

*Romeo*

*and*

*Juliet*

**THE CARE  
PACKAGE**





Associated Press

Bodies of Brckic, Ismic lay in no-man's-land before being retrieved.

## Serbs Retrieve Bodies of 2 Lovers

From Reuters

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina—Bosnian Serb soldiers retrieved the bodies of two slain lovers from a dangerous no-man's-land early Tuesday, saying they took the risk to demonstrate their humanity.

The 25-year-old lovers—a Serbian man and a Muslim woman—were shot and killed last Wednesday trying to escape the besieged Bosnian capital for Serbia.

Their bodies lay rotting in a shell-blasted wasteland between government and Serbian lines while the two sides bickered over who had rights to recover them.

A six-man Serbian commando team resolved the dispute by brav-

ing Muslim sniper fire.

"We did the job because we wanted to show that Serb soldiers are human soldiers, that we act for the people," said Marko Topic, a member of the team.

Friends say Bosko Brckic and Admira Ismic, sweethearts since high school, had set off for Serbia after having negotiated permission from commanders on both sides to leave the city.

They were shot as they approached the Vrbana bridge. Both sides deny responsibility.

The bodies were taken to Serb-held Lukavica, just outside Sarajevo. Serbian officials say the couple will be buried in Serbian territory.

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## CHARACTERS

### *The Ruling Family*

Escalus, Prince of Verona  
Mercutio, kinsman to the Prince and friend to  
Romeo, the quicksilver wit and clown of the  
young men's group  
Paris, a pleasant young Count or "County," kins-  
man to the Prince and suitor to Juliet

### *The House of Montague*

Montague, a nobleman  
Lady Montague, his wife  
Romeo, their romantic young son  
Benvolio, Romeo's cousin and steady friend  
Balthasar, servant to Romeo  
Abram, servant to Montague

### *The House of Capulet*

Old Capulet, a hot-tempered noble  
Lady Capulet, his young wife  
Juliet, their beautiful, clear-minded daughter  
Tybalt, the Capulets' young nephew, sleek and  
deadly  
Nurse, a jolly middle-aged servant to Juliet  
Peter, a stupid servant  
Old Man, cousin to Capulet  
Sampson | servants to Capulet  
Gregory |

### *The Clergy*

Friar Lawrence, a kindly old Franciscan priest  
Friar John, a younger brother

### *Others*

Chorus, the announcer of the Prologue  
Apothecary, a medieval druggist  
Officer and Watchmen, the local police  
Three Musicians  
Citizens of Verona, Gentlefolk, Maskers, Torch-  
bearers, Pages, Guards, Servants, and Atten-  
dants

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## Classic Notes on Romeo and Juliet About the Play

*Romeo and Juliet* was first published in quarto in 1597, and republished in a new edition only two years later. The second copy was used to create yet a third quarto in 1609, from which both the 1623 Quarto and First Folio are derived. The first quarto is generally considered a bad quarto, or an illicit copy created from the recollections of several actors. The second quarto seems to be taken from Shakespeare's rough draft, and thus has some inconsistent speech and preserved lines which Shakespeare apparently meant to cross out.

*Romeo and Juliet* derives its story from several sources available during the sixteenth century. Shakespeare's primary source for the play is Arthur Brooke's *Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet* (1562), which is a long, dense poem. This poem in turn was based on a French prose version written by Pierre Boiastuau (1559), who had used an Italian version by Bandello written in 1554. Bandello's poem was further derived from Luigi da Porto's version in 1525 of a story by Masuccio Salernitano (1476).

Shakespeare's plot remains true to the Brooke version in most details, with theatrical license taken in some instances. For example, as he often does, Shakespeare telescopes the events in the poem which take ninety days into only a few days. He also depicts Juliet as a much younger thirteen rather than sixteen, thus presenting a young girl who is suddenly awakened to love.

One of the most powerful aspects of *Romeo and Juliet* is the language. The characters curse, vow oaths, banish each other, and generally play with the language through overuse of action verbs. In addition, the play is saturated with the use of oxymorons, puns, paradoxes, and double entendres. Even the use of names is called into question, with Juliet asking what is in the name Romeo that denies her the right to love him.

Shakespeare uses the poetic form of sonnet to open the first and second acts. The sonnet usually is defined as being written from a lover to his beloved. Thus, Shakespeare's "misuse" of the prose ties into the actual tension of the play. The sonnet struggles to cover up the disorder and chaos which is immediately apparent in the first act. When the first sonnet ends, the stage is overrun with quarreling men. However, the sonnet is also used by Romeo and Juliet in their first love scene, again in an unusual manner. It is spoken by both characters rather than only one of them. This strange form of sonnet is, however, successful, and even ends with a kiss.

It is worthwhile to note the rather strong shift in language used by both Romeo and Juliet once they fall in love. Whereas Romeo is hopelessly normal in his courtship before meeting Juliet, afterwards his language becomes infinitely richer and stronger. He is changed so much that the Mercutio remarks, "Now art thou sociable" (2.3.77).

