

Tybalt in "romeo and juliet" essay sample



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Tybalt is a proud and patriotic Capulet cousin, his name reflects his personality (tybalt means the prince of cats) he is a rare swordsman and fights with honor, although he does take personal insults very far he can be viewed in two ways, first as a racist, prejudiced against the Montagues or second as an honorable man who fights for family and what he believes to be right, Mercutio describes him as

" More than prince of cats, I can tell you. O, he is the courageous captain of compliments. He fights as you sing prick-song, keeps time, distance, and proportion; rests me his minim rest, one, two, and the third in your bosom: the very butcher of a silk button, a duellist, a duellist; a gentleman of the very first house, of the first and second cause," (2. 4. 26)

In scene 1 act 1 Rioting has broken out between the two families, Tybalt must be held responsible for turning down an offer of peace from the Montagues, " What, drawn, and talk of peace! I hate the word, As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee: Have at thee, coward!" (1. 1. 72) However following the riot Tybalt and indeed all Capulets and Montagues are issued a warning that if violence is broken out again someone will pay the price

" If ever you disturb our streets again,

Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace." (1. 1. 97)

In this Tybalt does receive a warning so although he can be blamed for exacerbating a fight in act 1 scene 1 he cannot be further punished.

Some would believe that Tybalt does not really listen to the Princes warning which shows a lack of respect for authority which is all part of the reason

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that the Capulets and the Montagues are fighting anyway since, in Act 3 scene 1 Tybalt comes back to fight Romeo but in truth Tybalt is not trying to disturb the peace, he is merely trying to win his own back on Romeo.

When Romeo, Mercutio, Benvolio and several other Montagues Gatecrash the Capulet party they are merely doing it out of fun but to Tybalt it is an act of dishonor, he even tries to attack Romeo during the party,

" This, by his voice, should be a Montague.

Fetch me my rapier, boy. What dares the slave

Come hither, cover'd with an antic face,

To flear and scorn at our solemnity?

Now, by the stock and honor of my kin,

To strike him dead, I hold it not a sin." (1. 5. 59)

but is prevented by Capulet who is feeling generous, when Tybalt challenges him Capulet knows that the worst penalty he can dish out is to hurt his honor so he treats Tybalt Like a naughty boy,

" He shall be endured:

What, Goodman boy! I say, he shall: go to;

Am I the master here, or you? go to.

You'll not endure him! God shall mend my soul!

You'll make a mutiny among my guests!

You will set cock-a-hoop! you'll be the man!" (1. 5. 81)

This leads Tybalt to blame his punishment on Romeo and decides to fight him to also restore his honor

When Romeo doesn't respond to the letter that Tybalt sends to Romeo issuing him a challenge Tybalt sees this as even more of a dishonor and now is furious,

The fight that took place between Mercutio and Tybalt cannot be entirely blamed on Mercutio. Tybalt must shoulder some of the blame, as he was the one that confronted them, making rude comments about Romeo

" thou art a villain." (3. 1. 61)

" Therefore turn and draw." (3. 1. 67)

The second quote is when Tybalt challenges Romeo to a sword fight, this is when Mercutio steps in and Tybalt is more than happy to fight and defeat him.

To make matters worse, Tybalt comes back to where he has just killed Mercutio, after he realises that no one knows what has happened (except for the people that were there) and challenges Romeo again. This time Romeo, acting on behalf of his dead best friend tries to get revenge by agreeing to fight with Tybalt.

This is where Romeo becomes the one to blame. If Romeo had accepted that his friend was dead then he would not have killed Tybalt and instead gone to mourn over Mercutio. This would have meant that Tybalt would have been punished instead of Romeo.

In conclusion I believe that Tybalt is in fact just a man raised with the idea that Montagues are inferior and Capulets superior, although he has a prejudice against the Montagues I don't think that he is to blame for what happened because he does not intentionally try to cause suffering.