



# ROMEO & JULIET

STUDY GUIDE

2016





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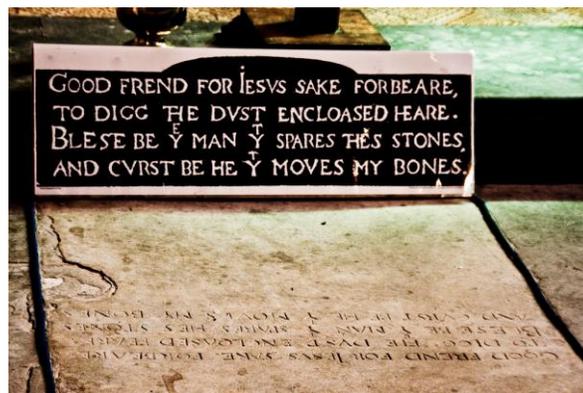
## About the Playwright

William Shakespeare is a name that many know, but what facts we do have about Shakespeare's life are few and far between. Records show that he was baptized on April 26, 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon at Holy Trinity Church. Since infants were baptized in the days after their birth, Shakespeare's birthday is widely accepted to be April 23, 1564. No school attendance records have been found from his life, but historians believe that Shakespeare received an education at the King's New School in Stratford. Records show that, at the age of 18, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, who was 26 years old when they married. Six months after their wedding, Anne gave birth to their first daughter, Susanna, who we know was baptized on May 26, 1583. Two years later, twins Hamnet and Judith were born and baptized on February 2, 1585. Hamnet passed away for reasons unknown at 11 years old. After the twins were born, there were few records of Shakespeare's life to be found. These years, about 1585 to 1592, are called "The Lost Years."

In 1594, Lord Chamberlain's Men, an acting company, was formed. Shakespeare published 15 of his 37 known plays published by 1597. In 1599, he and a few business partners built the famous Globe Theatre. By 1600, Shakespeare was the most successful playwright in London. In 1603, Lord Chamberlain's Men was changed to King's Men; King James I became the monarch of England, and he highly favored the acting company.

Shakespeare is believed to have died on April 23, 1616. If this is accurate, he would have died on this 52<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

Shakespeare is often regarded as the world's greatest playwright. The genres of his 36 plays vary greatly, some being comedies, some being tragedies, and many in between. Two actors in the King's Men compiled Shakespeare's plays into what we know as the First Folio, published in 1623. Find out more about how you can get to see one of the First Folios with your own eyes at [arkshakes.com](http://arkshakes.com)!



### Fun Fact!

*Shakespeare's grave at Holy Trinity Church, in Stratford-upon-Avon, pictured above, warns against grave robbers.*

## About the Play

In four short days, the streets of fair Verona see an ancient feud between the Montagues and Capulets come to a violent climax, a Friar devising an escape, and a pair of star-crossed lovers coming to an unexpected end. William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* tells the timeless story of two young people trying to overcome overwhelming odds.

Beginning with a masquerade at the Capulet household, Romeo catches his first glimpse of Juliet after sneaking in, instantly making an unbreakable connection. Just a few hours later they meet and decide to secretly marry. However, Juliet's parents have different plans: they wish to have their daughter marry Count Paris, the Prince's gallant kinsman. Nevertheless, the couple goes to Friar Laurence to make their vows. What should be the happiest day of their lives quickly becomes tragic when Romeo encounters a fight on his way home. Devastated with his friend Mercutio's death at the hands of Tybalt, a Capulet, Romeo slays Tybalt, resulting in his banishment. Juliet's grief over the loss of her cousin is not greater than her loyalty to her husband, so the two celebrate their wedding night together. With a bittersweet goodbye, Romeo leaves Juliet to serve his banishment in Mantua.