The play also deals with the issue of authoritarian law and order. Many of Shakespeare's plays have characters who represent the unalterable force of the law, such as the Duke in *The Comedy of Errors* and Prince Escalus in *Romeo and Juliet*. In this play, the law attempts to stop the civil disorder, and even banishes Romeo at the midpoint. However, as in *The Comedy of Errors*, the law again seems to be a side issue, one which cannot compete with the much stronger emotions of love and hate.

## Context Continued

The most influential writer in all of English literature, William Shakespeare was born in 1564 to a successful middle-class glove-maker in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. Shakespeare attended grammar school, but his formal education proceeded no further. In 1582 he married an older woman, Anne Hathaway, and had three children with her. Around 1590 he left his family behind and traveled to London to work as an actor and playwright. Public and critical success quickly followed, and Shakespeare eventually became the most popular playwright in England and part-owner of the Globe Theater. His career bridged the reigns of Elizabeth I (ruled 1558–1603) and James I (ruled 1603–1625), and he was a favorite of both monarchs. Indeed, James granted Shakespeare's company the greatest possible compliment by bestowing upon its members the title of King's Men. Wealthy and renowned, Shakespeare retired to Stratford and died in 1616 at the age of fifty-two. At the time of Shakespeare's death, literary luminaries such as Ben Jonson hailed his works as timeless.

Shakespeare's works were collected and printed in various editions in the century following his death, and by the early eighteenth century his reputation as the greatest poet ever to write in English was well established. The unprecedented admiration garnered by his works led to a fierce curiosity about Shakespeare's life, but the dearth of biographical information has left many details of Shakespeare's personal history shrouded in mystery. Some people have concluded from this fact that Shakespeare's plays were really written by someone else—Francis Bacon and the Earl of Oxford are the two most popular candidates—but the support for this claim is overwhelmingly circumstantial, and the theory is not taken seriously by many scholars.

In the absence of credible evidence to the contrary, Shakespeare must be viewed as the author of the thirty-seven plays and 154 sonnets that bear his name. The legacy of this body of work is immense. A number of Shakespeare's plays seem to have transcended even the category of brilliance, becoming so influential as to profoundly affect the course of Western literature and culture ever after.

Shakespeare did not invent the story of *Romeo and Juliet*. He did not, in fact, even introduce the story into the English language. A poet named Arthur Brooks first brought the story of *Romeus and Juliet* to an English-speaking audience in a long and plodding poem that was itself not original, but rather an adaptation of adaptations that stretched across nearly a hundred years and two languages. Many of the details of Shakespeare's plot are lifted directly from Brooks's poem, including the meeting of Romeo and Juliet at the ball, their secret marriage, Romeo's fight with Tybalt, the sleeping potion, and the timing of the lover's

eventual suicides. Such appropriation of other stories is characteristic of Shakespeare, who often wrote plays based on earlier works.

Shakespeare's use of existing material as fodder for his plays should not, however, be taken as a lack of originality. Instead, readers should note how Shakespeare crafts his sources in new ways while displaying a remarkable understanding of the literary tradition in which he is working. Shakespeare's version of *Romeo and Juliet* is no exception. The play distinguishes itself from its predecessors in several important aspects: the subtlety and originality of its characterization (Shakespeare almost wholly created Mercutio); the intense pace of its action, which is compressed from nine months into four frenetic days; a powerful enrichment of the story's thematic aspects; and, above all, an extraordinary use of language. Shakespeare's play not only bears a resemblance to the works on which it is based, it is also quite similar in plot, theme, and dramatic ending to the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, told by the great Roman poet Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*. Shakespeare was well aware of this similarity; he includes a reference to Thisbe in *Romeo and Juliet*. Shakespeare also includes scenes from the story of Pyramus and Thisbe in the comically awful play-within-a-play put on by Bottom and his friends in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—a play Shakespeare wrote around the same time he was composing *Romeo and Juliet*. Indeed, one can look at the play-within-a-play in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as parodying the very story that Shakespeare seeks to tell in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Shakespeare wrote *Romeo and Juliet* in full knowledge that the story he was telling was old, clichéd, and an easy target for parody. In writing *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare, then, implicitly set himself the task of telling a love story despite the considerable forces he knew were stacked against its success. Through the incomparable intensity of his language Shakespeare succeeded in this effort, writing a play that is universally accepted in Western culture as the preeminent, archetypal love story.

## Outline of Shakespeare's Life

William Shakespeare was born in 1564, in Stratford-upon-Avon. Located in the centre of England, the town was (and still is) an important river-crossing settlement and market centre. The register of Stratford's Holy Trinity Church records Shakespeare's baptism on 26 April. He is traditionally said to have been born on 23 April.

### Parents/Family

His father, John, trained as a glove-maker and married Mary Arden, the daughter of Robert Arden, a farmer from the nearby village of Wilmcote. John and Mary set up home in Henley Street, Stratford, in the house now known as Shakespeare's Birthplace.

John Shakespeare was a prominent citizen, serving on the town council for many years and becoming Bailiff, or Mayor, in 1568. Besides his craft as a glover, he traded as a wool dealer and was also involved in money-lending.

John and Mary lost two children before William was born. They had five more children, another of whom died young.

