# 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 sense of building dread that is ever-present in many of Shakespeare’s tragedies, However, what is interesting about many of his works is the effect on the secondary characters, two of which are directly impacted by Friar Lawrence's conviction that the marriage would end the feud between the rival houses, Mercutio’s and Tybalt’s deaths in the middle of the play and both “star crossed lovers” at the very end.

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's 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. Furthermore, the Friar’s role in the faked death of Juliet is also caused by both his and Romeo’s impulsive nature and more poor planning on the part of the Friar.

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. The Friar should have also made more of an attempt to contact Romeo before he made it to Juliet’s deathbed, with him deciding to “Write again to Mantua.” (Act 5, scene 2) another poor decision, as Romeo was already informed by another that Juliet was dead, and the Friar should have known that Romeo’s love for Juliet and his consistent impatience would have lead to Romeo doing something rash, potentially harming himself or the supposedly dead Juliet. In conclusion the Friar makes many errors in the convoluted plans that he manufactures to serve a childish dream of everlasting peace.

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.