# Romeo & Juliet

What does it mean to kill someone? To stab them in the chest? Or indirectly enable the situation where they kill themselves? Friar Lawrence is undeniably the most responsible for the foreshadowed, tragic double suicide at the end of the famous Shakespearean tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet*. This is because of many crucial mistakes that the Franciscan Monk made throughout the story: firstly, his rush to marry Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet in order to aspire to a childish fantasy of peace between the feuding families, Secondly his poor role as Romeo’s secondary father figure in order to lead him in a better direction, and lastly, his overly convoluted and poorly planned out schemes in order for the lovers to run away together.

The Franciscan Monk's fantasy for peace between the two feuding families directly causes the Friar to hastily marry the young ‘star-crossed lovers’ far earlier than should have occurred. Romeo had only recently met Juliet, and the Friar even comments on how fast he butterflied from one infatuation to another with, “So soon forsaken? Young men’s love then lies Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.” (Act 2, Scene 3) This shows that while the Friar appears to the reader as a modest, calm and patient man, to contrast Romeo and his hamartia of impatience, however if you look further at the Friar’s actions the next day he is marrying the two lovers who met less than 12 hours ago, contradicting his prior statement. Shakespeare’s use of dramatic irony at the start of the play with “From forth the fatal loins of these two foes, a pair of star-crossed lovers take their life.” (Prologue) Is used to give the reader or watcher a sense of looming dread throughout the play. However the most interesting part about many of Shakespeare’s plays is the effect that the tragedy has on the other characters in the play, for example, Mercutio, who was seen as completely innocent, yet was tragically murdered because of the hasty actions of the Friar and Romeo. In conclusion the aspiration of the Friar to achieve the immature vision of peace between the two feuding families directly causes the deaths of not only Romeo and Juliet, but also Mercutio and Tybalt.

Despite not being related to Romeo in the slightest, the Franciscan Monk was still presented as the closest thing to a father figure that we are shown in the play. Friar Lawrence’s reprimanding of Romeo’s actions is him attempting to correct his course and adjust his impulsive nature to avoid the dangers that impatience can bring to oneself, as seen in “Wisely and slow; they stumble that run fast.” (Act 2, Scene 3) this is proving that Friar Lawrence cares for Romeo, and is attempting to teach him about the dangers of the world, however, the actions that the Friar takes inevitably leads Romeo to his doom. The Friar attempting to rectify the situation after Tybalt and Mercutio’s deaths by sending Romeo to Mantua, without establishing a reliable method of communication, directly causes Romeo to be misinformed about the supposed death of his lover Juliet. Shakespeare has also used poison as a repetitive theme throughout the play, with the feud symbolically poisoning​ the streets of Verona, Romeo buying the poison that takes his own life and the Friar hastily concocting a poison that symbolises every mistake that the Friar makes throughout the play, showing his impulsiveness and terrible planning skills while appearing to the outside as a stable and pragmatic man.

The Friar’s poor planning skills directly caused Romeo to be uninformed of his beloved’s faked death. The decision by the Franciscan Monk to send the slow Friar John to Mantua, instead of someone more capable directly causes Romeo to be uninformed of the Friar’s complicated plan to fake Juliet’s death. The effects of the Friar being to slow is seen in (Act 5, Scene 2) spoken by Friar John,

“Suspecting that we both were in a house

Where the infectious pestilence did reign,

Sealed up the doors, and would not let us forth,

So that my speed to Mantua there was stayed.”

This is proving that sending the Friar, who was far too slow and assumed to be assisting in the epidemic in Mantua, another indirect result of atrocious planning by Friar Lawrence. Shakespeare has also used foreshadowing as a form of dramatic irony for an audience that has potentially noticed subtle foreshadowing, for example when Romeo says “And fall upon the ground as I do now, taking the measure of an unmade grave” (Act 3, Scene 3) Basically explaining that without Juliet he will die, foreshadowing their later deaths. In addition Friar Lawrence should have taken that Romeo was having suicidal, rash thoughts and should have made an effort to keep him safe when he was banished, The Friar should have also been less hasty in his plans to stop Romeo’s suicidal tendencies.

Throughout the play the Friar is seen as a paragon, making the right decision for the right reasons. Yet he is a man of contradictions, of imperfection and impatience, his actions throughout the tragedy Romeo and Juliet directly brings him his wish, peace forevermore in the streets of Verona, but what did it cost? The lives of two innocent teenagers that he cared for and adored, Sir Romeo Montague and Lady Juliet Capulet.