

Romeo and Juliet Knowledge Organiser



Very Brief Plot Summary

Act 1: Set in Verona, we find two warring families – the Montagues and the Capulets. There is a ball and two young people meet and fall in love – Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet. Their families will never allow this.

Act 2: Romeo and Juliet continue to see each other secretly. Romeo wishes he was not a Montague and they decide that they will secretly marry.

Act 3: Tybalt (Juliet's cousin) tries to argue with Romeo, who refuses. Mercutio (Romeo's friend) goads Tybalt into a fight and is killed by Tybalt when Romeo attempts to stop them. Romeo then murders Tybalt in his anger.

Act 4: Juliet asks for help from Friar Lawrence. He gives her a sleeping potion that will make her appear dead so that on her supposed wedding day to Paris she will be carried to the family vault, where Romeo will find her and whisk her away.

Act 5: Romeo doesn't receive the letter about the plan. He hears Juliet has died and obtains a poison for himself. Romeo sees Juliet (assuming she is dead) and poisons himself. Juliet awakes and realising what has happened kills herself. The two families reconcile in the wake of the tragedy.

Characters

Romeo Montague – Son of the Montague family.

Juliet Capulet – Daughter of the Capulet family.

Mercutio – Friend to Romeo – neither Capulet nor Montague.

Tybalt – Juliet's Cousin, a prominent Capulet.

Benvolio – Romeo's cousin.

Friar Lawrence – A Franciscan monk and friend to both families.

Nurse – Juliet's confidante, very close to her, motherly.

Prince Escalus – Leader of Verona, trying to keep peace between the families.

Honour

Maintaining family honour was seen as of great importance. If you were challenged to a duel and refused, your family would be seen as cowardly and this would dishonour their status and power. This strong regard for honour could often lead to violence and unrest.

Gender

Men controlled society. Women were seen as the weaker sex and were expected to be obedient to their families and husbands.

Arranged Marriage

Arranged marriages between wealthy families were never about love. They were arranged to improve status, power and wealth.

Catholicism

Religion was very important at this time and set in Italy, the Catholic church had great influence. Marriage was sacred and could not be undone. There was a strong belief in 'damnation' for mortal sin. Suicide was considered a mortal sin.

Family and children

Children were considered property of their parents. It was also common for children to have a 'nurse' and as a result, did not often have strong bonds with their parents.

Courtly love

Courtly love was all about behaviour and was supposed to be polite, restrained and courteous. Often gifts were exchanged but there was little contact. The notion of 'courtly love' strongly opposes the passion and emotion we associated with 'real love'.

Key Quotations

"A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life" Prologue

"My child is yet a stranger in the world" Act 1 Scene 2

"It is too rough,

Too rude, too boisterous, and it pricks like a thorn." Act 1, Scene 4

"O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!" Act 1, Scene 5

"Did my heart love till now?" Act 1 Scene 5

"I will withdraw, but this intrusion shall, Now seeming sweet, convert to bitterest gall!" Act 1, Scene 5

"If he be married, my grave is like to be my wedding bed." Act 1, Scene 5

"My only love sprung from my only hate!

Too early seen unknown, and known too late!" Act 1, Scene 5

"But, soft, what light through yonder window breaks?"

It is the east, and Juliet is the sun." Act 2, Scene 1

"Oh Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?" Act 2, Scene 1

"Deny thy father and refuse thy name." Act 2, Scene 2

"For this alliance may so happy prove

To turn your households' rancour to pure love." Act 2, Scene 1

"Parting is such sweet sorrow." Act 2, Scene 1

"These violent delights have violent ends." Act 2, Scene 5

"A plague o'both your houses!" Act 3, Scene 1

"Mercy but murders, pardoning those that kill." Act 3, Scene 1

"O deadly sin! O rude unthankfulness!" Act 3 Scene 3

"Romeo, Romeo, Romeo! Here's drink: I drink to thee." Act 4, Scene 3

My lady's dead! Oh curse the day that I was born! Act 4, Scene 5

"O happy dagger,

This is thy sheath: there rust, and let me die." Act 5, Scene 3

"All are punished." Act 5, Scene 3

"For never was a story of more woe, Than this of Juliet and her Romeo." Act 5, Scene 3



Themes	
Love	Fate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passionate, chaotic love is pitched against the 'order' of courtly love. • Love often leads to violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No matter what they do, the characters cannot escape their fate. It is the determination of Romeo and Juliet in the face of fate that conveys how fiery the love between them is.
Individuals V Society	Language and Word Play
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forbidden love forces Romeo and Juliet to turn against the conformity of the society their live in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant play on language, using pun, rhyme and double-entendre. • Romeo and Juliet seem to use word play to escape from the world, their act of rebellion.
Violence and Conflict	Death
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving force in the play. • Occurs between several characters. • Opens the play and concludes it with the deaths of Romeo and Juliet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Society was much more comfortable with the idea of death than we are now. • Death is mentioned and referenced throughout the play.

Symbols and Motifs

Poison; Night; light/dark imagery; thumb-biting; Dreams/Queen Mab; opposing points of view.



Key Vocabulary	
patriarchy	Verona
Elizabethan	conspire
character	ambiguity
society	predicament
violence	unease
conflict	suicide
resolution	brawl
civil unrest	relationship
marriage	adversity
catholic	provoke
Catholicism	mutiny
Shakespeare	adversary

Language and Techniques
prologue
foreshadowing
dramatic irony
bawdy humour
monologue
soliloquy
oxymoron
metaphor
simile
imagery
iambic pentameter
juxtaposition
tragedy
antagonist
blank verse
sonnet
sonnet form
suspense

