

Romeo and Juliet

Characters

Lord and Lady Montague: heads of a wealthy household. Romeo is their only son

Lord and Lady Capulet: heads of a wealthy household. Juliet is their only daughter

Romeo: son of the Montagues. Falls in love with Juliet

Juliet: daughter of the Capulets. She falls in love with Romeo

The Nurse: has looked after Juliet since she was born

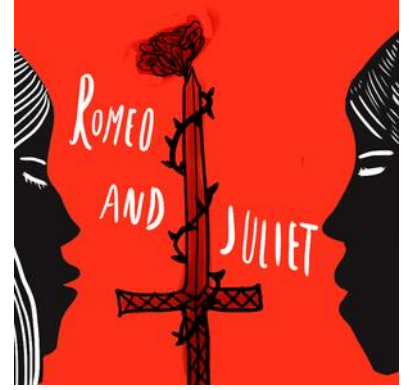
Tybalt: Juliet's cousin; he has a fiery temper

Benvolio: Romeo's best friend and he is trusted by the Montagues

Mercutio: Romeo's friend and he is related to the Prince

Friar Lawrence: he helps Romeo and Juliet to get married, helps Romeo to escape to Mantua and he gives Juliet the potion that makes her appear dead on her wedding day to Paris

Paris: a wealthy eligible bachelor who wants to marry Juliet



Key Quotations

- 'a pair of star-cross'd lovers'
- 'what sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?'
- 'my only love sprung from my only hate'
- 'my child is yet a stranger in the world'
- 'O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face'
- 'my bounty is as boundless as the sea'
- 'these violent delights have violent ends'
- 'a plague on both your houses'
- 'my fingers itch'
- 'if you had the strength of twenty men, it would dispatch you straight'
- 'her beauty makes this vault a feasting present full of light'



The Plot

1. The Montague and Capulet servants fight in the street and Prince Escalus issues a final warning to both of the families
2. Romeo's love has been refused by Rosaline
3. Paris asks for Juliet's hand in marriage and Capulet refuses saying Juliet is too young but he will allow her to make her own decision about whether she wants to marry him
4. Romeo, Benvolio and Mercutio gate-crash the Capulet's ball and are spotted by Tybalt who is very annoyed
5. Romeo and Juliet fall in love with each other at first sight and then discover that their families are sworn enemies
6. Romeo asks Friar Lawrence to marry him and Juliet and the Friar agrees thinking it may heal the rift between the two families
7. Tybalt, who is still annoyed that Romeo and his friends came to the Capulet party, kills Mercutio and in revenge Romeo then murders Tybalt
8. Romeo, who is now married to Juliet, is banished to Mantua by the Prince but the Friar arranges for him to spend his wedding night with Juliet before he leaves for Mantua
9. Capulet agrees for Paris to marry Juliet unaware that she has married Romeo
10. Juliet refuses to marry Paris and Capulet verbally abuses her and threatens to disown her
11. The Friar gives Juliet a potion to drink which will make her appear dead the morning of her wedding to Paris. She takes the drug and is placed in the Capulet tomb the next morning by her grieving family
12. Romeo wrongly receives the information that Juliet has died. He is heartbroken and, having bought some poison, goes to Juliet's tomb where he dies beside her
13. Juliet awakens and sees Romeo dead. She then stabs herself and dies next to her Romeo
14. The Capulets and Montagues make peace with each other

Themes

Love: this includes romantic love as well as love for family

Fate: the Elizabethans believed that an individual's destiny had already been decided for them and they could do very little to change it.

Death: Tybalt, Mercutio, Paris, Romeo and Juliet all die

Time: time influences all of the major events: Capulet rushes Juliet's marriage to Paris; the sleeping potion lasts a certain time; Juliet awakens moments after Romeo's death

Family and Marriage: Juliet rebels against her family; Capulet arranges Juliet's marriage to Paris to secure her financially – it wasn't about love; Romeo and Juliet's love conflicts with their families

Conflict: no one can escape the feud between the two families and it has far-reaching consequences

Context

- William Shakespeare was born in Stratford in 1564.
- he was the most famous writer of all time
- he had two daughters and a son (who died aged 11).
- *Romeo and Juliet* is a tragedy
- the play is set in the northern Italy in Verona
- we do not know why the Capulets and the Montagues were enemies
- Women and girls were only ever in a domestic setting. The men worked and were responsible for the finance of the household. Women and girls were subservient and obedient.
- Marriages were arranged for money not always love; parents wanted to secure a spouse who was well off and could offer their child a comfortable life



Key Terminology

Soliloquy
 Dramatic Irony
 Light/dark imagery
 Puns / wordplay
 Metaphor
 Stage Directions
 Oxymoron
 Prologue
 Blank Verse
 Tragedy
 Aside
 Nature Imagery
 Sonnet
 Foreshadow
 Antithesis