

# romeo and juliet

chicago  
shakespeare theater  
on navy pier

Juliet, rendering by Miska van der Ploeg, 2019



# Teacher Handbook

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This Teacher Handbook grew out of a team effort of teachers past and present, Chicago Shakespeare Theater artists, interns, educators, and scholars. Chicago Shakespeare Theater gratefully acknowledges the groundbreaking and indelible work of Dr. Rex Gibson and the Cambridge School Shakespeare Series, whose contributions to the field of teaching have helped shape our own work through the years.

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Chicago Shakespeare Theater is Chicago's professional theater dedicated to the works of William Shakespeare. Founded as Shakespeare Repertory in 1986, the company moved to its seven-story home on Navy Pier in 1999. In its Elizabethan-style courtyard theater, 500 seats on three levels wrap around a deep thrust stage—with only nine rows separating the farthest seat from the stage. Chicago Shakespeare also features a flexible 180-seat black box studio theater, a Teacher Resource Center, and a Shakespeare specialty bookstall. In 2017, a new, innovative performance venue, The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare, expands CST's campus to include three theaters. The year-round, flexible venue can be configured in a variety of shapes and sizes with audience capacities ranging from 150 to 850, defining the audience–artist relationship to best serve each production. Now in its thirty-second season, the Theater has produced nearly the entire Shakespeare canon: *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *As You Like It*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Cymbeline*, *Edward III*, *Hamlet*, *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2*, *Henry V*, *Henry VI Parts 1, 2, and 3*, *Henry VIII*, *Julius Caesar*, *King John*, *King Lear*, *Love's Labor's Lost*, *Macbeth*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Othello*, *Pericles*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Tempest*, *Timon of Athens*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, and *The Winter's Tale*. Chicago Shakespeare Theater was the 2008 recipient of the Regional Theatre Tony Award. Chicago's Jeff Awards year after year have honored the Theater, including repeated awards for Best Production and Best Director, the two highest honors in Chicago theater. Since Chicago Shakespeare's founding, its programming for young audiences has been an essential element in the realization of its mission. Team Shakespeare supports education in our schools, where Shakespeare is part of every required curriculum. As a theater within a multicultural city, we are committed to bringing Shakespeare to life for tens of thousands of middle and high school students each year. Team Shakespeare's programming includes free teacher workshops, student matinees of main stage shows, post-performance discussions, comprehensive teacher handbooks, and an abridged, original production each year of one of the "curriculum plays." Team Shakespeare offers a region-wide forum for new vision and enthusiasm for teaching Shakespeare in our schools. In 2012 the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC, honored that vision with the prestigious Shakespeare Steward Award. The 2019-20 Season offers student matinees for three of Chicago Shakespeare Theater's full-length productions: in the fall, David Seidler's *The King's Speech* directed by Michael Wilson; in the winter, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* directed by Artistic Director Barbara Gaines; and the spring, Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, adapted and directed by Daryl Cloran and conceived by the Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival. Also this winter, a 75-minute abridged version of *The Comedy of Errors* will be performed for student and family audiences at the Theater on Navy Pier and will tour schools across the region. ■



# SHAKESPEARE'S ROMEO & JULIET

One city, two families, and a hatred so old that no one can remember its cause. Romeo, a Montague, and Juliet, a Capulet, fall in love. Shakespeare sets his story of young love in a city of old hatreds. Violence is woven into their world and death is on every mind. This is a story that tells of the power of passions and words to sever and to destroy, to bridge and to bind. Words express—and ignite—passions. When words can no longer be uttered, silence and swords take their place.

More than four hundred years after Shakespeare wrote his *Romeo and Juliet*, we still see in his characters and their story ourselves and our world. Shakespeare's characters are faced with choices. What is it they want—that we want—in the face of a violent world? And will it be words or weapons that we choose to steer the course of our lives?

# INTRODUCTION



## LIVING ART, CREATING COMMUNITY

**[Theatrical performance] is essentially a sociable, communal affair. This is important. To resist this is, I think, to ruin one of the very important parts of the theatrical experience. Let the play and let the fact that temporarily you are not your private self, but a member of a closely fused group, make it easy for the performance to ‘take you out of yourself.’ This, I suggest, is the object of going to a play...to be taken out of yourself, out of your ordinary life, away from the ordinary world of everyday.**

—TYRONE GUTHRIE, 1962

**A**s a *living art*, a play is performed for a group of people who gather and, at each performance, create a unique and singular audience, experiencing a story together as a community—just as you will soon at Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Drama not only tells stories about human communication, it *is* human communication. Different from television or film, theater creates a two-way communication between the actors and their audience. You are not simply on the receiving end of this communication: the audience is also a participant. Here at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, you become part of the story.

During Shakespeare’s time, playhouses were gathering places for Londoners from all walks of life to experience a story, together. Because most of Shakespeare’s plays were written to be performed outdoors in daylight, the actors and the audience could see each other. The audience was part of the performance—they didn’t sit in a darkened theater as they typically do today. In Chicago Shakespeare’s Courtyard Theater, the actors and their audience are so close together that the actors can see almost everyone in the audience—and they can *hear* everyone. Sitting this close to the stage and actors, the audience becomes part of the world of the play.

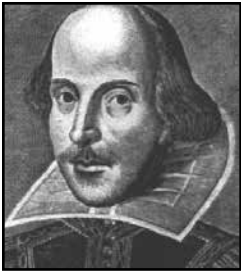
## How can you help us give you the best performance we can?

- **Please, no talking during the performance.** It distracts the actors as well as the people sitting nearby.
- **Respond naturally to our play.** Emotions are part of drama. We hope that you’ll laugh, cry, and even gasp—but as a natural response to the story, and not in order to distract attention from the stage.
- **Please leave all “noisemakers”—**food, gum, cell phones, iPods, etc.—back at school or on the bus. In a quiet theater, wrappers, munching—and even a phone’s vibration—are heard by all, the actors included.
- **No photographs of any kind, please.** Flashbulbs can make the actors lose their focus and can be dangerous. Digital cameras, along with all other kinds of recording devices, are prohibited, as is text-messaging.

You know Sir Patrick Stewart from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*—but Stewart spent most of his illustrious career on *stage*. He said once that most “audiences don’t understand how essential they are to the experience, and what an impact they can have on it.” Theater can’t exist without an audience. Actor Cristina Panfilio, who played Helena in Chicago Shakespeare’s recent production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, explained to students at a performance: “I never find myself until the audience shows up.” Film and Broadway actor Jason Robards once said, “An audience is really another performer in the play.” We are used to thinking about the *actors’* roles in a play, but may find it strange to imagine ourselves, the audience, playing a role—and a leading one, at that.

Because theater is art that lives and breathes, each performance is guaranteed to be unique—because each audience and what it brings is unique. The success of a live performance depends upon its audience and their honest responses. When an audience is unengaged, the story is less dynamic and compelling. And when the actors experience a responsive, interested audience, their work is at its best—full of animation and energy. We hope you’ll enjoy *your* role as a member of this storytelling community—and will help us create a dramatic experience that you’ll always remember. ■

# INTRODUCTION



## BARD'S BIO

**T**he exact date of William Shakespeare's birth is not known, but his baptism (traditionally held three days after a child's birth) was recorded on April 26, 1564. His father,

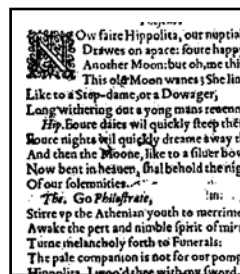
John Shakespeare, was a tanner, glover, grain dealer, and prominent town official of the thriving market town of Stratford-upon-Avon. His mother, Mary Arden, was the daughter of a prosperous, educated farmer. Though the records are lost, Shakespeare undoubtedly attended Stratford's grammar school, where he would have acquired knowledge of Latin and the classical writers, training in rhetoric and analysis of texts, and gained a smattering of arithmetic as well as instruction in the articles of the Christian faith. There is no record that Shakespeare acquired a university education of any kind.

At the age of eighteen, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, eight years his senior. They had one daughter, Susanna, followed by twins, Hamnet and Judith. Hamnet, Shakespeare's only son, died at age eleven. From 1585, the year in which the twins were baptized, until 1592 when he is first referred to as a dramatist in London, we know nothing of Shakespeare's life. Consequently, these seven so-called "lost years" are filled with legend and conjecture. We may never know what brought Shakespeare to London or how he entered its world of the theater. The first reference to Shakespeare as an actor and playwright appears in 1592 and was made by Robert Greene, a rival playwright and pamphleteer, who attacked Shakespeare as an "upstart crow" for presuming to write plays (when he was only a mere actor) and for copying the material of established dramatists.

By the early 1590s Shakespeare emerged as a rising playwright in London, where he continued to enjoy fame and financial success as an actor, playwright, and part-owner of one of London's leading theater companies for nearly twenty years. Subsequent references to Shakespeare indicate that as early as 1594 he was not only an actor and a playwright, but also a shareholder in a new theatrical company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, which soon became one of London's two principal companies. With the accession of James I in 1603, the company's name changed to the King's Men, and it thrived until the Commonwealth closed the theaters in 1642.

