

Friar Lawrence is
responsible for the
deaths of Romeo and
Juliet



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the Shakespearean tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet*, Friar Lawrence was a monk, and a counselor, who came up with intricate plots and concocted a seemingly magical elixir in order to solve problems that the lovers encountered. Friar Lawrence had a profound impact on the outcome of this Shakespearean play; however, in a way that led to catastrophe. There are many factors that caused the deaths of the lovers, but two of the most important were how Friar Lawrence disregarded his own logic, and how he missed numerous opportunities to save the lovers.

First of all, Friar Lawrence explicitly knew better than to do many of the things he did. First, he should not have agreed to marry Romeo and Juliet so quickly. Romeo wanted to marry Juliet after knowing her for less than twenty-four hours, which reveals his reckless personality. The friar knew this, because he said " So soon forsaken? Young men's love then lies not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes"(II. iii. 67-68). After Romeo protested, he agreed to marry them in order to solve the family feud.

However, if he had simply delayed the marriage, Romeo and Juliet would have had more time for courtship, and Friar Lawrence would have had more time to clarify the situation with Capulet and Montague as well. Moreover, he should have taken the time to think about Juliet's dilemma with Paris when she approached him for help. Instead, he was caught off guard by Juliet's threat to commit suicide, because he hastily responded " Hold daughter! I do spy a kind of hope, which craves as desperate an execution as that is desperate to prevent"(IV. i. 68-70), and gave her the vial.

He should not have acted so hastily, especially after he told Romeo “Wisely and slow, they stumble that run fast”(II. iii. 94-95). All in all, Friar Lawrence should not have allowed pressure from other people to distort his own judgement. Lastly, Friar Lawrence could have prevented the deaths of Romeo and Juliet. For instance, he could have prevented Romeo’s suicide. In addition to having sent Friar John with a letter, he could have waited in the graveyard. Had he done so, he could have informed Romeo that Juliet was alive, thus he could have prevented Romeo’s death.

Also, Friar Lawrence did not physically stop Juliet’s suicide; he simply said “Come, come away... I’ll dispose of thee among a sisterhood of nuns”(V. iii. 154-157), and ran away. Had he not been so hasty, he could have realized that the consequences of being caught trespassing are less punitive than those of abandoning Juliet. In fact, Friar Lawrence knew that if he abandoned Juliet, she likely would have committed suicide, because she threatened to do so in the past “... And with this knife I’ll help it presently”(IV. i. 54).

Furthermore, he planned on solving the family feud with the marriage “... To turn your household’s rancour to pure love”(II. iii. 92), but he did not make any arrangements to inform Montague and Capulet that he married Romeo and Juliet; he simply disappeared. Had he explained the situation to Montague and Capulet, at any time before the catastrophe, they would have trusted the friar, a holy man who everyone respected, and they would have hopefully dissolved their family feud. They did so in the end after the friar was forced to explain (V. iii).

In brief, Friar Lawrence should have been more proactive, and he should have stepped in at the right time. Friar Lawrence meant well, but as an adult, he had to take responsibility for his actions. As an adult, he should have thought things through, and he should have used any means necessary to prevent this catastrophe. In many situations he should have followed his own advice. Unfortunately, Friar Lawrence was so focused on coming up with a brilliant plan, that he failed to act like a responsible adult, and as a result, completed the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet.