**A Cold Case**

**The deaths of Romeo and Juliet: misadventure, homicide or suicide?**

**Investigative Wall**

**What (fate?) or who is/are to blame for Romeo and Juliet’s death?**

You have the following suspects and clues for each suspect. Find the evidence for each of the suspects below and make a judgement call on who or what was responsible for their deaths:

**1) they met their deaths by misadventure/forces beyond their control: fate? certain circumstances? the Plague? the power of love? (pp14, 22, 30 -33, 56, 70, 72, 166)**

‘From forth the fatal loins of these two foes, a pair of star-cross’d lovers take their life’ (Prologue)

‘Some consequence yet hanging in the stars/Shall bitterly begin his fearful date/With this night’s revels, and expire…/… a despised life…/By some vile forfeit of untimely death.’

If individuals challenged the feudal system, they would be mostly faced with a tragic fate: ‘The fearful passage of their death-marked love, and the continuance of their parents’ rage, which, but their children’s end, nought could remove’ (Prologue)

They fell in love under a patriarchal system when women had no rights. Juliet was her father’s property and he therefore had the right to force her to marry Paris so quickly. She didn’t have a chance.

Romeo was on the rebound – he needed to find love after Rosaline’s rejection.

‘Love is…/… a madness most discreet’ (Romeo, p22)

‘But I am sent to find those persons whose names are here writ, and can never find what names…’ (Peter to Benvolio and Romeo, p30)

‘… my mind misgives/Some consequence yet hanging in the stars/Shall bitterly begin his fearful date/With this night’s revels…’ (Romeo, p56)

‘My only love sprung from my only hate!/Too early seen and known too late!’ (Juliet, p70)

‘Juliet must ‘steal love’s sweet bait from fearful hooks’ (Prologue, Act 2, p72)

‘A gentler judgement vanished from his lips:/Not body’s death but body’s banishment’ (Friar L. to R, p166)

**2) the Montagues’ and Capulets’ feud (pp2, 68, 70, 146, 284)**

‘… this ancient quarrel’ (Montague) p14

‘Two households…/From ancient grudge break to new mutiny’ (Prologue, p2)

‘Your life shall pay the forfeit of the peace’ (Prince Escalus, p14)

‘Is she a Capulet?/… My life is my foe’s debt’ (R, p68)

‘Prodigious birth of love it is to me,/That I must love a loathed enemy’ (J, p70)

‘A plague o’ both your houses!/They have made worms’ meat of me’ (Mercutio, p146)

‘… Capulet! Montague!/See what a scourge is laid upon your hate’ (Prince, of R and J’s deaths, p284)

**3) Capulet and Lady Capulet (pp12, 28, 194, 198, 202)**

‘My sword, I say! Old Montague is come’ – he is motivated by hatred for R’s family, p12

Capulet is a hypocrite, telling Paris to ‘… get her heart/My will to her consent is but a part’ (p28) and then later forcing her to marry him against her will, saying, ‘I will drag thee on a hurdle thither’, p198

Lady Capulet also turns against her: ‘I would the fool were married to her grave!’ and ‘I have done with thee’, pp198, 202

This pushed Juliet to ask Friar Lawrence for help and to take the medicine to feign death.

**4) Mercutio (pp 110, 114, 136, 138, 140, 142)**

‘I’ll bite thee on the ear for that jest’ (Mercutio is hot-tempered and he is named after Mercury, which is a volatile metal, p110)

He suggests that Peter give the Nurse her fan ‘to hide her face, for her fan’s the fairer face’ (M is a troublemaker, p114)

‘I pray thee, good Mercutio, let’s retire,/The day is hot; the Capulets abroad;/And if we meet we shall not scape a brawl’ (Benvolio to M – M is a troublemaker, p136)

‘Your head is as full of quarrels as an egg is full of meat…’ (Benvolio to M, p138)

‘… dost thou make us minstrels?... Here’s my fiddlestick. Here’s that shall make you dance’ (M is hot-headed, p140)

