

# THE TRAGEDY OF ROMEO & JULIET



# Romeo

- He serves as the play's male protagonist. Romeo, the son of Montague and his wife, secretly loves and marries Juliet, a member of the rival House of Capulet. Forced into exile by his slaying of Juliet's cousin, Tybalt, in a duel, Romeo commits suicide upon hearing falsely of Juliet's death.





# Juliet

- **Juliet** is the female protagonist and one of two title characters in William Shakespeare's romantic love tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*, the other being Romeo. Juliet is the only daughter of Capulet, the patriarch of the Capulet family. The story has a long history that precedes Shakespeare himself.



# Mercutio



- A kinsman to the Prince, and Romeo's close friend. One of the most extraordinary characters in all of Shakespeare's plays, Mercutio overflows with imagination, wit, and, at times, a strange, biting satire and brooding fervor. Mercutio loves wordplay, especially sexual double entendres. He can be quite hotheaded, and hates people who are affected, pretentious, or obsessed with the latest fashions. He finds Romeo's romanticized ideas about love tiresome, and tries to convince Romeo to view love as a simple matter of sexual appetite.



# Friar Lawrence

- A Franciscan friar, friend to both Romeo and Juliet.

Kind, civic-minded, a proponent of moderation, and always ready with a plan, Friar Lawrence secretly marries the impassioned lovers in hopes that the union might eventually bring peace to Verona. As well as being a Catholic holy man, Friar Lawrence is also an expert in the use of seemingly mystical potions and herbs.



# Rosaline

- is an unseen character and niece of Capulet
- The woman with whom Romeo is infatuated at the beginning of the play. Rosaline never appears onstage, but it is said by other characters that she is very beautiful and has sworn to live a life of chastity.





# Benvolio

- Montague's nephew, Romeo's cousin and thoughtful

friend, he makes a genuine effort to defuse violent scenes in public places, though Mercutio accuses him of having a nasty temper in private. He spends most of the play trying to help Romeo get his mind off Rosaline, even after Romeo has fallen in love with Juliet.



# Tybalt Capulet



- A Capulet, Juliet's cousin on her mother's side. Vain, fashionable, supremely aware of courtesy and the lack of it, he becomes aggressive, violent, and quick to draw his sword when he feels his pride has been injured. Once drawn, his sword is something to be feared. He loathes Montagues.



# The Nurse

- Juliet's nurse, the woman who breast-fed Juliet when she was a baby and has cared for Juliet her entire life. A vulgar, long-winded, and senile woman, the Nurse provides comic relief with her frequently inappropriate remarks and speeches. But, until a disagreement near the play's end, the Nurse is Juliet's faithful confidante and loyal intermediary in Juliet's affair with Romeo. She provides a contrast with Juliet, given that her view of love is earthy and sexual, whereas Juliet is idealistic and intense. The Nurse believes in love and wants Juliet to have a nice-looking husband, but the idea that Juliet would want to sacrifice herself for love is incomprehensible to her.



# Lady Capulet

- Juliet's mother, Capulet's wife.

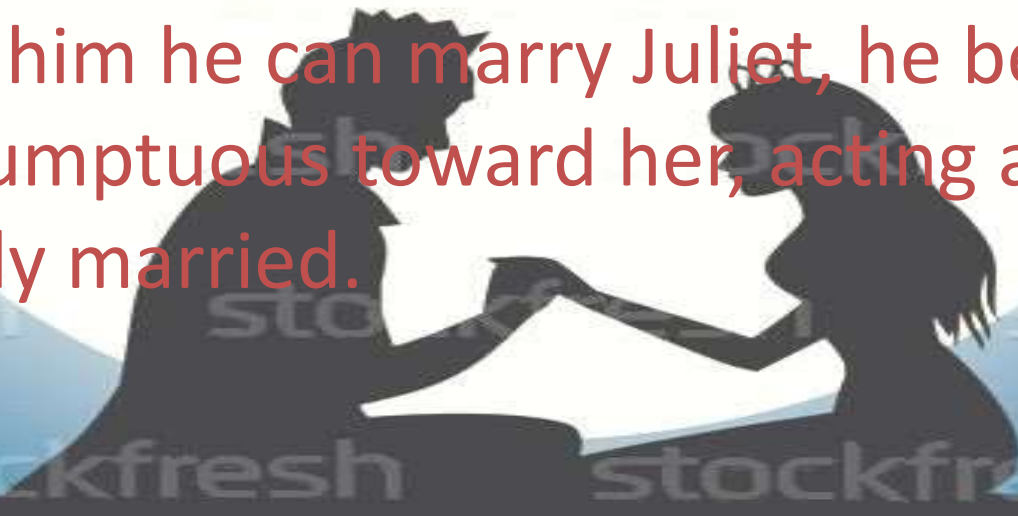
A woman who herself married young (by her own estimation she gave birth to Juliet at close to the age of fourteen), she is eager to see her daughter marry Paris. She is an ineffectual mother, relying on the Nurse for moral and pragmatic support.





# Paris

- A kinsman of the Prince, and the suitor of Juliet most preferred by Capulet. Once Capulet has promised him he can marry Juliet, he behaves very presumptuous toward her, acting as if they are already married.



# Prince Escalus

- The Prince of Verona.
- A kinsman of Mercutio and Paris. As the seat of political power in Verona, he is concerned about maintaining the public peace at all costs.





# Balthasar

- Romeo's dedicated servant, who brings Romeo the news of Juliet's death, unaware that her death is a ruse.



# Sampson & Gregory

- Two servants of the house of Capulet, who, like their master, hate the Montagues. At the outset of the play, they successfully provoke some Montague men into a fight.





# Abram

- Montague's servant, who fights with Sampson and Gregory in the first scene of the play.



# The Apothecary

- An apothecary in Mantua. Had he been wealthier, he might have been able to afford to value his morals more than money, and refused to sell poison to Romeo.





# Peter

- A Capulet servant who invites guests to Capulet's feast and escorts the Nurse to meet with Romeo. He is illiterate, and a bad singer.



# Montague



- Romeo's father, the patriarch of the Montague clan and bitter enemy of Capulet. At the beginning of the play, he is chiefly concerned about Romeo's melancholy.



# Lady Montague

- Romeo's mother, Montague's wife. She dies of grief after Romeo is exiled from Verona.

