

The criminal responsible for the deaths of romeo and juliet

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In the days of old, a friar was a man to be respected and revered for his relationship with God. However there was the occasional servant of the Lord that would abuse this massive amount of respect and use it to obtain his wishes. A main character presented in Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, Friar Lawrence, is one of these untrustworthy Friars. He is, undoubtedly, responsible for the deaths of the Romeo and Juliet as a result of being too compassionate, manipulative, and deceiving.

As a result of being too compassionate, Friar Lawrence makes rash decisions and is undoubtedly to blame for the tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*. For instance, when Juliet discovers that she has no choice but be married to Paris, the Friar attempts to comfort her by saying that " he already knows [her] grief; / It strains [him] past the compass of [his] wits. / [He] hears [she] must, and nothing may prorogue it, on Thursday next be married to County Paris" (IV. i. 47-50). Friar Lawrence proves to be a truly compassionate person, as shown with the usage of the hyperbole " past the compass of [his] wits".

Despite the intended exaggeration made by the Friar, this hyperbole proves itself to be true, later in the play, when Friar Lawrence makes many ineffective plots that only lead the star-crossed lovers closer to their deaths. The extent of Friar Lawrence's compassion is shown, again, when Romeo threatens to kill himself after successfully ending the life of the Capulet, Tybalt. The Friar chides Romeo's " rude unthankfulness" and explains that " the kind prince hath turned that black word " death" to " banishment"" (III. iii. 24-29).

The Friar's exalting tone toward the lightened punishment causes Romeo to reconsider taking his own life and keeps him alive. However, this compassion of keeping Romeo alive only leads to Juliet's demise after Romeo regains his want to kill himself and succeeds in doing just that. There is no doubt that Friar Lawrence has compassion, but the intensive compassion leads to rash decisions, eventually ending the lives of Romeo and Juliet. Along with an extreme compassion that proves to be detrimental, Friar Lawrence leads the fated couple to their deaths by being manipulative.

One such example is shown as the Friar marries Romeo and Juliet when he comments that " by [their] leaves, [they] shall not stay alone / Till the Holy Church incorporate two in one" (II. ii. 35-37). Friar Lawrence hints with the broad statement " incorporate two in one" that he does not only want to incorporate Romeo and Juliet, but also the Capulet's and Montague's under the marriage of the lovers. The Friar, simply, only wants to unite the two families, of a seemingly never-ending feud, and uses Romeo and Juliet as pawns at the front line, in the chess game of fate.

Manipulation is shown again when the Friar addresses this art of manipulation, earlier in the play, when he explains the various properties of herbs. He notes that the herbs are " nor aught so good but, strained from that fair use, / Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse" (II. ii. 19-20). Shakespeare uses Friar Lawrence's knowledge of the manipulation of herbs as foreshadowing into the Friar's extensive knowledge of manipulating people, as well. This quote explains how the Friar understands the art of manipulation and intends to obtain his goal of uniting the two families.

Friar Lawrence does not hesitate to use his tact of manipulation, which causes the death of the fated lovers. Another ungodly skill possessed by the Friar is his ability to be very deceiving, which results in the death of the destined lovers. For example, after Juliet fakes her death, Friar Lawrence chides the Capulets by saying that they “ love [their] child so ill / that [they] run mad seeing that she is well /... [They should] Dry up [their] tears and stick [their] rosemary / on [the] fair corse /... and bear her to church” (IV. . 75-81). Despite being a prominent man of God, The Friar can easily deceive without remorse, as made vastly apparent with this quote. This skill of deception brings the star-crossed lovers ever so closer to their deaths when the Friar makes the Capulet parents to arrive much faster and rush Juliet into killing herself. Deceiving traits by the Friar are shown, once again, when the Friar hatches the plot to fake Juliet’s death.

He shares this idea with Juliet saying that she should “ take thou this vial being then in bed, / And this distilling thou off;/ When presently thou all thy veins run / A cold and drowsy humor, for no pulse” (IV. i. 93-96). As the Friar becomes more desperate, he begins to hatch more plans that have only a slight possibility of success, like this one of putting Juliet into a deep sleep. The deceiving Friar again, is responsible for a plan that later proves to be responsible for the death of both Romeo and Juliet.

The Friar’s skill of deception and his constant use of this skill leads to the downfall of Romeo and Juliet. As a result of too much compassion, manipulation, and deception, Friar Lawrence is completely at fault for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet. Despite his want to help Romeo and Juliet, many,

if not all, of his plans were unsuccessful and were done without any thought of the consequences. Friar Lawrence abused his position of high respect, causing a devastating event that ended badly for the star-crossed lovers.