‘Good King of Cats, nothing but one of your nine lives, that I mean to make bold withal…’ (M picks the fight with Tybalt, p142)

**5) Tybalt (pp12, 16, 64, 140, 142)**

‘I hate the word [peace],/As I hate hell, all Montagues and thee’ (T’s words to Benvolio show he is vindictive, p12)

‘The fiery Tybalt, with his sword prepared,/… He swung about his head and cut the winds’ (Benvolio recognises T’s fiery nature)

‘What dares the slave/Come hither, covered with an antic face,/… Now, by the stock and honour of my kin,/To strike him dead I hold it not a sin’ (T of R, T’s anger does not help, p62)

Tybalt to Romeo ‘thou art a villain’, p140

‘I’ll fight you’ (T is just as much of a troublemaker as M, p142)

**6) Balthasar (248, 250, 260 – 264, 282)**

‘I saw her laid low in her kindred’s vault/And presently took post to tell it you’ (to R, p248)

‘Your looks are pale and wild, and do import/Some misadventure’ (and B does nothing to stop R from returning to Verona, even though he sees the state he is in, p250)

When B tells R, ‘But if thou… dost return to pry/… I will tear thee joint by joint’, he says ‘I will be gone, sir, and not trouble you’ (B is a coward, p262); when he decides he will look out for R, he

falls asleep (p264)

‘This letter he early did bid me give his father,/And threatened me with death, going in the vault,/If I departed not and left him there’ B is a coward (p282)

**7) Count Paris (29, 184, 260, 266)**

When Capulet says ‘Let two more summers whither in their pride/Ere we may think her ripe to be a bride’, Paris responds ‘Younger than she are happy mothers made’ (he is too impatient, p28)

‘My lord, I would that Thursday were tomorrow’ (if Count Paris had not been so impatient to marry her, J would not have been so desperate, p184)

To his page: ‘Listen to make sure no one is coming through the graveyard’ – if he had not been so secretive, he may have seen that Romeo came to mourn J, not to desecrate Tybalt’s tomb. Then

R would not have fought with him and been so distracted that he did not see her wake up, p260

His hatred for the Montagues distracts R, ‘I do…/… apprehend thee for a felon here’, p266

**8) Romeo (pp16, 26, 32, 34, 48, 60, 78, 140, 142, 146, 166, 168, 170, 176, 186, 268)**

***Romeo’s nature (passionate, excessive, impulsive):***

‘He that is stricken blind cannot forget/the precious treasure of his eyesight lost’ (R about Rosaline)

‘ Under love’s heavy burden do I sink’ (R of Rosaline)

‘That fair for which love groaned for and would die/With tender Juliet matched, is now not fair’ (Prol., p72)

Romeo’s love for Mercutio led to Tybalt’s death and his exile to mantua. making their love more difficult to be accepted by the two households, and also led to his exile to Mantua. Being in Mantua means that the news of Juliet’s feigned death did not reach him.

Romeo’s passionate love for Juliet led him to drink the poison without much hesitation.

‘There is no world without Verona walls/But purgatory, torture, hell itself’ (R, p166)

‘Alive in triumph - and Mercutio slain!/… fiery-eyed fury be my conduct now’ (R, p146)

‘Tybalt, the reason I have to love thee/Doth much excuse…’ (R should have practiced this to the letter but he is also mercurial, p140)

**9) Juliet (pp42, 44, 70, 80, 124, 154, 158, 186, 190, 196, 274)**

***Juliet’s impulsive nature:***

She changes her mind too easily, saying o her mother that marriage is ‘an honour that I dream not of’ and ‘… no more deep will I endart mine eye/Than your consent gives strength to make it fly’, pp42, 44

‘… If he be married/My grave is like to be my wedding bed’ (J. to Nurse, 70)

Very quickly changes this resolution: ‘… be but sworn my love,/And I’ll no longer be a Capulet’, p80

