

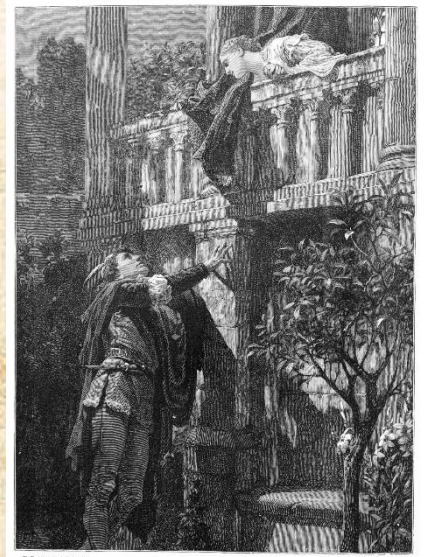
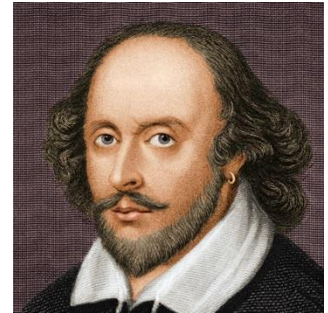
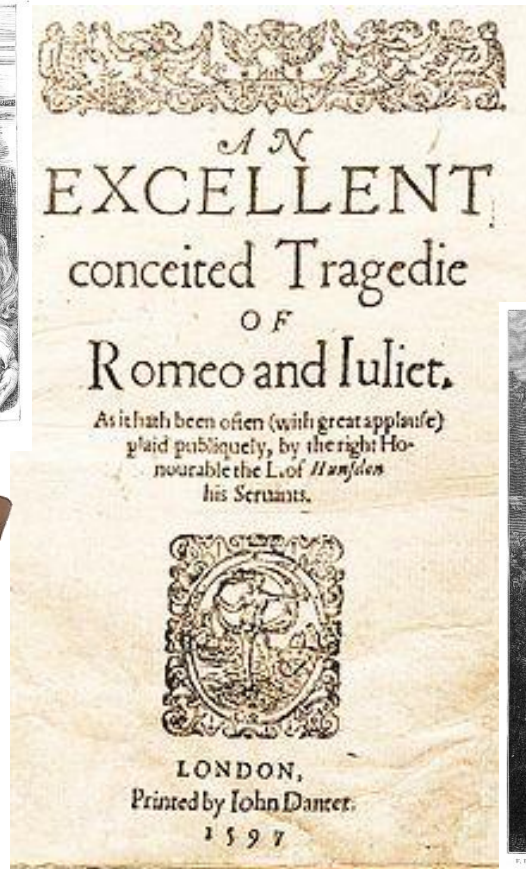
# ‘Romeo and Juliet’

by

William Shakespeare



*Juliet. This is thy death. There rest, and let me die. Act V. Scene III.*



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# **'Romeo and Juliet'**

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## 'Romeo and Juliet': an introduction

### The First Folio

Seven years after his death, 36 of Shakespeare's plays were published in a book now known as the First Folio. Not many people had their plays published because it was very expensive. The fact that Shakespeare's plays were printed tells us that his plays were very popular when he was alive. The First Folio grouped his plays in three genres:

1. **Comedies**, such as 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', 'Twelfth Night', 'The Tempest' and 'All's Well That Ends Well'.
2. **English History Plays**, such as 'Henry IV', 'Richard II', and 'Richard III'. The History Plays tell the stories of the kings of England.
3. **Tragedies**, such as 'Romeo and Juliet', 'Macbeth', 'King Lear', 'Hamlet', and 'Othello'.

Each genre of play has its own rules. Last year, we looked at the rules of a **comedy** when we studied 'The Tempest'. This year, as we study 'Romeo and Juliet', we will find out more about the features of a Shakespearean **tragedy**.

### 'Romeo and Juliet'

Shakespeare wrote during the **Elizabethan era** (1558-1603) and into the Jacobean era (1603-1625) until his death in 1616.

'Romeo and Juliet' was one of his earlier plays. It was probably written in 1595, around the same time he was writing the comedy 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' (AMND). Even though AMND is a comedy and 'Romeo and Juliet' is a tragedy, the two plays have a lot of **similarities**:

- they are both set in **Europe** (AMND in Athens; 'Romeo and Juliet' in Verona, Italy);
- they both have **fathers who tell their daughters who to wed** (Egeus and Lord Capulet);
- and both contain **love plots**.

However, the two plays end in very different ways: while AMND ends with all couples getting married and living happily ever after, 'Romeo and Juliet' ends with the tragic deaths of the two main characters.

