

Romeo and juliet

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William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* was believed to be written and performed in 1594 or 1595, the Elizabethan era. The play was about two young "star-cross'd lovers" that live in Verona, whose deaths ultimately unite their feuding families. Both families are known to one another by their surnames, Montague's & Capulet's. Romeo is the son of the Lord Montague, he is the patriarch of the house of Montague and Juliet is the daughter of Lord Capulet, he is the patriarch of the house of Capulet. The two teenagers meet at the Capulet's party, where Romeo, Mercutio and Benvolio was not meant to be.

Romeo first caught glimpse of Juliet when he noticed the fish tank in the men's toilets and whilst looking at the fish, Juliet appeared on the other side of the tank, a few moments after they seen each other, they shared a kiss in the elevator until Juliet's nurse pulled her away and then told her that Romeo was a Montague. After the party, Romeo jumps out of Mercutio's car to climb up a vine to Juliet's balcony, this is known as the famous balcony scene and also the part in the tale where Romeo asks Juliet to marry him the day after they met, Juliet happily agrees.

The next day Romeo visits the Friar, who does marry them with the help of Juliet's nurse. That following evening Romeo comes to cross paths with Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, who is also a Capulet. Mercutio retaliates to Tybalt's insults but Tybalt has no interest in Mercutio, he wants Romeo. When Romeo turns down a brawl, Tybalt becomes angry, he wants to inflict pain on Romeo but then things erupt into disaster when Romeo tells Tybalt that he and Juliet are now married and that he wants to call a truce and Tybalt turns physically brutal, beating on Romeo.

Mercutio then steps in to help Romeo and fights Tybalt, then when Mercutio is getting the best of the fight, Romeo stops Mercutio from seriously hurting Tybalt but whilst they both rest, Tybalt picks up a piece of broken glass, aiming to stab Romeo but Mercutio throws him out of the way and Mercutio is stabbed. Mercutio's last words was to curse both houses, the Montague' and Capulet's. After seeing his bestfriend die to save his own life, Romeo takes revenge and shoots Tybalt dead in the fountain, in the streets of Verona. Romeo becomes banished from Verona and leaves.

Juliet then fakes her own death so that she can write a letter for her and Romeo to runaway together but Romeo doesn't receive the letter that tells him about her drinking a potion that knocks her out for 42 hours. He believes that Juliet is actually deceased, so he takes his own life by drinking poison that kills and whilst the poison was taking effect, Juliet awoke and picked up Romeos gun and shot herself in the head. Romeo and Juliet can be considered a tragedy because the protagonists - the young lovers - are faced with a momentous obstacle that results in a horrible and fatal conclusion.

This is the structure of all Shakespeare's tragedies. In the dictionary tragedy is defined as a dramatic composition, often in verse, dealing with a serious or somber theme, typically that of a great person destined through a flaw of character or conflict with some overpowering force, as fate or society, to downfall or destruction. My theory of tragedy is when there is a happy moment between people but is short lived because of death or a severe accident. I do think that Romeo and Juliet is in some way a divine tragedy because when they both die they are reunited in heaven.

There are many themes in the play, one of the themes is hate. Hatred plays an important role in Romeo and Juliet, the hatred between the Montague's and Capulet's ends up killing their only two children, and what was this hate for? Nothing. It was just an ancient feud that no one bothered ending and if the two families had just stopped feuding earlier, the lives of the two lovers could have been saved. Hatred never leads up to anything good.

Shakespeare tells us that it is senseless in fighting with someone just for the sake of fighting, this is an everlasting lesson.

Although you see lots of violence, the main theme is love. You first see the role of love, when Romeo reminisces about his love interest Rosaline and then the second sighting is when Romeo first meets Juliet at the party and then when he serenades her in the Capulet's swimming pool and on her balcony, and from then on you witness a lot of love scenes and even a few intimate scenes. Act 3 scene 1 is the climax of the whole play, Mercutio and Tybalt both die and this adds to the families ongoing feud, the role of hatred really shines in this scene because you see how vindictive and manipulative it can be with a human mind.