Complicating her situation further, Juliet's parents inform her that she is to marry Paris in two days. Juliet, desperate for help, goes to the Friar, who gives her a potion to make her appear deceased. He sends a letter to Romeo to inform him of the plan, Juliet fakes her death and is placed in the Capulet tomb, and her family mourns. The letter doesn't make it to Romeo on time, and when he hears of Juliet's supposed death, he goes to an apothecary for poison to take his life. When Juliet wakes, she finds that Romeo has died, and she takes her life with his dagger. Hearing news of the whole love affair from the Friar, the Capulets and the Montagues finally end their feud, realizing the damaging impact it had on their children.



# Who's Side Am I On?

- **Capulets:**
  - Juliet
  - Lord Capulet
  - Lady Capulet
  - Tybalt
  - Nurse
  - Peter
  - Samson
  - Gregory
  - Rosaline (not seen)
- **Montagues:**
  - Romeo
  - Lord Montague
  - Lady Montague
  - Benvolio
  - Balthasar
  - Abraham
- **The Prince's Kindred:**
  - Prince Escalus
  - Mercutio
  - Paris
- **Others:**
  - Friar Laurence
  - Friar John
  - Apothecary

## Fun Fact!

*Shakespeare himself may have played Friar Laurence in the earliest productions of the play.*

## High Speeds and Higher Stakes

The impact time has on the play is important, since the sense of urgency that the star-crossed lovers feel leads to very quick decision making. Shakespeare included time markers throughout the play (words like today, tomorrow, etc.) to help audiences understand how quickly Romeo and Juliet's love affair pans out.

- Sunday
  - Morning: The feud in the streets occurs. Romeo pines for Rosaline.
  - Evening: Juliet, Nurse, and Lady Capulet discuss Juliet's readiness for marriage.
  - Night: Romeo and Juliet meet and kiss at the ball.
- Monday
  - Before dawn: The balcony scene happens, and Romeo and Juliet decide to marry.
  - After dawn: Friar Laurence agrees to marry Romeo and Juliet.
  - 9 a.m.: Juliet sends Nurse to speak to Romeo.
  - Afternoon: Romeo and Juliet marry offstage. After their wedding, Tybalt kills Mercutio, and Romeo then slays Tybalt. Romeo is banished.
  - Evening: Juliet is longing for Romeo to come for their wedding night, then the Nurse brings news of Tybalt's death. Later, Romeo, the Friar, and Nurse meet in the Friar's cell. At the end of the night, Romeo and Juliet celebrate their wedding night.
  - Later: The Capulets meet with Paris.
- Tuesday
  - Dawn: Romeo leaves Juliet. Juliet tells her father that she does not wish to marry Paris.
  - Afternoon: Juliet goes to the Friar for help, where she runs into Paris. The Friar devises the plan.
  - Evening: The Capulet household prepares for the wedding.
  - Night: Juliet swallows the poison to fake her death.
- Wednesday
  - 3 a.m.: Capulet, Lady Capulet, and the servants prepare for the wedding.
  - Dawn: Juliet is found "dead"
  - Afternoon: Romeo is serving his banishment in Mantua and hears that Juliet is "dead" and he decides to join her. He gets the poison from the apothecary.
  - Evening: The Friar learns that his letter did not make it to Romeo.
  - After midnight: Romeo reaches the Capulet vault. He drinks his poison before she wakes from her poison-induced fake death. The Friar reaches the vault and finds Romeo dead. Juliet wakes up and refuses to leave with the Friar. Juliet takes her life.
- Thursday
  - Dawn: The Capulet and Montague families end their feud and mourn the lovers.

### Fun Fact!

*There are 103 time-marking words total in the play*

## Gender Issues: Masculinity and Femininity in the Renaissance

While gender equality is a hot-button issue now, it was also a source of tension in the Renaissance as well. Women were expected to be submissive wives and daughters, always under the control of their fathers or husbands. The ideal woman in the Renaissance was chaste and submissive, never defying her father or husband.

Men, on the other hand, were expected to be strong-willed and dominant. An ideal man was well trained in sword-fighting, dancing, and other arts. Men were privileged as fathers and husbands as being the head of households. Their word was ultimate; their wives, daughters, and any household servants were expected to submit to them. For nobly born young men in the Renaissance, love was supposed to be unrequited since ladies were expected to be chaste. Nobly born men were also expected to resist the physical expression of love, because sensuality was considered to be the lowest rung of love.