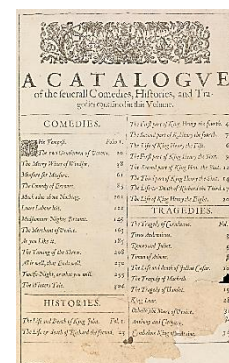
### Verona

As we have seen in AMND and 'The Tempest', Shakespeare enjoyed setting his plays **outside of England**, where his plays were performed. By setting his plays away from home, Shakespeare gave the audience a chance to escape their hard lives during their time in the theatre.

'Romeo and Juliet' is set in **Verona, Italy**. Like Milan and Naples in 'The Tempest', Verona was an Italian city-state during the Elizabethan era. During the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, Italy was not a country like it is today. Instead, the place that we now call Italy was made up of lots of smaller **city-states**. A **city-state is an area that is ruled by a large city**.

The rulers of city-states had different titles. Kings, Queens, Princes, Dukes, and Lords could be rulers. Depending on the city-state, any of these titles could mean that you were the ruler of a city. For example, in 'The Tempest', Prospero was the Duke of Milan and Alonso was the King of Naples. In 'Romeo and Juliet', Prince Escalus is the Prince of Verona. Although there are two powerful families in the city called the Montagues and Capulets, they must obey the Prince's laws.

Due to the popularity of 'Romeo and Juliet', thousands of people travel to Verona today to visit the city where the Shakespeare's most famous tragic characters lived and died.



## The Prologue

Two households, both alike in dignity,  
In fair Verona (where we lay our scene),  
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,  
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean. 4  
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes  
A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life;  
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows  
Doth with their death bury their parents' strife. 8  
The fearful passage of their death-marked love,  
And the continuance of their parents' rage,  
Which but their children's end nought could remove,  
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage; 12  
The which if you with patient ears attend,  
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend. 14

**Bradley, A.C., 'The Substance of Shakespearean Tragedy', in *Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear and Macbeth* (1905)**

This is an academic essay. The author, A C Bradley, was one of the world's most influential Shakespeare scholars. Today, students at universities will read Bradley's essays when they are studying Shakespeare.

This essay explains what makes a Shakespearean tragedy, and what kind of characters are the heroes in Shakespeare's tragedies. **Note:** *The majority of tragic heroes are men, which is why Bradley refers to 'he' and 'him'. However, Juliet is also a tragic hero, so the pronouns can refer to men **or** women.*

In this lecture, we will consider this question: What makes a Shakespearean tragedy? To address this task, we will take examples from across his plays and we will gradually arrive at an overall idea of what is meant by the term 'Shakespearean Tragedy'.

## One character

First, a Shakespearean tragedy is the story of one person, the 'hero,' or at most of two, the 'hero' and 'heroine.' It is only in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra* that the heroine is as much the centre of the action as the hero. The other tragedies, including *Macbeth*, have single stars. We may speak of the tragic story as being usually concerned with one person.

## Death

The story, next, leads up to, and includes, the *death* of the hero. No play that ends with the hero remaining alive can be called a tragedy. The play ends with the hero's death. The rest of the story depicts the troubled part of the hero's life which leads up to his death. A Shakespearean tragedy is a tale of suffering and calamity concluding in death.

## Status

Shakespeare is concerned always with persons of 'high status' in his tragedies. They are often kings or princes; at the least, as in *Romeo and Juliet*, with members of great houses, whose quarrels impact a large number of people.

## Action

The calamities of tragedy do not simply happen, nor are they sent by some god; they occur from characters' actions.

<p>We see people placed in certain circumstances; and we see certain actions. These actions lead onto others, and so on until this series of actions leads to a catastrophe. The effect is to make us view the sufferings of the catastrophe as something which is caused by the hero. The hero always contributes in some way to the disaster in which he or she perishes.</p>	40	<b>catastrophe</b> – awful disaster
<p>The tragic world is a world of action. We see men and women strike into the existing order of things in pursuit of their ideas. But what they achieve is not what they wanted; it is terribly unlike it. They act freely, and yet their action traps them hand and foot. They lead themselves into a snare of their own creation. Everywhere in Shakespeare's tragedies, the hero desires something, and he tries to obtain it. But whatever he dreams of, he achieves that which he least dreamed of: his own destruction.</p>	45	<b>perishes</b> – dies
<p>So that, by way of summary, we may define tragedy thus: 'A tragedy is a story of human actions producing exceptional calamity and ending in the death of such a man'.</p>	50	<b>snare</b> – trap
<p><b>Character</b></p> <p>Let us turn now from the 'action' to the central figure in it, and let us ask whether they have any characteristics in common which are essential to Shakespearean tragedies.</p>	55	
<p><b>Exceptional</b></p> <p>One they certainly have. They are exceptional beings. We have seen already that the hero is a person of high status or of public importance, and that his actions or sufferings are of an unusual kind. But this is not all. His nature also is exceptional, and generally raises him in some respect much above the average level of humanity.</p>	60	
<p>In almost all tragic heroes we observe a marked one-sidedness; a deadly tendency to pursue one interest, object, or passion. This is, for Shakespeare, the fundamental tragic characteristic. It is present in his early heroes, Romeo and Richard II. Both are infatuated: one with love, one with power. This infatuation is what makes them exceptional, and in both cases, it is what leads to their catastrophic deaths.</p>	65	<b>nature</b> – inbuilt character
	70	<b>one-sidedness</b> – determination, focus
	75	<b>infatuated</b> – obsessed

