

“All Alike in Dignity”

Readings from
The Capulets and the Montagues
by Lope de Vega

In a new rhyming verse translation by
Dakin Matthews

SCENE ONE: The Street

Benvolio: Harris Matthews
Romeo: Peter Mendoza
Marín: Bruce Green

SCENE TWO: The Party

Romeo: Peter Mendoza
Juliet: Tamika Katon-Donegal
Octavio: Harris Matthews

SCENE THREE: The Garden

Juliet: Tamika Katon-Donegal
Romeo: Peter Mendoza
Marín: Bruce Green
Celia: Kavi Ladnier

The Capulets and the Montagues
is available in a Critical Edition from
LinguaText

The Juan de la Cuesta Hispanic Monographs Series
The *Comedia* in Translation and Performance

and in an Acting Edition from
Andak Theatrical Services
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BIOS

BRUCE GREEN (Marín) is a Hollywood character actor and itinerant stage actor. Theatre credits include Neil Simon's *Fools* at Open Fist and *King Lear* with Dakin Matthews at Antaeus Theatre Company. Film credits include the Coen brothers' adaptation of *True Grit*. Television credits include NBC's *Parks and Recreation* and The CW's *Supernatural*.

TAMIKA KATON-DONEGAL (Juliet) is a seasoned actress soon to be seen as Mayor Gildersleeve on Nickelodeon's *Side Hustle*. Career highlights include *No Word in Guyanese for Me*, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, *Rent*, *Our Town*, *Tree*, *Marvel's Dr. Strange*, *Something Like a Business*, *Speechless*, *Fresh Off the Boat*, *Agent Carter*, *How to Get Away with Murder*, *Adam Ruins Everything*, *The Newsroom*. BFA-USC.

KAVI LADNIER (Celia), a seasoned actor/producer, is currently shooting a recurring role for an upcoming new series on HBO Max. Kavi produced/starred in the feature *Boris and the Bomb* (now on TUBI/PRIME) and is Associate Producer/star of a feature with Constance Wu, currently in post-production. Kavi will produce/star in the short *Now and Never* this Spring. BFA-NYU. www.kaviladnier.com

DAKIN MATTHEWS (Translator, Director) is a veteran actor on stage and screen and a Professor Emeritus of English from Cal State East Bay. He is also an award-winning playwright and translator, and a Shakespearean scholar and dramaturge.

HARRIS MATTHEWS (Benvolio, Octavio) appeared in *Romeo and Juliet* for the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, in *1 Henry IV* for the Valley Shakespeare Festival, and in *Henry V* for the Old Globe in San Diego, as well as in *The Misanthrope* and *Betrayal* for the Andak Stage Company. He holds a BFA in Acting from Cal-Arts and is also a certified hair stylist and teacher of Japanese.

PETER MENDOZA (Romeo). **Theatre:** Center Theatre Group: Oscar in *Sweat* (Mark Taper Forum), Elliot in *Elliot*, *A Soldiers Fugue* (Kirk Douglas Theatre), Oedipus in *Oedipus El Rey* (Kirk Douglas Theatre, Digital Stage), Henry Reyna in *Zoot Suit* (Mark Taper Forum, U/S). Other Theatre: Hason in *Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles* (The Rep. Theatre of St. Louis), Belyaev in *Three Days in the Country* (Antaeus Theatre Company), Rafael in *La Piedra Oscura*, Don Carlos in *Los Empeños de una Casa*, Don Juan Tenorio in *El Burlador de Sevilla* (Bilingual Foundation of the Arts). **Television:** *Shooter* (USA), *NCIS* (CBS), *Snowfall* (FX), *Casual* (Hulu), *On My Block* (Netflix). **Film:** *Dead Bullet*, *Nathan's Kingdom*, *Parasites*, *Tecato*, *Hello to Never*, *Ana Maria in Novella Land*.

Three scenes from *The Capulets and the Montagues*, an American rhyming verse translation by Dakin Matthews, 2021.

The Street

The play opens on a street in Verona, outside the Capulet's house:

BENVOLIO Oh, the loveliest women of Italy
 make of this house a Paradise,
 but not without danger, all the same.
Your father is a Montague,
and head of the rival family, who
will not even allow the name
 of Capulet to be spoken aloud
in his house—let alone to actually see
one there—oh, with what fury he
would blaze out then—impatient, proud!
 And of the Capulet family
the head is this Antonio—
whose house and feast these are, as you know,
and who relishes this rivalry
 and thinks no Montague should live.

