

Romeo and juliet act 3 scene 1

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



" Analyse the dramatic effectiveness of Act 3 Scene 1" The tragic Shakespearian play " Rome and Juliet" is about two young people who experience true love even though it is forbidden. Against the will of both families they marry secretly. Just when all seems well, everything goes horribly wrong leaving them dead. Even though this play is based on the innocent love between two individuals there are many scenes which involve routine violence and conflict. An example of this would be the plays opening, a fight between the two families, the Montague's and Capulets. Another sorrowful event would be the ending, in which both Romeo and Juliet perish. The fighting occurs because of an ongoing hatred between the two families which goes so far back that no one knows what even started it. In this essay I will discuss the utter importance of Act 3 Scene 1 and how it changes the tides of the play. In doing this I shall explore the dramatic qualities and discuss them. When Shakespeare geniously created this play Elizabeth the 1st was the Queen of England. She adored the theatre. The Citizens of England in the 16th century would jump at the thought of entertainment, whether this be cockerel fighting to a good ol' romantic play. Although pleasing them was a different matter. After a couple of pints of extra strong ale, they weren't going to settle for anything less than spectacular. This meant that Shakespeare had to be on top form when writing all of his plays. Therefore a 16th century audience would love one of Shakespeare's plays because they include all the things for a recipe of perfection. If they wanted love, drama, passion and action, they certainly got it with Shakespeare. In the final moments of Act 2 Romeo and Juliet have been married in secret by Friar Laurence. To show the delight of Juliet Shakespeare uses a

preponderance of words relating to wealth/ value. Words to suggest this include "worth", "rich", "substance" and "excess". This is telling us that her love for Romeo makes her feel on top of the world. It is also saying that people who have all these things are beggars without true love. Act 3 Scene 1 opens with typical old Benvolio being his usual self. He is very similar to Romeo in the sense that throughout the play he tries to avoid conflict. He could be seen as the peacemaker. Benvolio begs Mercutio to "retire" for the day for he can clearly see that he is growing restless. He has two very important reasons for wanting to be home and safe: starting with "the day is hot" which is making "the mad blood boil". The other reason being that "the Capels' are abroad". Benvolio knows that Mercutio will be seeking a brawl. Referring back to Act 1 the Prince said that if either of the family's caused and trouble he would deal with it severely; meaning death. This justifies Benvolio's caution as well as foreshadowing upcoming events in this scene. In reaction to this Mercutio begins to taunt and tease Benvolio. The reason this is so dramatic is the irony of what he says. Mercutio begins to tell Benvolio that that he is an angry and "moody" person. The audience and Benvolio know that he is in fact describing himself. Mercutio says things such as "Thou wilt quarrel with a man for cracking nuts" which is clearly an absurd thing to say. However, he follows this by making a pun "hazel eyes". This shows more of Mercutio's character and how he loves to be witty. Following Mercutio's long winded speech, Benvolio says "An I was so apt to quarrel as thou art, any man should buy the sample fee of my life. " Once again Shakespeare is using Benvolio as the cautious character to foreshadow event. Which is not so far away... All of Shakespeare's foreshadowing comes

into play as Tybalt and his men enter the scene. Benvolio is quick on the mark to worry but Mercutio keeps his cool and states “ I care not”. Once again showing his cocky nature. Tybalt approaches being very calm and overly polite. Mercutio, feeling hot and angry, decides to turn words and very cleverly implies the idea of a fight. After some more petty bickering Tybalt says that he has come for Romeo. He uses the word “ consortest” . Now Mercutio knows that he means associate but just to try and pick a fight he turns it to “ minstrels”. He follows by producing his “ fiddlestick” and threatening him, increasing the dramatic build up towards the fight. Benvolio realises what Mercutio is trying to do and begs him to retreat because of the Prince’s warning. Mercutio once again picks up on Benvolio’s words and starts and finishes his sentence with “ I”. The dramatic tension intensifies greatly at this point because of Romeos entry. The audience have the superior knowledge over the characters, for they know nothing of the wedding. This therefore leaves the audience predicting what is going to happen. Now that Tybalt’s man has arrived he is slightly smug and over polite. He speaks in a monosyllabic way increasing the tension even more. Mercutio, trying to defend Romeo, says “ he’ll be your follower”. The use of irony here is effective because the audience know he is family but neither Mercutio or Tybalt have a clue. Tybalt responds in disgust of the idea that he would love Romeo by calling him a “ villain”. Romeo replies by telling him that he has reason to love him. He uses the juxta position of the words “ love” and “ rage” to encapsulate the story. However this hints that the story may end in tragedy, which again is foreshadowing. Romeo now turns to leave but Tybalt demands that he stay and fight. He patronises him by

calling him “ boy” seemingly trying to provoke him. Romeo again begins to plead, he uses words such as “ tender”, “ love” and “ good Capulet”. All this time Mercutio can not believe his ears. “ Good Capulet” is an oxy-moron, which is surprising to Mercutio because he only sees them as bad. I think at this point Mercutio is burning up inside with anger, readying himself for a fight. Therefore he doesn’t really understand why Romeo is being like this because it is not in his nature. He then calls Tybalt a “ rat catcher” referring to his title as the prince of cats, although reducing him to the lowest profession. Tybalt and Mercutio the very much anticipated fight. As this goes on for a while, Romeo cannot bear to look and decides to jump in and try to bring peace. This could be seen as being cowardly and Romeo being his usual lovey dovey self. Following this, Tybalt lunges at Mercutio under Romeo’s arm. A follower of Tybalt quickly beckons him away “ away Tybalt! ” At this point in the play neither the audience or characters on stage are particularly sure whether Mercutio is injured or not. At this point Mercutio curses both the Montague’s and the Capulets. “ A plague a’ both your houses! ” This is the first, but not the last time he does this. At this point I thought he was just being overly dramatic and wasn’t really injured, similar to the thoughts of Benvolio whom I can imagine saying “ art thou hurt? ” in a softer more serious manner. Mercutio in his dying moments continues to curse “ Marry”. He beckons over his page, calls him a “ villain” and sends him to fetch a surgeon. Romeo, still in shock, says “ the hurt cannot be much”. Mercutio, I can imagine being either sarcastic or bitter while saying a series of hyperbolic sentences; over dramatizing his wound. But still in his dying moments he cannot resist being humorous by referring to Tybalt as

