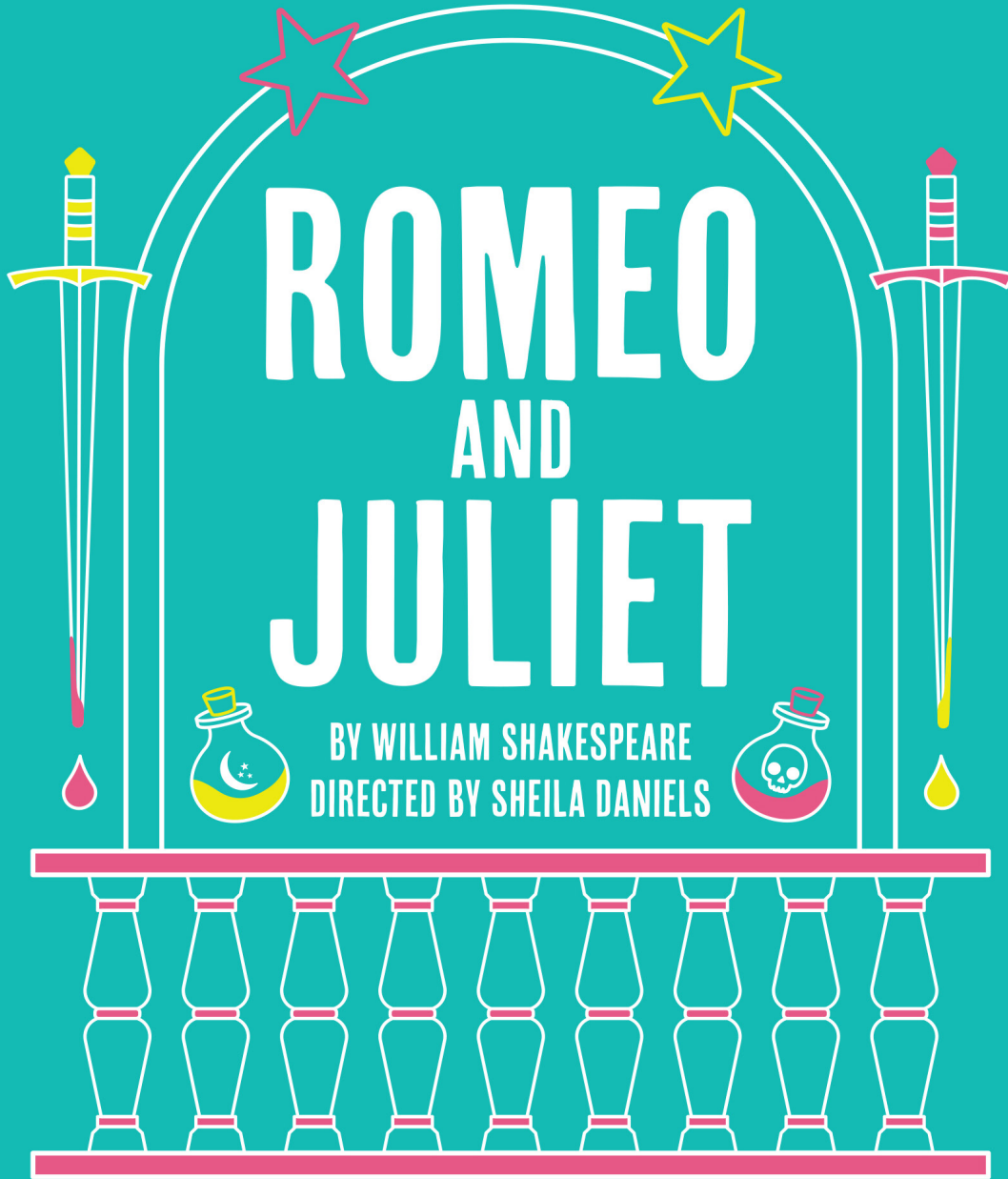




SEATTLE SHAKESPEARE

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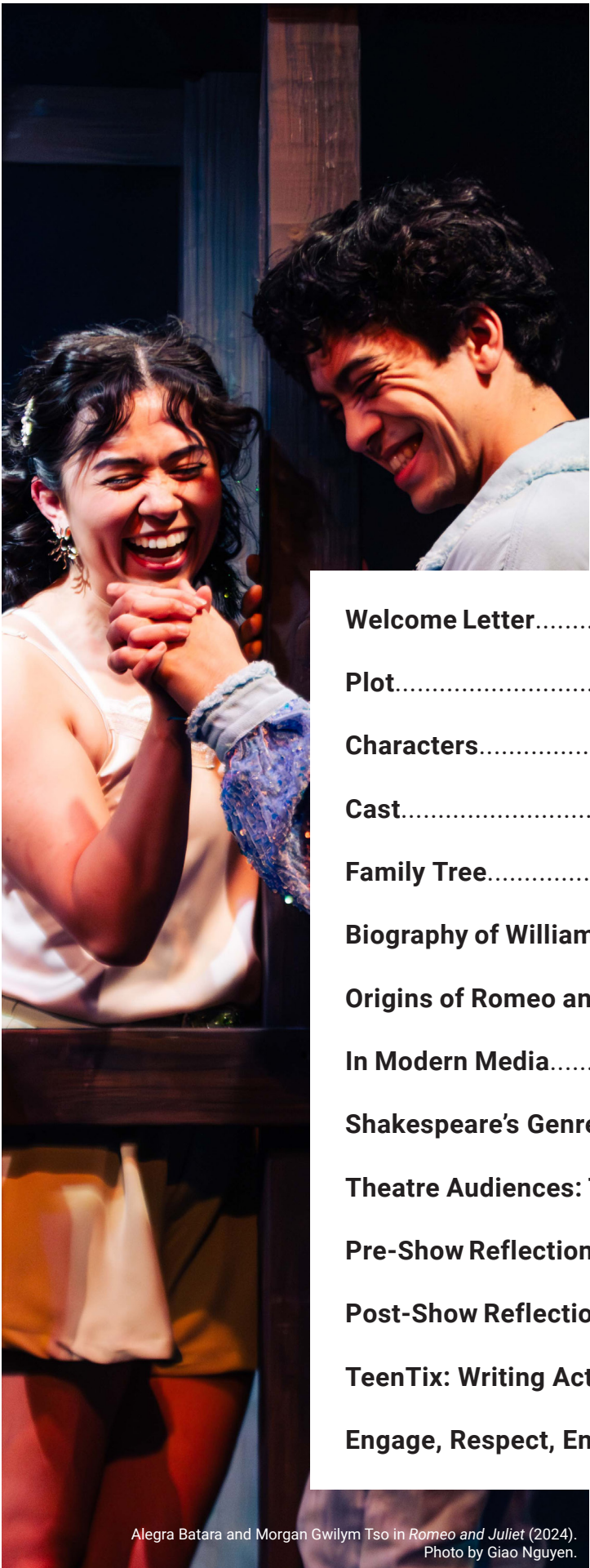
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EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE



ROMEO AND JULIET

Resource Guide

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Alegra Batara and Morgan Gwilym Tso in *Romeo and Juliet* (2024).
Photo by Giao Nguyen.

Dear Educators,

Romeo and Juliet was the first Shakespeare play I ever fell in love with, and to this day remains one of my absolute favorite pieces of literature. *Romeo and Juliet* is more than a mere love story; it examines the danger of grudges and the power of choices. It wasn't just the stunning language that captivated me, but the often-overlooked moments of strength and agency that the young people in the play showed despite the oppressive forces in their lives.

As one of Shakespeare's most famous plays, it is no wonder why *Romeo and Juliet* has been adapted numerous times, referred to in several popular songs and stories, and translated into over 100 languages. However, students unfamiliar with Shakespeare's work often approach the text with expectations that the stories are dry, boring, or unrealistic. Popular meme culture has only perpetuated this, with quotes reading "*Romeo and Juliet* is not a love story, it's a three-day relationship between a 13-year-old and a 17-year-old that caused six deaths. Sincerely, everyone that actually read it." But, when students dive into the world of the play, put the text on its feet, and watch the characters brought to life, they are able to see the parallels that exist in their own lives. I know I did. This 400 year-old play still captures the urgency of first-loves, the struggles of managing parental expectations, and the deadly miscommunications that occur in times of conflict.

