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**ESL Podcast 339 – Star-crossed Lovers**

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**GLOSSARY**

**to defy** – to disobey; to not do what one has been asked to do; to not do what one is expected to do; to not do what one is supposed to do

\* Chuck defied his parents by staying out until 4:00 a.m. after they told him to come home before midnight.

**forbidden** – prohibited; not allowed to do something; not permitted

\* Smoking is forbidden in this restaurant.

**to stand up to (someone)** – to confront someone; to fight against someone for one's beliefs; to say what one thinks to someone who disagrees

\* I need to stand up to my boss and tell him that it isn't fair for him to make me do all the work.

**puppet** – a person who is controlled by others; a person who is used by others for a specific purpose

\* When I was young, I felt like a puppet in my parents' divorce.

**feud** – a long fight or argument between two people or groups of people that lasts for many years

\* They have had a feud with their neighbors for years about who owns that cherry tree.

**to confront** – to speak with someone to show that one doesn't agree with him or her; to speak with someone about one's plans to do something that he or she doesn't agree with

\* Someone needs to confront him about the way his children mistreat their pets.

**guilt** – feelings of sadness and embarrassment because one believes that one has done something wrong, or something that another person would not approve of

\* Chanterelle couldn't sleep because of her guilt over lying to her teacher.

**to give (someone) up** – to end a relationship with someone, often to please another person; to stop having a relationship with another person

\* Even though she loves Peter, she's going to give him up so that he'll go to study at a good university on the other side of the country.

**to manipulate** – to use a person in a dishonest way; to do something to control the way that another person acts, often without that person realizing it

\* The organization lied and manipulated us into donating money.



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**to tear (someone) apart** – to hurt someone emotionally; to put someone in a difficult situation where he or she cannot decide what to do and is in emotional pain

\* Dating two men at once was tearing her apart, so she decided she would have to choose one.

**Cut!** – a command used in making movies, television shows, or theater productions to get the actors to stop performing because it is completed or something is wrong with the scene

\* Cut! That was terrible! Try to do the scene again, but this time with more emotion.

**director** – the person who tells the actors and other people what to do when making a movie, TV show, or play

\* The director told the actress to cry when the man said, “I love you.”

**star-crossed lovers** – a phrase from a Shakespearean play, used to refer to a romantic couple whose relationship cannot succeed

\* Although they love each other very much, they seem to be star-crossed lovers since he has to live in the States and she has to return to Laos.

**trashy** – worthless; with very poor quality; without value

\* Her mother told her to stop reading those trashy romance novels and read something else instead.

**melodrama** – a story, play, movie, or book where the characters seem to overreact to everything and be too emotional to be believed or realistic

\* The actors were so dramatic in the melodrama that the audience began laughing even in the saddest scenes.



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**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1. Why is Juliet forbidden to see Romeo?
  - a) Because their two families are in a feud.
  - b) Because her father doesn't like him.
  - c) Because she cannot defy her parents.
  
2. Why is Romeo leaving?
  - a) Because he's tearing Juliet apart by staying there.
  - b) Because he's manipulating Juliet into giving him up.
  - c) Because he's mad that Juliet won't confront her father.

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**WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?**

**to give (someone) up**

The phrase “to give (someone) up,” in this podcast, means to end a relationship with someone: “I think she should give him up because he doesn't treat her well.” The phrase “to give (someone) away” means for a father to allow his daughter to marry her new husband on her wedding day: “Jake had tears in his eyes as he gave away his daughter in the church.” The phrase “to give (something) away” means to share information that was supposed to be kept secret: “He was arrested for giving away nuclear information to foreign governments.” Finally, the phrase “to give off (something)” means to produce a sound, odor, or light: “The roses are giving off a wonderful smell in the garden.”

**cut**

In this podcast, the word “Cut!” is a command used in making movies, television shows, or theater productions to get the actors to stop performing: “Cut! The camera stopped working, so we need to fix it and record that scene again.” The phrase “to cut (somebody) off” means to change lanes while driving, so that one is in front of and too close to another car and that car has to slow down: “We almost got in an accident when another driver cut us off on the freeway.” The phrase “to cut (somebody) off” can also mean to stop providing financial support: “When she graduated from college, her parents cut her off and stopped sending her money to help her pay for her apartment.” Finally, the phrase “to cut (something) down” means to make something smaller: “Please cut down your essay to just 1,200 words.”



