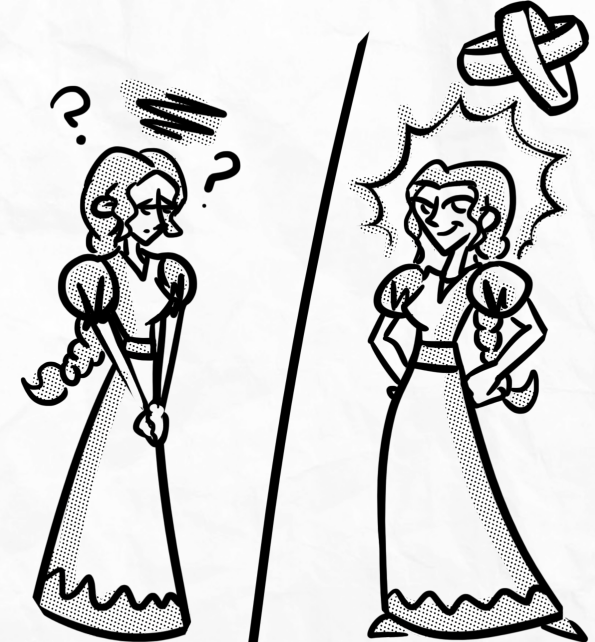


Romeo and Juliet

William Shakespeare



ThinkIT

Disobedience

What is the importance of disobedience in the play?

Who is the most disobedient character? What is your justification for this?

Why are so many characters in the play disobedient? What might this reveal about the Elizabethan society?

Which characters are disobedient and how does this reflect rebellion against the stereotypes of an Elizabethan society's morals and expectations? What makes these characters disobedient?

To what extent is there disobedience on every level of Verona's hierarchy?

Livery

Why is livery such an important theme in the play?

Where does Shakespeare draw attention to the theme of livery?

In Act 2, Scene 2, as Juliet is speaking her soliloquy on her balcony, she states *'deny thy father and refuse thy name and I'll no longer be a Capulet'*.

Why would Juliet's words resonate amongst an Elizabethan audience? What is so shocking about her words?

Mercutio is neither Capulet nor Montague. Why does he align himself to the Montagues? How could we argue that Mercutio is more devoted to the Montagues than Romeo?

Tybal is very passionate about his Capulet livery. To what extent does Tybal's passion for his livery become an obsession?

Death

Which is more important in the play, the theme of love or the theme of death?

Towards the end of Act 5, Scene 3, as Juliet kills herself, she refers to Romeo's dagger as a *'happy dagger'*. Why does she say this and why is the adjective *'happy'* particularly significant?

What do you feel is the biggest turning point in the play which acts as the catalyst for Romeo and Juliet's death? Justification is needed.

Why is communication such an important concept in the play and how does the lack of communication bring about the death of the protagonists?

What do Romeo and Juliet risk when they take their own lives?

Feud

Why is the feud such an important motif in the play?

Why does Shakespeare choose to set the story amidst the blood stained streets of Verona?

In Act 1, Scene 1, after the Capulet & Montague servants are feuding in the streets, the Prince arrives and warns the *'rebellious subjects'* and *'enemies to peace'*. He commands them to *'throw [their] mistemper'd weapons to the ground'* and tells them that *'if ever [they] disturb [the] streets again, [their] lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace'*. Why are his words here particularly poignant? What do they foreshadow later in the play?

When Mercutio realises that Romeo is refusing to fight Tybal in Act 3, Scene 1, he states *'O, calm, dishonourable, vile submission'*. Why is he so angered that Romeo will not fight Tybal?

Why is it so tragic that Mercutio is killed by Tybal under Romeo's arm? He dies shouting *'A plague on both your houses.'* Why is this particular quote so tragic?

Required Love

In what way does Shakespeare use the semantic field of religion, through Romeo's speech in Act 1, Scene 5 when he first sets eyes on Juliet, to reveal the power and potency of their love?

How do Romeo and Juliet's reactions towards one another in Act 1, Scene 5 contradict everything we have seen them do and say up to this point?

In Act 2, Scene 2, Juliet first speaks to Romeo of *'thy purpose marriage'*. Why would an Elizabethan audience have been shocked by Juliet mentioning marriage before Romeo?

What are Friar Lawrence's attitudes towards Romeo and Juliet's love in Act 2? What does he hope he can achieve through their union?

In Act 2, Scene 3, Friar Lawrence says: *'Is Rosaline, whom thou didst love so dear, So soon forsaken? young men's love then lies Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.'*

What do we discover here about his attitudes towards love and his thoughts about Romeo's relationships?

In Act 2, Scene 5, Romeo and Juliet are married. Why might this scene be short in length?

Family Relationships

How does Shakespeare present the relationship between Juliet and her parents?

What is the significance of the relationship between Juliet and the nurse?

How does this contrast and contradict the relationship between Juliet and her mother?

Why does Juliet lie to the nurse about wanting to marry Paris at the end of Act 3?

In Act 1, Scene 3, Juliet refers to her mother as *'Madam'*. What does this reveal about their relationship and how does this support Elizabethan stereotypes?

In Act 1, Scene 3, Juliet and Lady Capulet speak of Juliet's possible marriage to Paris. Juliet says *'marriage is an honour I dream not of'*.

What do her language choices here reveal about her attitudes and feelings towards marriage?

Later in the scene she says:

*'I'll look to like, if looking liking move:
But no more deep will I endart mine eye
Than your consent gives strength to make it fly.'*

What does this reveal about her thoughts and feelings? How does this contradict her behaviour and attitudes later in the play?

What is the significance of the relationship between Romeo and Friar Lawrence?

In Act 1, Scene 2, Capulet speaks to Paris of his marriage to Juliet and says *'She is the hopeful lady of my earth:
But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart,
My will to her consent is but a part;
An she agree, within her scope of choice
Lies my consent and fair according voice.'*

This is a stark juxtaposition to Act 3, Scene 4 where Lord Capulet responds to Juliet's refusal to marry Paris with *'Out, you green-sickness carrion! out, you baggage!' and 'Hang thee, young baggage! disobedient wretch! I tell thee what: get thee to church o' Thursday, Or never after look me in the face: Speak not, reply not, do not answer me'*

Why does Shakespeare include this antithesis?

What does this reveal about patriarchal societies in the time of Shakespeare?