ROMEO Enough—no more. To one house and
the other, God opened his hand,
and two remarkable gifts did He give.
 To us, the Montagues, He gave
the most courageous men, whose names
echo with excellence, whose fames
live on in tales beyond the grave.
 The Capulets received from Him
the finest, fairest ladies, whose
beauty Nature itself did use
as models for the Seraphim.
 If only we could join the two

by marriage—if this rivalry
and violence and hostility
would disappear, I'm telling you
the Veronese would end up being
the envy of all Italy.

MARÍN

I'll tell you what repulses me,
what makes me sick and tired—it's seeing
your vicious hatred for each other
make not just families fight like hell,
but all the family dogs as well;
they bite and snap at one another.

And as for the cats? They slink around
in packs, spoiling for a fight,
turning kitchens and rooftops at night
into their brawling battleground.

And when they meow, all they're do-
ing's announcing which side they're on. One howls,
"I'm Capulet!" And the other yowls,
"Oh yeah, well I'm a Montague!"

Till all the roosters on the block
get infected with this insanity,
and take it as a great injury
if anyone crows for the rival flock;
and with a fury, what they do
whenever they hear a Capulet crow
in his barnyard, thirty cocks will go
crazy with, "Monta-gyoogle-goo!"

The Party

Romeo sees Juliet entertaining her tedious cousin Octavio and immediately moves to make conversation with her:

ROMEO Lady, I'm in the wrong, it's clear,
I'll go away.

JULIET Oh, really? Where?

ROMEO I'll amuse myself right over there.

JULIET You haven't been amused over here?

ROMEO I couldn't be more amused, it's true;
but if it's been discourteous of me—

JULIET How could it be discourtesy
in one so worthy of favor as you?
(Aside to him) Stay here, with any luck we'll see
if we can so annoy this drone,
that he'll stop his buzzing and leave us alone.

(ROMEO sits.)

(To OCTAVIO) Octavio, sit back down with me.

OCTAVIO Why should I sit back down with you,
when you'll just turn away again?

JULIET I see you're resolved to be a pain!
I want to talk to you—I do!

OCTAVIO Oh, now you're being nice to me!
I forgive you all the heartache and
the grief you've given me.

(He sits; JULIET faces him, but gives her hand to ROMEO.)

ROMEO *(Aside)* My hand!

JULIET I need you, sir, to clearly see
(She speaks to OCTAVIO, but intends it for ROMEO.)
and be satisfied with this from me,
for short of behaving in a way
that would dishonor me, I may
not favor you more earnestly.

ROMEO (*Aside*) So long as I get to drain the cup,
who cares if another man gets the toast?

JULIET And turning one's back on one's foe is at most
a sign of surrender and giving up.

OCTAVIO But when you turned your back on me,
and showed your face to my foe instead,
I had to think what your gesture said
was that you despised me utterly.

JULIET What kind of despite could it possibly be
to give up everything for you?

OCTAVIO No more complaining, lady, I'm through.

ROMEO (*Aside*) How sweet! She's saying all this to me!

JULIET Because there's no more I can do,
I must behave discourteously.

OCTAVIO I understand your behavior to be
what your position requires of you.

JULIET But know that you're very pleasing to me,
however little I am able to show it.

OCTAVIO I'm mad about you, I want you to know it.

ROMEO (*Aside*) It's me she favors, obviously!

JULIET If they gave me a chance to disobey,
you'd see how forward I could be.

OCTAVIO The very same thought occurred to me!

ROMEO (*Aside*) How did she learn to talk this way!

JULIET How forceful is the power of Love!

OCTAVIO Such kindness after such ridicule!

ROMEO (*Aside*) She's talking to me, and the poor little fool
thinks that it's him she's speaking of.

JULIET In all my life, Octavio,
nothing has pleased me so totally!

OCTAVIO A thousand-fold, love burns in me.

ROMEO (*Aside*) It's me she's talking about, I know.

JULIET Perhaps I seem too free to you,
show too much boldness, too much haste.