During his career, Shakespeare wrote or collaborated on what most scholars now agree upon as thirty-eight plays. His earliest plays—including *Love's Labor's Lost*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Richard III*, *King John*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*—were written between 1589 and 1594. Between 1594 and 1599, Shakespeare wrote both *Romeo and Juliet* and *Julius Caesar* as well as other plays, including *Richard II*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Twelfth Night*. His great tragedies—*Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*—were composed between 1599 and 1607, and were preceded by his last plays traditionally categorized as comedy, *Measure for Measure* and *All's Well That Ends Well*. The earlier histories, comedies, and tragedies made way for Shakespeare's final dramatic form—the plays commonly termed "romances" or "tragicomedies" for their blending of the comic and tragic forms. Written between 1606 and 1611, the romances include *Cymbeline*, *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*. These were the plays of a playwright no longer bound by the constraints of his earlier forms.

Although some quarto versions of the plays were printed in Shakespeare's lifetime, there is no definitive extant evidence to suggest that he directly oversaw their publication. It was not until 1623, seven years after his death, that his complete plays were published in the First Folio. However, we do know that Shakespeare did oversee the publication of two narrative poems and a collection of 154 sonnets during his lifetime. Shakespeare retired ca. 1611 to live as a country gentleman in Stratford, his birthplace, until his death on April 23, 1616. ■



## THE FIRST FOLIO

**T**hroughout much of the Renaissance, plays did not occupy the same high cultural status that we attribute to them today. In fact, theatrical texts were not viewed as "literature" at

all. When a play was published (if it was published at all) it was printed inexpensively in a small book, called a "quarto," the sixteenth-century equivalent of our paperbacks. It was not until 1616, the year of Shakespeare's death, when a contemporary English poet and dramatist, Ben Jonson, published his own plays in a large-format book called a "folio"—the format traditionally reserved for the authoritative texts of religious and

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classical works. Jonson sought to challenge the pervasive understanding of theatrical texts as holding little literary value, that plays began to be understood as literature worthy of publication. Jonson was chided as bold and arrogant for his venture for many years.

During Shakespeare's lifetime, only half of his plays were ever published, and those were printed as quartos. He did, however, oversee the publication of two narrative poems and a collection of 154 sonnets. It was not until seven years after the playwright's death that two of his close colleagues decided to gather his plays for publication in a move of threefold significance: as a gesture of homage to a long-time friend and colleague; as a promotion of the King's Men as a theater company of the highest cultural prestige; and as a financial venture with lucrative potential.

In 1623 what is now known as the First Folio, a book containing thirty-six of Shakespeare's estimated thirty-eight plays, was published. Modern textual scholars maintain that the First Folio was likely compiled from a combination of stage prompt books and other theatrical documents, the playwright's handwritten manuscripts (no longer extant), and various versions of some of the plays already published. Shakespeare's First Folio took five compositors two-and-one-half years to print. The compositors manually set each individual letter of type, memorizing the text line by line to increase efficiency as they moved down the page. There was no editor overseeing the printing, and the compositors frequently altered punctuation and spelling. Errors caught in printing would be corrected, but due to the high cost of paper, earlier copies remained intact. Of the 1,200 copies of the First Folio that were printed, approximately 230 survive today, and each is slightly different. Chicago's Newberry Library contains an original First Folio in its rich collections.

Chicago Shakespeare Theater traditionally utilizes the First Folio as the basis for its play scripts. The First Folio still serves as a manual for many Shakespearean actors nearly 400 years after its publication because the editors of the First Folio took theatrical documents as their basis for printing. Its punctuation, capitalizations, variant spellings, line breaks, and rhetorical structures all give clues to actors and directors about what words to emphasize and about what ideas are important—helping them to break open and examine the language. In Shakespeare's own theater company, with only a few days to rehearse each new play, these built-in clues were essential and provided information for members of the entire company. Today, these textual clues still help modern actors make the language easier to

break apart—even though they're speaking language that's 400 years "younger" than ours. ■

**This is the book that gave us Shakespeare (or most of Shakespeare)[...] But the way it presented Shakespeare was carefully calculated to make a collection of theatre works look plausible as what we would now call works of literature. The book not only gives us the texts; it gives us Shakespeare as a cultural icon.**

—JOHN JOWETT, 2007



## SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND

**E**lizabeth I—daughter of Henry VIII and his second wife Anne Boleyn—ruled England for forty-five years, from 1558 to 1603, in a time of relative prosperity and peace. “Few monarchs,” says Shakespearean scholar David Bevington, “have ever influenced an age so pervasively and left their stamp on it so permanently.” He maintains that “[her] combination of imperious will and femininity and her brilliant handling of her many contending male admirers have become legendary,” and resulted in a monarchy that remained secure in the face of religious and political threats from many sides. In choosing not to marry, Elizabeth avoided allying herself and her throne with a foreign country or an English faction which may have threatened her broad base of power and influence.

Throughout early modern Europe—the period that spans the timeframe from after the late portion of the Middle Ages (ca.1500) through the beginning of the Age of Revolutions (ca.1800)—governments were centralized, assuming the power that once belonged to city-states and feudal lords, but the rule of monarchs like Queen Elizabeth I was still absolute, just as it had been understood in earlier historical periods. The monarch was seen as God's deputy on earth, and the divine right of kings (the theory that the monarch derives his/her power to rule and authority from God alone) was a cherished doctrine. It was this doctrine that condemned rebellion as an act of disobedience against both the state and God.

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The politics of religion constantly threatened Elizabeth's reign, even though it was one of the most secure that England had known for hundreds of years. As the daughter of Henry VIII's marriage following his divorce from Catherine of Aragon, Elizabeth was regarded by many Catholics as an illegitimate child—and thus an illegitimate monarch. Upon her ascension to the throne, Elizabeth I inherited the rule of a country that, in the wake of the Protestant Reformation, was engaged in the process of attempting to make sense of its own history. Religious power changed hands during the early modern period with astonishing rapidity.

Stephen Greenblatt reminds us that within living memory, England transformed from a highly conservative Roman Catholic State (in the 1520s Henry VIII fiercely attacked Martin Luther and the pope awarded him with the title "Defender of the Faith"). England then shifted first to a wary, tentative Protestantism; subsequently to a more radical Protestantism; later to a renewed and militant Roman Catholicism; and then, with Elizabeth and James, to Protestantism once again.<sup>1</sup> The English were living in a world where few people had clear memories of a time without religious confusion. Under Elizabeth, England had returned to Protestantism, and the Church of England's government was held under the direct authority of the crown (and England's conforming Protestant clergy).

In addition, Elizabethan England was a smaller, more isolated country than it had been previously or would be subsequently. The country withdrew from its extensive empire on the Continent, and its explorations of the New World were just beginning. There was a period of internal economic development as Elizabeth ignored the counsel of her advisors and kept out of war until the attempted invasion by Spain and the Great Armada in 1588. England's economy was still based in agriculture, and its farmers were poor and embittered by strife with rich landowners who "enclosed" what was once the farmers' cropland for pastures. Uprisings and food riots were commonplace in the rural area surrounding Stratford-upon-Avon, where Shakespeare grew up. London, then the largest city of Europe, was a city of contrasts: the richest and the poorest of England lived there, side by side. While many bettered themselves in a developing urban economy, unemployment was a serious problem. As England eventually began what would be a long transition from an economy based mostly in agriculture to one of increased reliance upon trade and the manufacture of goods, both cities and social structures would evolve rapidly—it was a time of change and social

mobility. For the first time in English history, a rising middle class aspired to the wealth and status of the aristocracy.

As Elizabeth had no heir, the politics of succession posed a real threat to the nation's peace throughout her reign, and Elizabeth I died childless in 1603. The crown passed to her cousin James VI, King of Scotland, who became England's King James I. Ruling from 1603 to 1625 (Shakespeare died in 1616), James I was famously responsible for overseeing a new translation of the English bible—the 1611 King James Version—which, with its powerful syntax, remains a legacy of this fertile time, just as Shakespeare's canon has. But national peace was never quite secured, and the reign of James I was troubled with political and religious controversy. James's son, Charles I, would be beheaded in the English Civil War of the 1640s for tyrannically abusing what he believed was his divinely ordained power. ■



## THE EARLY ENGLISH MODERN THEATER

**A** time of historical transition of incredible social upheaval and change, the English Renaissance provided fertile ground for creative innovation.

The early modern period stands as the bridge between England's very recent medieval past and its near future in the centuries commonly referred to as the "Age of Exploration," or the Enlightenment. When the English Renaissance is considered within its wider historical context, it is perhaps not surprising that the early modern period produced so many important dramatists and literary luminaries, with William Shakespeare as a significant example.

Because of its unique placement at a crossroad in history, the early modern English period served as the setting for a number of momentous historical events: the radical reconception of the English state, the beginnings of a new economy of industry, an explosion of exploration and colonialism, and the break with traditional religion as the Church of England separated from the Catholic Church. It is perhaps this last example of cultural upheaval—the changes brought from Continental Europe by the Protestant Reformation—that provides us with a useful

<sup>1</sup>Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*, (New York: Norton, 2004): 93-94

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lens to examine the culture of theater in England during this period, in particular.

It is held by scholars today that Shakespeare as a boy would have witnessed in his hometown the acting troupes that were still traveling from town to town—the early modern successors to a long heritage of English theater carried over from the Middle Ages. Troupes often enacted important stories from the Bible, staged tales of mystery and miracles, or presented their audiences with the stories of the lives of saints and heroes of the faith.

These companies would travel in flatbed, horse-drawn carts, which did triple duty as transportation, stage, and storage for their props and costumes. They would pull into a town square, into an inn yard, or the courtyard of a country estate or college, and transform that space into a theater. People gathered around to watch, some standing on the ground in front of the players' stage, some leaning over the rails from balconies above to view the action on the impromptu stage below.