‘Had she affections and warm youthful blood,/She would be as swift in motion as a ball’ J says this about the Nurse – she rushes far too fast into her marriage with R, p124

She is far too passionate: ‘Give me my Romeo. And when I shall die,/Take him and cut him out in little stars,/And he will make the face of heaven so fine/That all the world will be in love with night’, p154

On learning R has killed Tybalt, she says of R, ‘Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?/Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical’, p158, but then goes on to say of R, ‘Oh, what a beast was I to chide at him’, p160

She is far too passionate, saying to R: ‘Let me be put to death./I am content so thou wilt have it so’, p186

She has a negative mindset, saying to R: ‘Methinks I see thee now, thou art so low/As one dead in the bottom of a tomb’, p190

She should have been honest with her parents, telling them she was married, instead of saying that when she marries, ‘It shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate’, p196

Far too passionate: ‘O happy dagger,/This is thy sheath. There rust and let me die’, p274

**10) the Nurse (pp42, 120, 122, 126, 156, 160, 200, 204, 206)**

She gives conflicting advice: ‘Lady, such a man/As all the world’ (of Paris, p42) and later tells R that J will ‘be a happy woman’ with him (p120)

She stirs J up to become impatient to be with R: ‘I anger her sometimes and tell her that Paris is the properer man’, p122, and then tells J, ‘You know not how to choose a man. Romeo! No, not he…’, p126

She further confuses J by blaming T’s death on him, ‘Whoever would have thought it? Romeo!’, p156, and does not relent, saying ‘Shame come to Romeo!’, p160, but then goes on to berate Capulet for wanting to marry her to Paris, ‘My lord, you’re wrong to berate her like that’, p200, only to contradict herself again and say, ‘I think it best you married with the county./Oh, he’s a lovely gentleman’, p204

What is Shakespeare suggesting when J calls her Nurse, ‘O most wicked fiend’ (fiend = enemy), p206

**11) Friar Lawrence (pp96, 102, 132, 180, 240, 258, 270 – 274, 280)**

He uses an analogy to suggest that the story of R and J could have turned out to be different: ‘Within the infant rind of this small flower/Poison hath residence and medicine power’, p96 Metaphor

He is naïve: ‘For this alliance may so happy prove/To turn your households’ rancour to pure love’, p102

Foreshadowing

He is aware that R and J are excessive in their love but still marries them: ‘These violent delights have violent ends’, p132

Foreshadowing

He sets a very vague plan in motion: ‘I’ll find out your man,/And he shall signify from time to time/Every good hap to you that chances here’, p180

He is deceitful in pretending J is dead, ‘Everyone prepare/To follow this fair corse unto her grave’, p240

Foreshadowing

Is not astute enough to recognise the danger R and J are in because his letter to R did not arrive, ‘I will write again to Mantua’ – he is repeating his mistake! (p258)

Being dumb

His slowness allows R to see Juliet: ‘How often tonight have my old feet stumbled on gravestones!’, p270

Metaphor

Instead of staying to convince J to leave the crypt, he runs away, allowing her to find R’s body: ‘I don’t dare stay any longer’, p272

Soliloquy

He should have calmed J down when she came to him in his cell ‘with wild looks’, p280.

He blames J for killing herself, rather than admitting he was not brave enough to stay and stop her: ‘she, too desperate, would not go with me,/But… did violence to herself’, p282

**12) Friar John (p256)**

He did not want to take the letter on his own and got caught up in the plague because he went to ‘find another barefoot brother’, p256

**13) the apothecary in Mantua (pp252, 254)**

He is motivated by greed in as turned to crime to survive and therefore sells R the poison: ‘My poverty, but not my will, consents’.

**What are the language features that Shakespeare used?**

metaphors

symbolism

dramatic irony

foreshadowing

characterisation

rhyme

direct narration (the Prologue)

soliloquy

allusion

alliteration

figurative language

hyperbole

personification