

Theme Quotes & Analysis

Mercutio

THEME	ACT	QUOTES	ANALYSIS
The superficiality of love	Act 1	<u>gentle Romeo</u>	The adjective "gentle" almost sounds condescending (belittling), which would make sense given how he is often prone (often does) to jest (joke) at Romeo's expense. He is belittling Romeo who is a lover and thus love by extension.
	Act 1	<u>a lover [and he should] borrow Cupid's wings</u>	He is tone is deterministic (people's actions are determined) in the way that he labels Romeo as a "lover" which sounds rather cynical (pessimistic), as though people are set and have no free will to be something else. Furthermore, Cupid was actually blind in Roman mythology, making the arrows of love that he shoots seem random and ruled by chance which is a pessimistic view of something traditionally romantic. "Borrow" also diminishes cupid's power, as though anyone might "borrow Cupid's wings" . We can deduce (infer) from Mercutio's language that he is pessimistic about love .
	Act 1	<u>when maids lie on their backs [she] /Presses them and learns them first to bear</u>	He speaks of love as a corrupting influence , he slanders (vilifies) Queen Mab and turns her into a villain, doing so of love by extension. Sex was a very taboo (controversial) topic during this period and thus Queen Mab, who introduces "maids" to it is thus villainous . Mercutio speaks of cynically labelling it to be superficial and corrupting which, given the play's ending, doesn't seem all that inaccurate.
	Act 2	<u>madman, passion, lover!</u>	His grouping of these words makes them sound as though they are semantics , he speaks as though "madman" and "lover" are synonymous (mean the same thing). In this way he is mocking Romeo and shows his distaste for love .
	Act 2	<u>speak to my gossip Venus one fair word</u>	He evokes the Goddess of love using the personal pronoun "my" , as though he knows her personally, and calls her a "gossip" . With that he somehow manages to diminish (reduce) her power and the power of love by extension.

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Duality	Act 1	<u>prick love for pricking</u>	<p>Mercutio is a loyal friend who jests a lot but also has moments where he is serious. His repetition of “prick” reminds us that while he is giving advice to Romeo, he is also using violent language to convey a deeper, more serious point, that love can be violent as well as idyllic.</p>
	Act 1	<u>be rough with love</u>	<p>Again, his violent language is jovial but also has earnest undertones.</p>
	Act 2	<u>foot [...] straight leg [...] quivering thigh[s]</u>	<p>He attempts to lure Romeo out. He lists only the parts of her body that might be considered sexual. He jests (jokes) and yet there is something quite serious about his tone, in the way that he paints her in a sexual light, so vividly, with his bawdy imagery.</p>
	Act 2	<u>raise a spirit in his mistress' circle</u>	<p>His language boards offensive now, and has melted from comical, into offensive. Mercutio always seems to ride the line between being humorous and being serious, such is his dichotomy. Perhaps, Shakespeare uses him to demonstrate that humans are complex and contain multitudes and often people are not what they seem.</p>

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Rash and impulsive in violence	Act 3	<u><i>King of Cats</i></u>	He labels Tybalt as swift and nimble , but also referring to the Tybalt in the tale of ' Reynard the Fox ' who is also quick to brawl (fight) and impulsive. In his comment he both compliments Tybalt, but also insults him, comparing him to frequently mocked fictional character. This shows Mercutio to be unfiltered and impulsive in what he says.
	Act 3	<u><i>Could you not take some occasion without giving?</i></u>	He uses provocative language to entice Tybalt into a brawl. He does not think through the potential consequences , rather he acts impulsively, fuelled by emotion .
	Act 3	<u><i>I am hurt</i></u>	He uses a simple sentence , is straight to the point. No more, is he using flowery, descriptive language which shows that in death he has lost all of his character.
	Act 3	<u><i>a scratch</i></u>	He often contradicts himself which demonstrates him to be rash , both in his words and his actions, saying and doing things without thought.
	Act 3	<u><i>A plague o' both/ your houses"</i></u>	His death also represents his death represents his impulsivity and Shakespeare uses this quality to demonstrate the consequences of the folly of youth , that being hastiness . Romeo and Juliet, too, are hasty and that quality ultimate leads them to their death as well.