tiniest laugh:

ROMEO  
*Everything.*

Cradling Romeo's head, Juliet runs her fingers through his hair, tucking bloody strands behind his ears.

JULIET  
Why did you come for me? Do you  
ever listen?

ROMEO  
(a smile)  
Occasionally...

Juliet manages a grin through her tears... but around them:

## WATER IS RISING

The end is near. Romeo's eyes wander, landing on *something*:

ROMEO  
(distant)  
I see it...

JULIET  
What, my love? What do you see?

ROMEO  
The light...

His gaze wanders back to Juliet. A look of pure, utter love:

ROMEO  
Don't let me go.

With that, Romeo's eyes lose focus -- his seizing slows -- and like a candle blown out...

ROMEO IS DEAD.

Juliet is devastated -- clocking around -- panicked -- as WATER REACHES THEIR CHESTS...

She looks to the tomb's SPIRAL STAIRCASE: *an escape...* Then back to ROMEO: *a choice...*

Her choice. And as STRINGS SOAR....

JULIET KISSES ROMEO TIGHT

Soon, their bodies are SWALLOWED by the WAVE...

NOW UNDERWATER

Swirling FLOWERS mix with the VIOLENT TIDE, but still -- -- Juliet GRIPS Romeo -- her lips upon his -- refusing to let go -- and as water WRAPS THE PAIR IN DARKNESS, we...

CUT TO:

RUSHING WATER

erupting like a geyser -- *BOOM!* -- the TOMB DOORS BURST OPEN -- knocking Benvolio & the Friar off their feet...

**EXT. BATTLEGROUNDS - CASTLE CAPULET - CONTINUOUS**

As the roaring tide SPILLS onto open ground, it overtakes...

THE BATTLEFIELD

Noble Lords locked in combat... Swords meeting shields... Limp bodies falling into shallow water... now dyed BLOOD-RED.

ESCALUS

pulls his sword from the Pikeman's gut, the man FALLING from the ledge. Panting, he SCANS the scene below...

CAPULETS & MONTAGUES

desperately SLAUGHTERING each other... as they always have.

Escalus now knows: *he was too late... their nation is doomed.*

CUT TO:

CAPULET GUARDS

cranking A WHEEL. Metal GROANS as a RELEASE VALVE opens -- the water level DROPPING -- soon flowing away...

**INT. TOMB - THAT MOMENT**

Benvolio and Friar chase the RECEDING WATER, splashing into THE BURIAL CHAMBER

Their cautious steps soon HALTED. Freezing at the sight of... TWO DEAD BODIES

Romeo & Juliet strewn across the wet marble floor...

CUT TO:

SMOKE

Drifting across the castle grounds in SLOW MOTION...

**EXT. COURTYARD - CASTLE CAPULET - DAY**

THE BATTLE RAGES on: relentless CLANGING of swords... SCREAMS of dying men echo through the air...

Then, slowly... from the thick fog...

FIGURES EMERGE

Benvolio... The Friar... And in their arms...

ROMEO & JULIET

The Lords take notice, blades breaking free, stumbling back, stunned expressions upon their faces as...

FRIAR & BENVOLIO APPROACH

Soon, the whole battlefield takes notice -- Capulet & Montague alike -- all men lowering their weapons. Everything falling to STUNNED SILENCE...

Reaching the center of the courtyard, the Friar looks around. All eyes on them... and Romeo & Juliet, in their arms:

## FRIAR LAURENCE

People of Verona... let it be known today and all days forth: Romeo, who lies dead... was the husband of Juliet. And she... the faithful wife of Romeo. With my blessing, they wed in secret... and if any part of this tragedy is my fault, then let my life be sacrificed, for I deserve it more than they!

From the ramparts, Escalus watches the surreal scene...

## FRIAR LAURENCE

They took their own lives because their enemies gave them no other choice. And who were these enemies? They were you! They were Capulet! They were Montague!

Friar looks to the Lords, who hang their heads, ashamed...

## FRIAR LAURENCE

Do you see what evil has come from your hate? But while your hatred may have killed your children... it has also given them eternal love. For in death, none of you can take that away...

(a long beat)

If you ever loved them, let their deaths be not in vain.

The Lords' eyes find their lifeless children in the arms of these men, and then soon find... EACH OTHER.

Tense moments as they inch for...

## THEIR SWORDS

The Lords lock eyes -- *SHING!* -- swords DRAWN, approaching.