The story of *Romeo and Juliet* is as resonant now as it was when it was first performed in 1597. It's for this reason that we place such focus on *Romeo and Juliet* in our Education Department, be it in our in-school residency programs, or in our statewide touring productions, or here on the main stage. I hope that you are able to find your truth with this timeless story, and fall in love with it as much as I have.

Warmly,

Anna Klein

Youth and Engagement Manager

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Production still of *Romeo and Juliet* (2024).
Photo by Giao Nguyen.

The Plot of *Romeo and Juliet*

The play opens with a brawl between two feuding families of Verona, the Capulets and the Montagues. The chaos of the fight ensures the arrival of the Prince, who breaks up the fight and threatens death to anyone who continues to disturb Verona streets.

Meanwhile, a grand celebration is being planned by Lord and Lady Capulet. Everyone in the town is invited except, of course, the Montagues. The Capulets host this feast as a means to introduce their young daughter, Juliet, to an influential young lord in the town, Paris, in the hopes that they will marry.

In the streets of Verona, Romeo is gloomily dwelling on his unrequited love for the unattainable Rosaline. He is persuaded by his friends, Benvolio and Mercutio, to attend the Capulet's party in disguise in effort to distract him from his melancholy. Juliet's agitated cousin, Tybalt, notices that Romeo and his kinsmen are trespassing at the party but, at the behest of Lord Capulet who is disinterested in having an altercation during the event, doesn't start anything.