the "prince of cats". At the end of this small speech he intensifies the guilt on Romeo by saying "I was hurt under your arm". This is clearly included to make Romeo want to avenge his death, therefore foreshadowing another tragic incident. Romeo then mutters "I thought for all the best" which is clearly stated in sad tone. Mercutio dismisses this comment and continues to curse by repeating "a plague a' both your houses!" several more times. This builds up the atmosphere of dread, as well as continuing to build on Romeo's rage. Mercutio is then taken off stage by Benvolio. This is quite clever because it still leaves the essence of doubt in the audience's mind about whether or not he is actually dying. As well as it putting doubt in the minds of the audience it also is manipulating their emotions leaving them intrigued. Following Mercutio and Benvolio exiting stage, Romeo takes centre stage and the audience reflects on what has happened. His main emotions seem to be regret and guilt. He feels that his love for Juliet had made him become more feminine than masculine "soften valour's steel!" This keeps the audience wondering what he is going to do next. Benvolio now returns to stage to announce Mercutio's death, "Brave Mercutio is dead!" At this point the audience are utterly shocked. All doubts that have been present, are now eradicated. Romeo, as stunned as anyone, says "This day's black fate". This is referring to the beliefs of people in Elizabethan times, they believed heavily in fate and that the Gods have plans for everyone and that they don't have any control. This is ironic for Romeo because he has just been married and all seems well so things must take a turn for the worse. During this he also uses a rhyming couplet "depend" and "end" this adds to his tone, making it more serious. Tybalt now returns, this in a real life situation would probably

never happen, but it is done to sustain the audiences disbelief and to make it enjoyable. Romeo opens by juxtaposing the two words "alive" and "slain". This emphasises the unfairness of things. Romeo also uses alliteration with "fire-eyed fury" this adds real power to what he is saying. Now at this point the audience is seeing a completely different side of Romeo. I was also surprised at how infuriated he was. This shows his passionate state and builds up the tension for another brawl. Now, the audience knows that Tybalt is renowned for being the best swordsman in Verona, but have heard nothing about Romeo's skill, but know he would've done it because of his class. Tybalt, also knowing that he is considered the best swordsman, responds to Romeo's challenge in a very arrogant way. He uses the word "consort" again and states that Romeo shall be the one meeting Mercutio in the afterlife. The fight proceeds and ends with Romeo as the victor. Benvolio proclaims that "the Citizens are up", he is in fear for Romeo and is warning him to leave. Romeo says "I am fortune's fool" this again makes reference to the Elizabethan belief in fate. Romeo then proceeds to leave the stage and the citizens enter, beginning the commotion on stage. Following a few lines the Prince, Montague, Capulet, their wives and other towns people come onto the stage. This brings chaos to the stage, heightening the tension. I picture it with about 25 extras either side with the families, all making a lot of noise bickering among themselves. But when the Prince begins to talk all fall silent. He asks who started the brawl. Benvolio replies with a short summary of what happened. Before the Prince can say anything Lady Capulet interrupts. She is very upset "For blood of ours shed blood of Montague", she wants the Prince to kill Romeo to make it equal. The Prince

dismisses this and asks Benvolio what has happened. Benvolio, being an honest man, gives a statement. This is fairly un-bias as he gives a true account of everything that had happened, but when describing Romeo's actions he uses words such as "gentle", "fair", "peace" and "nice". These are all used to lighten the view of Romeo's intentions. However when it comes to Tybalt he uses words such as "cold", "retorts", "piercing" and "envious". All to sway the Princes opinion in a subtle way towards Romeo's side. I think this is very clever of Benvolio, using the Princes trust in him to manipulate his thoughts. After Benvolio's statement, all speech from here on is in rhyming couplets. This adds to the serious tone of the events unfolding. It also slows things down, bringing the scene to an end, playing out the tension. Lady Capulet makes a short complaint followed by Montague doing the same. Prince end the scene also using rhyming couplets, but also using a rhyming pentameter. But to make sure this dramatic scene goes out with a bang, the one word that ends the Prince's speech. "Kill". It summarises all the commotion in this scene and snaps it up nicely. Finally to summarise the essay and refer back to the question "Analyse the dramatic effectiveness of Act 3 Scene 1". This scene is clearly the turning point of the play seeing as everything takes a turn for the worse. The good tone set in the previous scene is utterly crushed by the deaths of two main characters; Mercutio and Tybalt. The tension begins right from the start of the scene and is gradually built up for the duration, climaxing at certain points, all of which lead to the exile of Romeo. Throughout the scene Shakespeare's use of foreshadowing or foreboding is present. Constantly hinting at upcoming events. This unknowingly build up the tension in the audiences mind. Another technique

that is used frequently to increase the drama is mono-syllabic phrases and rhyming couplets. Both used to get that element of seriousness when needed. Overall I thought this scene was very tense, doing well to maintain my attention. The use of witty jokes from Mercutio was entertaining and when it needed to change the mood it did so very well. So all in all I think the dramatic effectiveness of Act 3 Scene 1 was great in all aspects.