### Solamen miseris socios habuisse doloris

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**Summary**

“*Why?*” *Benvolio asks again. “Why only Him?”*

“*Because it’s God. Imagine what would happen if anyone could decide if someone lives or dies! No, God is fair and just and has a plan for all of us, even in our death.*”

“*If God is so fair and just like you say, father, tell me why they are dead and paid the price of their fathers’ sins? Romeo and Juliet wanted nothing but the chance to be man and wife and live their lives together, instead they now share a grave. Didn’t Tybalt kill Mercutio only because they made him think it was right? That it was his right to do so? [...] How can it be fair that I’m alive when everyone who I loved has died?*”

### Notes

Usual disclaimer applies.

No beta.

Title taken from Marlowe's Faustus because of reasons.
The door of the sacristy slams open, distracting Friar Laurence from the preparation of the morning mass.

“Father please you have to stop him!”

The voice doesn’t belong to the man who opened the door, but to a younger one few steps behind him. The man who opened the door storms directly to friar Laurence, his stride almost menacing, and stops a step before him. Friar Laurence doesn’t think he ever saw the young -if grief left any trace in youth in him- Benvolio Montague looking just so...tired. Tired of being hurt, tired of sleepless nights, tired of lonely days, tired of pain.

“Calm down and tell me what happened.”

“He’s lost his mind!”

“You have to help me.”

Valentine and Benvolio speaks at the same time both with a vehemence that the priest thought lost forever under the weight of loss.

“Of course I will help you son, of course.” friar Laurence pats gently one of Benvolio’s shoulder. He has been helping them for weeks now, listening to their sorrow, drying their tears, giving them words of comfort, guiding them through their pain; he doesn’t see why he should stop, although he knows that Valentine wouldn’t warn him without a good reason. And Valentine, if possibly, looks even more in pain than Benvolio with his bloodshot eyes, unkept stubble, and trembling hands.

“I…” Benvolio licks his upper lip pretending that it’s his chapped lips that made him hesitate. “I was wondering: if there is a way to fake death there must be some way to bring people back to life, right?”

“Here we go…” Valentine mutters under his breath, filling the astonished silence coming from friar Laurence.

“What I give to dear Juliet…” Friar Laurence starts with caution, “It was a potion made with the essence of very particular plants and flowers. Obliviously there was another potion to counter the effects of the first, but what you are asking...no, it cannot be done.”

“Why?”

A simple question that shows exactly how desperate Benvolio must be to even try to find a fault logic in not correlated elements.

“Because only God decided who lives and who dies; don’t be blasphemous Benvolio, I know you are a man of faith.”

But no faith stays untested for too long -otherwise it would have no value- and weaker men than Benvolio questioned their own faith for less.

“Why?” Benvolio asks again. “Why only Him?”

“Because it’s God. Imagine what would happen if anyone could decide if someone lives or dies! No, God is fair and just and has a plan for all of us, even in our death.”

“If God is so fair and just like you say, father, tell me why they are dead and paid the price of their fathers’ sins? Romeo and Juliet wanted nothing but the chance to be man and wife and live their lives together, instead they now share a grave. Didn’t Tybalt kill Mercutio only because they made
him think it was right? That it was *his right* to do so?” Benvolio hesitates just enough to glance at Valentine who looks away immediately. He should apologize for defending Mercutio’s murderer, in front of Mercutio’s brother, but there is still enough compassion in Benvolio’s heart to remember that Tybalt wasn’t older than them and that like them he had no real choice. “They taught us to hate each other, they raised us to honor their feud and yet they live! Where is the justice in that?”

Friar Laurence closes his eyes and shakes his head. “Your aunt and your uncle and Lord and Lady Capulet are expiating their fault, Benvolio. Aren’t they mourning the loss of their children after all? Nothing is worse for a parent. “ Benvolio’s humorless laugh stops him for a second. “You know very well that your aunt is suffering, the poor woman is inconsolable. Believe me, child, they are paying dearly for their hate.”

“And yet I see nothing of the justice you talk about!” Benvolio starts pacing the small room with frantic steps, unable to stay still for longer. “Where is the justice in innocents paying the price for someone’s else fault? How can it be fair that I’m left behind mourning them?” Benvolio let his anger deflate with a couple of deep breaths. He is angry, yes, but that doesn’t mean that he should let the anger consume him.

“How can it be fair that I’m alive when everyone who I loved has died?”

Oh saying *that* is not fair, is exaggerating, but that’s the great power of grief: it hurts so much that not even exaggerating can comprehend the whole extension of it.

“Benvolio…” Valentine calls gently. He wants to say something, but then Benvolio’s eyes found his. He can understand that pain to well to correct him. Isn’t it the reason why in the last couple of weeks they grew closer? Not because they didn’t have anyone else, but because they could find only in each other the understanding they needed?

“There must be a way, father.” Benvolio stares at the books in the room, the title barely readable in the soft light of dawn, but he suspect it’s only bibles and gospels.

He may look like a mad man, he could want things that only a mad man could want, but he’s extremely lucid and sober.

Exactly what you would expect from a mad man.

Valentine begs Friar Laurence with his eyes and a subtle shake of his head, but the priest ignores him and simply leave the room with a deep frown.

Then Valentine direct the same look at Benvolio.

“Don’t look at me like that.” still, it’s Benvolio the one who looks away and start pacing the room again.

“Tell me you know this is madness.” Valentine orders putting himself in Benvolio’s path to stop him -an easy deed considering how small the sacristy and a square table in the middle of it makes movement quite predictable.

“It is.” Benvolio grants. “But I have to try.”

“You *have* to?” Valentine repeats. “No, nobody is telling you that you must do this, nobody is forcing you. If you know this is madness then *stop.*”

“I must because I can’t take it. Because the is no other way and alternative is unthinkable.” so unthinkable that he can’t stop thinking about it. “Because I’m sure Mercutio would have done it if
he was in my place.”

“Since when what would Mercutio do is ever a good idea?” Valentine frowns. “His ideas got him killed, if you didn’t notice.”

The pain on Valentine’s face is raw and Benvolio needs to do something about it; he touches Valentine’s arm with unsteady fingers “I am sorry.”

“But you are doing this anyway.”

“Yes.” Benvolio nods. “And...I’ll appreciate any help.”

Valentine stares at Benvolio’s face; this desperate and resolute man doesn’t have anyone else, he reminds himself and the pain on his face is replaced by a softer look. “I’m with you.”

For the first time in weeks, there is hope on Benvolio’s face.

Friar Laurence clears his throat on the threshold of the room, regarding the two young men with a gaze of steel.

Benvolio moves his hand away from Valentine’s arm and turns towards the door. “Father…”

A small book bound in dark leather is thrust into Benvolio’s hands unceremoniously, with spite even. “If what you wish to do can be done, you’ll find your answers here.”

Benvolio stares at the book in awe, it feels heavier than it looks and older too because under his fingers he can feel the cracks of the leather. A relic wouldn’t receive so much reverence. “Thank you, father.”

“Now go away.” Friar Laurence points at the door behind him, ignoring the gratitude in Benvolio’s voice. “I’ll tell you to stay for the mass, but you look like sleep could do more for you than praying. When was the last time you have slept, child?”

“A...couple of days ago.” Benvolio admits. It’s easier to stay awake; if he sleep the memories comes back to him and he can’t protect himself from them and in the morning is always so hard to take his mind away from the thought of the blade of his shaving razor against his wrists.

“Valentine, bring him home and see that he gets some sleep.”

Valentine nods immediately, glad to have something to do that doesn’t include following a mad man around Verona trying to stop him.

“Thank you again, father.” Benvolio says one last time before taking his leave, his eyes never leaving the book.

When the two men are gone, friar Laurence allow himself to sigh. He should have said no, but Benvolio’s desperation reminded him of Romeo crying over his lost happiness in the same room, and his determination reminded him of the way Juliet was ready to do anything but marry Paris.

He can’t doubt now; if he thinks of Romeo and Juliet and what good his help did, he’s lost.

But his failure is what convinced him to help Benvolio; one last chance to make things right. Maybe he is mad as well.
“Let’s pray that some sleep with make him desist.”

When Benvolio calls for him, Balthasar is surprised, he is even more surprised when he arrives in Benvolio’s chambers and sees him strangely invigorated. Yes sorrow is still there, but Balthasar is glad to notice that Benvolio doesn’t look anymore like a man on the verge of screaming and screaming and screaming, until no sound comes out.

And Balthasar couldn’t be happier when Benvolio asks for food, it has been days since he ate more than a bite or two and choosing to eat is, after all, choosing to live.

At least someone in the house decided to own their grief and not let it kill them.

He even tells Abram the good news on his way back from the kitchen, but the other servant doesn’t share his enthusiasm. But that’s fine, Abram is still mourning as well, Balthasar can understand.

“Do you need anything else?”
“No Balthasar, thank you. Just don’t let anyone disturb me.”