From the moment Romeo sees Juliet from across the room, he is enchanted by her and forgets all about Rosaline. He manages to intercept her and woo her with flirtatious conversation. Quickly, Juliet becomes as entranced by Romeo as he is by her, and any hopes of a love-match between Juliet and Paris are thwarted. Romeo and Juliet leave the party utterly enamored with one another. It is only after

Romeo departs that Juliet discovers his identity as a Montague.

Later that night, Romeo sneaks back into the garden, where he hears Juliet talking to herself about the dangers of loving an enemy. He appears and speaks to Juliet. They exchange vows of love, and plan to marry in secret the next day.

Romeo begs his trusted advisor, Friar Lawrence, to marry him and Juliet. Friar Lawrence agrees, hoping that the marriage might end the feud between the families and bring peace to Verona. The two lovers are married in the morning and part ways, with intentions to meet again under cover of night.

However, that same afternoon Tybalt attempts to fight with Romeo. Romeo refrains, knowing that he has married Tybalt's cousin, Juliet. Mercutio takes up his sword to return Tybalt's insult. As Romeo tries to break up the fight, he restrains Mercutio. Tybalt takes advantage of this and kills Mercutio. In return, Romeo, enraged at the death of his friend, slays Tybalt.

Romeo flees the scene, where the Prince and rival families assemble to determine the punishment for this bloodshed. In mercy, the Prince elects to banish Romeo rather than killing him. The Nurse tells Juliet that Romeo has been banished for killing Tybalt, and while Juliet is devastated that her cousin has been killed, she is even more devastated that her new husband is banished.



Production still of *Romeo and Juliet* (2024).
Photo by Giao Nguyen.

Romeo and Juliet have one final night together before Romeo must leave the city.

Unaware that their daughter had already married Romeo, the Capulets decide to expedite their plan for Juliet to marry Paris. Juliet goes to Friar Lawrence for help, where he gives her a sleeping potion that will make her appear dead for two days. The Friar instructs her to take the potion the night before her wedding to Paris, and assures her that he will send a message to Romeo letting him know of the plan so that he can retrieve her from the tomb when she awakens.

Unfortunately, the Friar's message doesn't reach Romeo in time. Instead, he hears about Juliet's death from his servant who is unaware of the Friar's scheme. In grief, Romeo returns to the city determined to be with Juliet in death. He goes to the apothecary and buys a deadly poison, then goes to Juliet's tomb. There, he finds Paris who challenges him to a duel. In desperation, Romeo kills Paris, then takes the poison and kills himself.

Juliet wakes to find her love dead beside her. Unwilling to face the consequences of life without her husband, Juliet uses Romeo's dagger to take her own life. Friar Lawrence attempts to stop Juliet, but arrives at the scene too late to prevent the tragedy. The two families find Romeo and Juliet dead. Realizing that their feud was the catalyst for the deaths of their children, the families finally reconcile.



Production still of *Romeo and Juliet* (2024).
Photo by Giao Nguyen.



Production still of *Romeo and Juliet* (2024).
Photo by Giao Nguyen.



Production still of *Romeo and Juliet* (2024).
Photo by Giao Nguyen.

Meet the Characters

Romeo, son of Lord and Lady Montague

Abraham, a servant of the Montagues

Mercutio, related to Prince Escalus and a close friend to Romeo

Benvolio, Romeo's cousin and friend

Montague, Romeo's father

Lady Montague, Romeo's mother

Friar Lawrence, a Franciscan friar and close friend to Romeo

Friar John, another friar

Lord Capulet, head of the house of Capulet, Juliet's father and enemy of the Montagues

