

The use of dramatic irony in romeo and juliet

Literature



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Don't you always hate when you do something stupid and you could have prevented it from happening by just asking someone about it. In the play *Romeo and Juliet*, there are many characters who go through the exact same thing. This is called Dramatic irony, the irony occurring when the implications of a situation, speech, etc, are understood by the audience but not by the characters in the play. The main characters that Shakespeare uses this with are Benvolio and Mercutio, the Capulets, and Romeo and the Friar.

They all at first think they know what they are doing, but for all of them they learn the hard way that they should not have done that. Benvolio and Mercutio fall into dramatic irony in two ways. The first is when they think that Romeo is still in love with Rosaline. In the beginning of the play, Romeo is crying in the woods because he can not be with Rosaline because she has sworn chastity. Then later Romeo hides after a party that they all go to, and Mercutio and Benvolio think it is because he is sad about Rosaline.

Mercutio then says " I conjure thee by Rosaline bright eyes..." (Shakespeare 765). Little do they know that Romeo found a new girl at the party named Juliet, and the only reason that Romeo is hiding is to sneak a peak at her. The other way Shakespeare used dramatic irony was when Tybalt saw Romeo at the party, where he swore that he would kill Romeo. When Mercutio and Benvolio catch wind of this, they are worried that Romeo won't be able to fight him because he is love sick.

Then when Tybalt finally does confront Romeo, and Romeo backs down, Mercutio thinks it is because he is scared. However it is really because

Romeo has just married Juliet, who is a cousin of Tybalt, so Romeo is just being nice to his fiancé's cousin. However, when Mercutio sees him back down he decides to take action and fight Tybalt for Romeo (Shakespeare 792). While fighting, Mercutio gets stabbed and dies, and then Romeo goes and kills Tybalt.

This makes things complicated because then the prince banishes Romeo which makes it hard for Juliet and Romeo to be together and eventually leads to their doom. The way Shakespeare uses the Capulets to portray dramatic irony is in two ways. The first is when they think that Juliet is sad about Tybalt dying (Shakespeare 809). However it is the last person that they would ever think, Romeo, Tybalt's killer. She is sad for Romeo because she cannot be with him because he was banished for killing Tybalt.

That same night they spend their last together, and when he leaves she keeps crying all day and to cheer her up they marry her to Paris. This leads into the next dramatic irony, the Capulets don't know about Juliet is married to Romeo. Since they do not know about it, they tell Paris that he can marry Juliet (Shakespeare 806). This does not make Juliet happy at all because she loves Romeo and could not bare being with someone else. She even threatens to kill herself after she finds out.

This is how it leads to Romeo coming and killing himself and how she kills herself. The final people to be affected by dramatic irony are Romeo and the Friar. The first way is after Romeo is banished he goes to Mantua, and then later his friend, Balthasar, comes to tell him that Juliet has died (Shakespeare 836).

While at the same exact time the Friar tells one of his friar friends to go tell Romeo the plan that he and Juliet came up with. To no avail he was not able to give it to Romeo, who had passed him on the road to Mantua. So the Friar does not know Romeo knows about Juliet dieing (Shakespeare 839). When Romeo finally gets there he kills himself because he is so saddened that he can not be with her. The Friar comes in right after that to try to get Juliet but she kills herself out of sadness, and this is how the story ends.

Theses characters all fell into something they could have prevented, Mercutio dies because he doesn't know that Romeo is married, the Capulets lose there daughter because they did not know that Juliet was married and did not and could not marry Paris, and if Romeo had waited a little longer, him and Juliet would have lived happily ever after. This just shows how great, or tragic, dramatic irony can be for a play, and Shakespeare used it perfectly.