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**CULTURE NOTE**

Gone with the Wind, written by Margaret Mitchell in 1936, is one of the great American “romances” (a story about romantic love). The story “takes place” (happens) in the “Old South” (the southeastern United States before the Civil War). It is about a young woman named Scarlett O’Hara and her relationships with other people before, during, and after the Civil War.

Scarlett is beautiful and “rebellious” (not doing what other people want one to do). She lives with her family on a “plantation” (a large farm with many servants and slaves) and has many “beaux” (an old-fashioned word for men who are romantically interested in a woman), but the one man she loves, Ashley, is not interested in her.

An exciting but “scandalous” (not accepted by society because of what one does) man named Rhett Butler is very interested in Scarlett, but she doesn’t realize that she loves him. Instead, she marries two other men.

“Meanwhile” (during this time), the war “rages” (is fought violently and affects many people) through the South. Scarlett’s family plantation is almost destroyed and she almost “starves” (dies from not having enough food) and even kills a soldier. These experiences show that she is strong and independent, which makes her even more “attractive” (pretty and desirable) to Rhett.

When Scarlett’s second husband dies, she marries Rhett Butler, but she still loves the “unattainable” (something or someone that one cannot have) Ashley and this creates problems in the marriage. When their daughter dies, Scarlett and Rhett’s marriage “deteriorates” (gets worse). At the very end of the novel, Scarlett finally “realizes” (understands) that she loves Rhett, but at that time it is too late and Rhett has left her. The novel ends as Scarlett begins to plan how she will make Rhett love her again.

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Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – a; 2 – c



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**COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 339: Star-crossed Lovers.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 339. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is [eslpod.com](http://eslpod.com), and on it you can download a Learning Guide for this episode; an 8 to 10 page guide to help you pick up English even faster. You can also go to our ESL Podcast Blog, where a couple times a week we have additional information to help you improve your English.

This episode is called "Star-crossed Lovers." The expression "star-crossed lovers" usually refers to two people who are in love, but the situation – the circumstances prevents them from really being together. Let's take a listen to the dialogue between Romeo and Juliette.

[start of dialogue]

Romeo: What do you plan to do?

Juliette: I don't know! I can't defy my parents. They've been against our relationship from the start, and I've been forbidden to see you.

Romeo: It's your life, not theirs. It's time you stood up to them and told them what you want. I'm tired of being a puppet in the feud between your family and mine.

Juliette: That's easy to say, but I can't confront my father and tell him that I want to be with you. It would kill him!

Romeo: No, it won't. He's using guilt to get you to give me up. Don't let him manipulate you that way.

Juliette: This is tearing me apart. I can't take it much longer.

Romeo: You won't have to. I'm leaving – without you.

Juliette: No! You can't. I can't live without you.



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Romeo: Someday, we'll be together...Cut! Where is the director? This is supposed to be the story about star-crossed lovers, not a trashy melodrama. Whoever wrote this trash should be fired!

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue begins with Romeo saying to Juliette, "What do you plan to do?" – what are you going to do? Juliette says, "I don't know! I can't defy my parents" – I cannot disobey my parents. "To defy" (defy) means not to do what you have been asked to do, not to do what you are expected or supposed to do – to disobey. Juliette says, "I can't defy my parents. They've been against our relationship from the start, and I've been forbidden to see you." If you are "forbidden" to do something, you are prohibited from doing something – you are not allowed or not permitted to do something.

So, Juliette says she's been forbidden to see Romeo – how sad! Romeo says, "It's your life, not theirs," just like a teenager might say: "It's your life, not theirs." "It's time you stood up to them." "To stand up to someone" means to confront someone or to say what you think – what you really think to someone who disagrees with you. It can also mean to fight for your beliefs: "stand up for yourself" – stand up for what you believe, in other words, defend what you believe. "To stand up to someone" means to defend your beliefs with that person.

Romeo says, "It's time (Juliette) you stood up to them (to your parents) and told them what you want. I'm tired of being a puppet in the feud between your family and mine." Romeo says, "I'm tired of being a puppet" (puppet). A "puppet" can be a little doll that children play with, where you put your hand inside. For example, the Muppets – Kermit the Frog – those are examples of puppets. But here, a "puppet" means someone who is controlled by someone else, who is like a puppet. You say, "He isn't the real leader of his country, he's just a puppet," you mean the real leader is someone else, and he is just saying that he's the leader.