Lady Capulet, Juliet's mother and enemy of the Montagues

Sampson, servant of the Capulets

Gregory, servant of the Capulets

Juliet, daughter of Lord and Lady Capulet

Nurse, Juliet's nurse and confidant

Peter, servant to the nurse and Juliet

Tybalt, Juliet's cousin

Paris, a relative of Prince Escalus, and Juliet's proposed husband

Prince Escalus, the prince of Verona, he is related to Mercutio and Paris



Meet the Cast of *Romeo and Juliet*



Morgan Gwilym Tso
Romeo



Alegra Batara
Juliet



Miguel Castellano
Mercutio/Montague



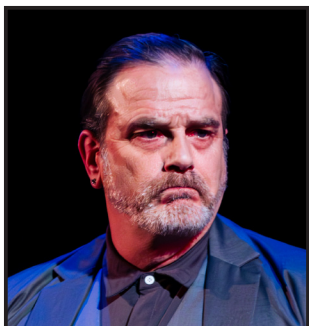
Karin Terry
Benvolio/Paris



S. Franco
Tybalt/Lady Montague/Balthasar



Sarah Harlett
The Nurse/Prince



Shawn Belyea
Capulet/Apothecary



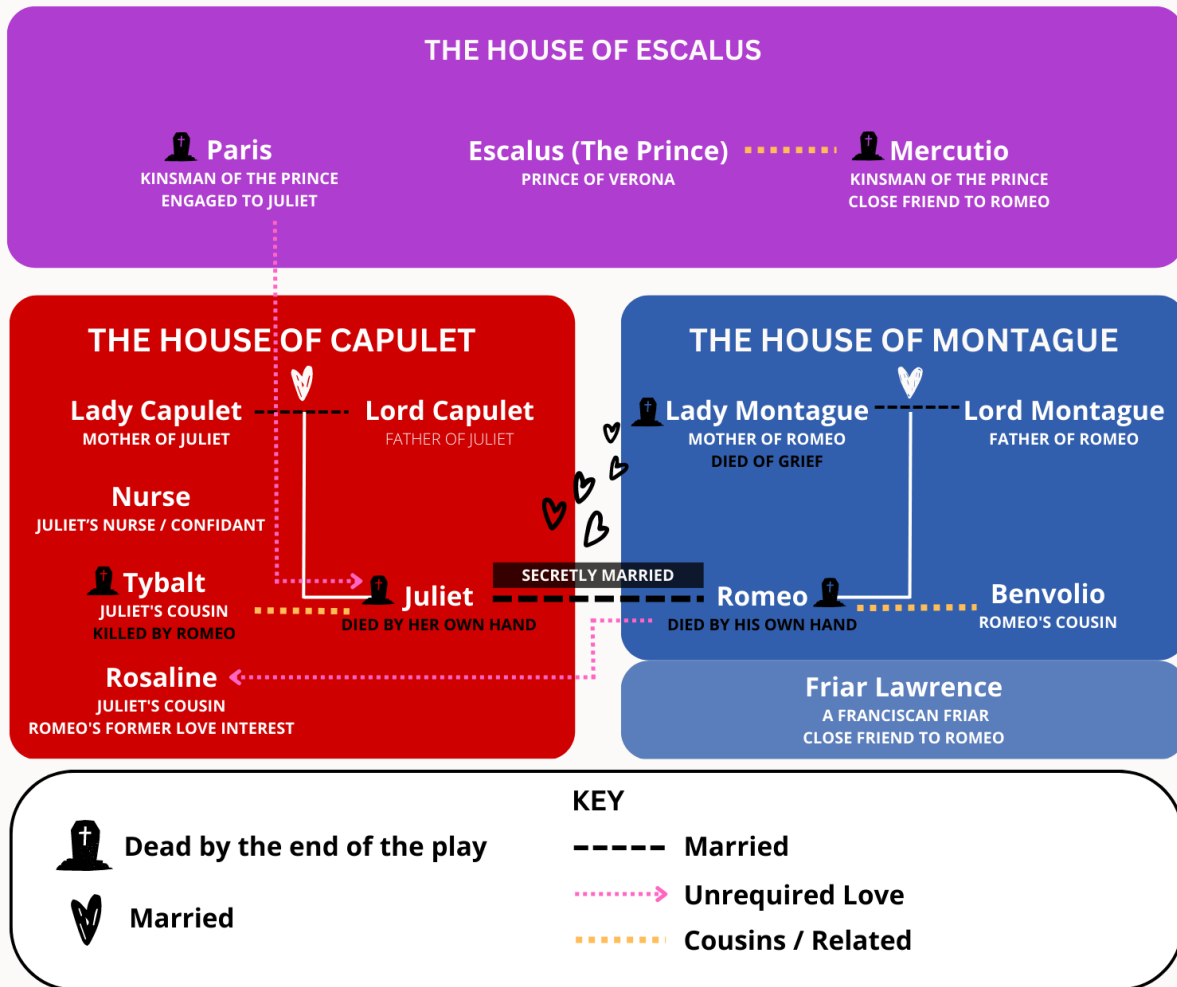
Josephine Keefe
Lady Capulet/Friar John/Abram



Andrew Lee Creech
Friar Lawrence/Sampson



Louis McElrath
Full Cast Understudy



Production still of *Romeo and Juliet* (2024).
Photo by Giao Nguyen.



Production still of *Romeo and Juliet* (2024).
Photo by Giao Nguyen.



Biography of William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare, widely regarded as the greatest dramatist in the English language, was born in the month of April of 1564 to John Shakespeare, a city councilman and glove maker, and Mary Arden. He was the eldest son in a family of eight.

Not much is known about William's childhood or education. The local school in Stratford would have provided him with a foundation in classical Latin authors, as was standard in Elizabethan curriculum. In 1582, at eighteen years old, William was married to Anne Hathaway (not the same one from *The Princess Diaries*). The marriage was apparently a hasty one, as Anne gave birth to a daughter, Susanna, six months later. Two years later the couple had twins, a son Hamnet and a daughter Judith. After the birth of the twins, records of William cease for several years.

These "lost years" have caused speculation among historians and suggestions about his vocation during this time vary greatly. Some say William began his theatrical career minding the horses at the theatre's stables. Regardless of what he was doing, William must have been honing his skills as a writer. No one knows when he began writing exactly, but we do know when people began to take notice.

