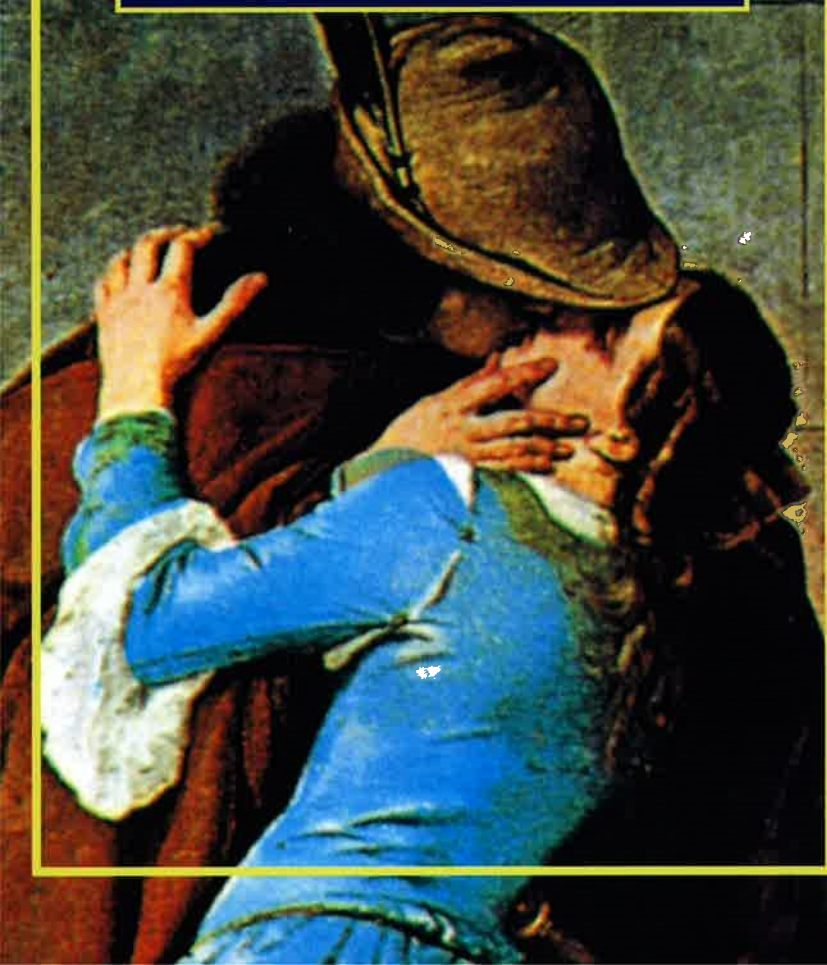


Stanford House Classics - Elementary

ROMEO AND JULIET

William Shakespeare

literature analysis and response



Romeo and Juliet

William Shakespeare

Of Shakespeare's life few details have survived. We know that he was born in Stratford-on-Avon in 1564 and attended the local Grammar school. He got married very young to Anne Hathaway, who was eight years older than him. They had three children together: Hamnet, Judith and Susanna.

Shakespeare left Stratford and moved to London, where he became a member of a company of actors and began writing for the theatre.

During the 1590s he also wrote a cycle of sonnets. He became a shareholder of the Globe Theatre and he went back to Stratford, buying a large house where he lived until his death on April 23, 1616.

His best known works are: *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Tempest* and other plays which have become classics of world literature.



Stanford House

ROMEO AND JULIET

This story is about the tragic love of Romeo and Juliet, two young lovers who lived in Verona, a city in Northern Italy. Their families, the Montagues and the Capulets were fierce rivals and every time a member, or even a servant, of one family met a person belonging to the other family, they quarrelled ¹ and fought ². Romeo was a Montague and Juliet was a Capulet.

One day Sampson and Gregory, who were servants of the Capulet family, met Abram and Balthasar, servants of the house of Montague. They started to fight. Benvolio, Montague's nephew, who was a peaceful ³ man, tried to stop the fight but it was too late. Tybalt, a hot-blooded⁴ Capulet had arrived and joined in ⁵.

All this noise attracted the attention of the town. The officers, old Capulet and his wife, old Montague and his wife, all came and took part in the fight.

Suddenly, Prince Escalus, the highest representative of political justice in Verona, arrived. He was very angry and called them all beasts who were

1. Answer the following questions:

a) What is this story about?

.....

b) Who was Romeo?

.....

c) Who was Juliet?

.....

d) Where is Verona?

.....

e) Were the Montagues and the Capulets friends?

.....

f) What kind of man was Benvolio?

.....

g) Who was Prince Escalus?

.....

