

Romeo and Juliet essay

Prompt 3

The tragedy play, *Romeo and Juliet*, written by William Shakespeare, is the result of two star crossed lovers falling deeply in love only to be lead to their deaths. During the Elizabeth times, children were expected to be submissive, obedient and have a formal relationship to the adults in the family. Afraid to find out what would happen if the feuding families found out that Romeo and Juliet were going against their parents wishes, they were forced to keep their romance a secret. This suggests the formal, distant and controlling relationship the children had with their parents.

William Shakespeare displays Romeo's relationship with his parents as somewhat typical of a modern family. Although his mother and father seem to care about his well being, they are distant and aren't able to bridge the gap in their parent-son relationship. After a nasty fight between the feuding families, Romeo's parents were concerned about where he was as they hadn't seen him that day. Conveniently, Romeo shows up and Benvolio suggests that he talk to Romeo rather than his parents because he "knows his grievance" and that they would "be much denied" by Romeo as he wouldn't admit his feelings. As a result, Shakespeare intends for readers to understand that although Romeo's parents care they don't have a strong bond where Romeo feels comfortable to open up to them. This shows the distant relationship between Romeo and his parents as they aren't able to empathise and comfort him while he is in a vulnerable situation, grieving over losing his first true love, Rosaline.

While Romeo's parents seem to notice and are concerned about his depressive behaviour, Shakespeare conveys Juliet's parents as apathetic, controlling and people who couldn't care less about how she feels regarding the decisions that they make for her. Marriage is a massive decision made in someone's life and in Juliet's case she never got to make her own decision and was handed a person to marry by her parents. Juliet refuses to get married to someone that she has never met but her father threatens her, saying that if she doesn't marry then she shall "never after look him in the face". Therefore, Shakespeare presents the message that during the Elizabeth times children were expected to follow orders by their parents or it was acceptable to punish them so. This shows the controlling and unilateral relationship between Juliet and her parents as her parents aren't giving her the freedom of making her own decisions about her own life.

Although Romeo and Juliet have differing relationships with their parents, William Shakespeare makes it clear that they both have a formal relationship with their parents. When looking for advice the two lovers never approached their parents and instead shared their thoughts and feelings with Friar Laurence and or the nurse. They acted similarly to sergote parents for the children and gave them advice on what was and wasn't right. When Romeo approaches Friar Laurence the day after he met Juliet and fell in love with her, Friar Laurence seemed proud of his "young son" but he warned him that a "young men's love then lies not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes". This shows that he wants to make sure that Romeo actually loves her and that he is fond of him, so much that he is giving advice about his future. Similarly when Juliet is

looking for guidance about what to do after Romeo has been banished, she seeks advice from the nurse. The nurse suggests that she thinks “it’s best you married with the County. O, he’s a lovely gentleman!”. This shows that although the nurse knows how dearly Juliet loves Romeo, she is trying to do the best for her future. Therefore, Shakespeare presents that the children have a formal relationship with their parents as they aren’t able to bring up conversations like the ones above and instead look for advice from the nurse and or Friar Laurence who act similarly to surrogate parents.

In the play ‘Romeo and Juliet’, Shakespeare portrays the relationship between parent and child as it typically would have been in the Elizabeth era. Romeo's relationship with his parents is shown to be distant, so much that lord and lady Montague weren’t able to comfort and connect with their own son when he needed them the most. Considered rebellious when the play was set, Juliet's relationship with her parents is controlling and often through the play Shakespeare shows situations where her parents are taking advantage of their power and forcing decisions upon her which she must follow or she would be facing threats. Common back then but unusual now, Romeo and Juliet also had a very formal relationship with their parents and seemed to receive advice where needed from Friar Laurence and or the nurse who formed a strong bond with the children and were quite like surrogate parents. Shakespeare explores the harsh realities of being a child in the Elizabeth era by portraying a typical parent-child relationship which in this case for Romeo and Juliet was distant, controlling and formal, having a negative impact on their well-being eventually leading to their deaths.