But during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries as the Protestant Reformation gained surer footing in England, the theater was caught between

conflicting ideas about the value and purpose of drama. Many officials of the Protestant Reformation were determined to outlaw these traveling performances for their strong Catholic sensibilities; and even as late as 1606 James I passed legislation to remove all treatment of religious matters from the English playhouses.

But as the stories enacted in the newly constructed public theaters became more secular, public officials scorned the theater as immoral and frivolous. The theaters just outside London's walls came to be feared as places where moral and social corruption spread. The authorities frequently shut them down during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries when the city was menaced by the plague and, frequently too, by political rioting. When the theaters were open, the Master of the Revels had to read and approve every word of a new play before it could be staged. But the practical enforcement of such measures was often sketchy at best, and playing companies themselves found plenty of ways around the strictures of the theatrical censors.

A man who would later become an associate of Shakespeare's, James Burbage, built the first commercial



Michael Polak as Tybalt, Carman Lacivita as Romeo, and Robert Petkoff as Mercutio in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2005 production of *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Mark Lamos. Photo by Liz Lauren.

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theater in England in 1576, in the decade prior to Shakespeare's own arrival on the London theater scene. Burbage skirted rigid restrictions governing entertainment in London by placing his theater just outside the city walls, in a community with the unglamorous name of "Shoreditch." Burbage was not the only one to dodge the severe rules of the Common Council of London by setting up shop in Shoreditch. His neighbors were other businesses of marginal repute, including London's brothels and bear-baiting arenas. Actors in Shakespeare's day were legally given the status of "vagabonds." They were considered little better than common criminals unless they could secure the patronage of a nobleman or, better still, the monarch.

Shakespeare and his fellow actors managed to secure both. They provided popular entertainment at Queen Elizabeth I's court as the Lord Chamberlain's Men, and they continued to enjoy court patronage after James I came to the throne in 1603, when they became the King's Men. Their success at court gave Shakespeare and his fellow shareholders in the company the funds to build the new Globe playhouse in 1599. The Globe then joined a handful of other theaters located just out of the city's jurisdiction as one of the first public theaters in England.

All kinds of people came to plays at the Globe, and they came in great numbers—a full house could accommodate as many as 3,000 people. The audience typically arrived well before the play began to meet friends, drink ale, and snack on the refreshments sold at the plays. An outing to the theater was a highly social and communal event and might take half the day. It was more like tailgating at a football game, or going with friends to a rock concert, than our experience of attending theater today.

Affluent patrons paid two to three pence or more for gallery seats (like the two levels of balcony seating in Chicago Shakespeare's Courtyard Theater), while the "common folk"—shopkeepers, artisans, and apprentices—stood for a penny, about a day's wages for a skilled worker. The audience of the early modern playhouse was a diverse and demanding group, and so it is often noted that Shakespeare depicted characters and situations that appealed to every cross-section of early modern English society. Audience appeal was a driving force for the theater as a business venture, and so during this period most new plays had short runs and were seldom revived. The acting companies were always in rehearsal for new shows and, because of the

number of ongoing and upcoming productions, most plays were rehearsed for just a few days.

There was, of course, no electricity for lighting, so all plays were performed in daylight. Sets and props were bare and basic. Since early modern English plays were written to be performed without scene breaks, a throne, table or bed had to be brought on stage during the action or lowered from a pulley above. For example, when stage directions in *Macbeth* indicate that "a banquet is prepared," the stage keepers likely prepared the banquet in full view of the audience. From what scholars can best reconstruct about performance conventions, Shakespeare's plays were performed primarily in "contemporary dress"—that is, the clothes of Shakespeare's time—regardless of the play's historical setting. Company members with tailoring skills sewed many of the company's stock costumes, and hand-me-downs from the English aristocracy often provided the elegant costumes for the play's nobility. Because women were not permitted to act on the English stage until 1660, female roles were performed by boys or young men, their male physique disguised with elaborate dresses and wigs. The young actors were readily accepted as women by the audience.

After an extremely productive creative period spanning about 100 years—often called the "Golden Age" of the English theater—the Puritans, now in power of the government, succeeded in 1642 in closing the theaters altogether. The public theaters did not reopen until the English monarchy was restored and Charles II came to the throne in 1660. A number of theaters, including the Globe, were open long before the Great Fire of London destroyed them in 1666. The fire, combined with the eighteen years of Commonwealth rule—the so-called Interregnum ("between kings")—led to the loss of many of the primary sources that would have provided us with further evidence of the staging traditions of Shakespeare's theater. The new theater of the Restoration approached plays, including Shakespeare's, very differently, often rewriting and adapting original scripts to suit the audience's contemporary tastes. It is left to scholars of early modern English drama to reconstruct the practices of Renaissance theater from clues left behind. ■

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## COURTYARD- STYLE THEATER

**C**hicago Shakespeare Theater's unique performance space reflects elements of both the first public playhouses in London and the courtyards of

inns temporarily transformed into theaters, in which the young Shakespeare might first have acquired his love of the stage. The interior of the Globe playhouse, opened in 1599, was simple, and similar to that of Chicago Shakespeare Theater—a raised platform for the stage surrounded by an open, circular area, with seating on three levels, one above the other. Both theaters use a thrust stage with an open performance area upstage; basically, the entire performance space is in the shape of a capital “T.” With the audience seated on three sides of the thrust stage, the play is staged in the middle of them. An architect for Chicago Shakespeare Theater describes the experience of theater staged in this way: “You’re the scenery. You’re the special effects. And the people you see performing this play are performing it in front, and out of, you.”

If you think about a more traditional theater’s proscenium arch “framing” what is (not literally) a two-dimensional stage picture behind it, the thrust stage by contrast creates a three-dimensional picture for an audience that surrounds it on three sides. The people sitting in the side seats have the closest interaction with the performers, and the performers with them. The play unfolds between the audience members seated along the sides, and the actors draw upon the responses of the audience (laughter, gasps, nervous shifting in chairs when tension mounts) as they perform. As an audience member, your facial expressions and body language serve both as the focal point of the actors’ energy and the backdrop for the other audience members seated across from you. Architect David Taylor and his company, Theatre Projects Consultants, worked closely with Chicago Shakespeare Theater to design this courtyard theater. “It’s important that we don’t lose the performer among the faces, but it’s essential to understand that every single face is a live piece of scenery reflecting and framing what’s going on,” Taylor explains. “That’s the reason why the courtyard theater shape is such a wonderful historical springboard for modern theater design.”

“The backdrop and the scenery for Shakespeare is the human race,” Taylor notes, “so we’re putting Shakespeare into its proper context by making human faces the backdrop for those sitting in any seat in the theater.” According to Taylor:

*This close, close relationship with the performers on stage is the very essence of the courtyard experience. The courtyard experience was about leaning out of windows. It was about throwing open the windows in the courtyard when the stage was brought through on a cart and leaning out and interacting.*

Audience members seated in the galleries at Chicago Shakespeare Theater are encouraged to use the “leaning rails” to watch the players below—like those watching from an inn’s balconies centuries ago when traveling troupes set up their temporary stages.

The actors and the audience share the experience of seeing and interacting with one another. Taylor thinks that actors benefit tremendously from the courtyard design: “They’re not looking at people sitting in straight rows, disconnected from everybody around them in big seats. There’s a sense of community in the space, a sense of embracing the performer on stage.” Actors are always fed by the energy generated from their audience. The design of Chicago Shakespeare Theater offers a feast of feedback to the actors on its stage.

Other theaters have been modeled upon the Elizabethan experience of courtyard theater, perhaps most notably the Royal Shakespeare Company’s Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. The Swan served as a model for Chicago Shakespeare’s Courtyard Theater. Besides their deep thrust stages that were designed to create an intimate relationship between actors and audience, prominent architectural elements in both theaters are the brick walls that surround the audience and natural wood that creates a feeling of warmth. Brick is an aesthetic choice but, due to its particular design, it also serves as an acoustic choice. The angle of the bricks in the side walls helps diffuse sound, sending it in different directions throughout the theater. The sound, lighting, and rigging systems are all state-of-the-art. Chicago Shakespeare Theater’s design accommodates a wide array of possibilities for structuring and using the performance space. ■

# TIMELINE

## 1300

- 1326** Founding of universities at Oxford and Cambridge
- 1348** Boccaccio's *Decameron*
- 1349** Bubonic Plague kills one-third of England's population
- 1387** Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*

## 1400

- ca. 1440** Johannes Gutenberg invents printing press
- 1472** Dante's *Divine Comedy* first printed
- 1492** Christopher Columbus lands at Cuba
- 1497** Vasco da Gama sails around the Cape of Good Hope

## 1500

- 1501-4** Michelangelo's *David* sculpture
- 1503** Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*
- 1512** Copernicus' *Commentariolus* published, theorizing that Earth and other planets revolve around the sun
- 1518** License to import 4,000 African slaves to Spanish American colonies granted to Lorens de Gominzot
- 1519** Ferdinand Magellan's trip around the world
- 1519** Conquest of Mexico by Cortez
- 1522** Luther's translation of the New Testament

## 1525

- 1531** Henry VIII recognized as Supreme Head of the Church of England
- 1533** Henry VIII secretly marries Anne Boleyn, and is excommunicated by Pope
- 1539** Hernando de Soto explores Florida
- 1540** G.L. de Cardenas "discovers" Grand Canyon
- 1541** Hernando de Soto "discovers" the Mississippi