## Romeo and Juliet's first meeting (1.5.92–109)

The first fourteen lines (92–105) of the lovers' meeting are written in sonnet form (the first twelve lines rhyme alternately; the last two lines are a rhyming couplet). It is helpful to know that:

- to show their faith, pilgrims made long journeys to the shrines of the Holy Land; they brought back **palm leaves** as proof of their visits, and so were known as '**palmer**s'
- Romeo compares Juliet to a shrine or a saint – religious imagery runs through the conversation ('profane', 'holy shrine', 'sin', 'pilgrims', 'wrong', 'devotion', 'palmer
s', 'faith', 'despair', 'purged', 'trespass').



Original version		Modern prose version
<b>ROMEO</b>	[To Juliet] If I profane with my unworhiest hand This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this, My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss. 95	If I have sinned by touching you (who are like a holy shrine) with my rough, unworthy hand, then my two lips are standing here like pilgrims ready to make amends with a gentle kiss.
<b>JULIET</b>	Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much, Which mannerly devotion shows in this, For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch, And palm to palm is holy palmer's kiss.	Good pilgrim, you discredit your hand too much. Your polite manners show this. After all, saints touch their palms against pilgrims'. Holding one hand against another is like a kiss.
<b>ROMEO</b>	Have not saints lips, and holy palmer too? 100	Don't saints and pilgrims also have lips?
<b>JULIET</b>	Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.	Yes, they do, and they use their lips to pray.
<b>ROMEO</b>	O then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do: They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.	Then, dear saint, let our lips do what our hands do. Please grant my prayer so that my faith doesn't turn to despair.
<b>JULIET</b>	Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.	Saints don't move, even when they grant prayers.
<b>ROMEO</b>	Then move not while my prayer's effect I take. 105 Thus from my lips, by thine, my sin is purged. [Kissing her.]	Then don't move while I act out my prayer. Your lips will get rid of my sin.
<b>JULIET</b>	Then have my lips the sin that they have took.	Now my lips have the sin that you gave me!
<b>ROMEO</b>	Sin from my lips? O trespass sweetly urged! Give me my sin again. [Kissing her again.]	I've given you my sin? This is a crime that you encourage me to continue! Give me my sin back.
<b>JULIET</b>	You kiss by the book.	You kiss like an expert.



**Bradley, A.C., 'Construction in Shakespeare's Tragedies', in  
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Having already discussed the characters of a Shakespearean tragedy, we should naturally go on to examine their structure.		
A Shakespearean tragedy contains a conflict which ends in a catastrophe. We can divide the plot of Shakespeare tragedies into three parts.	5	
1. The beginning sets out the situation of the play. In this situation, there will be the potential for some conflict arises. This section is called the <b>Exposition</b> .	10	<b>Exposition</b> - introduction
2. The second part deals with the growth of the conflicts in the play. The heroes often have to try to overcome more than one conflict. This middle section we may call the <b>Development</b> .	15	
3. The final section of the tragedy shows the resolution of the conflict in a <b>Catastrophe</b> .	15	<b>resolution</b> – solution; end
As is the nature of narrative, the three sections do not always have an obvious start and end. They often bleed into one another. The first part glides into the second, and the second into the third, and there may sometimes be difficulty in drawing the lines between them.	20	<b>Catastrophe</b> – awful disaster
<b><u>Exposition</u></b>	25	<b>status quo</b> – existing state of things
The main business of the Exposition is to show an audience the <i>status quo</i> of the world of the play. We are introduced to the location of the play, the characters that live there, their relationships to each other, and perhaps some hints at the tensions that may arise from these situations and relationships. An audience is left expectant because the situation points to great difficulties in the future. For example, we see first the hatred of the Montagues and Capulets; and then we see Romeo ready to fall	30	
	35	

