

“Romeo and Juliet” (drama) - Summary and Themes

"Romeo and Juliet" is a tragic play written by William Shakespeare around 1595. Set in Verona, Italy, it tells the story of two young lovers from feuding families, the Montagues and the Capulets. Romeo, a Montague, and Juliet, a Capulet, meet at a party and fall deeply in love at first sight. Despite their families' enmity, they marry in secret.

However, their happiness is short-lived as conflicts arise. Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, challenges Romeo to a duel, resulting in Tybalt's death and Romeo's banishment from Verona by Prince Escalus. In despair, Juliet seeks Friar Laurence's counsel, who devises a plan to reunite the lovers. But fate intervenes, and misunderstandings lead to tragic consequences.

Juliet fakes her own death to avoid marrying Paris, which leads Romeo to believe she is truly dead. He returns to Verona and takes his own life beside her seemingly lifeless body. Upon awakening to find Romeo dead, Juliet takes her own life as well. The tragic deaths of Romeo and Juliet ultimately reconcile their families, but at a devastating cost.

Themes unveiled in “Romeo and Juliet”:

1. Love:

- a. Romeo and Juliet's love is portrayed as intense and passionate, which transcends the societal boundaries imposed by their feuding families.
- b. Their love is further demonstrated through their secret marriage, symbolizing their commitment to each other despite their obstacles they face.

2. Fate:

- a. Theme of fate permeates the play as the characters' lives are seemingly predetermined by forces beyond their control (feud between the families).
 - i. Their tragic end is foreshadowed from the beginning, with references from the prologue “star-crossed lovers” (=lovers whose love is doomed by the stars and they cannot be together)
- b. Romeo and Juliet make decisions and take actions that lead to their tragic consequences, reinforcing the idea of fate
 - i. For example, Romeo's impulsive decision to attend the Capulet's party ultimately leading to his meeting with Juliet, setting the events of tragedies in motion

3. Consequences of Feuding:

- a. Feud between the Montagues and Capulets serve as a catalyst for Romeo and Juliet's tragedy
- b. Consequences of feuding families' rivalry are far reaching
 - i. resulting in violence, loss and not only the deaths of Romeo and Juliet, but also of Mercutio and Tybalt
- c. Play ends with reconciliation of the Montagues and Capulets, but it comes at a heavy price → loss of their beloved children.