## 1550

- 1558** Coronation of Queen Elizabeth I
- 1562** John Hawkins begins slave trade between Guinea and West Indies
- 1564** Birth of William Shakespeare and Galileo
- 1565** Pencils first manufactured in England
- 1570** Pope Pius V excommunicates Queen Elizabeth
- 1573** Francis Drake sees the Pacific Ocean

## 1575

- 1576** Mayor of London forbids theatrical performances in the City  
Burbage erects first public theater in England (the "Theater" in Shoreditch)
- 1577** Drake's trip around the world
- 1580** *Essays* of Montaigne published
- 1582** Marriage license issued for William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway  
Daughter Susanna Shakespeare christened

## SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS CA. 1592-1595

### Comedies

Love's Labor's Lost  
The Comedy of Errors  
The Two Gentlemen of Verona  
A Midsummer Night's Dream  
The Taming of the Shrew

### Histories

1, 2, 3 Henry VI  
Richard III  
King John

### Tragedies

Titus Andronicus  
**Romeo and Juliet**

### Sonnets

Probably written  
in this period

# TIMELINE

- 1585** Christening of son Hamnet and twin Judith
- 1587** Mary Queen of Scots executed
- 1588** Destruction of the Spanish Armada
- 1592** Shakespeare listed with the Lord Chamberlain's Men
- 1593-4** Plague closes London playhouses for 20 months
- 1595** Coat of arms granted to Shakespeare's father, John
- 1596** Death of son Hamnet, age 11  
Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*
- 1597** Shakespeare, one of London's most successful playwrights, buys New Place, one of the grandest houses in Stratford-upon-Avon
- 1599** Globe Theatre opens, as home to the Lord Chamberlain's Men, with Shakespeare as part-owner

## 1600

- 1602** Oxford University's Bodleian Library opens
- 1603** Death of Queen Elizabeth, coronation of James I  
Lord Chamberlain's Men become the King's Men upon endorsement of James I
- 1603-11** Plague closes London playhouses for at least 68 months (nearly 6 years)
- 1605** Cervantes' *Don Quixote Part 1* published
- 1607** Marriage of Susanna Shakespeare to Dr. John Hall  
Founding of Jamestown, Virginia, first English settlement on American mainland
- 1608** *A true relation of such Occurances and Accidents of Note as hath passed in Virginia* by John Smith  
Galileo constructs astronomical telescope
- 1609** Blackfriars Theatre, London's first commercial indoor theater, becomes winter home of the King's Men
- 1611** "King James Version" of the Bible published
- 1613** Globe Theatre destroyed by fire
- 1614** Globe Theatre rebuilt
- 1615** Galileo faces the Inquisition for the first time
- 1616** Judith Shakespeare marries Thomas Quinney  
Death of William Shakespeare, age 52
- 1618** Copernican system condemned by Roman Catholic Church
- 1619** First African slaves arrive in Virginia
- 1623** The First Folio, the first compiled text of Shakespeare's complete works published

## 1625

- 1625** James I dies, succeeded by Charles I
- 1633** Galileo recants before the Inquisition
- 1636** Harvard College founded in Cambridge, Massachusetts
- 1642** Civil War in England begins
- 1642** Puritans close theaters throughout England until the Restoration of the monarchy, 18 years later, with Charles II
- 1649** Charles I beheaded
- 1649** Commonwealth declared

## CA. 1596–1600 Comedies

Much Ado About Nothing  
The Merry Wives of Windsor  
As You Like It  
Twelfth Night

## Histories

Richard II  
1, 2 Henry IV  
Henry V

## Tragedies

Julius Caesar

## Problem Plays

The Merchant of Venice

## CA. 1601–1609 Comedies

Troilus and Cressida

## Tragedies

Hamlet  
Othello  
King Lear  
Macbeth  
Antony and Cleopatra  
Timon of Athens  
Coriolanus

## Problem Plays

All's Well That Ends Well  
Measure for Measure

## CA. 1609–1613 Romances

Pericles  
Cymbeline  
The Winter's Tale  
The Tempest  
The Two Noble Kinsmen

## Histories

Henry VIII

# ROMEO AND JULIET

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE



ROMEO



JULIET



MERCUTIO



TYBALT



BENVOLIO



FRIAR



NURSE



APOTHECARY

Renderings by Costume Designer Mieka van der Ploeg for CST's 2019 production of Romeo and Juliet.

### THE HOUSE OF CAPULET

LORD CAPULET\* head of the Capulet household

LADY CAPULET\* his wife

JULIET their only child

TYBALT nephew to Lady Capulet

NURSE nurse to the Capulet family

PETER\*\* servant to Juliet's nurse

SAMPSON servant to Capulet household

GREGORY servant to Capulet household

### THE CHURCH

FRIAR LAURENCE† mentor to Romeo

FRIAR JOHN Franciscan friar

### THE COURT

ESCALUS†† Prince of Verona

PARIS Prince's kinsman, betrothed to Juliet

MERCUTIO kinsman to the Prince and friend to Romeo

### THE HOUSE OF MONTAGUE

LADY MONTAGUE‡ mother to Romeo

ROMEO their only child

BENVOLIO cousin to Romeo

BALTHASAR servant to Romeo

ABRAHAM servant to Montague household

\* Characters named "Mr. and Mrs. Capulet" in CST's 2019 production

\*\* Character named "Petra" in CST's 2019 production

† Character named "the Friar" in CST's 2019 production

†† Played as Verona's Chief of Police in CST's 2019 production

‡ Character named "Mrs. Montague" in CST's 2019 production

# ROMEO AND JULIET



## THE STORY

In Verona, the **Montague** and **Capulet** families are enemies, and have been for longer than anyone can remember. The **Prince** decrees that the violence between these two proud households must end—under penalty of death.

Life in Verona goes on. For sport, the young Montague men decide to crash the **Lord Capulet's** party. **Romeo**, **Lord Montague's** only son, sees Capulet's daughter **Juliet**, and the two fall in love. Early the next morning, **Friar Laurence** agrees to wed the young couple, hoping that this marriage will put an end at last to their families' endless discord. Sending word by Juliet's **Nurse**, Romeo arranges their marriage that same afternoon at Friar Laurence's cell.

Their secret vows now made, Romeo is confronted in the street by Juliet's cousin **Tybalt**, enraged by the Montague's intrusion the night before. Romeo refuses to engage in a fight, but instead it is his friend Mercutio who accepts Tybalt's challenge. As Romeo attempts to break the two apart, Tybalt stabs **Mercutio** with a fatal blow. Romeo turns on his new kinsman, murdering him.

The Capulets demand Romeo's death, but the Prince chooses instead to banish the young Montague from Verona. Early the next morning, Romeo and Juliet part from one another. Moments later, **Lady Capulet** enters her daughter's room to bring news: Juliet's marriage to **Count Paris** is all arranged. Juliet begs her parents to reconsider, but her pleas are met with a father's rage. After the Nurse advises Juliet to forget all about her first husband, Juliet leaves to seek the Friar's counsel. His plan is a desperate one: Juliet must drink an herbal potion that will induce a deathlike trance; once she is buried by her family in the Capulet tomb, the Friar will send word to Romeo to rescue his wife there, returning with her to **Mantua** until their two families can be reconciled.

But the Friar's letter never reaches Romeo, who hears instead of his love's death. Armed with poison, he enters the tomb of the Capulets and, holding Juliet's lifeless body, Romeo takes the poison. Moments later as Juliet awakens from the potion's trance, she looks upon her dead husband and refuses to leave the tomb with the Friar as they hear people approaching. With Romeo's dagger, she takes her life. Too late to save their own children, the Montagues and Capulets vow to end their hatred. ■



## ACT-BY-ACT SYNOPSIS

### PROLOGUE + ACT 1

In the Prologue, the Chorus tells us that the play is set in Verona, where there is a long-time feud between two families, which nothing can mend. The play will tell the story of the "death marked love" of their two children, "a pair of star-crossed lovers," whose self-inflicted deaths signal an end to their families' violent struggle.

The servants of the two families—the Montagues and Capulets—engage in a street brawl. Romeo's cousin Benvolio, a Montague, enters and tries to stop the fight but is challenged by Lord Capulet's nephew, Tybalt. The fathers, Lord Montague and Lord Capulet, arrive and immediately are drawn into the brawl. Prince Escalus enters and forbids, on pain of death, any more fighting between these two households. Lord and Lady Montague ask Benvolio what he knows of their son Romeo's recent distracted behavior, and Benvolio offers to find out what troubles his cousin. To Benvolio's inquiries, Romeo expresses his unreturned love for Rosaline, a young woman determined to remain chaste, and he rejects Benvolio's advice to forget her and look around for someone else.

Lord Capulet gives Count Paris permission to court his young daughter, Juliet, at the Capulets' party that night. Lady Capulet tells Juliet of Paris's desire to marry her; obedient, Juliet agrees to entertain Paris's attention to her. Benvolio and Romeo, learning of the Capulet feast where Rosaline is among the invited guests, decide to attend in disguise. Romeo confesses his reluctance to go because of ominous dreams, and his friend Mercutio teases him and tells him that a tiny fairy named "Queen Mab" has caused his nightmares. Tybalt catches sight of Romeo at the party and angrily storms away when his uncle, Lord Capulet, forbids any confrontation in his house. Romeo and Juliet meet and immediately fall in love; both are deeply distressed to find out that their new love's family is an enemy to their own.