EVERY MAN COILS ANEW, READY TO FIGHT. But then, incredibly --

-- the Lords simply EXCHANGE SWORDS -- IBEX & WOLF emblems changing hands. No words spoken... None are needed...

The Capulet & Montague ARMIES trade glances, lowering their weapons as well. *The battle is over...*

## FROM THE RAMPART ABOVE

Escalus breaks into an exhausted smile. He shakes his head, relieved: *they might just have a chance.*

From his expression -- we FLOAT UP -- into the CLOUDS -- high above the SMOLDERING CASTLE...

DISSOLVING TO:

THE FRENCH ARMY

Fully assembled. Regiments MARCHING into place.

**EXT. ARMY CAMP - VERONA COUNTRYSIDE - MORNING**

KING CHARLES exits his royal tent, yawning to a GENERAL:

KING CHARLES  
A good morning for a hostile  
takeover, don't you think?

Slapping the General on the back, he breathes deep, admiring the land. Green grass. Golden fields. Purple mountains.

He notices a ROSE growing at his feet, PLUCKING it from soil:

KING CHARLES  
Such beautiful country...  
I've heard they've come to call  
it... V'italia.  
(eyeing the rose)  
A terrible name.

Just then, a SCOUT rides up. Out of breath. Ghost white:

SCOUT  
Your highness...

KING CHARLES  
What is it? Spit it out!

SENTRY  
You must see for yourself.

**EXT. VERONA COUNTRYSIDE - DAY**

His ARMY behind him, Charles GALLOPS up a STEEP HILL. As he does, a THUNDEROUS ROAR grows louder and louder...

Reaching the top, the King's expression falls to DREAD... CRANING UP, we reveal...

VERONA'S ARMY

Thousands strong. Finally united. Montague and Capulet side-by-side. All BELTING a ferocious BATTLE CRY!

Notice familiar faces: Sampson, Gregory, Lord Montague, Lord Capulet, Constable Escalus... even Boy Tanner... clutching his father's SICKLE. And behind them all...

WAR MACHINES

Romeo's inventions. Dozens of them. A force to be reckoned with. And finally, at the army's front...

BENVOLIO

carves his own WOODEN RING with a grin. Just then...

THUNDER CRASHES

Sky turning grey... and soon... RAIN BEGINS TO FALL.

KING CHARLES

looks on, now pale as ivory. PUSHING IN on his face, everything ramps to SLOW MOTION as...

THE ARMY OF VERONA CHARGES

and Friar's voice guides once last time:

FRIAR LAURENCE (V.O.)  
*That morning, some were to be  
pardoned, while others were to be  
punished. And a dark peace was soon  
to be settled, even with the sun  
too sad to show...*

FLYING UP from the battlefield, Verona grows smaller and smaller until our world again becomes...

A MAP

FRIAR LAURENCE (V.O.)  
*With the alliance complete, the  
republic of Verona repelled the  
invaders from the North...*

RAIN DROPS FALL on the map. As it SOAKS, paint thins as BORDERS disappear, the entire land becoming a SINGLE COLOR...

FRIAR LAURENCE (V.O.)  
*A spark was lit... a spark of  
unity... a spark that would in time  
unite the peninsula under a single  
name...*

In beautiful cursive, LETTERS are scrawled upon the map...

ITALY

As we FLY BACK DOWN, the real world MATERIALIZES again as --

## EXT. SYCAMORE FOREST - DAY

-- we GLIDE over treetops. RAIN still POURING...  
Is this the past? The future? It doesn't matter...

FRIAR LAURENCE (V.O.)  
*But this freedom came with a grave  
cost...*

We FOLLOW a single RAINDROP... FALLING for the forest --  
a dream-like descent -- into a clearing, where it lands on...

## A STATUE

We circle around it. Half stone. Half marble. A visage of  
Romeo & Juliet, wrapped in each other's arms.

MUSIC SOARS as we continue to FALL, deep into SOAKED EARTH...

FRIAR LAURENCE (V.O.)  
*... A cost that will be remembered  
forever...*

... Finding ourselves UNDERWATER...

FRIAR LAURENCE (V.O.)  
*... In war, in life, in love...*

... PUSHING THROUGH swirling FLOWER PETALS, revealing...

FRIAR LAURENCE (V.O.)  
*For there will never be a story of  
more woe... than that of Juliet...  
and her Romeo.*

... Romeo & Juliet. Still locked in an eternal kiss.

Together. Forever.

FADE OUT.