In this case, Romeo is saying, "I'm tired of being a puppet" – I'm tired of (being) someone who is controlled by someone else. He's tired of being a puppet in the feud between Juliette's family and his. A "feud" (feud) is a long fight or argument between two people or two groups of people that may have lasted for many years. A long-standing fight is sometimes called a "feud." Juliette says, "That's easy to say, but I can't confront my father and tell him that I want to be with you. It would kill him!" Juliette says she can't confront her father. "To confront someone" is to speak to someone to tell them that you don't agree with them, or



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to talk with someone about your plans to do something, knowing that that person doesn't agree with you. "I'm going to confront my boss tomorrow, and tell her that I need a bigger salary if I'm going to stay here" – I'm going to confront her, I know she'll say no and she'll disagree with me, but I'm going to confront her anyway. And then, the day after tomorrow, I will look for a new job after my boss fires me!

Romeo responds to Juliette by saying your father is "using guilt to get you to give me up. Don't let him manipulate you that way." "Guilt" is when you feel sad or embarrassed because you think you did something wrong – or you did something wrong; that's "guilt." Your father is "using guilt (making you think that you've done something wrong) to get you (in order to get you) to give me up." "To give someone up," in this case, means to end a relationship with someone, often in order to make somebody else happy, such as your parents. There's a couple different meanings of this phrasal verb, "to give someone up"; take a look at our Learning Guide for some more explanations.

Romeo says don't let your father "manipulate you." "To manipulate someone" is to use this person in a dishonest way; to do something to control the way someone else acts, without them knowing it or realizing it. Governments sometimes manipulate public opinion and the media in order to get what it wants.

Juliette said, "This is tearing me apart" – this situation is tearing me apart. "To tear someone apart" is another two-word phrasal verb meaning to hurt someone emotionally, to put someone in a difficult situation where you can't decide what to do. "This is tearing me apart" – it's hurting me a great deal. "I can't take it much longer," Juliette says.

Romeo then says, "You don't have to. I'm leaving – without you." Juliette, not happy, says, "No! You can't. I can't live without you" – just like the old song: (Jeff sings) "I can't live if living is without you." If this were a musical, Romeo would sing! Then, Romeo says, "Someday, we'll be together," and then he says, "Cut!" "Cut" (cut) is a command that they use when they're making a movie or a TV show to get the actors to stop performing. In other words, Romeo and Juliette are actors, and this is some sort of movie or TV show. Romeo says "cut," meaning let's stop our acting right now.

He says, "Where is the director?" The "director" is the person on a TV or movie filming that tells everyone what to do – tells the actors what to do. Romeo says, "This is supposed to be the story about star-crossed lovers, not a trashy melodrama." When we say "star-crossed," we are actually using a phrase from a Shakespearean play, Romeo and Juliet, to refer to a romantic couple whose



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relationship cannot work – cannot succeed. People used to believe – some people still do – that the stars and the planets determined our actions on earth – had an influence; we call this “astrology.” Well, this is the idea that somehow the stars are arranged so that we cannot have this romantic relationship.

Romeo says, “This is not supposed to be a trashy melodrama.” A “melodrama” is a story, a play, a movie, a book, where the characters seem to overreact to everything. They’re too emotional; you can’t believe them, they don’t seem realistic because they’re too emotional. If you watch a soap opera, for example, this is very melodramatic sometimes; the actors are what we would say “overacting,” they’re trying to be too emotional. “Trashy” (trashy) means very poor quality, very low quality, not having any value. “Trash” is what you throw away, things that you don’t need. So “trashy” means it’s without much artistic value. Then Romeo says, “Whoever wrote this trash should be fired!” Maybe it would be better if they did the original Romeo and Juliet!

Now let’s listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

Romeo: What do you plan to do?

Juliette: I don’t know! I can’t defy my parents. They’ve been against our relationship from the start, and I’ve been forbidden to see you.

Romeo: It’s your life, not theirs. It’s time you stood up to them and told them what you want. I’m tired of being a puppet in the feud between your family and mine.

Juliette: That’s easy to say, but I can’t confront my father and tell him that I want to be with you. It would kill him!

Romeo: No, it won’t. He’s using guilt to get you to give me up. Don’t let him manipulate you that way.

Juliette: This is tearing me apart. I can’t take it much longer.

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Romeo: Someday, we'll be together...Cut! Where is the director? This is supposed to be the story about star-crossed lovers, not a trashy melodrama. Whoever wrote this trash should be fired!

[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by Dr. Lucy Tse – with a little help from Bill Shakespeare!

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

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