# ROMEO AND JULIET

## ACT 2

**A**s Romeo and his friends leave the party, he slips away and hides in the Capulets' garden. Thinking that she is alone on her balcony above the garden, Juliet speaks of her new feelings for Romeo. When he reveals himself, both confess their love. Juliet tells Romeo that she will send a messenger to him the next day to find out about his plans for their marriage. Romeo confides in Friar Laurence and asks him to help them marry; hoping to end their families' hatred, the Friar agrees. The next morning in the public square, Romeo instructs Juliet's nurse to tell Juliet to go to Friar Laurence, who will join them in marriage that same afternoon. The Nurse returns to tease Juliet, who is impatient to hear Romeo's plan. When she learns of Romeo's proposal, Juliet leaves immediately for the Friar's, where she and Romeo are secretly married.

## ACT 3

**T**ybalt, enraged by the Montagues' uninvited presence at his uncle's party the night before, looks for Romeo to confront him, but he comes upon Benvolio and Mercutio instead. Mercutio picks a fight. When Romeo arrives, Tybalt insults him and challenges him to a duel. Romeo refuses the challenge, saying that he loves Tybalt as his own family. Mercutio, disgusted by Romeo's apparent cowardice, challenges Tybalt. Romeo intercedes to stop the fight, and, as he does, Mercutio is slain, receiving a mortal wound as Romeo tries to pull him away. Now in blind rage, Romeo avenges his friend's death and kills Tybalt, and then flees to Friar Laurence's cell. Prince Escalus spares Romeo's life but banishes him from Verona, sentencing death if he returns.

Juliet, longing for night so that she can see her husband, is informed by her Nurse of Tybalt's murder and Romeo's banishment. Juliet talks of suicide but is comforted when the Nurse offers to find Romeo and bring him to her. Friar Laurence informs Romeo of his banishment and advises him to spend the night with his bride, then flee to Mantua until the Friar can reveal the marriage. Romeo agrees. Lord Capulet accepts Paris's offer for his daughter's hand and sets the wedding three days away. Romeo and Juliet take their farewells as daybreak lights Juliet's bedchamber. Lord and Lady Capulet enter to inform Juliet that she is to marry Paris. She refuses, and Lord Capulet, enraged by her disobedience, swears to disown her. Ignoring her Nurse's advice to forget Romeo and marry Paris, Juliet seeks counsel from the Friar.

## ACT 4

**A**t Friar Laurence's cell, Juliet encounters Paris and avoids his advances. She privately confesses her despair to the Friar and talks of killing herself. He persuades her instead to follow his plan: to return home and consent to marry Paris; then, on the night before the wedding, to drink the herbal potion he now gives her. The potion will induce a deathlike trance, and she will be entombed in the Capulet crypt; when she wakes Romeo will be there to take her to Mantua, where the couple can live until their two families are reconciled.

Juliet returns home, and, apologizing for her disobedience, agrees to marry Paris. Lord Capulet decides to move the wedding up to the next day. Alone in her room, Juliet fears that the potion might kill her or that she will wake before Romeo arrives and, trapped in a tomb with Tybalt's corpse, that she will go mad. Invoking Romeo's name, she drinks the potion. The next morning, her body is discovered by her Nurse. Her family and Paris are devastated. Friar Laurence instructs the family to arrange for her funeral.

## ACT 5

**B**efore news of the Friar's plan reaches him in Mantua, Romeo learns of his beloved's death from his friend Balthasar, and, resolving to join her in death, buys poison from a poor Apothecary. Friar John returns from Mantua, informing Friar Laurence that he was prevented from delivering the Friar's letter to Romeo. Friar Laurence rushes to the tomb to avert disaster. When Romeo reaches the tomb, he encounters Paris, whom in the darkness of night he does not recognize. When Paris sees him, he challenges a desperate Romeo to a duel. Romeo urges him to get away, but when Paris refuses, they fight and Romeo kills his opponent before recognizing him.

Entering the tomb and kissing Juliet, Romeo drinks the poison and dies. The Friar enters the tomb as Juliet awakens. He begs Juliet to flee with him, but she refuses and kills herself with Romeo's dagger as she hears the townspeople outside. The two families and Prince Escalus are summoned. The Friar recounts the whole story, volunteering for a punishment of death if the Prince finds him guilty of misconduct. The Prince blames the children's deaths on their parents' hatred. The two lords resolve to abandon their feud and vow to erect golden statues in memory of their two children. ■

# ROMEO AND JULIET

## SOMETHING BORROWED, SOMETHING NEW: SHAKESPEARE'S SOURCES

*The detection of [Shakespeare's sources] has its own fascination and is useful insofar as they illustrate the workings of Shakespeare's imagination, but the most notable feature of the play is the dramatist's inventiveness, brilliantly fusing scattered elements from legend, folklore and earlier books and plays into a whole that remains as fresh and original now as when it was composed.*

—R.A. FOAKES, 1984

**R**omeo and Juliet is in many ways a familiar story, not just because it is one of Shakespeare's best-loved plays, but because the play has thematic roots in myths as old as storytelling itself. A man and a woman fall in love; they are young and their love is so consuming that the world and all the people around them seem to vanish. The young woman dies, or appears to die, and her grief-stricken lover determines to win her back from death, either by his wits or by joining her in the afterlife. In some versions of the story he succeeds, though only for a time. The themes of the story—love, death, resurrection, and death again—are clearly present in the ancient

Greek myth of *Orpheus and Eurydice*: when Eurydice dies, her lover Orpheus defies Death

and brings her back from the underworld, only to lose her again when he doubts his success. Another myth is that of Demeter and Persephone, though it concerns a mother and daughter's relationship. In this story, Hades, the god of the underworld, has kidnapped Demeter's beloved daughter Persephone and Demeter fights him until he allows her to have Persephone back for half of every year.

As far as scholars can tell, Shakespeare used only one source for his version of *Romeo and Juliet*: a narrative poem by the sixteenth-century English poet Arthur Brooke, entitled *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*. The origins of Brooke's poem can be traced back to the second century AD, to a romance called *The Ephesiaca*, by Xenophon of Ephesus. In Xenophon's story, two teenagers—Anthia and Habrocomes—fall in love at first sight and they

marry. But when Anthia is rescued from robbers by Perilaus, he too wants to marry her. Attempting to kill herself in order to avoid marrying Perilaus, Anthia drinks a potion that she believes to be poison, but rather than dying, she falls into a deathlike sleep. Habrocomes visits her tomb to mourn, and eventually the lovers are reunited, living happily ever after.

*The Ephesiaca* holds many familiar sections for readers of *Romeo and Juliet*: a hidden marriage, a second suitor, a potion that causes the appearance of death, and a scene in the young woman's tomb. Masuccio Salernitano's similarly themed *Cinquante Novelle* of 1476 tells of the romance between Mariotto and Gianozza. The lovers are secretly married by a friar; Mariotto is banished for killing another citizen; Gianozza's father chooses a husband for her and she goes to the friar for help. He gives her a sleeping potion, which she drinks; she appears to be dead and is entombed. Although she has sent a note to her husband, he does not receive it. Anguished by reports of his wife's death, Mariotto rushes home, only to be arrested at her tomb and put to death. Gianozza subsequently dies of grief.

At least three other versions of this story were written between Salernitano's and Brooke's, and each include elements that would become essential in Shakespeare's tragedy. The most influential is Luigi da Porto's 1530 version. In it, he renames the lovers Romeo Montecchi and Giulietta Capelletti; he calls the friar Lorenzo. Da Porto introduces a character called Marcuccio, a friend of Romeo's (noted only for his icy hands), and also identifies the

man whom Romeo kills as Theobaldo Capelletti.

Da Porto's story adds the ball, the balcony scene, and the lovers' double

suicide at Giulietta's tomb—which Giulietta accomplishes by holding her breath! Matteo Bandello's 1554 *Novelle* gives the Nurse the significant part that she plays in Shakespeare's retelling. In 1559 Pierre Boiastuau has Romeo go to the Capulets' ball in hopes of seeing his unrequited love, whom Shakespeare would later call Rosaline. Boiastuau was the first to write of Juliet's grief when her husband murders her cousin Tybalt, and his version was the first in which the character of the Apothecary appears.

Arthur Brooke's poem *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*, published in 1564, adheres to the framework constructed in the previous stories, while adding more developed characters and relationships. He adds the character of Benvolio, and concentrates on deepening relationships, such as Juliet's to her father, and the Nurse's to the lovers. Brooke's poem slightly expands the role of

***Romeo and Juliet... has thematic roots in  
myths as old as storytelling itself.***

# ROMEO AND JULIET

Mercutio, paving the way for Shakespeare to develop one of his most fascinating characters. About thirty-five years later, ca. 1597, William Shakespeare would write the version of *Romeo and Juliet* that today remains the best known and loved.

Why is Shakespeare's play the one we remember? His story is quite similar to Brooke's poem—adapting Brooke's plot, characters, and sometimes even his characters' speeches. What makes Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* a classic while Xenophon of Ephesus's *The Ephesiaca* and Brooke's *Tragicall Historye* are obscure artifacts? What ensures the survival of one retelling rather than another?