violently in love; and then we hear talk of a marriage between Juliet and Paris; but the exposition is not complete, and the conflict has not definitely begun to arise, till, in the last scene of the First Act, Romeo the Montague sees Juliet the Capulet and becomes her slave.	40	
The end of the Exposition is generally marked in the mind of the reader by a feeling that the action it contains is for the moment complete but has left a problem; for example, in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , the lovers have met, but their families are embroiled in a deadly feud and Juliet has been promised to another man. And so we ask, <i>What will come of this?</i>	45	
<b><u>Development</u></b>	50	
<b>Obstacles</b>		
The Development of the play makes up the bulk of the play. In some tragedies, the obstacles can be opposing persons or groups. So it is in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> and <i>Macbeth</i> , but it is not always so. Indeed, the battle between the two families is not the only obstacle the heroes must overcome in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> : Juliet must also act in defiance of her father's promise of marriage to his friend Paris. During the Development, the hero must overcome the obstacles that lay in his or her way. These obstacles have been established in the Exposition. This is where the hero takes action, and these actions always lead to their demise.	55 60 65	opposing – warring  demise – death
<b><u>Catastrophe</u></b>		
We have already touched on the nature of the Catastrophe, the final part of a Shakespearean tragedy. It is worth mentioning, however, that Shakespeare rarely attempts to surprise an audience with his catastrophes. They are felt to be inevitable, though the precise way in which they will be brought about is not, of course, foreseen. Occasionally, where we dread the catastrophe because we love the hero, a moment occurs, just before it, in which a gleam of false hope lights up the darkening scene; and, though we know it is false, it affects us.	70 75	inevitable – unavoidable, always going to happen
But no play at the end of which the hero remains alive is a tragedy. The story depicts the troubled part of the hero's life which precedes and leads up to his death. It is, in fact, essentially a tale of suffering and calamity concluding in death.		calamity – terrible accidents

## Romeo and Juliet exchange vows (2.2.49-189)

This is a slightly abridged edition of the balcony scene. At the top of each page there is a brief summary of what is happening.

- 1) When Romeo reveals himself, she fears for his safety.
- 2) Juliet warns Romeo that her family will kill him if they find him.

ROMEO	I take thee at thy word: Call me but love, and I'll be new baptised; Henceforth I never will be Romeo.	Henceforth from this time on <b>bescreened</b> hidden <b>counsel</b> private thoughts
JULIET	What man art thou that thus bescreened in night So stumblest on my counsel?	
ROMEO	By a name I know not how to tell thee who I am. My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself, Because it is an enemy to thee; Had I it written, I would tear the word.	
JULIET	My ears have yet not drunk a hundred words Of thy tongue's uttering, yet I know the sound. Art thou not Romeo and a Montague?	
ROMEO	Neither, fair maid, if either thee dislike.	
JULIET	How cam'st thou hither, tell me, and wherefore? The orchard walls are high and hard to climb, And the place death, considering who thou art, If any of my kinsmen find thee here.	the place death by being here you risk your life <b>o'erperch</b> fly over
ROMEO	With love's light wings did I o'erperch these walls, For stony limits cannot hold love out, And what love can do, that dares love attempt: Therefore thy kinsmen are no stop to me.	
JULIET	If they do see thee, they will murder thee.	
ROMEO	Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye Than twenty of their swords. Look thou but sweet, And I am proof against their enmity.	proof protected
JULIET	I would not for the world they saw thee here.	
ROMEO	I have night's cloak to hide me from their eyes, And but thou love me, let them find me here; My life were better ended by their hate, Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love.	but thou if you do not <b>prorouged</b> postponed <b>wanting of</b> lacking

- 3) Admitting embarrassment at being overheard telling of her love, Juliet asks if Romeo loves her.
- 4) Romeo and Juliet exchange vows of love, but both are fearful. Juliet fears the suddenness of their love.
- 5) Juliet, promising marriage, says she will send a messenger tomorrow to ask for the time and place of the wedding.
- 6) At the Nurse's call, Juliet goes inside the house.

**JULIET** Thou knowest the mask of night is on my face,  
 Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek.  
 Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say 'Ay';  
 And I will take thy word. O gentle Romeo,  
 If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully;  
 Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,  
 I'll frown and be perverse, and say thee nay,  
 So thou wilt woo, but else not for the world.  
 In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,  
 And therefore thou mayst think my behaviour light:  
 But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true  
 Than those that have more coying to be strange.  
 I should have been more strange, I must confess,  
 But that thou overheard'st, ere I was ware,  
 My true-love passion; therefore pardon me,  
 And not impute this yielding to light love,  
 Which the dark night hath so discovered.  
 Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.  
 If that thy bent of love be honourable,  
 Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow,  
 By one that I'll procure to come to thee,  
 Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite,  
 And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay,  
 And follow thee my lord throughout the world.