In 1592, theatre records show that William Shakespeare's plays started being performed in London. William joined an acting company called Lord Chamberlain's Men. This company, co-owned by William and several other actors, became a favorite of Queen Elizabeth I and of her successor, James I. Records from the period show that William acted in his own plays, usually as minor characters, as well as in other productions. William Shakespeare's earliest plays were largely comedies and histories. In 1596, William's son, Hamnet, died of an unknown illness.

In 1599, the Lord Chamberlain's Men had gained enough success to fund the construction of their own theater venue, the Globe Theatre. As Shakespeare's career grew, the Lord Chamberlain's Men became one of the most popular theatre groups in London. William's writing also matured as he began writing his great tragedies.

In 1603, with James I's succession to the throne following the death of Elizabeth I, the new king became the official patron of the Lord Chamberlain's Men and the group changed their name to the King's Men. In 1608, the King's Men expanded to purchase the indoor Blackfriars theatre. Shakespeare himself became quite wealthy due to his career success; he made numerous property purchases, including New Place, the second largest house in his hometown of Stratford. He divided his time between London and Stratford, eventually retiring to Stratford. Shakespeare died on April 23rd, 1616. The cause of his death is unknown.

"Richard Brinsley Sheridan" Encyclopædia Britannica. 03 July, 2018. <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Richard-Brinsley-Sheridan>> Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th Edition, Volume XXIV. John George Robertson. Cambridge: University Press, 1911. pp. 845-7.

Origins: How did Romeo and Juliet come to be?

Romeo and Juliet was influenced by a number of stories of doomed lovers, dating back to ancient times. Shakespeare clearly drew from Ovid's telling of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, which tells the story of ill-fated lovers who were only able to communicate through a crack in the wall between their houses. Since their parents refused to consent to their union, Pyramus and Thisbe decided to flee their houses and convene in an agreed upon place in the woods. Thisbe arrived before Pyramus, but heard the roar of a lion and ran away in terror. However, in her retreat she lost her veil which was torn apart by the lion and stained with the blood of the animal's previous kill. Upon finding the mangled veil, Pyramus stabbed himself, believing that his paramour had been killed by the animal. When Thisbe returned and found her lover mortally wounded, she took her own life to be with him in death.

The parallels between these two tales is undeniable. The parents of both lovers' hate each other and, like Romeo, Pyramus kills himself, believing Thisbe is dead. The *Ephesiaca* of Xenophon of Ephesus has other elements that Shakespeare used, such as the sleeping potion. Scholars also believe Shakespeare may have drawn for Dante's *Divine Comedy* where Dante refers to the two warring families, *Matechhi* and *Cappelletti*. While the overall plot of *Romeo and Juliet* was based on two sources, the first adaptation came from a narrative poem titled, *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*, which was translated in 1562 by Arthur Brooke and later retold by William Painter in 1567. Shakespeare borrowed heavily from both versions, but is believed to have created a number of supporting characters, such as Mercutio and Paris.

It is believed that Shakespeare's play was written between 1591 and 1597. The play is a clear indication of Shakespeare's growth as a dramatist, and command of both the comedy and tragedy genre. The characters of the Nurse and Mercutio demonstrate a growing skill to expand minor characters and use subplots to enrich the main story. His use of language was also improving; different characters expressed themselves in different poetic forms, which would often change as the character developed. For example, Romeo often uses the form of a sonnet to emphasize his romantic nature, while Mercutio and the Nurse often speak in prose.

Shakespeare also took the liberty of altering how the characters interacted. In the original Italian story, the balcony scene (*Romeo and Juliet*, 2.2) only involves Juliet declaring her love to Romeo alone, which played into the renaissance conventions of how women were expected to behave; modest and careful. By placing Romeo in the scene with Juliet, Shakespeare throws this social etiquette out the window by investing in the autonomy of the star-crossed lovers and allowing them to talk about their relationship with each other.



Production still of *Romeo and Juliet* (2024).
Photo by Giao Nguyen.

Romeo and Juliet in Modern Media

Music

- 'Love Story' by Taylor Swift
- 'Mystery Dance' by Elvis Costello
- 'Cinema Show' by Genesis
- 'They Don't Know' by Kirsty MacColl

TV

- 'Star-Crossed'
- 'First Kill'
- 'Wizards of Waverly Place' (Season 2)
- "Noughts & Crosses"

Movies

- 'Rosaline'
- 'Warm Bodies'
- 'West Side Story'
- 'Gnomeo & Juliet'

Books

- 'These Violent Delights' by Chloe Gong
- 'Between You, Me, and the Honeybees' by Amelia Diane Coombs
- 'Starry Eyes' by Jen Bennett
- 'When You Were Mine' by Rebecca Serle



'Love Story' by Taylor Swift



"Noughts & Crosses"



Rosaline (2022)

REFLECTION QUESTION: *Why do you think Romeo and Juliet has been retold for so long, in so many ways?*

Shakespeare's Genres

While occasionally dissected further, Shakespeare's plays are typically divided into three categories: **Comedy, Tragedy, and History.**

COMEDY: A Shakespearean comedy is not necessarily what a modern audience would expect when they hear "comedy". Whilst there may be some laugh-out-loud moments, the most commonly identifiable traits of a Shakespearean comedy are:

- Young lovers struggling to overcome problems (often thanks to their strict elders)
- Mistaken identities, often involving disguise
- Complex, interwoven plot-lines
- Frequent use of puns
- A happy ending (often involving a wedding)



Actors in Wooden O production of *The Comedy of Errors* (2021). Photo by John Ullman.