OCTAVIO In pure love nothing is unchaste.
ROMEO (*Aside to her*) But have I not shown boldness, too?
And since it happened that I loved you
the moment I saw you, could it be,
that at that moment, you loved me?
JULIET Seeing you gave me pleasure, it's true—
you were so gallant a gentleman.
OCTAVIO I'll be an angel if you love me, dear.
ROMEO (*Aside*) No, all you'll be is just a mir-
ror, reflecting back the rays of the sun,
which seem to shine only on you,
while I remain here in the shade;
yet by the reflection that you've made,
I get more light than you can do.
Octavio, you think I lack
the light, because she faces you.
But she is sunlight through and through,
and casts no shadow with her back.
JULIET Who loves me best?
OCTAVIO I do!
ROMEO (*Quietly*) I do.
JULIET To whom do I belong?
OCTAVIO To me!
ROMEO (*Quietly*) To me.
JULIET And you'll be mine?
OCTAVIO I'll be!
ROMEO (*Quietly*) I'll be.
JULIET And you won't be untrue
to me?
OCTAVIO Never!
ROMEO (*Quietly*) Never.
JULIET My own!
Come see me.
OCTAVIO Yes!

ROMEO (Quietly) Yes.
JULIET But la-
ter.
OCTAVIO Better!
ROMEO (Quietly) Better.
JULIET Who'll show you the way?
OCTAVIO Love!
ROMEO (Quietly) Love.
JULIET Come alone.
OCTAVIO Alone!
ROMEO (Quietly) Alone.
JULIET Then I shall wait for you, shall I?
OCTAVIO Yes, wait.
ROMEO (Quietly) Yes, wait.
JULIET You swear?
OCTAVIO I swear.
ROMEO (Quietly) I swear.
JULIET The garden?
OCTAVIO Yes, there.
ROMEO (Quietly) Yes, there.
JULIET Tell no one.
OCTAVIO Though I die.
ROMEO (Quietly) I die.
OCTAVIO I know it's strange but I thought I heard
an echo to every word I said.
JULIET It was your imagination instead.
ROMEO (Quietly) And I understood your every word.

The Garden

Weeks after the couple has been secretly married, Romeo gives a sorrowful goodbye as he prepares for exile. His servant Marín gives his own farewells:

JULIET My darling husband, is that you?
ROMEO Give me patience, heavens above!
Life itself is nothing worth
if I lose the light of her I love.
It is I, your husband, Juliet,
for better or worse, in joy and in pain;
and as in person I have been,
the same in absence will I remain.
I think you have been weeping for
our misery. But do not be
my death, in crying so, nor give
others the opportunity
to hear you. Unless you wish one sword
to put an end to us and to
such miseries— then here I am.
Our lives may die; but they can do
nothing to part our souls, those men
who wish to murder me to keep
our bodies apart; over our souls
they have no power. And if you weep
because of what my sword has done,
I tell you I was not to blame,
and 'tis against all evidence
that you complain. Your cousin came
at me, and from his vaunting tongue,
rather than lose you, love, I bore
a thousand insults and infamies.
But if you value your cousin more

CELIA

Who else, my dear Marín, but I,
has given up her house for you?
Who leaves behind its snow-white linens
and its pantry full of jam-jars, too?
Tell me, why should I even care
how brave or valiant you might be?
'Cuz if you were, you might get killed
in all this battling rivalry;
and then I'd get no joy from you,
a lot of pain is all I'd have.
Take it from me, the gentlemen'd
be better off if they'd behave
like you. Chickens survive—they even
get fat—plumped up for the table—because
cowards keep to themselves; the brave
with all their bravery, keep the laws
awake all night; they disturb
the peace of the neighborhood. I want
my man to be a chicken, and not
some brawling, furious Rodomont.
Chickens feather their nests, Marín,
with scarves and chains and jewelry;
while roosters quarrel and steal and scratch
and rip them apart with jealousy.
And I could never murder you,
not in the way you've offered me.
But here is something you can use,
I surrender to you the wine-cellar key;
you can pour yourself some blood-red wine.
I have no other fortune to grant you,
you are the faction I follow now;
for now that you have made me want you,
I may be Celia in my body,
but my whole soul belongs to Marín.