### Education

As the son of a leading townsman, William almost certainly attended Stratford's 'petty' or junior school before progressing, perhaps at the age of seven, to the Grammar School, which still stands. The grammar school's curriculum was geared to teaching pupils Latin, both spoken and written. The classical writers studied in the classroom influenced Shakespeare's plays and poetry; for example, some of his ideas for plots and characters came from Ovid's tales, the plays of Terence and Plautus, and Roman history.

### Marriage

It is not known what Shakespeare did when he left school, probably at the age of fourteen, as was usual. In November 1582 he married Anne Hathaway, the daughter of Richard Hathaway, a local farmer. Her home, now known as Anne Hathaway's Cottage, still stands in the village of Shottery, a mile from Stratford. At the time of their marriage William was eighteen and Anne was twenty-six. Their first-born child, Susanna, was baptised on 26 May 1583. Two years later twins followed, Hamnet and Judith.

### The Lost Years

We do not know when or why Shakespeare left Stratford for London, or what he was doing before becoming a professional actor and dramatist in the capital. There are various traditions and stories about the so-called 'lost years' between 1585 and 1592, a period for which there is virtually no evidence concerning his life. One tale tells how he was caught poaching deer in Charlecote Park, near Stratford, and went off to London to avoid prosecution. A plausible early tradition claims Shakespeare was a schoolmaster for some years. When he was growing up, drama was a significant part of Stratford's social life. Not only did local people put on amateur

shows, but the town was visited regularly by London-based companies of actors and Shakespeare may have joined one of them. He probably arrived in London around 1586/7.

### Early Career

Shakespeare's reputation was established in London by 1592; in that year another dramatist, Robert Greene, was envious of his success and called him 'an upstart crow'. Shakespeare's earliest plays included the three parts of *Henry VI*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *Titus Andronicus*.

Shakespeare's first printed works were two long poems, *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594). These were both dedicated to the Earl of Southampton, a young courtier and favourite of Queen Elizabeth I, who had become Shakespeare's patron. Most of the Sonnets were probably written about this time, too, although they were not published until 1609.

In 1594, Shakespeare joined others in forming a new theatre company, under the patronage of the Lord Chamberlain, with Richard Burbage as its leading actor. For almost twenty years Shakespeare was its regular dramatist, producing on average two plays a year. Burbage played roles such as Richard III, Hamlet, Othello and Lear.

### Growing Success: Man of Property

In 1596 Shakespeare's father was granted a coat-of-arms, and it is likely that in this matter the dramatist took the initiative with the College of Arms in London. On his father's death in 1601, he inherited the arms and the right to style himself a gentleman, even though, at the time, actors were generally regarded as rogues and vagabonds.

Shakespeare's success in the London theatres made him wealthy and in 1597 he bought New Place, one of the largest houses in Stratford. Although his professional career was spent in London, he maintained close links with his native town. Further property investments in Stratford followed, including the purchase of 107 acres of land in 1602.

In 1598, the author of a book on the arts, Francis Meres, described Shakespeare as the best contemporary dramatist and mentioned twelve of his plays, including *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Richard II* and *Henry IV*, all of which date from the mid- to late-1590s.

### The Theatres

Drama was a nation-wide activity in Shakespeare's time but only in London were there buildings designed specifically for performing plays. Most public theatres were tall, roughly circular structures, open to the sky, with a cover over part of the stage and a roof running round the edge to protect the galleries. Performances took place in the afternoons, with the actors playing on a raised stage which projected halfway into the theatre. All the women's roles were performed by boys. The audience, which either stood in the yard around the stage or sat in the galleries, represented a wide social mix of people.



In 1599 the acting company with which Shakespeare was involved, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, built a new theatre, the *Globe*. Situated on the south bank of the Thames, in the suburb of Southwark, it is the theatre most closely associated with Shakespeare's plays, and he was one of the shareholders in the enterprise. Two of his plays, *Henry V* and *Julius Caesar*, were almost certainly written during the year in which the *Globe* opened. In 1613, during a performance of *Henry VIII*, a fire broke out and destroyed the *Globe*, but it was rebuilt the following year.

### **James I and Shakespeare's Late Career**

When James I (James VI of Scotland) came to the English throne in 1603 he granted royal patronage to Shakespeare's acting company, which thus became the 'King's Men.' As had happened in the 1590s in Elizabeth I's last years, Shakespeare's plays were presented before the court in the royal palaces, as well as to audiences in the public theatres. In 1609 the King's Men acquired an indoor theatre, the Blackfriars, to use in addition to the *Globe*.

Some of Shakespeare's most famous tragedies were written in the early 1600s, including *Hamlet* and, after James I's accession, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*. His late plays, often known as the Romances, date from c. 1608 to 1612 and include *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*.

In 1623, seven years after his death, the *First Folio*, the first collected edition of his plays, was published. It contains thirty-six plays, about half of which had been published individually in his lifetime. *Pericles*, not included in the *First Folio*, has been accepted as his, and he is known to have collaborated with John Fletcher on *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and a lost work, *Cardenio*, as well as on *Henry VIII* which was included in the *Folio*.

