

William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet

BRIEF HISTORY

- William Shakespeare was born in the year _____ in the town of _____ - _____.
- William married _____ at the age of _____.
- He worked as both an _____ and a _____.
- He died in _____ in his hometown of Stratford.

THE THEATRE

- Shakespeare performed on stages just like the theatre he helped build – the _____ Theatre.
- The Globe was built around _____ and later was destroyed by _____ around the year _____.
- The style of stage used in the Globe Theatre was a _____ stage.
- During performances, the _____ class patrons were on the _____ level, while the _____ class patrons sat in the _____.
- During Shakespeare's time, there were no female actors – female roles were played by _____ or _____.
- Because the printing was still relatively new and expensive, actors were not given the entire play – only _____ with a their lines and their cue.

VOCABULARY

- *Soliloquy*
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- *Aside*
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- *Monologue*

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- *Iambic Pentameter*

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- *Blank Verse*

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- *Sonnet*

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- *Protagonist*

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- *Antagonist*

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- *Tragedy*

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- *Pun*

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- *Act*

-

- *Scene*

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THE LANGUAGE

- A sonnet is comprised of _____ lines written in _____ with a _____ at the end.
- Shakespeare's sonnets are written with a _____ rhyme scheme.
- _____ is what Scholars have named the dialect they believe actors used in Shakespeare's original productions.

SONNET 138

1 WHEN my love swears that she is made of truth,
2 I do believe her, though I know she lies,
3 That she might think me some untutored youth,
4 Unlearnèd in the world's false subtleties.
5 Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
6 Although she knows my days are past the best,
7 Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue:
8 On both sides thus is simple truth suppressed.
9 But wherefore says she not she is unjust?
10 And wherefore say not I that I am old?
11 Oh, love's best habit is in seeming trust,
12 And age in love loves not to have years told.
13 Therefore, I lie with her and she with me,
14 And in our faults by lies we flattered be.

THE PROLOGUE

1 TWO households, both alike in dignity,
2 In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
3 From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
4 Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
5 From forth the fatal loins of these two foes,
6 A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;
7 Whose misadventur'd piteous overthrows
8 Do with their death bury their parents' strife.
9 The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,
10 And the continuance of their parents' rage,
11 Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,
12 Is now the two hours' traffick of our stage;
13 The which if you with patient ears attend,
14 What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

THE PLAY -- DAY-BY-DAY SUMMARY (from Cliff's Notes)

Day 1 — Sunday: Act I, Scene 1-Act II, Scene 2

As the play begins, a long-standing feud between the Montague and Capulet families continues to disrupt the peace of Verona, a city in northern Italy. A brawl between the servants of the feuding households prompts the Prince to threaten both sides to keep the peace on pain of death.

Benvolio advises his lovesick friend [Romeo](#), (son of Montague), to abandon his unrequited love for Rosaline and seek another.

That night, Capulet holds a masked ball to encourage a courtship between his daughter, [Juliet](#), and Paris, a relative of the Prince. Concealing their identities behind masks, Romeo and Benvolio go to the ball, where Romeo and Juliet fall in love at first sight, but at the end of the evening discover their identities as members of the opposed families. On his way home from the feast, Romeo climbs into Capulet's orchard to glimpse Juliet again. Juliet appears at her balcony, and the couple exchange vows of love, agreeing to marry the next day.

Day 2 — Monday: Act II, Scene 3-Act III, Scene 4

Romeo asks [Friar Laurence](#) to perform the marriage ceremony. Though initially reluctant, he finally agrees, hoping to reconcile the families, and marries Romeo and Juliet that afternoon.

Meanwhile, Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, sends Romeo a challenge to a duel. Romeo refuses to fight when Tybalt confronts him because they're now related. However, [Mercutio](#), Romeo's quick-tempered friend, intervenes and accepts the challenge. Romeo tries to part the other two as they fight, but Mercutio is fatally wounded under Romeo's arm. To avenge Mercutio's death, Romeo kills Tybalt and then flees.

The Prince announces Romeo's banishment for Tybalt's murder. Romeo, in hiding at the Friar's cell, becomes hysterical at the news of his sentence and tries to kill himself, but the Friar promises to make Romeo's marriage to Juliet public and gain the Prince's pardon. Romeo and Juliet celebrate their wedding night before he leaves at dawn for Mantua.

Day 3 — Tuesday: Act III, Scene 5-Act IV, Scene 3

That morning, Juliet discovers that her father has arranged for her to marry Paris on Thursday. The Capulets, unaware that Juliet is grieving for Romeo's exile rather than Tybalt's death, believe the wedding will distract her from mourning. Distressed at the prospect of a false marriage and isolated from her family, Juliet seeks advice from Friar Laurence, who offers her a sleeping potion to make her appear dead for 42 hours. During

this time, the Friar will send a message to Romeo in Mantua so that Romeo can return to Verona in time for Juliet to awake.

Juliet returns home and agrees to marry Paris. In a moment of euphoria, Capulet brings the wedding forward from Thursday to Wednesday, thereby forcing Juliet to take the potion that night and reducing the time for the message to reach Romeo.

Day 4 — Wednesday: Act IV, Scene 4-Act V, Scene 2

Early on Wednesday morning, Juliet's seemingly lifeless body is discovered and she is placed in the family tomb. Because an outbreak of the plague prevents the Friar's messenger from leaving Verona, Romeo now receives news of Juliet's death instead. Desperate, Romeo buys poison from an apothecary and returns to Verona.

Late that night, Romeo enters the Capulet tomb, but is confronted by Paris, whom he fights and kills.

Still unaware that Juliet is in fact alive, Romeo takes the poison and dies. The Friar, arriving too late, discovers the bodies as Juliet begins to stir. He begs her to leave with him, but Juliet refuses, and then stabs herself with Romeo's dagger.

Day 5 — Thursday: Act V, Scene 3

As dawn breaks, the Watch arrives, closely followed by the Prince, who demands a full inquiry into what has happened. The two families then arrive, and the Friar comes forward to explain the tragic sequence of events. The deaths of Romeo and Juliet finally bring the feud to an end as Montague and Capulet join hands in peace.