**bepaint** colour

**fond** foolish

**light** wanton, loose

**coying to be strange** cunning to be distant or offhand

**ere I was aware** before I was aware you were listening

**impute** attribute

**light love** false feeling

**bent** intention

**one that I'll procure**

someone I'll choose

**Nurse** [Within] Madam!

**JULIET** I come, anon. -- But if thou meanest not well,  
 I do beseech thee--

**Nurse** [Within] Madam!

**JULIET** By and by, I come:--

To cease thy strife, and leave me to my grief.  
 Tomorrow will I send.

**cease thy strife** stop your effort (of loving me)

**ROMEO** So thrive my soul--

**JULIET** A thousand times good night!

[Exit above]

- 7) Returning from inside, Juliet calls Romeo back.
- 8) They reluctantly part.
- 9) She compares him to a captive bird that can never escape from its owner.
- 10) Romeo promises to seek Friar Lawrence's help.

**ROMEO** A thousand times the worse, to want thy light.  
 Love goes toward love, as schoolboys from  
 their books,  
 But love from love, toward school with heavy  
 looks.

**want** lack

*[Retiring slowly]*

*Enter Juliet again [above]*

**JULIET** Romeo!

**ROMEO** My niësse?

**niësse** young,  
 unfledged hawk  
**a'clock** time

**JULIET** What a'clock to-morrow  
 Shall I send to thee?

**ROMEO** By the hour of nine.

**JULIET** I will not fail, 'tis twenty years till then.  
 'Tis almost morning, I would have thee gone:  
 And yet no farther than a wanton's bird,  
 Who lets it hop a little from her hand,  
 Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,  
 And with a silken thread plucks it back again,  
 So loving-jealous of his liberty.

**wonton's bird** spoilt  
 child's pet bird  
 (held captive by  
 sting tied to its legs)

**gyves** fetters on the  
 legs of prisoners

**ROMEO** I would I were thy bird.

**JULIET** Sweet, so would I,  
 Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.  
 Good night, good night! Parting is such  
 sweet sorrow,  
 That I shall say good night till it be morrow.

**kill thee ...**  
**cherishing** kill you  
 with kindness

*[Exit above]*

**ROMEO** Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast!  
 Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest!  
 Hence will I to my ghostly sire's close cell,  
 His help to crave, and my dear hap to tell.

**ghostly sire** Friar  
 Lawrence  
 (Romeo's 'spiritual  
 father')

*Exit* **close cell** private  
 room

**crave** seek  
**dear hap** good  
 fortune

## Act 3, Scene 1. A public place.

Montagues	Capulets
Romeo	Tybalt
Benvolio	Petruchio
Mercutio, and his Page	

### Enter MERCUTIO and his PAGE, BENVOLIO, and MEN

**BENVOLIO** I beg thee, good Mercutio, let's leave:  
The day is hot, the Capulets are out,  
And, if we meet, we shall not escape a brawl.  
Here come the Capulets. 5

**MERCUTIO** I care not.

### Enter TYBALT, PETRUCHIO, and others

**TYBALT** Follow me close, for I will speak to them.  
[To Mercutio] Gentlemen, good day: a word with one of you.  
Mercutio, thou consort with Romeo,-- 10

**MERCUTIO** Consort! what, dost thou make us minstrels? And thou make  
minstrels of us, look to hear nothing but discords: here's my  
fiddlestick; here's that shall make you dance. 'Zounds, consort!

**BENVOLIO** We talk here in the public view of men:  
Either withdraw unto some private place, 15  
Or else depart; here all eyes gaze on us.

### Enter ROMEO

**TYBALT** Well, peace be with you, sir: here comes my man.

**MERCUTIO** But I'll be hanged, sir, if he wear your colours.

**TYBALT** Romeo, the hate I bear thee can afford 20  
No better term than this,--thou art a villain.

**ROMEO** Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee  
Excuses the rage of your greeting.  
Villain am I none; therefore farewell;  
I see thou know'st me not. 25

**TYBALT** Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries  
That you have done me; therefore turn and draw.

**ROMEO** I do protest, I never injured thee,  
But love thee better than thou canst imagine.  
And so, good Capulet,--which name I love 30  
As dearly as my own,--be satisfied.

**MERCUTIO** O calm, dishonourable, vile submission!

### Draws

Tybalt, you rat-catcher, will you walk away?  
**TYBALT** What wouldst thou have with me? 35

**MERCUTIO** Good king of cats, I would take one of your nine lives. Will you  
pluck your sword out? Make haste, or else mine will be about  
your ears before yours is out.