Shakespeare used the English language with a precision and an imagination that no other playwright has achieved, before or since. Lines like "Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?" or "Parting is such sweet sorrow" may seem clichéd now, but their familiarity is a testament to their lyrical—and lasting—power. Another essential difference between Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and the earlier versions is the development of character and plot. Shakespeare recreates each character, filling out the framework of the story so that they all—even the ones who appear only briefly like Peter—seems like a person we know. When Juliet proclaims her love to Romeo, she speaks it beautifully; the exchange between them feels almost too perfect. She even wonders aloud if she should have been "more strange"—or in other words, kept her true feelings private. We've all had the feeling of having said too much and we can relate to how she feels.

Shakespeare also gives a social context to his love story, setting the play in a Verona that is bawdy and bustling with life. The private scenes between the lovers capture us, in part, by the way they are brilliantly set against other scenes so full of people and action that we hardly know where to focus our attention. *Romeo and Juliet* create a private world of love, into which Shakespeare allows us to enter; he brings us so close that we feel their agony, even after we close the book or leave the theater. Using Verona and the families' feud as background, Shakespeare brings us into the intimate story of the lovers. Like the writers before him, Shakespeare touches on eternal themes of love, death, hatred and reconciliation. However, unlike the other stories, Shakespeare's play helps us understand where these themes dwell in our own lives. ■



## TO HAVE AND TO HOLD: THE ELIZABETHANS AND THEIR BONDS OF MARRIAGE

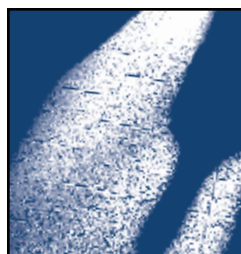
**F**rom his very entrance in the play, Lord Capulet expresses his desire to match Juliet to the suitor as the most suitable for his daughter's—and the family's—future. It is, of course, of the utmost importance to him to secure the safety of his only heir; but at what cost? Is he preventing his daughter from finding true love? Is he ignoring his daughter's rights as an individual coming into womanhood? Most of us are taught from an early age, through Disney Princess movies, Hollywood romantic comedies, and pop love songs that love is the be-all and end-all of our relationships. Not only is this a romantic ideal in our society, but it has also become an American value preserving an individual's basic human right: people should be allowed to marry whom they choose for themselves. That Lord Capulet so tarnishes and disregards this value—of ours—when he forces Paris upon his daughter is why his actions seem so disturbing to modern audiences. Rest assured, this practice was quite customary of the early modern period.

For centuries, the marriage contract was exactly that: an agreement between two parties (the parents or guardians of the bride and groom) that constituted a "merger," not unlike corporate mergers of today. Marriage solidified the merging of a variety of largely important societal and economic factors, including the acquired property, power of societal status, and ancestral bloodlines of both parties involved. With the strong alliances marriages provided at the time, almost no parent could pass up the opportunity to better their ancestral line by choosing their child's intended.

However the early modern period, in which Shakespeare lived and wrote all his plays including *Romeo and Juliet*, was in many ways a transitional period when long-held traditions and social values were in a state of flux. With the advent of the Renaissance came an exalted view of the individual. The standard contractual marriage was challenged by a multiplicity of factors. In keeping with the early modern ideal of individualism, "companionate" marriage arose—a bond of marriage based upon the free choice of two individuals.

# ROMEO AND JULIET

As with the dispersing of any long-held belief, change comes slowly, and with much public debate and social anxiety. With its contrasting projections of marriage, with nostalgia for the old order on one hand and, on the other, with a growing awareness of, and respect for, individual and human rights and passions, this period of transition proved to be a great source of inspiration for writers like Shakespeare. Early modern literature, like Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, reflects the debate, commenting on the unsettling of traditional reasons for marriage, and immortalizing the state of flux in which England and other European countries found themselves. Capulet's expressed right to choose his daughter's husband collides with Juliet's exerted right to choose her own love, erupting into an explosive catastrophe—and mirroring the conflict of the social transition taking place in England and beyond. Considering the end of his play, it is difficult to come to a conclusion about Shakespeare's opinion on this historic conflict. Perhaps William Shakespeare sets out to endorse neither a centuries-old tradition nor the individual's free choice but instead opens the door to understanding the anxieties of his Elizabethan audience, as diverse ideologically as it was socially. ■



## SHAKESPEARE, TRAGEDY, AND US

**W**e all know something about tragedy: we lose someone we love; we have to leave a

place we have called home; we make a decision that leads to consequences we never wanted. Tragedy is a part of our lives as humans, despite all of our attempts to keep it at arm's length.

But what's the point of picking up a book we know to be full of doom and, by choice, entering so dark a world? Clearly, it's more “fun” to spend time watching re-runs of *The Office* than to read *Romeo and Juliet*. So why do it?

We read tragedy for many of the same reasons we read other literary genres—because we respond to stories that show us people who are somehow like us, versions of ourselves under other circumstances. When we feel that characters bear some resemblance to us—are relatable to us in some way, although they may be very different—we become interested in them and can empathize with them. But when a story communicates a certain kind of emotional



Ben Huth as Balthazar, Zach Appelman as Tybalt, and James Elly as Abraham in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2010 production of *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Gale Edwards. Photo by Liz Lauren.

# ROMEO AND JULIET

truth to us, it goes beyond touching our sympathy. As we come to understand the people in it, we can also reach some understanding about our world, about ourselves and the people we know, and about the tragedies we may face in our own lives.

Where do we find our story in theirs? Often the characters face some very difficult choices, and the story follows them as they wrestle with making their decisions. In tragedy, the hero typically faces some “fearful passage” (from the Prologue of *Romeo and Juliet*)—a path traveled for the first time where old answers and old behaviors are suddenly not sufficient. The stakes are very high, and the risk to the individual, to the family—and sometimes to an entire society, as in *Romeo and Juliet*—is great. There is much discussion in literature about the tragic hero and his inherent “tragic flaw.” Shakespearean scholar Russ McDonald warns that in labeling the hero as inherently weak and not up to the challenge, we’re inclined to judge him critically. But the heroes of tragedy typically display great strengths, says McDonald. Their tragedy lays not so much in a weakness of character, but in a “kind of tragic incompatibility between the hero’s particular form of greatness and the earthly circumstances that he or she is forced to confront.” McDonald points out how differently the heroes of Shakespeare’s tragedies speak, not only from us, but also from all the other characters around them. Their poetic language, he says, expresses their “vast imaginations.” They see the world more completely than the rest of us.

Tragic figures imagine something extraordinary, and seek to transcend the compromises of the familiar; we both admire that imaginative leap and acknowledge its impossibility. The contest between world and will brings misery, but it also produces meaning and magnificence. Through their journeys, the tragic hero and heroine learn something about themselves and about their lives. It is understanding that comes, however, from unbearable loss and pain. It has been noted by some scholars that in *Romeo and Juliet*, the earliest of Shakespearean tragedies, the hero and heroine themselves do not learn as much from their tragic path as do the survivors and the city they leave behind. It is Verona suffering through the consequences of the disagreements

**It has been noted by some scholars that in *Romeo and Juliet*...the hero and heroine themselves do not learn as much from their tragic path as do the survivors and the city they leave behind.**



Karen Janes Woditsch as Nurse and Emma Ladji as Juliet in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2017 production of *Short Shakespeare! Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Marti Lyons. Photo by Liz Lauren.

and violence that leads to wisdom and reconciliation. In this sense, according to David Bevington, the community itself becomes a protagonist in this early play. In his later tragedies, those lessons are internalized into the consciousness of Shakespeare’s heroes and heroines through their tragic journeys.

In our own lives, we will likely never face the same choices that Romeo and Juliet did. But we will face choices that seem too big for us to handle. One day we will be required to go through some “fearful passage” of our own, where old ways of thinking and behaving don’t

work. We will face head-on the consequences of choices we’ve made, wishing that what’s done could somehow be undone.

What makes art different from life is exactly that. The tragedy in *Romeo and Juliet* is temporary. We close the book; we leave the theater. But when we enter that world and come to know its characters, we come to know ourselves. The damage that is permanent and irreversible to tragedy’s heroes is reversible and temporary for us as witnesses. And when our own “fearful passage” comes along, we will have learned along the way about ourselves and the nature of others, and be able to make our choices with the benefit of these characters’ experiences. ■

# ROMEO AND JULIET

## THE TIMELESS TRAGEDY



**PETER HOLLAND** is the McMeel Family Professor in Shakespeare Studies and Chair of the Film, Television and Theatre Department at the University of Notre Dame. His most recent books include *English Shakespeares: Shakespeare on the English Stage in the 1990s* and *From Script to Stage in Early Modern England*. The following scholar notes were first published in the play program for CST's 2005 production of *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Mark Lamos.

It's fascinating how Shakespeare plays show you how you change as you get older. I can remember when I thought *Romeo and Juliet* was the great tragedy of adolescent passion. Now, part of my mind wants to say 'Damn kids!' and I can end up, at some productions, feeling sorrier for their parents.

When Shakespeare read Arthur Brooke's long and really rather boring poem *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet* (1562) and saw the possibilities of turning it into exhilarating drama, he also found that Brooke thought his young lovers were indeed damned. Brooke blamed them for:

*...thralling themselves to dishonest desire, neglecting the authority and advice of parents and friends, conferring their principal counsels with drunken gossips and superstitious friars (the naturally fit instruments of unchastity), attempting all adventures for th'attaining of their wished lust,...abusing the honorable name of lawful marriage..., finally, by all means of dishonest life, hasting to most unhappy death.*

Brooke's poem is perhaps not quite as moralistic as this passage suggests. But at the heart of Shakespeare's play, as throughout his work, is a deep anxiety about making judgments, moral or otherwise. The mad haste which drives the action onwards, barely giving anyone a chance to think or reflect, the impetuosity that prevents the characters from taking Friar Laurence's advice ("Wisely and slow. They stumble that run fast"), also means that it is difficult to blame these "star-crossed" figures for what they are driven to do.

