

SUBJECT: English

UNIT: Year 8 Romeo and Juliet



Plot

Act 1

The Montagues and the Capulets are families involved in a bitter feud. Under penalty of death, the Prince of Verona orders the families to stop fighting.

Romeo, a Montague, is lovestruck. His cousin, Benvolio, and best friend, Mercutio plan to cheer him up by gatecrashing a party at the Capulet house.

Meanwhile, Lady Capulet plans for her daughter, Juliet, to marry Paris, a wealthy gentleman.

At the party, Romeo and Juliet meet and fall in love at first sight.

Act 2

After the party, Romeo sneaks back into the Capulet house and asks for her hand in marriage.

Friar Laurence agrees to marry the lovers in secret, hoping that it will end the feud.

Act 3

Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, is enraged that Romeo snuck into his family party. He tries to fight Romeo, who will not fight back. Mercutio dies defending his friend Romeo.

Having heard of the violence, the Prince banishes Romeo from Verona.

Capulet, in order to cheer his daughter up, arranges for her to marry Paris in two day's time.

Act 4

Friar Laurence hatches a plan for Juliet to take a sleeping potion and appear dead, so she can meet Romeo in the family crypt and run away together. Juliet takes the potion, and funeral plans are made.

Act 5

Romeo learns of Juliet's death, but not the secret plan. He fights his way back to Verona, buying poison on the way.

Romeo kills Paris in order to be the one lying next to Juliet's grave. He kills himself just as Juliet wakes up. She then uses Romeo's dagger to take her own life.

Key Quotations

"Peace? I hate the word, as I hate all Montagues"

Tybalt – A1S1

"Here's much to do with hate, but more to do with love." – Romeo – A1S1

"But soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun!" Romeo – A2S2

"My only love sprung from my only hate!" Juliet – A2S2

"A rose by any other name would smell as sweet!" Juliet – A2S2

"These violent delights have violent ends."

Friar Laurence – A2S5

"A plague on both your houses!" Mercutio – A3S1

"O! I am Fortune's fool!" Romeo – A3S1

"Get thee to church on Thursday, or never after look me in the face" Lord Capulet – A3S5

"All are punished" Prince Escalus – A5S3

Context

Feuds and Conflict

The families hate each other, and within each family there are several different layers of conflict.

Religion

In the 1600s, religion dictated strict rules – no sex before marriage, no divorce, and suicide sent you to hell.

Family

Fathers ruled the household. Disobeying them was unheard of. Daughters were married off in exchange for money.

Love

Courtly love is a cold, distant way of admiring someone. R+J share the passion of real love.

Fate

A higher power determines the lover's future – many people in the 1600s believed that people had a prewritten destiny.