**TYBALT** I am for you.

### Drawing

**ROMEO** Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up. 40

**MERCUTIO** Come, sir.

### They fight

**ROMEO** Draw, Benvolio; beat down their weapons.  
Gentlemen, for shame, stop this outrage! 45  
Tybalt, Mercutio, the prince has  
Forbidden fighting in Verona streets.

<b>Montagues</b> Romeo Benvolio Mercutio, and his Page	<b>Capulets</b> Tybalt Petruchio
---	--

**ROMEO steps between them**

Stop, Tybalt! good Mercutio!

**Under ROMEO's arm, TYBALT thrusts MERCUTIO.**

50

**Away TYBALT flies with his followers**

**MERCUTIO** I am hurt.

A plague o' both your houses! I am done for.

Is Tybalt gone, and unhurt?

**BENVOLIO** What, art thou hurt?

55

**MERCUTIO** Ay, ay, a scratch, a scratch; marry, 'tis enough.  
Where is my page? Go, villain, fetch a surgeon.

**Exit Page**

**ROMEO** Courage, man; the hurt cannot be much.

**MERCUTIO** No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church-door;  
but 'tis enough, 'twill serve: ask for me to-morrow, and you  
shall find me a grave man. A plague o' both your houses! Why  
the devil came you between us? I was hurt under your arm.

**ROMEO** I thought all for the best.

**MERCUTIO** A plague o' both your houses!  
They have made worms' meat of me: I have it,  
And soundly too: your houses! 65

**Exit with BENVOLIO**

**ROMEO** This gentleman, My very friend,  
Has got his mortal hurt on my behalf;  
My reputation stain'd with Tybalt's insult,  
Tybalt, that an hour hath been my family! 70

**Enter BENVOLIO**

**BENVOLIO** O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio's dead!  
That brave spirit hath risen up to the clouds.  
But look! Here comes the furious Tybalt again. 75

**ROMEO** He alive, and Mercutio slain!  
Fire-eyed fury be my guide now!

**Enter TYBALT**

Now, Tybalt, Mercutio's soul is but  
A little way above our heads.  
And either thou, or I, or both, must go with him. 80

**TYBALT** Thou, wretched boy, shalt with him hence.

**ROMEO** This shall determine that.

**They fight; TYBALT falls**

85

**BENVOLIO** Romeo, away, be gone!  
The citizens are up, and Tybalt slain.  
Stand not amazed: the prince will doom thee death,  
If thou art taken: hence, be gone, away!

**ROMEO** O, I am fortune's fool!

90

**BENVOLIO** Why dost thou stay?

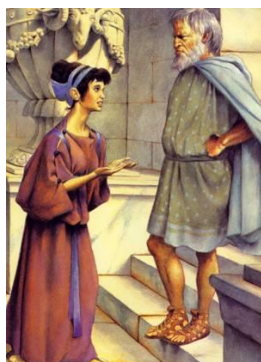
**Exit ROMEO**

## Daughters in Shakespeare: dreams, duty and defiance

A number of Shakespeare's plays show daughters negotiating the demands of their fathers, often trying to reconcile duty with a desire for independence. **Kim Ballard** discusses women's obligations to the men in their lives during the Elizabethan era.

Shakespeare created not only complex and engaging female roles, but also many memorable parent-child relationships. A significant number of these relationships involve fathers and daughters. Interestingly, mothers are often absent from the drama, throwing the daughter/father relationship into sharp relief. A father of two daughters himself, Shakespeare's dramatic daughters make a formidable line-up of young women, most of them at a transitional stage between the protection of their childhood home and an adult life beyond it. The transition is rarely a smooth one: in both comedies and tragedies, tension rises as daughters go in search of love, adventure and independence.

*Romeo and Juliet* may be a love story, but a daughter/father relationship lies at the heart of the play's events. Juliet is not yet 14 when the young nobleman Paris approaches her father Capulet for permission to woo his daughter. At first, Capulet seems protective of Juliet, his only surviving child, and proposes that 'two more summers' should pass before 'we may think her ripe to be a bride' (1.2.10–11). But Paris is a good prospect, a relative of the Prince of Verona, so Capulet agrees to Paris's request, inviting him to a family feast that very evening which Juliet will be attending.



*Hermia had to obey her father's wishes in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'*

In Shakespeare's time, daughters of respectable families, like Juliet, could expect their fathers to have a significant involvement in choosing their future husband. This reflected the subordinate position of women in a society at the time, and particularly the traditional view that daughters were a commodity and could be used in marriage to create useful alliances. Paternal involvement in husband selection provided material for many of Shakespeare's plays, and he makes dramatic use of the resulting family clashes. Initially, Capulet is seemingly kinder than many fathers in allowing Juliet some say over her future husband: 'But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart, / My will to her consent is but a part...' (1.2.16–17).

