

Act Two, Scene 1. Juliet thinks about her beloved Romeo. (Luhrmann, 1996)



The Prologue

In a sonnet the CHORUS summarizes what has happened so far in the play. He reviews how Romeo and Juliet have fallen in love and suggests both the problems and delights they now face. He also includes hints about what will result from the events of Act One.

[Enter Chorus.]

Chorus. Now old desire doth in his deathbed lie,
And young affection gapes to be his heir.
That fair for which love groaned for and would die,
With tender Juliet matched, is now not fair.
5 Now Romeo is beloved, and loves again,
Alike bewitched by the charm of looks;
But to his foe supposed he must complain,
And she steal love's sweet bait from fearful hooks.
Being held a foe, he may not have access
10 To breathe such vows as lovers use to swear,
And she as much in love, her means much less
To meet her new beloved anywhere;
But passion lends them power, time means, to meet,
Temp'ring extremities with extreme sweet.

[Exit.]

1–4 old . . . heir: Romeo's love for Rosaline (**old desire**) is now dead. His new love (**young affection**) replaces the old. Compared to Juliet, Rosaline no longer seems so lovely.

6 What attracted Romeo and Juliet to each other?

7 But . . . complain: Juliet, a Capulet, is Romeo's enemy; yet she is the one to whom he must plead (**complain**) his love.

9–12 What would Romeo and Juliet do?

14 Temp'ring . . . sweet: moderating great difficulties with extreme delights.