### **Last Years in Stratford**

Shakespeare's elder daughter, Susanna, married John Hall a Stratford physician, in 1607, and gave birth to a daughter, Elizabeth, the following year. Shakespeare's other daughter, Judith, married Thomas Quiney, a Stratford vintner, in 1616. (Shakespeare's son Hamnet, twin brother to Judith, had died in 1596, aged eleven.)

From around 1611 Shakespeare seems largely to have disengaged himself from the London theatre world and to have spent his time at his Stratford house, New Place. In March 1616 he signed his will, in which he left substantial property and other bequests to his family and friends, including theatre colleagues in the King's Men.

Shakespeare died in Stratford, aged fifty-two, on 23 April 1616, and was buried in Holy Trinity Church two days later. Within a short time a monument to him was put up, probably by his family, on the wall close to his grave.

His widow, Anne, died in 1623 and was buried beside him. Shakespeare's family line came to an end with the death of his grand-daughter Elizabeth in 1670.

# Chronology

[The action begins shortly before 9:00 a.m. on a Sunday morning in the middle of July and ends at dawn the following Thursday. Often in Shakespeare's tragedies it's difficult – and not important – to know just when things happen, but in *Romeo and Juliet* the time of events is very precisely accounted for. The only discrepancy is in the matter of the sleeping potion. Friar Laurence tells Juliet that she will awake forty-two hours after she takes it, but on Wednesday morning he sees her asleep from the potion and that evening, about twenty-four hours after she has taken the potion, he expects her to awake soon, and she does.]

## Some Time in the Recent Past:

The feud flares up.

- Chorus: Two households, both alike in dignity,  
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,  
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny . . . . (Prologue 1-3).
- Prince Escalus: Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word,  
By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,  
Have thrice disturb'd the quiet of our streets . . . . (1.1.89-91)

Romeo suffers for love of Rosaline.

- Montague: Many a morning hath he [Romeo] there been seen,  
With tears augmenting the fresh morning dew,  
Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs . . . . (1.1.131-133)

## The First Day (Sunday, a little more than two weeks before Lammastide, August 1):

Before dawn: Benvolio and Romeo wander in the woods.

- Benvolio: Madam, an hour before the worshipp'd sun  
Peer'd forth the golden window of the east,  
A troubled mind drave me to walk abroad;  
Where, underneath the grove of sycamore  
That westward rooteth from the city's side,  
So early walking did I see your son . . . . (1.1.123)

Morning (shortly before 9:00 a.m.): Prince Escalus breaks up a brawl between the Capulets and Montagues, orders Capulet and Montague to confer with him.

- Prince Escalus: You Capulet; shall go along with me:  
And, Montague, come you this afternoon,  
To know our further pleasure in this case . . . . (1.1.99-101)

Morning (shortly after 9:00 a.m.): Benvolio tries to counsel Romeo about his hopeless love for Rosaline.

- \* Benvolio: Good-morrow, cousin.  
Romeo: Is the day so young?  
Benvolio: But new struck nine. (1.1.160-161)

Afternoon: Capulet returns from his conference with Prince Escalus and invites Paris to his feast.

- Capulet: But Montague is bound as well as I,  
In penalty alike; and 'tis not hard, I think,  
For men so old as we to keep the peace. (1.2.1-3)
- Capulet: This night I hold an old accustom'd feast . . . . (1.2.20)

Late Afternoon: Lady Capulet and the Nurse discuss Juliet's age. Lady Capulet tells Juliet that Paris wants to marry her.

- Lady Capulet: Thou know'st my daughter's of a pretty age.  
Nurse: Faith, I can tell her age unto an hour.  
Lady Capulet: She's not fourteen.  
Nurse: I'll lay fourteen of my teeth,-  
And yet, to my teeth be it spoken, I have but four-  
She is not fourteen. How long is it now  
To Lammas-tide?  
Lady Capulet: A fortnight and odd days.  
Nurse: Even or odd, of all days in the year,  
Come Lammas-eve at night shall she be fourteen. (1.3.10-17)
- Lady Capulet: What say you? can you love the gentleman?  
This night you shall behold him at our feast . . . . (1.3.79-80)
- Servingman: Madam, the guests are come, supper served  
up, you called, my young lady asked for, the nurse  
cursed in the pantry, and every thing in extremity. I  
must hence to wait; I beseech you, follow straight. (1.3.100-103)

Evening: Romeo and his friends go to Capulet's house.

- Mercutio: Come, we burn daylight, ho!  
Romeo: Nay, that's not so.  
Mercutio: I mean, sir, in delay  
We waste our lights in vain, like lamps by day. (1.4.143-145)
- Benvolio: Supper is done, and we shall come too late. (1.4.105)

Night: Romeo jumps the wall into Capulet's garden, hides from Benvolio and Mercutio.

- Benvolio: Come, he hath hid himself among these trees,  
To be consorted with the humorous night:  
Blind is his love and best befits the dark. (2.1.30-32)

Late night to shortly before dawn: Romeo and Juliet exchange vows of love, plan to be married the next day.