Gretchen Hahn and Stephanie Roman as Friar Lawrence and Romeo in Educational Tour production of *Romeo and Juliet* (2023). Photo by Giao Nguyen

HISTORY: Shakespeare's histories are focused on English monarchs, and were often used to perpetuate Elizabethan propaganda, and influence the perception of royalty. Many historians have suggested there are inaccuracies in the depictions, but the plays have proved influential for centuries in shaping how we view these historical figures.

TRAGEDY: While they may feature comedic moments, Shakespearean tragedies boast high-stakes storylines that often involve the death of main characters. The main features of a Shakespearean tragedy are that:

- Characters are impacted heavily by social or societal turmoil
- Themes of inescapable doom
- A noble, but flawed central character that suffers a terrible downfall
- Ends in death



Kathy Hsieh, Rhys Daly, and Rachel Guyer-Mafune as King Henry IV, Prince Hal, and Poins in *Drum and Colours: Henry IV* (2023). Photo by Robert Wade

Shakespeare's Audiences

Audiences in Shakespeare's time behaved differently than what we think of today when we go to the theatre. In general, audiences were much more rowdy and directly involved in the show than modern audiences.

Shakespeare is often associated with the Globe Theatre in London, which was a wooden stage constructed in 1599, and hosted many of Shakespeare's world premieres, including *As You Like It*; *Hamlet*; *Othello* and *Macbeth*. On June 29th, 1613, the Globe Theatre went up in flames during a performance of *Henry VIII*. A modern reconstruction of the theatre, named "Shakespeare's Globe", opened in 1997, and is located approximately 750 feet from the site of the original theatre.

London theatres like the Globe could accommodate up to 3,000 people watching popular plays. With theatres running most afternoons, that could mean as many as 10,000–20,000 people could see a play every week! Shakespeare's audiences included the very rich, the upper-middle class, and the lower-middle class. People sought entertainment just as we do today and could afford to spend money going to the theatre. To get into the Globe Theatre cost a penny. In Elizabethan England, one penny would buy a loaf of bread, a pint of ale, or a ticket to the theatre. Those who paid just one penny were known as "groundlings," because they stood on the ground in what was known as "the yard," which is the area closest to the stage. For another penny, they could sit on a bench just behind the yard. For a penny more, they could sit more comfortably on a cushion. To get into the upper galleries, which were covered and had seats, cost would start at 6 pence.

Since there was no electricity, both performances took place in broad daylight, allowing actors and audience members to see each other and interact. Shakespeare's soliloquies would be spoken directly to the audience, who could potentially answer back! The audience would clap for the hero, boo the villain, and cheer for the special effects. They might even dance at the end of a comedy along with the characters onstage. However, in the case where an audience didn't like a play, they caused a ruckus, and had been known to throw furniture and damage the theatre.

Shakespeare used several tricks to gain and hold his audience's attention. His plays rarely begin with main characters onstage; instead a minor character typically begins the first scene. Without lights to dim at the beginning of a play, the performance simply started when actors walked onstage and started to speak, usually over the noise made by the audience. Because of this, the first scene would usually set the mood of the play, but the opening dialogue wasn't vital because it might not be heard.

Another trick that Shakespeare used was to break up the main action of the play with comedy. In most of his plays, there is comic relief in the form of "clown" or "fool" characters sprinkled throughout the show, making jokes or clowning around onstage. This ensured that even during a 3-hour history play, there would be something that appealed to everyone.



A performance of *King Lear* at the new Globe Theatre in London.

Audiences today can learn from Elizabethan audiences about how to watch a Shakespeare play. Here are some tips:

- Remind yourself that the first scene mostly sets the mood of the play and rarely has vital dialogue, so if you miss some of the words at the beginning, that is okay. It can take a couple minutes to adjust to Shakespeare's unusual language. It's a little bit like listening to someone with a heavy accent; at first it can be difficult to understand, but after a minute or two it becomes easier. Don't be discouraged if it doesn't make sense right away. Our actors are professionally trained to make sure that you understand the words, so you'll catch on!
- Enjoy the play and feel free to express your enjoyment. Laugh at the clowns, clap for the heroes, gasp at important revelations, and applaud for the actors at the end to thank them for their work. This will keep you engaged in the show and help let the actors know that the audience is paying attention and enjoying the play.
- Remember that in a play, unlike in a movie, the actors can see and hear you too! Even with more sophisticated theatre lighting that keeps the stage lit and the audience dim, the actors are often very close to the first few rows, and they can definitely hear the audience. That means please don't talk to your neighbor during the show, and keep your phones silent and away for the duration of the performance (it lights up your face!) — these can all be very distracting to the performers and your fellow audience members.
- And finally, remember that the theatre exists for everyone. Theatre is not meant to be only for the upper class, college graduates, and old people. In Shakespeare's day theatre was an affordable form of entertainment that had something any person could enjoy. Shakespeare's plays have something for you, whether you have seen one hundred plays or no plays at all, if you're rich, poor, young, old, or if you enjoy jokes, speeches, banter, or battles. Shakespeare wrote his plays with a diverse audience in mind, and that is part of the reason they are still significant today.