Later in the play, however, when the family is in shock after their kinsman Tybalt has been murdered, Capulet leaps ahead and sets an early date for the wedding without consulting his daughter first. 'I think she will be rul'd / In all respects by me' (3.4.13–14) he comments, clearly expecting Juliet to be obedient.

The obedient way young women of the 16th century were meant to behave towards their parents was not only reflected in religious teaching but also well



documented in publications known as 'conduct books'. At the beginning of the play, Lady Capulet – sent to speak to Juliet by her husband – tells Juliet about Paris's interest in her, and encourages her to consider him. Juliet's reply exemplifies the behaviour expected of her:

*I'll look to like, if looking liking move;  
But no more deep will I endart mine eye  
Than your consent gives strength to make it fly. (1.3.97–99)*

Unfortunately, Juliet's dutiful words are soon forgotten when, overcome by her 'warm youthful blood', she falls in love with Romeo (the son of her father's enemy) and marries him in secret.



*In the Elizabethan era, men dominated the lives of women*

Time and again Shakespeare's plays dramatise the conflict between the status quo in which fathers chose husbands for their daughters and the new order in which daughters wished to choose their own mates based on affection. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* opens with Egeus demanding that his daughter Hermia either marry Demetrius, the husband he has selected for her, or be put to death; while Hermia remains steadfastly committed to Lysander, the prospective husband that *she* has chosen.

It's part of Juliet's tragedy that she's unable to tell her authoritarian father about her marriage to Romeo, even though she could express her love with an eloquence that could overcome anger and hatred. Capulet is determined to 'give' her to Paris (a father's right, even enshrined in the marriage ceremony). After seeing their daughters married off to the husband of their choosing, the relationship between a father and a daughter would grow more distant. They have, after all, 'given' their daughter away in marriage; the child is no longer theirs. Rather, the woman is now the husband's. He is now the superior influence in her life.

The Christian scholar, John Knox, summarised the age's attitudes to women: 'woman in her greatest perfection was made to serve and obey man, not to rule and command him.' However, the triumphant rule of Elizabeth I marked the beginning of a change in these opinions – indeed, Shakespeare can be seen to challenge these viewpoints with his strong, confident and defiant female characters.

## Juliet begs Friar Lawrence for advice (Act 4, Scene 1)

Parts in *italics* are in a modern version

<b>JULIET</b>	<i>O shut the door! and when you have, Come weep with me. I am beyond all hope!</i>	
<b>FRIAR LAURENCE</b>	<i>Ah, Juliet, I already know why you are so upset. I hear you must – and nothing can delay it – Be married to Paris on Thursday.</i>	5
<b>JULIET</b>	<i>Don't remind me, Friar, Unless you can tell me how I may prevent it. If, in your wisdom, you cannot help me, At least call my solution wise, And with this knife I'll sort out my situation now.</i>	10
<b>FRIAR LAURENCE</b>	<i>So, with your wise experience Give help me now, or, behold: This knife will solve all of my problems. Stop, child: I do spy a kind of hope. It is dangerous, but desperate times Call for desperate measures. If, rather than marrying County Paris, You have the strength of will to kill yourself, Then is it likely you will undertake A thing like death to escape the shame you feel.</i>	15 20
<b>JULIET</b>	<i>If you are willing, I'll give you a solution. O, ask me to leap from off the battlements Of yonder tower, rather than marry Paris; Or tell me to go into a new-made grave And hide with a dead man in his shroud.</i>	25
	<i>Things that, to hear them, would make me tremble; And I will do it without fear or doubt, To live a pure wife to my sweet love.</i>	



## Juliet's death

Romeo and Juliet kiss when they meet for the first time in Act 1. Juliet **also** kisses Romeo before she kills herself in Act 5.

What are the similarities or differences between Romeo and Juliet's first kiss in Act 1 and their last kiss in Act 5?

Similarities	Differences
They kiss each other in <b>secret</b> .	In Act 1, <b>Romeo</b> moved to kiss Juliet. In Act 5, <b>Juliet</b> kisses him.

## Juliet

Here is a list of the ways Juliet could be described at the start of the play.

**Explain how Juliet has changed at the end of the play.**

Juliet at the start of the play	Juliet at the end of the play
<b>Obedient:</b> she does what she is told	
<b>Quiet</b> and <b>meek:</b> she doesn't say much and lets others talk on her behalf	
<b>Loyal</b> to her <b>parents:</b> she wants to make her mother and father happy	
<b>Friendly, family-based:</b> At the start of the play, Juliet is surrounded by her family (father and mother) and friends (nurse, Romeo, Friar Lawrence)	

## **Essay Writing**

### **Writers' names**

You should refer to the author of a text by their **surname**.