- Juliet: 'Tis almost morning; I would have thee gone . . . (2.2.176).
- Juliet: Good night, good night! parting is such sweet sorrow,  
That I shall say good night till it be morrow. (2.2.184-185)

## The Second Day (Monday):

Dawn: Friar Laurence gathers herbs. Romeo asks the Friar to marry himself and Juliet.

- Friar Laurence: The grey-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night . . . .  
Now, ere the sun advance his burning eye,  
The day to cheer and night's dank dew to dry,  
I must up-fill this osier cage of ours . . . (2.3.1-7).
- Friar Laurence: Thou art up-roused by some distemperature;  
Or if not so, then here I hit it right,  
Our Romeo hath not been in bed to-night. (2.3.40-42)

9:00 a.m.: Juliet sends the Nurse to Romeo.

- Juliet: At what o'clock to-morrow  
Shall I send to thee?  
Romeo: At the hour of nine. (2.2.167-168)

- Juliet: The clock struck nine when I did send the nurse;  
In half an hour she promised to return. (2.5.1-2)

Noon: The Nurse finds Romeo, who tells her to tell Juliet to meet him at Friar Laurence's cell that afternoon.

- Nurse: God ye good morrow, gentlemen.  
Mercutio: God ye good den, fair gentlewoman.  
Nurse: Is it good den?  
Mercutio: 'Tis no less, I tell you, for the bawdy hand of the dial is now upon the prick of noon. (2.4.109-113)

- Juliet: Now is the sun upon the highmost hill  
Of this day's journey, and from nine till twelve  
Is three long hours, yet she [the Nurse] is not come. (2.5.9-11).

Early Afternoon: Romeo and Juliet are married.

- Nurse: Go; I'll to dinner [lunch]: hie you to the cell. (2.5.77)

An Hour Later: Tybalt kills Mercutio, and Romeo kills Tybalt.

- Romeo: My very friend, hath got his mortal hurt  
In my behalf; my reputation stain'd  
With Tybalt's slander,—Tybalt, that an hour  
Hath been my kinsman! (3.1.110-113).

Shortly Before Nightfall: Juliet longs for Romeo to come to her, then learns that Romeo is banished. The Nurse promises to send Romeo to Juliet that night.

- Juliet: Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,  
Towards Phoebus' lodging: such a wagoner  
As Phaëthon would whip you to the west,  
And bring in cloudy night immediately. (3.2.1-4)
- Nurse: Hark ye, your Romeo will be here at night. (3.2.140)

Night: Friar Laurence sends Romeo to Juliet.

- Friar Laurence: Give me thy hand; 'tis late: farewell; good night. (3.3.172)

Late Night: Capulet arranges for the wedding of Juliet to Paris three days hence, Thursday.

- Capulet: 'Tis very late, she'll not come down to-night:  
I promise you, but for your company,  
I would have been a-bed an hour ago. (3.4.5-7)
- Capulet: Wife, go you to her ere you go to bed;  
Acquaint her here of my son Paris' love,  
And bid her, mark you me, on Wednesday next—  
But, soft! what day is this?  
Paris: Monday, my lord.  
Capulet: Monday! ha, ha! Well, Wednesday is too soon,  
O' Thursday let it be: o' Thursday, tell her,  
She shall be married to this noble earl. (3.4.15-21)

## The Third Day (Tuesday):

Dawn: Romeo, after spending his wedding-night with Juliet, departs for Mantua.

- Romeo: It was the lark, the herald of the morn,  
No nightingale. Look, love, what envious streaks  
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east.  
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day  
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.  
I must be gone and live, or stay and die. (3.5.6-11)

Sometime During the Day: Friar Laurence hears from Paris that he and Juliet are to be married on Thursday. Paris, encountering Juliet at Friar Laurence's cell, reminds her that they are to be married on Thursday. Friar Laurence gives Juliet the sleeping potion and tells her the rest of his plan.

- Friar Laurence: On Thursday, sir? the time is very short.  
Paris: My father Capulet will have it so,  
And I am nothing slow to slack his haste. (4.1.1-3)
- Paris: Happily met, my lady and my wife!  
Juliet: That may be, sir, when I may be a wife.  
Paris: That "may be" must be, love, on Thursday next. (4.1.18-20)
- Friar Laurence: Hold, then; go home, be merry, give consent  
To marry Paris: Wednesday is to-morrow:  
To-morrow night look that thou lie alone;  
Let not thy nurse lie with thee in thy chamber:  
Take thou this vial, being then in bed,  
And this distilling liquor drink thou off . . . . (4.1.89-94)
- Friar Laurence: And in this borrow'd likeness of shrunk death  
Thou shalt continue two and forty hours,  
And then awake as from a pleasant sleep. (4.1.104-106)
- Friar Laurence: In the mean time, against thou shalt awake,  
Shall Romeo by my letters know our drift,  
And hither shall he come: and he and I  
Will watch thy waking, and that very night  
Shall Romeo bear thee hence to Mantua (4.1.113-117)

Late Afternoon: Juliet tells her father that she has repented her opposition to the marriage to Paris, and Capulet moves the wedding up a day, from Thursday to Wednesday, which is the next morning.