Pre-Show Reflection Questions

These questions will help students to think about some of the big ideas behind the play before watching it.

In this play, Juliet is the only daughter of the Capulet family, and her parents expect her to marry a wealthy, powerful man. Think of a time in your life when an adult figure set out expectations for you, either explicit or implied. Was the expectation reasonable for them to ask? Was it something you were willing to do?

Family rivalry is a major theme in *Romeo and Juliet*. Can you think of a time when you were in a rivalry with another person or group of people? What about a rivalry between schools? Between cities? Between countries? What causes these rivalries?

Have you ever kept a big secret from your friends? Your family? Why did you keep that secret? How did it make you feel to leave your friends or family in the dark about something?



Production still of *Romeo and Juliet* (2024).
Photo by Giao Nguyen.

Post-Show Reflection Questions

The following questions are to help lead a discussion with your class after seeing the play. For all of these, there are many possible answers and student responses will vary. There is no wrong answer, as long as students use examples from the play to back up their opinions. Some possible responses are provided.

At what point in the story did things begin to go wrong? Whose fault was this? Consider how the choices of the following characters may have affected the outcome of the play: Romeo, Juliet, Friar Lawrence, Mercutio, Lord Capulet, Tybalt.

- The prologue told us how things were going to go wrong, and jumped right into a brawl between the Capulets and Montagues to showcase this. With that in mind, things were going wrong before the play even began. Thanks to the elders of the family that this feud persisted and killed their children.
- If Mercutio hadn't been so hot-headed, he wouldn't have gotten into a fight with Tybalt, and Romeo wouldn't have been moved to avenge him. Mercutio's temper, and that fight at the top of Act 3 was the catalyst for all the problems in the play.

Who is/are the "villain(s)" of the story? Who is responsible for all of the tragic events?

- The villain is Tybalt. He incites Romeo and Mercutio to violence.
- The villain is Lord Capulet. If he wasn't so intent on getting Juliet married off — at the threat of disowning her— she and Romeo might have ended up all right.
- We never meet the villain! The ancestors who started the feud in the first place are the real villains of the story, because the feud they created is the catalyst for all of Romeo and Juliet's problems.
- The Friar is responsible for the ultimate tragedy and deaths. He married Romeo and Juliet in secret, then gave Juliet a sleeping drug and failed to let Romeo know what happened!

Romeo and Juliet may be the most famous pair of lovers in Western literature, but, seriously: is their love real, or is it just infatuation? Are they just melodramatic teenagers, or are they a model of romantic love? What proof does the play provide that their love is "real love," not just infatuation?

- Romeo and Juliet are a perfect match, even going as far as to complete an entire sonnet in their first meeting. Their instant compatibility assures the audience that their connection is more than mere infatuation.
- Romeo is a hopeless romantic, and clearly will jump from one love to the next with little thought. One second he was whining over Rosaline, and the next he's hanging outside Juliet's window. The inconsistency of his devotion makes their relationship inauthentic.
- Juliet doesn't love Romeo for who he is, but for what he offers her. He is the first person in her life to value her opinions and present her with a future where she will be respected and understood. The allure of that lifestyle clouds her judgment and puts the legitimacy of their relationship in question.

According to this story, what does it mean to be a part of a family?

- Family is what you make it. Romeo doesn't always abide by the wishes of his elders, but has made his own community with Mercutio, Benvolio and, later, Juliet.
- In *Romeo and Juliet*, family means a lot more than a husband, wife, and 2.5 kids. "Family" means everyone from the head of the household down to the lowly servants—anyone who could possibly owe them loyalty.



Arts Writing ACTIVITY

GRADES 7-12



DISCUSS: WHY WRITE ABOUT ART?

Discussion Prompts:

What is arts criticism for? Why do people read reviews?

- **Education/Illumination:** To help people think about the art, to confirm or challenge their personal opinions
- **Entertainment:** To entertain people via the writing itself, whether or not they intend to consume the art
- **Consumer reports:** To help people decide what to see

Who gets to write reviews? Historically and currently?

Why is it important for young people to write reviews?

REFLECT ON THE PLAY

Writing or reflection prompts after seeing the play:

- What do you see (Props, Costumes, Set, Lights)?
- What do you hear (music, sound effects)?
- What stories are important in the performance?
- How do the characters change during the performance?
- How does the performance show aspects of Identity (including race, gender, and location), Power, Community, and History?
- What is the background of the playwright? Of other cast and crew members?