Romeo and Juliet both challenge typical ideas about masculinity and femininity. In the beginning, Romeo is pining for Rosaline. Just like the “ideal” lady, Rosaline never speaks in the play. When Romeo meets Juliet, though, he changes. His love for her is requited, and they kiss, which is a physical act of love. Juliet is not a typical, submissive woman in the play. She speaks with Romeo and flirts with him at the ball, not ashamed. Juliet openly defies her father and insists that she will not marry Paris. Even in the end, the way the two lovers died is in defiance with gender norms. Romeo drinks a poison, which is a more feminine way to commit suicide. Juliet, however, chooses the more violent death by the dagger, a more masculine approach. Like with many of his plays, Shakespeare uses his work to comment on relevant issues in his society.

### Fun Fact!

*During the Renaissance, people believed that the ultimate form for a fetus was to be male. Essentially, if a baby was born female, it was because it had not spent “enough time” in the womb.*

## About Our Production:

### Q & A with Director Rebekah Scallet

**Q: What were your initial feelings when learning you'd be directing *Romeo and Juliet*?**

A: I am lucky in that as artistic director I actually get to select the production that I am directing myself, so I chose to direct *Romeo and Juliet* this year. It is my first time tackling this play, but I have loved it for a very long time. The tragic love appeals to my romantic nature, and the amazing poetic dialogue excites my inner English major. Not to mention swashbuckling sword fights, dancing, and heart pounding action. . .it's got it all!

**Q: Which scene was your favorite to see come to life?**

A: Probably the sonnet that Romeo and Juliet share when they first meet. It is such a perfect mix of writing and stagecraft. Shakespeare structures it so that the couple meets at a dance, where everyone else is dancing except for the two of them, which allows for there to be music underscoring their first meeting and kiss. When we added the music and dance to the scene, the whole thing came alive with a stolen moment of intimacy between Romeo and Juliet in the midst of this dance whirling around them. And Haulston and Sophina do a beautiful job sharing the language in their rhymed exchange.

**Q: What made you decide to portray *Romeo and Juliet* in the original time period?**

A: There are many aspects of the story that don't quite make as much sense if we modernize it, like the fact that they are marrying off Juliet at the age of not-quite 14. And I wanted the youth of both Romeo and Juliet to be featured in this production. They are young people, being ruled by their hormones and their emotions. Also, keeping it in the Renaissance shows how limited Juliet's options were—a young woman of the time would not be able to choose her own husband, especially not one from a rival family. Finally, I think it will stand in very nice contrast to *West Side Story*, which is also a modernized version of *Romeo and Juliet* itself.

**Q: What has been the most challenging part of directing this play?**

A: The play! There are many challenges, starting from creating my cuts, where I had a heck of a time trying to figure out which parts weren't absolutely necessary. The language is so beautiful, I struggled to get rid of any of it. Now that we're in rehearsal, I'm finding it a challenge to balance all of the elements: the beauty of the language, the emotional truth of the characters, the action of the fighting, and the energy of the dance. There's a lot going on!

**Q: How do you feel about performing *Romeo and Juliet* in an alley style?**

A: The alley configuration really helps set up our two warring families. As the audience enters, they will be asked to literally pick a side, and depending on which one they pick,