Allocating responsibility matters less than accepting that, as the Prince states so fiercely, "All are punished," suffering through their grief—and that includes the Prince himself, for, while the Prologue told us that this is a tale of "Two households, both alike in dignity," the Prince's own family

is the third to be involved: Mercutio and Paris, two of the slaughtered young, are his kinsmen. Over and over again, the characters would like to say, with Romeo, "I thought all for the best." But none of the play's children survive, except perhaps Benvolio, the man whose name means "I wish well" but who vanishes from the play after Romeo kills Tybalt, the point when there seems no longer a possibility of drawing back from the rush to tragedy.

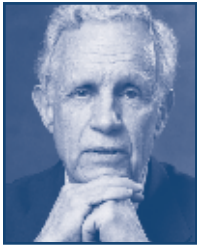
These hectic events of mid-July, which last only from a Sunday to a Thursday—and the play is surprisingly precise about its time of year and days of the week—are increasingly out of control, subject to accident, chance, and that terrifying delay, the single minute that causes the final tragedy—for, if Romeo had only waited another minute before taking the poison, Juliet would have woken up in time. But little in this play is ever "in time"; this is the great drama about being short of time, out of time, never timely.

Instead, *Romeo and Juliet* teases us with shapes and repetitions that tantalizingly suggest order. Take the way, for example, that the Prince appears three times, at the beginning, middle and end of the action, each time responding to civil disorder; or the shapely poetic form of the sonnet that is both the structure of the opening Prologue and of the first exchange between *Romeo and Juliet*, and then is heard in fragments of quatrains and couplets right through to the play's end; or the way the Nurse three times interrupts the lovers' attempts to be together (at the party, in the balcony scene, and in that terrible dawn of parting). Such devices set up resonances and echoes that remind us how the fluidity of the action, its immediacy and disorderly energies, are also part of something that Shakespeare here seems to define as the "stars" that Romeo defies.

Mercutio's death and the Nurse's urging Juliet's marriage to Paris leave the lovers most completely alone, in a space where they make their own choices. The result is that moral judgments prove unexpectedly true: it is over Juliet's feigned death that Friar Laurence pontificates "she's best married that dies married young," never guessing how appallingly it will become the case. Now that our society seems particularly full of people offering to force their own moral views on the rest, *Romeo and Juliet* can, in its reminding us of the inefficacy of such actions, prove newly timely. ■

# ROMEO AND JULIET

## LOVE IN A HARSH WORLD



**DAVID BEVINGTON** was one of the pre-eminent Shakespeare and early modern drama scholars of his generation. Before his recent death at age 88, Dr. Bevington served as professor emeritus in the Humanities at the University of Chicago, where he taught for six decades. A prolific writer and editor, his many publications included editing the *Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, and authoring:

From "Mankind" to Marlowe, Tudor Drama and Politics, and *Action Is Eloquence*. Dr. Bevington was awarded the coveted Quantrell Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching by his students at the University of Chicago, where he remained committed throughout his career to teaching at all levels of higher education. From Chicago Shakespeare's early storefront days, Professor Bevington was a fierce advocate for the Theater's work, championing our growth and aiding our artistic exploration. He was a scholar who believed in the power of performance to reimagine Shakespeare across continents and centuries, impacting generations of students and audiences.

**W**hen Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* complains that "The course of true love never did run smooth," obstructed as it is by inequalities of social rank, family antagonisms, death, and sickness, he might as well be talking about *Romeo and Juliet*. Romeo and Juliet's passionate desire to spend their lives together is hindered by just such difficulties. Juliet's well-to-do but non-patrician parents are dazzled by the prospect of marrying her to the aristocratic Count Paris. Families that we might call "bourgeois" or "nouveau riche" often bought their way into high society (and still do; think of Grace Kelly, or Princess Diana) by such marital alliances.

Compounding such social hazards in *Romeo and Juliet* are elements of uncontrollable misfortune. A bout of plague prevents Friar Laurence from getting a message to Romeo instructing him to return to awaken Juliet from a deep sleep induced by the Friar's potion as a means of escaping the marriage to Paris. Misunderstanding and failures of communication are also crucial factors: Juliet cannot tell her father and mother that she is already married into the family of the Montagues, ancient enemies of the Capulets. An overwhelming cause of tragedy is indeed the enmity of Capulets and Montagues, two long-established families of Verona whose cause of feuding is so ancient that no one knows how or why it began. The play's Prologue promises that the lovers' "star-crossed" search for romantic

happiness will be thwarted by an "ancient grudge" that "breaks to new mutiny." Friar Laurence sees the conflict in terms of a cosmic struggle between good and evil. This perception lends depth to a lovely poetic figure that runs through the play, one in which the opposites of good and evil paradoxically meet. "My only love sprung from my only hate!" observes Juliet, when she is told by her Nurse that the young man she has just met and fallen in love with at the Capulets' ball is a Montague.

Are *Romeo and Juliet* then victims of circumstances beyond their control? In good part they are. Capulet, in the play's closing moments, refers to *Romeo and Juliet* as "poor sacrifices of our enmity." An aspect of *Romeo and Juliet*'s timeless appeal is a feeling we all share: that the deck is stacked against young love in a world filled with hatred. Romeo's murder of Tybalt is a regrettable caving in to the feuding mentality of his peers at the expense of his commitment to Juliet. The code of the vendetta is a timeless enemy of love, as in the New York gang warfare scene of *West Side Story*, and to this extent Romeo is to blame for the tragedy. Still, we feel deeply that the lovers' death is a price that they must innocently pay for our corrupted human nature. The play ends with old Capulet and Montague vowing to end their feud by honoring the lovers'

memory with a statue of pure gold.

Written about the same time—in the 1590s, fairly early in Shakespeare's career—*Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's*

*Dream* are an interesting pair. Both have left us with some of Shakespeare's most wonderful comic characters and scenes. *Midsummer*'s play-within-the-play of "Pyramus and Thisbe," about two lovers from feuding families, resembles *Romeo and Juliet* to such an extent that we cannot be sure which play was written first. Together they offer a splendid and timeless tribute to the exquisite brevity of young love in this harsh world. ■

**An aspect of *Romeo and Juliet*'s timeless appeal is a feeling we all share: that the deck is stacked against young love in a world filled with hatred.**



Ariel Shafir as Mercutio and Jeff Lillico as Romeo in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2010 production of *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Gale Edwards. Photo by Liz Lauren.

# WHAT THE CRITICS & ARTISTS SAY

## 1600s

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[I went to] the Opera, and there saw Romeo and Juliet, the first time it was ever acted, but it is a play of itself the worst that ever I heard in my life.

—SAMUEL PEPYS, CRITIC, 1662

Shakespear [sic] show'd the best of his skill in his Mercutio, and he said himself, that he was forc'd to kill him in the third Act, to prevent being kill'd by him. But, for my part, I cannot find he was so dangerous a person: I see nothing in him but what was so exceeding harmless, that he might have liv'd to the end of the Play, and dy'd in his bed, without offence to any man.

—JOHN DRYDEN, POET, 1672

## 1700s & 1800s

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Mercutio's wit, gaiety and courage, will always procure him friends [among critical scholars] that wish him a longer life but his death is not precipitated, he has lived out the time allotted him in the construction of the play; nor do I doubt the ability of Shakespeare to have continued his existence, though some of his sallies are perhaps out of the reach of Dryden [see quote above]; whose genius was not very fertile of merriment, nor ductile to humour, but acute, argumentative, comprehensive, and sublime.

—SAMUEL JOHNSON, AUTHOR, 1765

[The Nurse] is possessed of cunning which is counteracted by her ignorance, thus she insinuates herself into the secrets of her young lady to gain over an insolent ascendancy, and thus, a stranger to the gratitude due to her benefactors, she abuses that indulgence, and betrays that confidence of which they themselves ought to have known her unworthy. There cannot be a properer lesson to parents and children than this. Half, perhaps nine-tenths of the various instances of family misery happen through the improper confidence placed in servants.

—CHARLES DIBDIN, AUTHOR, 1800

The sweetest and the bitterest love and hatred, festive rejoicings and dark forebodings, tender embraces and sepulchral horrors, the fullness of life and self-annihilation, are here all brought close to each other; and yet these contrasts are so blended into a unity of impression, that the echo which the whole leaves behind in the mind resembles a single but endless sigh.

—AUGUST WILHELM SCHLEGEL, PHILOSOPHER, 1811

He has founded the passion of the two lovers not on the pleasures they had experienced, but on all the pleasures they had not experienced. All that was to come of life was theirs...Their hopes were of air, their desires of fire.

—WILLIAM HAZLITT, SCHOLAR, 1817

All Shakspeare's [*sic*] women, being essentially women, either love or have loved, or are capable of loving; but Juliet is love itself. The passion is her state of being, and out of it she has to existence. It is the soul within her soul...