- Capulet: Send for the County; go tell him of this:  
I'll have this knot knit up to-morrow morning. (4.2.24)
- Juliet: Nurse, will you go with me into my closet,  
To help me sort such needful ornaments  
As you think fit to furnish me to-morrow?  
Lady Capulet: No, not till Thursday; there is time enough.  
Capulet: Go, nurse, go with her: we'll to church to-morrow.  
Lady Capulet: We shall be short in our provision,  
'Tis now near night. (4.2.33-39)

Night: Juliet takes the sleeping potion.

- Juliet: Ay, those attires are best, but, gentle nurse,  
I pray thee, leave me to myself to-night &nbsp; . . . (4.3.1-2)
- Juliet: So please you, let me now be left alone,

And let the nurse this night sit up with you;  
For, I am sure, you have your hands full all,  
In this so sudden business.

Lady Capulet:    Good night.  
Get thee to bed, and rest; for thou hast need. (4.3.9-14)

## The Fourth Day (Wednesday):

Dawn: Everyone in the Capulet household, having been up all night preparing the wedding feast, is still at it when Paris arrives and the Nurse goes to wake Juliet.

- Capulet: Come, stir, stir, stir! the second cock hath crow'd,  
The curfew-bell hath rung, 'tis three o'clock. (4.4.3-4)

Sometime During the Day: Romeo hears from Balthasar that Juliet is dead and determines to join her in death that night.

- Romeo: Is it even so? then I defy you, stars!  
Thou know'st my lodging: get me ink and paper,  
And hire post-horses; I will hence to-night. (5.1.24-26)
  
- Romeo: Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee to-night (5.1.34)

Evening: Friar Laurence learns from Friar John that the letter to Romeo was never delivered and realizes he must go Juliet's tomb alone, because she will awake within three hours.

- Friar Laurence: Now must I to the monument alone;  
Within three hours will fair Juliet wake (5.2.24-25)

Night to Dawn: Paris comes to Juliet's tomb. After Romeo kills Paris and commits suicide, Friar Laurence, coming to take Juliet away, discovers the bodies of Paris and Romeo. Paris' Page leads the Watch to Juliet's tomb. Prince Escalus arrives at the tomb, then Montague and the Capulets. Prince Escalus, after conducting an investigation, sends everyone away.

- Paris: Give me thy torch, boy: hence, and stand aloof. (5.3.1)
  
- \* Paris: The boy gives warning something doth approach.  
What cursed foot wanders this way to-night,  
To cross my obsequies and true love's rite?  
What with a torch! muffle me, night, awhile. (5.3.18-21)
  
- Friar Laurence: Bliss be upon you! Tell me, good my friend,  
What torch is yond, that vainly lends his light  
To grubs and eyeless skulls? as I discern,  
It burneth in the Capel's monument. (5.3.124-127)
  
- Page: This is the place; there, where the torch doth burn. (5.3.171)
  
- Prince: What misadventure is so early up,  
That calls our person from our morning's rest? (5.3.188-189)
  
- Prince: Come, Montague; for thou art early up,  
To see thy son and heir more early down. (5.3.208-209)
  
- Prince: A glooming peace this morning with it brings;  
The sun, for sorrow, will not show his head (5.3.305-306)

## **What's In a Name?**

### **Tybalt**

Tibert or Tybalt is the name of the Prince of Cats in the popular medieval beast fable, Reynard the Fox.

### **Capulet**

His name suggests "captain," a military leader.

### **Montague**

His name suggests "mount," and therefore someone above the rest.

### **Prince Escalus**

His name suggests "scales," and therefore balance, justice.

### **Romeo**

His name suggests "romance," and therefore love and adventure.

### **Paris**

In mythology, Paris was the male beauty who abducted Helen of Troy.

### **Juliet**

Her name suggests "jewel."

### **Mercutio**

His name suggests "mercurial."

## HOUSE OF CAPULET

**Juliet:** daughter to Capulet, takes the lead in the romance, lyrical use of language, has premonitions but does not act on them, isolated, only one in the play to guess the outcome

**Tybalt:** Juliet's cousin, foil to Romeo, passionate, prideful, easily provoked, high-spirited, hot-blooded, fiery nature, inflexible, single set of absolutes

**Nurse:** Juliet's nurse, stereotypical, arrogant, garrulous, ignorant, bawdy, uncultivated, old and infirm, fickle, wants the "best for Juliet" (translated: wants Juliet married to anyone), looks at love as "animal lust", comic

**Capulet:** Juliet's father, impatient, loves Juliet but is misguided in his love, querulous, inflexible, old, looks at love as a good match

## HOUSE OF MONTAGUE

**Romeo:** son of Montague, isolated, passionate, idealistic, naive, has premonitions but does not act on them, helpless

**Mercutio:** kinsman to Prince and friend of Romeo, witty, honorable, intelligent, loves word play, amiable, could be voice of reason but underestimates Romeo's passion, foil to Romeo, his death makes the tragedy inevitable

**Benvolio:** Montague nephew, friend of Romeo, peacemaker

## Other Important Characters

**Paris:** a count, betrothed to Juliet, foil to Romeo

**Friar Laurence:** Romeo's counselor, loved and respected, attempts to do what is "right", marred reasoning, misplaced virtue



# Analysis of Major Characters

## Romeo

The name Romeo, in popular culture, has become nearly synonymous with “lover.” Romeo, in *Romeo and Juliet*, does indeed experience a love of such purity and passion that he kills himself when he believes that the object of his love, Juliet, has died. The power of Romeo’s love, however, often obscures a clear vision of Romeo’s character, which is far more complex.