When Balthasar leaves, Benvolio makes himself comfortable, kicking away his boots and undoing the laces of his shirt.
He should sleep, he needs to sleep, but the small book is calling to him and he can’t ignore it. He takes the plate full of food that Balthasar just brought him and sit on the bed with the book on his knees.

After weeks of swimming in misery, Benvolio lingers in the feeling of having a goal, something to live for.

Balthasar finds Valentine in the piazza, a message carefully tucked in his pocket. A written message. The fact that Benvolio didn’t share the content of the message, that he didn’t trust Balthasar enough to say it out loud, worried him. It’s a private matter, surely, but Balthasar can’t forget the look in Benvolio’s eyes when he handed him the piece of paper.

And to think that the last couple of days were going so well.

His instinct tells him to go back and tell Benvolio that he couldn’t find Valentine. Yes, that would be for the better, Benvolio is a good master, he would never punish him for something like that.

But he can’t turn his back to Benvolio now that he finally decided to go back and live his life.

While he approaches the group of young men, he tries to keep his troubled thoughts away from his face. “My lord Valentine?”

Valentine, despite being surrounded by friends, has around him the same aura of pity, a sadness that doesn’t allow him to really be part of the group, that Balthasar is getting used to see around Benvolio. It’s unfair that those young men have to live so young with sorrow in their hearts.

“A message from my master Benvolio.”

A private matter indeed, but not a good one, Balthasar decides from the way Valentine’s face
becomes suddenly paler when he reads the message.

“Thank you.” Valentine says too quickly, stuffing the piece of paper away from prying eyes.

Yes, whatever the message is, is not good news and Balthasar leaves wondering what he really did.

The night seems to agree with Benvolio’s wish; despite the hot summer day, the sky is full of clouds and in the distance thunders rumbles promising a reckoning. Valentine and Friar Laurence stare in disbelief at Benvolio standing in front of open tombcoffins, looming as dark as the night around them.

“This is madness!” Valentine exclaims. “We have to stop him.”

“Heaven has laws, my son.” Friar Laurence replies. “No man can undo them.”

Valentine does have faith in the laws of God, but it seems to him that Benvolio has the Devil on his side.

Benvolio takes a deep breath and steel himself in front of the steel in his hand. The magic, the book had warned, is only as strong as the magician’s will, so Benvolio focuses his mind and heart on his wish. To bring back to life the missing parts of his souls, to be whole again with them, to hear their voices once again. The air growls with electricity and raw power in anticipation.

To have back what hate took from me, he commands as the knife cut his palm letting the blood fall down into a silver cup.

He walks like in trance towards the first grave, pushed by a sudden wind that has nothing of natural in its nature, his choice only in part based on some sense of chivalry: the real reason why he kneels next to Juliet first it’s because he needs to test the magic before...before he use it on Mercutio and makes everything worse.

Juliet is lying in her grave, wearing the dress she chose for her wedding, her round face clean of all the tears she shed in the last days of her life. That’s the reason why Benvolio ultimately decided to wake Juliet as well, not just for his cousin, but because he had come to know grief too much to give himself a second chance without sharing it with someone that suffered as much as him.

He carefully lifts her head and guides the cup to her lips; for a long moment nothing happens, then the young girl opens her eyes. Benvolio is too shocked to do anything, his mind too busy processing that the magic actually worked.

Juliet sits with some difficult, her limbs heavy and learning again how to work; when she notices Benvolio she stares at him with hollow eyes, tilting her head in an angle that would hurt any living creature. It is unsettling, Benvolio must admit.

“Romeo?” she asks with a distant voice, her pronunciation uncertain. When she doesn’t get any answer from the other she looks around calling her husband again, clearly hoping for him to hear her. When she finally notices the corpse next to her she leans over him, like a curious puppy, but when she notices that her husband is dead she cries a desperate sound.
That seems enough to make Benvolio focus on the situation at hands. “Hush Juliet, hush.” he touches the girl’s shoulder with his uninjured hand. “We will wake him up too.”

Waking up Romeo is easier because the first thing he sees is Juliet and that is enough to put his spirit at ease. The two young lovers touch each other’s face carefully, exploring like creatures learning for the first time what it means to be corporeal.

“Vergine Santa!” friar Laurence sign himself in front of something that only Jesus Christ was ever able to do.

“He did it. He really did it!” Valentine raises up an arm to his face to protect himself from the ever rising wind. “You said it couldn’t be done, father!”

Yes, friar Laurence said that and, despite the two figures who raised from their graves, he still believes it cannot be done. Because if it can be done than he has to revalue all he believes in, his own faith. If it can be done the world will never be the same again.

