

Romeo and juliet,  
from verona city to  
verona beach usa  
essay sample



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

When we asked two hundred people “ what is the first thing that comes into your head when thinking of Shakespeare? ” one hundred and twenty four people replied “ Romeo and Juliet” and after this soon to be blockbuster hit directed by the astonishing Baz Lurhman, “ Romeo and Juliet” will be the first words that come out of everyone’s mouth when talking about Hollywood movies. Lurhman has managed to take this play out of the dark ages with terrible costumes and a one stage setting and turn it into an action packed movie focusing on love, tragedy and a lot more violence that most wouldn’t expect from a play such as this.

I personally think that the “ Western/Matrix” style violence that Lurhman has created is a major reason why this movie is the biggest Shakespeare blockbuster yet. Just by watching the first five minutes of this film you understand the whole concept of the story and you can instantly see the hatred between these two feuding families; the Montagues and the Capulets. We have an interesting start to the movie as we see a T. V screen, very small at the beginning but very slowly, moving closer and closer to the screen whilst a news reporter is reciting the original prologue.

A nice touch by Lurhman, keeping the language the same but still taking this play forward in time. Once the reporter is finished the camera dives in to the T. V. taking us to the setting with dramatic music playing in the background. The setting of the original play is Verona, Italy; Lurhman cunningly changed this to Verona beach, USA the perfect setting for all famous Hollywood movies! The prologue is repeated again but this time by the voice of a man with a very deep voice, making the prologue sound more meaningful.

Whilst this is happening, all the main characters are introduced with frozen images and the names written clearly to help the story make more sense. The dramatic music is still playing, and also moving in time with the music, are the moving images of the film, we see the city of Verona, the hostility and we see how the families have not only divided themselves from each other but the whole city as well. This introduction like a movie trailer, tells us the story and gets us yearning for more.

Now the story begins with rock music in the background, the fluorescent Hawaiian shirts and a flash motor license plate reading " MON 005", the Montague boys have arrived. They are very rowdy and noisy and one shouts out standing in the flash convertible " a dog of the house of Montagues moves me" changing the original script but making it humorous which is more appealing to other audiences. The boys are now at a petrol station shrewdly called " Phoenix".

Rock music is still playing and the two of the boys step out of the car, at this point another car has arrived, license plate reading " CAP 005", the Capulets have now arrived. Their image is more " Italian mafia" style making the Montague boys looking just that little bit more stupid. The Montague's see that the Capulets have arrived and aren't as boisterous as they were before. But they still manage to be the ones to start a fight with the peacemaker- Abra by biting his thumb at them. In the Elizabethan times this was considered to be the same as putting your middle finger up to someone now.

Benvolio questions them very politely which isn't expected " Do you bite your thumb at me sir" but it's not long before the first fight is about to kick

off. As the last Capulet in the car steps out, the camera only focuses on the metal cowboy shoes of Tybalt known as “ the prince of cats,” stubbing out his cigar which is echoed, the sound hurting your ears!! The slogan of the petrol station is “ add more fuel to your fire” which is exactly what Tybalt is doing to this fire! Both families are arguing and have now got to the point where they have both drawn their swords.

I say swords but it is not how it seems. Lurhman has made another intelligent change by swapping the swords for guns but engraving on the gun a trademark, “ 9mm swords”. This helps to modernize it and still make the script make sense when talking about swords. There’s silence, then the swinging of the Phoenix sign swaying back and forth screeching each time creating a lot of suspense and tension. The fighting begins and the Montagues are made to look very small in front of the Capulets, especially Tybalt who looks like an absolute pro, with all the right moves and not looking worried at all.

The fight moves into the city causing havoc, all over the news, the fight has got back to the heads of both the families and we are left at the crucial point of a stand off. Lurhman has managed to direct this camera work in a spectacular manner. The same dramatic music comes in and the camera is focused on both the Capulet and Montague getting shots of both their faces and the tension between these two characters, however before things could get even worse there is the sound of a helicopter and a loudspeaker.

The voice of the prince (the head of police) orders them both to drop their weapons to the ground on which the scene has now ended leaves the

audience astounded and longing for more. Lurhman has brought this play and its script to life and has done a stupendous job of directing this master piece. Some may think he's ruined the play but I personally think that this is the best version of " Romeo and Juliet" I have come across so far, and it gets a 10 out of 10 rating from me.