Even Romeo’s relation to love is not so simple. At the beginning of the play, Romeo pines for Rosaline, proclaiming her the paragon of women and despairing at her indifference toward him. Taken together, Romeo’s Rosaline-induced histrionics seem rather juvenile. Romeo is a great reader of love poetry, and the portrayal of his love for Rosaline suggests he is trying to re-create the feelings that he has read about. After first kissing Juliet, she tells him “you kiss by th’ book,” meaning that he kisses according to the rules, and implying that while proficient, his kissing lacks originality (I.v.107). In reference to Rosaline, it seems, Romeo loves by the book. Rosaline, of course, slips from Romeo’s mind at first sight of Juliet. But Juliet is no mere replacement. The love she shares with Romeo is far deeper, more authentic and unique than the clichéd puppy love Romeo felt for Rosaline. Romeo’s love matures over the course of the play from the shallow desire to be in love to a profound and intense passion. One must ascribe Romeo’s development at least in part to Juliet. Her level-headed observations, such as the one about Romeo’s kissing, seem just the thing to snap Romeo from his superficial idea of love and to inspire him to begin to speak some of the most beautiful and intense love poetry ever written.

Yet Romeo’s deep capacity for love is merely a part of his larger capacity for intense feeling of all kinds. Put another way, it is possible to describe Romeo as lacking the capacity for moderation. Love compels him to sneak into the garden of his enemy’s daughter, risking death simply to catch a glimpse of her. Anger compels him to kill his wife’s cousin in a reckless duel to avenge the death of his friend. Despair compels him to suicide upon hearing of Juliet’s death. Such extreme behavior dominates Romeo’s character throughout the play and contributes to the ultimate tragedy that befalls the lovers. Had Romeo restrained himself from killing Tybalt, or waited even one day before killing himself after hearing the news of Juliet’s death, matters might have ended happily. Of course, though, had Romeo not had such depths of feeling, the love he shared with Juliet would never have existed in the first place.

Among his friends, especially while bantering with Mercutio, Romeo shows glimpses of his social persona. He is intelligent, quick-witted, fond of verbal jousting (particularly about sex), loyal, and unafraid of danger.

## Juliet

Having not quite reached her fourteenth birthday, Juliet is of an age that stands on the border between immaturity and maturity. At the play’s beginning however she seems merely an obedient, sheltered, naïve child. Though many girls her age—including her mother—get married, Juliet has not given the subject any thought. When Lady Capulet mentions Paris’s interest in marrying Juliet, Juliet dutifully responds that she will try to see if she can love him, a response that seems childish in its obedience and in its immature conception of love. Juliet seems to have no friends her own age, and she is not comfortable talking about sex (as seen in her discomfort when the Nurse goes on and on about a sexual joke at Juliet’s expense in Act I, scene iii).

Juliet gives glimpses of her determination, strength, and sober-mindedness, in her earliest scenes, and offers a preview of the woman she will become during the five-day span of *Romeo and Juliet*. While Lady Capulet proves unable to quiet the Nurse, Juliet succeeds with one word (also in Act I, scene iii). In addition, even in Juliet’s dutiful acquiescence to try to love Paris, there is some seed of steely determination. Juliet promises to consider Paris as

a possible husband to the precise degree her mother desires. While an outward show of obedience, such a statement can also be read as a refusal through passivity. Juliet will accede to her mother's wishes, but she will not go out of her way to fall in love with Paris. Juliet's first meeting with Romeo propels her full-force toward adulthood. Though profoundly in love with him, Juliet is able to see and criticize Romeo's rash decisions and his tendency to romanticize things. After Romeo kills Tybalt and is banished, Juliet does not follow him blindly. She makes a logical and heartfelt decision that her loyalty and love for Romeo must be her guiding priorities. Essentially, Juliet cuts herself loose from her prior social moorings—her Nurse, her parents, and her social position in Verona—in order to try to reunite with Romeo. When she wakes in the tomb to find Romeo dead, she does not kill herself out of feminine weakness, but rather out of an intensity of love, just as Romeo did. Juliet's suicide actually requires more nerve than Romeo's: while he swallows poison, she stabs herself through the heart with a dagger.

Juliet's development from a wide-eyed girl into a self-assured, loyal, and capable woman is one of Shakespeare's early triumphs of characterization. It also marks one of his most confident and rounded treatments of a female character.