READ: EXAMPLE STUDENT REVIEWS

Balance the World of Love and Family

Review of *Romeo y Julieta* presented by Seattle Shakespeare Company
Written by a student at Glacier Middle School during an Arts Writing Residency

A Brave Portrayal of Mental Health

Review of *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* at Seattle Repertory Theatre
Written by an Evergreen HS student during an Arts Criticism Residency

The Bloody Madness of Seattle Shakespeare's "Macbeth"

Review of *Macbeth* at Seattle Shakespeare Company
Written by a TeenTix Newsroom writer

WRITE A REVIEW!

Ask students to write a review based on their reflections. If your students attended a Seattle Shakespeare matinee, **TeenTix will publish up to 2 student reviews per school on the TeenTix Blog.**

Send reviews for consideration to:
mariko@teentix.org

INTERESTED IN MORE?

Host a TeenTix Arts Writing residency in your classroom!

If you'd like additional curriculum or teaching artist support for Arts Writing in your classroom, reach out for details about our in-school residencies.

Contact Mariko Smithashima, Teen Programs Director at mariko@teentix.org

All teens ages 13-19 can sign up for a **FREE TeenTix Pass** to explore even more arts and culture events in the greater Seattle area. For more info and to sign up visit: teentix.org

Engage, Respect, Enjoy

Welcome Back to the Theatre!

Welcome! Seattle Shakespeare Company is thrilled to have you here! For many of you, it's been a long time since you've been in a shared theatre space! Here are some helpful tips to get you reacquainted with Seattle Shakespeare, and theatre going in general!

Listen: To the talented actors sharing their story with you today. They're eager for you to hear it! To instructions from our staff. We're here to ensure everyone has a great time. Sometimes, we'll guide you on seating or movement to make the experience smoother for all.

Participate: You're part of the experience! Laugh, applaud, and listen closely to enrich the show for everyone. Remember, respect is key. Playwright Dominique Morrisseau reminds us, "This is [also] live theater, and the actors need you to engage with them, not distract or thwart their performance."

Care: The actors can see and hear you. Be the kind of audience member you'd enjoy sitting next to. Before you leave, check around to ensure you haven't left anything behind.

Phones: Keep them in your backpack or pocket, preferably on airplane mode. Share your experience with friends after the show, and enjoy the performance distraction-free. If you pull out your phone during intermission, be sure it goes back off before the show begins again!

Aisles: Actors may move throughout the theater, so keep aisles clear for their safety and yours.

Bathrooms: Located across from the theater entrance near the water fountains. If you need to use them during the show, exit mindfully to avoid disrupting the performance.

Thank you for being here with us! Enjoy the show!



Production stills of *Romeo and Juliet* (2024). Photo by Giao Nguyen.



MISSION STATEMENT

With the plays of William Shakespeare at our core, Seattle Shakespeare Company engages our audiences, our artists and our community in the universal human experience inherent in classic drama through the vitality, immediacy and intimacy of live performance and dynamic outreach programs.

ABOUT US

Seattle Shakespeare Company is the Puget Sound region's year-round, professional, classical theatre. The company's growing success stems from a deep belief in the power and vibrancy of the time-tested words and ideas of Shakespeare and other classical playwrights along with a commitment to artistic excellence on stage. The results have been provocative performances that both challenge and delight audiences while fostering an appreciation for great stage works. Our combined programs — which include indoor performances, free outdoor productions, regional tours, educator and youth programs — reach across barriers of income, geography, and education to bring classical theatre to Washington State.

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EDUCATION PROGRAMS

In-School Residencies, Matinees, and Workshops

- In-School Residencies bring active, customized curriculum into schools across Washington State. Professional teaching artists plan with teachers to tailor each residency to fit the needs and objectives of the classroom. Seattle Shakespeare Company residencies inject vibrant, active exercises into lessons that unlock the text, themes, and actions of a Shakespeare play.
- Student Matinees bring over 3,000 students annually to our mainstage productions in the Seattle Center. Teachers are provided free study guides, and student groups are invited to stay after the show for a free Q&A session with the cast.
- Pre-show and post-show workshops can be booked to accompany mainstage matinees. These workshops include an introduction to the play itself, student activities, and insights into direction and design choices of our specific production.

Touring Productions

- Fresh and accessible 90-minute productions tour across Washington State each Spring, reaching more than 14,000 students and adults. These nimble productions perform as easily in school gymnasiums as professional theatre facilities. Teachers are provided free study guides and students enjoy free post-show Q&A sessions with the cast.
- Schools have the opportunity to book accompanying in-school residencies with touring productions, led by members of the touring cast and additional teaching artists.

Camps and Classes

- Our summer "Camp Bill" series in Seattle and Edmonds offers young actors a variety of camps to choose from or combine. Camps range from a One-Week Introduction to a Three-Week Production Intensive, with many options in between.
- In our Fall and Spring after-school "Short Shakes" programs, young actors develop their skills and gain hands-on performance and production experience.
- Seattle Shakespeare Company occasionally offers adult classes and workshops to our community featuring guest artists who work on our stage.