Also love is shown during this scene because you see Mercutio risk his own life for his best friend (Romeo) and also you see Romeo taking Tybalt's life to avenge the murder of Mercutio, Romeo didn't want his best friend to die in vain. From this scene, you can tell that the worst isn't over just yet and that the tragedy has just begun. Background on Italy: Verona: Verona is located in northern Italy near the border, somewhat east of Venice. During the

fourteenth century, Verona was a thriving trade city that was extremely successful, but violence was not uncommon.

The reasons for that violence are cited below: The Roman Empire maintained control of Italy through 400 AD, when it split into two distinct halves. The governmental faction established its capital in Constantinople and regarded the emperor as its supreme authority. The spiritual faction (often called ‘Christendom’), centered in Rome and was ruled by the pope. By the fourteenth century, the division between supporters of the emperor and supporters of the pope was firmly established. As in other Italian city-states, a fierce rivalry existed in Verona between the two sides.

They fought deadly battles over the most petty of differences: blood was spilled over such trivial issues as the proper method of eating garlic and the viability of wearing a feather on the left rather than the right side of the cap. Astrology: Astrology was an integral part of Italian society and culture.

Virtually every noble family in Italy had horoscopes drawn for their children upon birth, and most government leaders employed courtly astrologers to advise them on important issues of state.

Many people believed that the conjunction of certain planets gave rise to different religions, and most believed that the stars dictated the outcome of wars. Throughout *Romeo and Juliet*, references are made to supernatural forces at work, and suggestions are continually put forward that Fate is inextricably linked to the stars. ” Shakespeare was clearly aware of Italian custom in regard to astrology. The power of the stars in determining the Fate of the characters can be found numerous times in the play. Bubonic Plague:

The plague decimated Europe in 1348 killing approximately one-third of the population.

Famine and epidemics ensued. Overcrowding in city-states like Venice and Verona led to “ fierce competition for few natural resources, further igniting the turmoil that already raged because of political and religious differences. ” These conflicts are evident in Romeo and Juliet. Boethius, Tragedy, God and Fortune: In sixth century Rome, a statesman named Boethius wrote The Consolation of Philosophy; a work which attempted to explain why tragedy is a part of life. He proposed that life is governed by both God and Fortune, with Fortune serving as a sort of agent carrying out God’s master plan for the universe.

He further asserted that good and bad Fortune occur randomly. This explanation allowed the later readers, during the Dark Ages and the Renaissance, to explain the misfortune they experienced because of the plague and violent conflicts. Boethius’s concepts of God, Fate, and Fortune... even went so far as to claim that misfortune was a greater teacher than good fortune. ” Romeo and Juliet clearly “ reflects fourteenth-century notions of God and Fortune as figures that work to control the fate of human beings.

Background on Elizabethan England:

Queen Elizabeth I: Elizabeth was the third Tudor monarch and ruled England at the height of its prosperity and affluence. In 1588 the Spanish Armada was soundly defeated during an invasion attempt. This caused England’s national pride to grow, and Elizabeth was quite popular as a result. Elizabeth was greatly touted for her “ political shrewdness” and many English

households were built in an “ E” shape to honor her. Shakespeare also wished to please the Queen. He often wrote, in the hope that the Queen, who was a patron of the theater and arts, would enjoy his work. However, many wished to dethrone the “ Virgin Queen” because she would not wed.

In addition, Elizabeth was a Protestant and was constantly challenged by the Catholic Stuarts and the Puritan reformers; however, she managed to hold the throne until her death. The Danverses and the Longs: Another well-known feud of Shakespeare’s time involved the Danvers and Long families of England. Some scholars have speculated that this rivalry might have been yet another source of inspiration” for Romeo and Juliet. The feud allegedly began when “ Charles and Henry Danvers killed their neighbor Henry Long. ” The incident was well known throughout the country and could have been an influence on Shakespeare’s writing.