

# Love and marriage in "romeo and juliet" essay sample

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## **Love and Marriage in “Romeo and Juliet” Essay Sample**

Modern audiences would blame Paris for not courting Juliet, however in Shakespeare's time Paris would have been considered as behaving in a much more proper fashion than Romeo. Private courting between young people, illustrated in Romeo and Juliet, was officially disapproved of. There are many types of love in the two scenes, for example Paris's love. Paris is the man Juliet's parents think is fit for her; however this arranged marriage does not involve love - love was not a feeling, it was a commitment. Another type of love is illustrated in Romeo and Juliet. When Romeo met Juliet, Romeo became more passionate, seen in his language compared with his language about Rosaline. Juliet also became more independent. Their love was so strong they were willing to die for each other, although their families had gone through years of hatred.

Wealthy men and women of Shakespeare's time considered that 'true love' was when young men fell in love with beautiful young women, with little hope of winning the women's love in return, and unrequited love was common among the men, such love did not lead to marriage. Marriage in Shakespeare's era was normally arranged by parents between the families. Priority in marriage concerned: legal contracts, family pride and, of course, money. Love did not enter in it at all, or only as a secondary consideration, as it does in Act 3 Scene 4, where Paris appears passionately keen to marry Juliet immediately and says to Capulet, 'My lord, I would that Thursday were tomorrow'.

In Act 1, Capulet is asked by Paris for Juliet's hand in marriage, ' But now my lord what say you to my suit?' Capulet is not willing; he expresses his concern about Juliet's age, ' My child is yet a stranger in the world' and ' Let two more summer's wither in their pride' Also in Act 1, Capulet arranges a ball to which Paris is invited. Capulet told Paris, at the ball, that he would agree to their marriage only if Juliet agreed, ' And she agreed, within her scope of choice lies my consent and fair according voice' this means; ' if she agrees, I will give my consent to her marrying the man she chooses'.

However in Act 3 Scene 4 his assurances to Paris that Juliet will be dutiful are dramatically ironic, because Juliet has already married Romeo and is spending the night with him. Also in Act 3 Scene 4 Capulet changes his mind about waiting two more years, and decide to go ahead with the marriage with Paris without Juliet's consent. He also changes his mind on what day they should marry for no apparent reason. From Act 1 to Act 3 Scene 5, Capulet has gone from letting his daughter choose a groom to forcing and violently threatening her into an arranged marriage with Paris. His ' fingers itch' to strike Juliet.

In Act 3 Scene 4, when Capulet informs Paris of Tybalt's death and the effect he thinks this has on Juliet, he uses language that states that Juliet is his property; '... that we have had no time to move our daughter'. Capulet also thinks that he is in no doubt that Juliet is ' ruled' by him: ' I think she will be ruled in all respects by me, nay more, I doubt it not' Capulet's confidence that Juliet will obey him and marry Paris contrasts sharply with his behaviour in Act I, Scene 2. At the masquerade ball, he told Paris he would agree to the

match only if Juliet agreed. However, when she refuses to obey him and marry Paris Capulet loses his temper (his many rhetorical questions emphasize his anger and confusion) and says he will disown her.

Shakespeare assigns Capulet foul and threatening language towards his daughter, ' Out you green sickness carrion, out you baggage, you tallow face!' he also states that if Juliet does not marry Paris, he will drag her to church on a traitor's ' hurdle'.

We get a sense that Capulet sees his wife as inferior to him, throughout the play he repeatedly calls her ' wife' and he shows no sign of love or respect. We see this in Act 3 Scene 4 when Capulet agrees to Juliet's marriage and says to his wife, ' Prepare her, wife, against this wedding day' But Lady Capulet seems to accept the idea of being called wife, she also looks up to her husband and accepts his authority and calls him ' sir' as seen in Act 3 Scene 5, ' Ay sir, but she will none...'. She does try to pacify Capulet when he rages at his daughter's disobedience, ' Fie, fie what are you, mad?' However, her attitude towards marriage is similar to that of her husband. She expects Juliet to obey her parents, and when Juliet refuses, she washes her hands of her daughter and says, ' Do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee'

Paris's attitude towards Juliet is one of courtly love. He is happy to enter marriage without ever getting to know her, or ' court' her: ' These times of woe afford no time to woo' He also asks Lady Capulet to announce their marriage for him, as if marriage was as simple as a financial transaction. Paris's courtly love towards Juliet in Act 3 Scene 4 is juxtaposed

by Shakespeare to the passionate love illustrated in Act 3 Scene 5 between Romeo and Juliet.