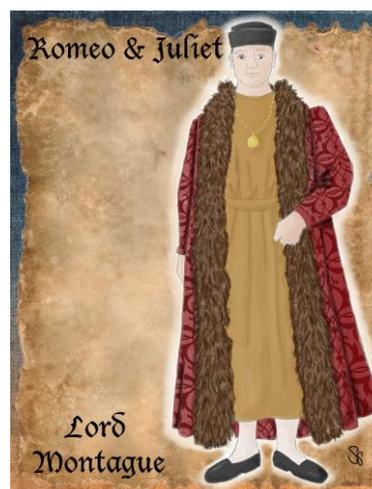
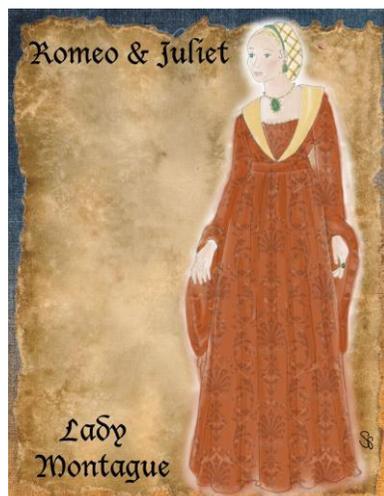
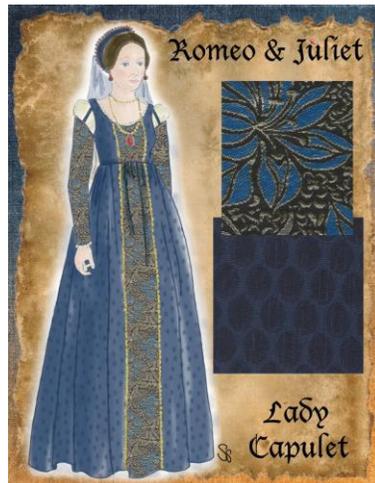
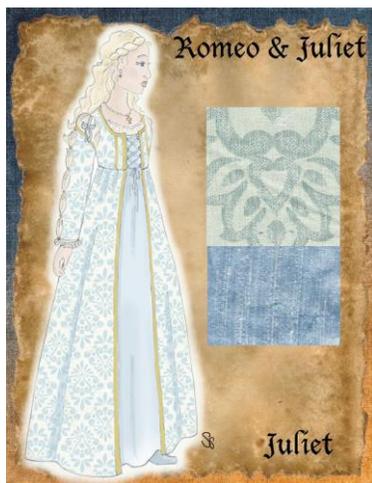
they will form an alliance with either the Montagues or the Capulets, engaging them in the action. I also love that they are so close to our actors, making the entire experience intimate.

**Q: What do you think makes *Romeo and Juliet* relevant to today?**

A: We can all see ourselves in Romeo and Juliet, whether we met our first love 50 years ago, or yesterday. We know that feeling, that headlong, out of control, rushing excitement of young love. Many among us might identify with the parents as well, who want nothing but the best for their children, but sometimes make foolhardy choices trying to achieve it. And by the end of the play, we are all reminded of what it means to experience regret for taking actions that we believed were for the best, only to discover they had unexpected consequences. These feelings of love, loss, and remorse are truly universal.

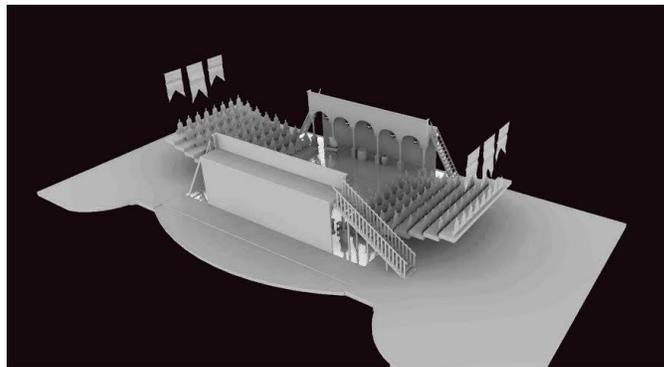
## Spotlight on Costume Design

The costume designer, Sandy Spence, had a distinct vision for *Romeo and Juliet*. “When the director, Rebekah, and I first started speaking about the costumes for *Romeo and Juliet*, we knew that we wanted to keep it in the Renaissance time period,” Sandy said. “We spoke about the Montagues and the Capulets being different halves of the same coin—‘Two households, both alike in dignity’. But Shakespeare also filled the play with opposites: love/hate, sun/moon, nightingale/lark, fate/free will, etc. There is small visual distinction between the two families.” Sandy played up the differences between the two families by choosing opposite color palettes. “On one side we have the Montagues in a warm color palette and, on the other, the Capulets in cool colors,” Sandy said. “Also, Romeo and Juliet are in less intense versions of the colors their parents wear.” Not only did she need to consider the characters’ personalities, she also had a specific time period to accurately depict. “The rich color palette and brocaded fabrics reflect the time period and the intense emotion of the play,” she said.