2. Insert the right interrogative pronoun (*what, who, whose*).

a) were Sampson and Gregory?

b) did they meet?

c) did they do?

d) servants were they?

e) suddenly arrived?

f) are you speaking to on the phone?

g) left this puppy on my hat?

h) did you go out with yesterday evening?

i) do you generally have for breakfast?

j) asked me for money?

1. **quarrelled** : *took part in a violent disagreement; spoke angrily to each other.*

2. **fought** : (to fight – fought – fought) *hit each other.*

3. **peaceful** : *calm, quiet.*

4. **hot-blooded** : *easily excited.*

5. **joined in** : *came and took part in.*

disturbing the quiet of the city. He commanded them not to make any more trouble¹ and said that if they did, they would pay for it with their lives. Then he told them to leave that place.

Montague, his wife and Benvolio were the last to leave. Lady Montague asked where her son, Romeo, was and said how pleased² she was that he had not been involved³ in the fight⁴. Benvolio said that he had seen Romeo very early that morning walking all alone in a wood⁵ near the city. However, when Romeo had seen Benvolio, he had turned his back so Benvolio did not try to speak to him.

Old Montague added that Romeo had often been seen weeping⁶ in the morning but as soon as the sun rose⁷ he would go to his room and remain there all day alone. Montague said that he was very worried about all this.

At that moment Romeo was seen arriving. Benvolio said he would try to find out what the matter was.

PLANS FOR MARRIAGE

After a few questions Benvolio discovered that Romeo was in love with a girl called Rosaline but she did not love him. Benvolio tried to comfort Romeo by telling him to forget her and that there were many other girls just as beautiful as Rosaline but Romeo refused to believe that there was anyone as beautiful as her.

Meanwhile⁸, Count Paris was talking to Capulet,

3. Insert *said* or *told* in the following sentences.

e.g. Rosaline *said* : "I do not love you".

- Romeo : "I love Rosaline".
- He..... Benvolio he loved Rosaline.
- Hehe loved Rosaline.
- Benvolio.....him to forget her.
- Benvolio: "Forget her!".
- Benvolioto forget her.
- She me that John likes you.
- They us they are looking for a job.

4. Write sentences with *as ... as*.

e.g. Milan is more polluted than Sanremo.

Sanremo isn't as polluted as Milan.

- You work harder than me.
.....
- Mary's kitchen is bigger than Jane's kitchen.
.....
- Yesterday you came home earlier than me.
.....
- We play tennis better than they do.
.....
- I have more English friends than my brother.
.....
- My mother is older than your father.
.....

- trouble** : *disturbance*.
- pleased** : *happy*.
- involved** : *mixed up in*.
- fight** : *act of hitting each other*.
- wood** : *area of land with trees*.
- weeping** : *crying*.
- rose** : (to rise – rose – risen) *to appear above the horizon*.
- Meanwhile** : *at the same moment*.

Juliet's father about the possibility of his marriage to Juliet. Capulet replied ¹ that she was only fourteen years old and too young for marriage and he also wanted her to choose by herself. However, Count Paris had his permission to court her. In two years she would be ready for marriage.

"I give a feast ² at this time every year", Capulet said, "There will be dancing and you can meet my daughter there." Capulet called a servant and gave him the list of dinner guests ³, ordering him to ask all the listed people to dine with him that evening.

The servant, left alone with the list, had one big problem: he could not read so, seeing Benvolio and Romeo nearby ⁴ he approached ⁵ them and asked them to read the list for him. Romeo began to read the names aloud to him, "Count Anselm and his sister ... Rosaline..."

The servant told him, "If you are not a Montague, come to my master's house."

Romeo decided to go to the feast just ⁶ to see his beloved Rosaline.

AT THE CAPULETS' HOUSE

Lady Capulet and Juliet were at home with Juliet's old Nurse who had looked after her since she was a baby.

They were speaking together happily and the Nurse said, "I hope to live enough to see you marry."

5. Answer the following questions.

- a) How old was Juliet?
.....
- b) Why was Romeo so sad?
.....
- c) What happened every time a Montague met a Capulet?
.....
- d) How did Benvolio try to comfort Romeo?
.....
- e) What did Count Paris want to do?
.....
- f) Why did Capulet want him to wait for two years?
.....
- g) Why did the servant ask Romeo for help?
.....

6. Insert the right tense (past simple or past continuous).

e.g. He was *thinking* (to think) about the feast when the servant arrived.

- a) Count Paris (to talk) to Capulet when a servant arrived.
- b) The servant (to look) at the list when Romeo (to approach).
- c) Romeo (to read) aloud while the servant (to listen) to him.
- d) Romeo (to decide) to go to the feast because he (to want) to see Rosaline.

-
- 1. replied : answered.
 - 2. feast : party.
 - 3. guests : people who visit another's house.
 - 4. nearby : near.
 - 5. approached : came nearer.
 - 6. just : only.