In Act 3 Scene 5, Shakespeare assigns Romeo and Juliet to play out an extended metaphor about two birds; a lark and a nightingale. The lovers try to resist the coming day that brings them separation by pretending that it is still night and that the bird they hear is the nightingale and not the lark, a morning bird, ' Nor that is not the lark'. However, the threat of the Prince's sentence of death finally forces the lovers to part, ' It is, it is, hie hence, be gone, away. It is the lark that sings so out of tune' This unwilling departure of Romeo shows us that they do not wish to part and their love is strong enough to risk death, ' I have more care to stay than will to go' and ' Come death and welcome'

In Act 3 Scene 5, Juliet assures Romeo that ' It was the nightingale, and not the lark' She also applies the word ' Love' when talking to Romeo, ' Believe me love, it was the nightingale'. Juliet wishes the sound of the morning lark was actually the sound of the nightingale. Juliet tries to refuse the arrival of day to extend her time with Romeo. Their language is passionate and intense as Romeo agrees to stay and face his death. As in previous scenes, Romeo and Juliet's love lives in the dark and night, but daylight brings separation and ill fortune; Juliet says reluctantly, ' Window, let day in, and let life out'. This also gives us a sense of foreboding.

When talking about Rosaline, Romeo uses many rhyming couplets, unlike his more natural dialogue with Juliet, which makes what he says about Rosaline

sound like a well-rehearsed speech rather than true love; this may be an example of exasperated love. We also seem to get the impression that he is more in love with the idea of being in love " Here's much to do with hate, but more with love" This contrasts sharply with Romeo's idea of love in Act 1 Scene 1 when he thinks he is in love with Rosaline.

Juliet has a conversation with her mother shortly after Romeo's departure, a conversation of two meanings, ' indeed I shall never be satisfied, till I behold him dead, is my poor heart so for a kinsman vexed?' Lady Capulet thinks she is saying; I never shall be satisfied until Romeo is dead, and she is weeping for a kinsman, Tybalt. However, she may actually mean; I never shall be satisfied with Romeo till I behold him dead, my poor heart is so vexed for a kinsman, Romeo. In Elizabethan dialect, a man's death also means his sexual climax and this allows Juliet to discuss her sexual relationship with her husband in a disguised manner

Lady Capulet, who is unaware that Juliet, who is dramatically ironic, grieves for Romeo's banishment rather than the death of Tybalt, tries to comfort her daughter with her plans to avenge Tybalt's death by poisoning Romeo. This conversation has a heavy sense of foreboding since Lady Capulet's hope of poisoning Romeo is brought to life at the end. Juliet's attitude towards love and marriage is seen in her refusal to marry Paris. She is already married to Romeo, so to marry Paris would be bigamy. This shows us that Shakespeare has assigned Juliet to be a faithful and law abiding person.

The Nurse, who is been presented as more of a mother than Juliet's biological mother, fails Juliet at the end of Act 3 Scene 5. To comfort Juliet in her desperate situation, the Nurse offers her an easy solution; to marry Paris and forget the 'dish clout' Romeo. This immoral advice betrays Juliet's trust and shows the Nurse's failure to understand the passionate nature of Romeo and Juliet's love. The Nurse therefore regards love as a temporary and physical relationship, and she sees Juliet's marriage to Paris entirely acceptable.

To conclude, in the two scenes the attitudes of Capulet, Lady Capulet, Paris and the nurse towards love and marriage were normal for the time. They believed that marriage was a business deal and love was not a priority when it comes to power and authority. It seems as if passionate love is outside their experience and they fail to understand Juliet's infatuation for Romeo. Juliet was on her knees begging for his understanding, but he casts her aside as do her mother and the nurse and by the end of Act 3 Scene 5 Juliet is left emotionally alone on stage isolated and completely alone to seek solace in her love for Romeo. Romeo and Juliet's attitude to love is more akin to Modern-day love. The love between them is deep and passionate and is more powerful than the hatred between their families and even death.