## Spotlight on Scenic Design

C. Murdock Lucas designed the set for the play, bringing Renaissance period Verona, Italy right to our stage. Murdock, an excellent craftsman, based his vision for the set on reality: "The two balcony structures are based on historical research of market squares in Verona, where many people engaged in the business of the day." Murdock, like the director Rebekah, was interested in how strong of a statement it is to use an alley type set up for audience seating. "We placed the audience (which is divided into two sections) at the intersection of the two houses of Montague and Capulet," Murdock said. "When you pick your seat, you are making a choice as to which house you stand with, and only the course of the play will tell ou if you chose correctly, or if, indeed, a choice is really necessary. Both houses are 'alike in dignity' and by the end of the production you may find that there is more that unites us than divides us."



## Before the Play: Word Search

Can you solve this word search? Give it a try!

M A N O R E V V M H V R O E E  
O O P P U O S Y J B U G A R N  
N J E O G J G K M P H F A T P  
T D U M T O I L O V N E B A S  
A D I L O H K X H U P U N E W  
G L I W I R E Y D S Q D E H O  
U L A I A E D C E P Z E S T R  
E S O I D E T K A G P M R P D  
Y T R V G Q A I D R E I U R S  
V F E A E H Y D H R Y Z N T D  
H S R L S T A R C R O S S E D  
U T R F U G R U B A L C O N Y  
U X S N G P T H F A T E N S D  
Z M D E G I A Q K W T J E F J  
V Q R D O Q C C Y H G H P X D

APOTHECARY  
BALCONY  
BENVOLIO  
CAPULET

DAGGER  
FATE  
FEUD  
FRIAR

JULIET  
LOVE  
MERCUTIO  
MONTAGUE

NURSE  
ROMEO  
SHAKESPEARE  
STAR-CROSSED

SWORDS  
THEATRE  
TRAGEDY  
VERONA

### Fun Fact!

*Linguists have traced 1,700 words from the English language back to Shakespeare as the creator.*

# Theatre Etiquette

Attending a live play is a unique experience; no two performances are exactly the same. If you are lucky enough to get to see a live performance, there are a few things you should keep in mind to be the best audience member you can be.

**Arrive early.** Getting to the theater 10-15 minutes early is key to getting great seats, and also to being a good audience member. Arriving right when the play starts is distracting to other people in the audience, as well as the actors.

**Power off electronics.** Cell phones, cameras, and other devices can be extremely distracting to the people around you, including those providing you with a wonderful theatrical experience. If for some reason you cannot power off your phone, put it on silent. If you must take a call, try to wait until intermission. Otherwise, exit the theatre and take your call in the lobby.

**Zip the lips.** Any talking, even whispering, is distracting to the audience and to the actors. Save comments for intermission or after the show.

**Participate.** Laugh and applaud when it feels appropriate to do so. Just be mindful of those around you.

**Have fun.** This is the most important part! Soak in every bit of the experience and enjoy it.

## Further Reading

Greenblatt, Stephen, ed. *Romeo and Juliet. The Norton Shakespeare*. Third Ed. New York: Norton, 1997. 986-87. Print.

Ryle, Simon. "'The Lightning Which Doth Cease To Be:': The Human Experience of Time in *Romeo and Juliet*." *Journal of the Wooden O Symposium* 5. (2005): 47-65. *MLA International Bibliography*. Web. 12 May 2016.

Weis, René, ed. *Romeo and Juliet. The Arden Shakespeare*. London: Bloomsbury, 2012. Print.

## Appendix: Character Map