“Are you not going to stop him?”
When Valentine gets no answer he takes the initiative and move towards Benvolio.
Easier said than done; the more Valentine gets closer the stronger the winds grow making harder and harder to move, but he doesn’t stop: he has to reach and stop Benvolio before it’s too late.

Something is wrong -he would say evil, even- and he can almost taste it the closer he gets. Can’t Benvolio sense it?
But no, the strangest thing is not the wind, not the oppressive sensation of evil at work, not the goosebumps, no. The strangest thing is that one moment Valentine is fighting against the wind, which seems decided to throw him to the ground, the next he steps freely, the air light as it should be.

All around Benvolio and coffins the wind is calmer, quieter, and Valentine deeply regrets his decision. It’s like stepping in a whole different world where Benvolio is the fulcrum that keeps everything in balance. And now Valentine is part of it as well.

He looks around, the corner of his eyes catching shadows that shouldn’t be there but he can feel nonetheless.
“Benvolio no, please. I’m begging you! Don’t do this!” Valentine grabs Benvolio’s arm and tries to keep him away from the open coffin, but the other frees his arm from the his grasp and doesn’t stop.
There are thunders ringing in Benvolio’s ears and somehow he knows he’s running out of time; someone or something is listening to his pleas but whoever or whatever it is, it’s not very patience.

“It’s my brother! I’m asking you to leave him to his rest!”

Valentine’s plea falls to deaf ears; Benvolio mind is focused, sharp, he knows what he has to do and it’s almost easy to kneel on the ground and, once again, perform the simple ritual. He uses extra care, too afraid to see the magic -his magic- fail now that he needs it the most, and the magnitude of the moment makes the blood in his vein tremble.

Like with Juliet and Romeo there is a little delay, for a moment Mercutio keeps lying in the grave with blood stained lips, then he springs to life with the same force he held when he was alive.
Benvolio is quickly calming him, his hands on Mercutio’s shoulder to keep him steady. “It’s okay.” he whispers. “You are alive.”

There is a sort of protest on Mercutio’s face, but it’s clear that like for Juliet and Romeo words are definitely hard to formulate at the moment. Instead Mercutio touches Benvolio’s wrist with ice cold fingers and looks at him with eyes that lacks any trace of his usual feverish imagination.

Valentine stares as Benvolio helps Mercutio getting up, shocked and disgusted at the same time. “Benvolio,” he calls avoiding looking directly at his brother. “What have you done?”

Benvolio turns his attention to the younger man, his arms still supporting Mercutio. “What I said I would do, Valentine.”

“This...this wasn’t supposed to work.”

If Mercutio has problems standing on his own, Juliet tried and succeeded and soon she reaches the trio. “Tybalt” she says in the same way she said her husband’s name earlier. She grabs Benvolio’s arm and shake it a little. “Tybalt. Ty-bal-t!” Hers is not a request, but a demand and Benvolio is reluctantly forced to comply.

That’s how Valentine finds himself forced to help his not-anymore-deceased brother to stand up right. That’s how Valentine finds himself staring in hollow eyes that don’t recognize him anymore.

Benvolio moves back to the Capulet crypt. He didn’t plan on bringing Tybalt back to life (how could he when Tybalt was the reason he lost everything?) but...it’s only right. After all he was a victim of Verona’s hate as much as the others.

All of them are victims and deserve to be alive and live a life free of poison.

Juliet follows Benvolio on stiff legs, every step showing how determined she can be, and stays to his side during the whole short ritual, leaning over the grave with curiosity. When Tybalt rises from the grave with all his rage still intact, it’s only her presence and sweet shushing that calms him before he can tear apart all the still sealed graves of the cemetery.

Benvolio leaves Tybalt to his cousin’s attention and moves back towards Mercutio and Valentine. Now that the deed is done he can take a deep breath, breathing the scent of rain. He is at peace, finally, knowing that Romeo is alive, Juliet is alive, Tybalt is alive and Mercutio is alive.

Mercutio is alive.

And Benvolio falls like a dead body falls.
I'm offering a cookie to whoever finds the Hamilton quotes in the chapter.

So first chapter is up! I've been delaying this story for...a year now? It was time I actually started this. It's a rather big project with themes and symbolism which I will probably fail to make clear, but I will appreciate if you will stay with me in this journey.

-You can follow me on tumblr @gabrielleig
-You can follow the tag for this fanfiction to read sneak peek and see how the story is going.
-You can totally come into my askbox and ask me question or just talk to me and share headcanons, I love that!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!