### **Friar Lawrence**

Friar Lawrence occupies a strange position territory in *Romeo and Juliet*. He is a kindhearted cleric who helps Romeo and Juliet throughout the play. He performs their marriage and gives generally good advice, especially in regard to the need for moderation. He is the sole figure of religion in the play. But Friar Lawrence is also the most scheming and political of characters in the play: he marries Romeo and Juliet as part of a plan to end the civil strife in Verona; he spirits Romeo into Juliet's room and then out of Verona; he devises the plan to reunite Romeo and Juliet through the deceptive ruse of a sleeping potion that seems to arise from almost mystic knowledge. This mystical knowledge seems out of place for a Catholic friar; why does he have such knowledge, and what could such knowledge mean? The answers are not clear. In addition, though Friar Lawrence's plans all seem well conceived and well intentioned, they serve as the main mechanisms through which the fated tragedy of the play occurs. Readers should recognize that the Friar is not only subject to the fate that dominates the play—in many ways he brings that fate about.

### **Mercutio**

With a lightning-quick wit and a clever mind, Mercutio is a scene stealer and one of the most memorable characters in all of Shakespeare's works. Though he constantly puns, jokes, and teases—sometimes in fun, sometimes with bitterness—Mercutio is not a mere jester or prankster. With his wild words, Mercutio punctures the romantic sentiments and blind self-love that exist within the play. He mocks Romeo's self-indulgence just as he ridicules Tybalt's hauteur and adherence to fashion. The critic Stephen Greenblatt describes Mercutio as a force within the play that functions to deflate the possibility of romantic love and the power of tragic fate. Unlike the other characters who blame their deaths on fate, Mercutio dies cursing all Montagues and Capulets. Mercutio believes that specific people are responsible for his death rather than some external impersonal force.

## Chart of the proportions of rhyme, blank verse, and prose in *Romeo and Juliet*.

**Prologue** -- rhyme: 14 lines || total: 14 lines

100%  
100%

**Act 1, Scene 1** -- rhyme: 68 lines || blank verse: 106 lines || prose: 64 lines  
|| total: 238 lines

29%                      44%                      27%  
29%                      44%                      27%

**Act 1, Scene 2** -- rhyme: 48 lines || blank verse: 34 lines || prose: 19 lines ||  
total: 101 lines

47%                      34%                      19%  
47%                      34%                      19%

**Act 1, Scene 3** -- rhyme: 20 lines || blank verse: 81 lines || prose: 4 lines ||  
total: 105 lines

19%    77%                      4%  
19%    77%                      4%

**Act 1, Scene 4** -- rhyme: 14 lines || blank verse: 100 lines || total: 114 lines

12%    88%  
12%    88%

**Act 1, Scene 5** -- rhyme: 54 lines || blank verse: 75 lines || prose: 15 lines ||  
total: 144 lines

38%                      52%                      10%  
38%                      52%                      10%

**Act 2, Prologue** -- rhyme: 14 lines || total: 14 lines

100%  
100%

**Act 2, Scene 1** -- rhyme: 6 lines || blank verse: 36 lines || total: 42 lines

14%    86%  
14%    86%

**Act 2, Scene 2** -- rhyme: 26 lines || blank verse: 163 lines || total: 189 lines

14% 86%



**Act 2, Scene 3** -- rhyme: 94 lines || total: 94 lines

100%



**Act 2, Scene 4** -- rhyme: 6 lines || blank verse: 16 lines || prose: 195 lines ||  
total: 217 lines

3% 7% 90%



**Act 2, Scene 5** -- rhyme: 6 lines || blank verse: 64 lines || prose: 8 lines ||  
total: 78 lines

8% 82% 10%



**Act 2, Scene 6** -- rhyme: 4 lines || blank verse: 33 lines || total: 37 lines

11% 89%



**Act 3, Scene 1** -- rhyme: 46 lines || blank verse: 56 lines || prose: 95 lines ||  
total: 197 lines

23% 28% 48%



**Act 3, Scene 2** -- rhyme: 39 lines || blank verse: 104 lines || total: 143 lines

27% 73%



**Act 3, Scene 3** -- rhyme: 26 lines || blank verse: 149 lines || total: 175 lines

15% 85%



**Act 3, Scene 4** -- blank verse: 35 lines || total: 35 lines

100%



**Act 3, Scene 5** -- rhyme: 34 lines || blank verse: 208 lines || total: 242 lines

14% 86%



**Act 4, Scene 1** -- rhyme: 2 lines || blank verse: 122 lines || total: 126 lines

3% 97%



**Act 4, Scene 2** -- blank verse: 33 lines || prose: 14 lines || total: 47 lines

70% 30%



**Act 4, Scene 3** -- blank verse: 58 lines || total: 58 lines

100%



**Act 4, Scene 4** -- blank verse: 27 lines || total: 27 lines

100%



**Act 4, Scene 5** -- rhyme: 17 lines || blank verse: 83 lines || prose: 46 lines ||

total: 146 lines

12% 57%

31%



**Act 5, Scene 1** -- rhyme: 4 lines || blank verse: 82 lines || total: 144 lines

5% 95%



**Act 5, Scene 2** -- blank verse: 30 lines || total: 30 lines

100%



**Act 5, Scene 3** -- rhyme: 16 lines || blank verse: 294 lines || total: 310 lines

5% 95%