- Which **two sentences** would be **correct**?
- **Fix up the incorrect sentences.**

1. The character of Miss Temple shows Brontë's forgiving and kind attitudes to childhood.
2. George highlights how corrupt the pigs are becoming as they begin to sleep in beds and drink whiskey.
3. Bill is one of Dickens' most famous and wicked villains.
4. In 'The Tempest', Shakespear portrays Caliban as a victim of Prospero's cruelty.
5. By including both Holmes and Watson, Sir Arthur highlights just how brilliant the detective's mind is.

### **Thesis**

Your answer should contain a thesis. A **thesis** is the **main argument** that runs through your essay.

With a partner, come up with **2 theses** for **these questions**:

1. Is Lord Capulet a tyrant?
2. What is the greatest obstacle the two lovers face in 'Romeo and Juliet'?

### **Pronouns**

You should make it clear who you are talking about in your writing. You should avoid using 'he', 'him', 'she' and 'her' if it could be unclear who you are talking about.

**Correct the unclear parts of these sentences.**

1. Before the Capulets' ball, Lady Capulet and the Nurse discuss marriage with Juliet. Lady Capulet and the Nurse declare how handsome Paris is. She tells her that she will do what she asks her to do.
2. Romeo and Juliet fall deeply in love at first sight. Romeo compares Juliet to a saint and an angel.
3. Tybalt and Mercutio fight to the death as Romeo looks on. He stabs him underneath his arm.

<p><b>Term:</b> Obstacle</p> <p><b>Definition:</b></p> <p><b>Example from 'Romeo and Juliet':</b> The feud between the Montages and Capulets; Juliet has been promised to Paris in marriage</p>
<p><b>Term:</b></p> <p><b>Definition:</b> The beginning part of the play, where the situation is explained.</p> <p><b>Example from 'Romeo and Juliet':</b> We learn of the feud between the Montages and Capulets; Romeo falls in love with Juliet at the Capulets' ball.</p>
<p><b>Term:</b></p> <p><b>Definition:</b> the situation as it currently exists. The 'normal' situation.</p> <p><b>Example(s) from 'Romeo and Juliet':</b> The Montagues and Capulets are enemies; fathers tell their daughters who to marry.</p>
<p><b>Term:</b> Foreshadowing</p> <p><b>Definition:</b> to foreshadow is to show or warn that something bigger, worse, or more important is coming.</p> <p><b>Example(s) from 'Romeo and Juliet':</b></p>
<p><b>Term:</b> Hyperbole</p> <p><b>Definition:</b></p> <p><b>Example from 'Romeo and Juliet':</b> Romeo says, 'Juliet is the sun'; he compares her to 'the fairest stars', a 'bright angel', and a 'messenger of heaven'.</p>

**Fix up the errors in this paragraph.**

<p>Shakespear shows that Lord Capulet is a cruel and tyrant. Lord Capulet uses hyperbole to threaten his daughter. He tells her to 'hang, beg, starve, die in the streets. Juliet's cruel father cannot believe that his daughter will not obey his orders. Lord Capulet and Romeo treat Juliet in different ways. Romeo is upset when he leaves Juliet, but he is furious. This contrast between Lord Capulet and Romeo highlights how desperate and confused Juliet is.</p>
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## **Queen Mab**

Complete the table about what Queen Mab does when people are sleeping, using Mercutio's words in Act 1 Scene 4, lines 70 - 93.

<b>Person Queen Mab visits</b>	<b>Part of the body Queen Mab drives her carriage</b>	<b>What the person dreams of</b>
Lovers	brain	Dream of love

The Tragic Hero	
<b>The characters are 'high-status' – they are important people</b>	
Romeo	Juliet
<b>The tragic hero acts: they try to do things. They don't just let things happen to them</b>	
Romeo	Juliet
<b>Whatever they try to do, it always puts them in a worse situation</b>	
Romeo	Juliet
<b>They are exceptional – there is something that makes them special</b>	
Romeo	Juliet

The tragic plot	
<b>1: Exposition</b>	
Montagues and Capulets are at war	
Lord Capulet has promised his daughter to Paris	
Romeo and Juliet fall in love	
<b>2: Development</b>	
<b>Obstacle A:</b> Romeo and Juliet are from feuding families	
<b>Obstacle B:</b> Juliet has already been promised to another man	
<b>3: Catastrophe</b>	
The story ends in the death of the main character	