—ANNA BROWNELL JAMESON, AUTHOR, 1833

The necessity of loving creates an object for itself in man and woman; and yet there is a difference in this respect between the sexes, though only to be known by a perception of it. It would have displeased us if Juliet had been represented as already in love, or as fancying herself so;—but no one, I believe, ever experiences any shock at Romeo's forgetting his Rosaline, who had been a mere name for the yearning of his youthful imagination, and rushing into his passion for Juliet.

—SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, POET, CA. 1836

This reckless passion, this fatal vehemence of love is contrasted by a hate quite as passionate and as fatal. Hate is, as it were, but the reverse of love, the same passion in its negative force...Their love has to overcome this hate and to assert itself in opposition to it; whether, and in what way their love conquer it, will be the test of their power and their right.

—HERMANN ULRICI, PHILOSOPHER, 1847

# WHAT THE CRITICS & ARTISTS SAY

## 1700s & 1800s

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[Friar Laurence] represents, as it were, the part of the chorus in this tragedy, and expresses the leading idea of the piece in all its fullness, namely, that excess in any enjoyment, however pure in itself, transforms its sweet into bitterness; that devotion to any single feeling, however noble, bespeaks its ascendancy; that this ascendancy moves the man and woman out of their natural spheres; that love can only be an accompaniment to life, and that it cannot completely fill out the life and business of the man especially...These ideas are placed by the poet in the lips of the wise Laurence in almost a moralizing manner with gradually increasing emphasis.

—G.G. GERVINUS, LITERARY HISTORIAN, 1849

It is impossible to agree with those critics, among others Gervinus, who represent the friar as a kind of chorus expressing Shakspeare's [sic] own ethical ideas, and his opinions respecting the characters and action. It is not Shakspeare's practice to expound the moralities of his artistic creations; nor does he ever, by means of a chorus, stand above and outside the men and women of his plays, who are bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. No! Friar Laurence...is moving in the cloud, and misled by error as well as the rest. Shakspeare has never made the moderate, self-possessed, sedate person a final or absolute judge of the impulsive and the passionate. The

one sees a side of truth which is unseen by the other; but to neither is the whole truth visible....Shakspeare did not believe that the highest wisdom of human life was acquirable by mild, monastic meditation...Friar Laurence too, old man, had his lesson to learn.

—EDWARD DOWDEN, CRITIC, 1881

The rational object of marriage is for man to exist in the Family, which, if it cannot be reached through one person, must be sought through another. The Institution is higher than the Individual; but, in the present drama, the love of an individual assails the Family on its universal side; thus there must result a tragic termination. For, truly considered, love, which is the emotional ground of the Family, is here destroying the Family itself. Love thus annihilates its own object, puts an end to itself.

—DENTON J. SNIDER, SCHOLAR, 1887

It should never be forgotten in judging an attempt to play Romeo and Juliet that the parts are made almost impossible, except to actors of positive genius, skilled to the last degree in metrical declamation, by the way in which the poetry, magnificent as it is, is interlarded by the miserable rhetoric and silly logical conceits which were the foible of the Elizabethans.

—GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, PLAYWRIGHT, 1895



Keegan-Michael Key as Romeo and Nicole Parker Redford as Juliet in Second City's 2004 production of *The People vs. Friar Laurence, the Man Who Killed Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Ron West at Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Photo by Michael Brosilow.

# WHAT THE CRITICS & ARTISTS SAY

## 1900s

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Few other plays, even by Shakespeare, engage the audience so intimately. The hearts of the hearers, surrendered early, are handled with the greatest care until the end, and with the greatest human respect. No distinction of Shakespeare is so hard to define as this distinction of his which consists of knowing the spectator through and through, and of valuing what is there. The author of *Romeo and Juliet* watches us as affectionately as he watches his hero and heroine; no sooner has he hurt our feelings than he has saved them, no sooner are we outraged than we are healed.

—MARK VAN DOREN, SCHOLAR, 1939

*Romeo and Juliet* don't know each other, but when one dies, the other can't go on living. Behind their passionate suicides, as well as their reactions to Romeo's banishment, is finally a lack of feeling, a fear that the relationship cannot be sustained and that, out of pride, it should be stopped now, in death. If they become a married couple, there will be no more wonderful speeches—and a good thing, too. Then the real tasks of life will begin, with which art has surprisingly little to do. *Romeo and Juliet* are idolaters of each other, which is what leads to their suicides.

—W.H. AUDEN, POET, 1946

In tragedy the individual is not reconcilable with the universe, and the symbol for their opposition is death. In comedy the individual is reconcilable with the universe, and the symbol for their harmony is marriage. In ancient tragedy the universe refuses reconciliation, in modern tragedy the failure is the result of the individual's choice. Comedy includes both fate and choice...*Romeo and Juliet* are not right to commit suicide... *Romeo and Juliet* confuse romance and love. The ancient tragic character is one with whom fate is passionately offended. The modern tragic character is passionately related to an untruth. It is the passion that makes the aesthetic interest, it is the untruth that makes the tragedy.

—W.H. AUDEN, POET, 1946

The love of *Romeo and Juliet* is beyond the ken of their friends; it belongs to a world which is not their world.

—H.B. CHARLTON, AUTHOR, 1948

*Romeo*...falls back on the testimony of all history that only force can overcome force. He descends from the level of love to the level of violence and attempts to part the fighters with his sword.

—HAROLD C. GODDARD, SCHOLAR, 1951

The theme of *Romeo and Juliet* is love and violence and their interactions. In it these two mightiest of mighty opposites meet each other squarely—and one wins. And yet the other wins.

—HAROLD C. GODDARD, SCHOLAR, 1951

*Romeo* as an honorable man avenges his friend, but in proving himself a man in this sense, he proves himself less than the perfect lover...the play is usually explained as a tragedy of the excess of love. On the contrary it is the tragedy of a deficiency of it. *Romeo* did not 'follow it utterly'; did not give quite 'all' to love.

—HAROLD C. GODDARD, SCHOLAR, 1951

Whatever literal epidemic there may have been in the region, it is plain that fear is the real pestilence that pervades the play. It is fear of the code of honor, not fate, that drives *Romeo* to seek vengeance on Tybalt. It is fear of the plague, not accident, that leads to the miscarriage of Friar Laurence's message to *Romeo*. It is fear of poverty, not the chance of his being at hand at the moment, that lets the apothecary sell the poison. It is fear of the part he is playing, not age, that makes Friar Laurence's old feet stumble and brings him to the tomb just a few seconds too late to prevent *Romeo's* death. It is fear of being found at such a spot at such a time, not coincidence, that lets him desert Juliet at last just when he does. Fear, fear, fear, fear, fear. Fear is the evil 'star' that crosses the lovers. And fear resides not in the skies but in the human heart.

—HAROLD C. GODDARD, SCHOLAR, 1951

*Romeo and Juliet* was his first successful experiment in tragedy. Because of that very success, it is hard for us to realize the full extent of its novelty, though scholarship has lately been reminding us of how it must have struck contemporaries. They would have been surprised, and possibly shocked, at seeing lovers taken so seriously. Legend, it had heretofore taken for granted, was the

# WHAT THE CRITICS & ARTISTS SAY

## 1900s

proper matter for serious drama; romance was the stuff of the comic stage. Romantic tragedy...was one of those contradictions in terms which Shakespeare seems to have delighted in resolving.

—HARRY LEVIN, SCHOLAR, 1960

It is not accidental that Mercutio's outcries come at the exact center of the play. 'A plague o' both your houses!' is both a judgment and a prophecy, as well as a curse. Through the repetition of this line Mercutio rises almost physically above the action of the play. And as this line sounds and resounds, one begins to realize that the whole play pivots on it.

—STEPHEN A. SHAPIRO, SCHOLAR, 1964

Romeo and Juliet is a tragedy of first love. For these young lovers, in their abandon, the world does not exist. That is, perhaps, why they choose death so easily.

—JAN KOTT, SCHOLAR, 1965

[In *West Side Story*] the final moment is even more significant, for the curtain falls with Laurents' Paris and Juliet (Chino and Maria) still alive...To understand what this alteration in the story means, requires us to turn from purely plot considerations to look at character and at Laurents' intent as opposed Shakespeare's. The contemporary American playwright obviously feels that suicide is inconsistent with his heroine's character, that their death by her own hand would only diminish her stature. More significantly, however, her act of not killing herself or any of the gang members whom she threatens in the final scene, underlines the basic difference between this play and Shakespeare's: *West Side Story* is conceived as a social document, *Romeo and Juliet* as a Liebestod. Consequently, it becomes important to the contemporary play's message that a resolution of the gang warfare by effected, not as a postscript, so to speak, but by the hand of one of the play's protagonists.

—NORRIS HOUGHTON, DIRECTOR, 1965

The world at large rushes and the lovers haste toward one another, but when they are united, especially in the orchard, time and motion cease. Given the contrasting principles of movement and stasis, the form of the play might be diagrammed as a horizontal line interrupted by several circles indicating the times when Romeo and Juliet are together. For in each of these five scenes the

primary tension is between staying and departing, and in each scene the lovers are called out of stillness by the exigencies of time and motion.

—JAMES L. CALDERWOOD, SCHOLAR, 1971

The image that remains most strongly in our minds is not of the lovers as a couple, but of each as a separate individual grappling with internal energies that both threaten and express the self, energies for which language is inadequate but that lie at the root of language, that both overturn and enrich society. Touched by adult desire, the unsounded self burst out with the explosive, subversive, dangerous energy of the sword, gunpowder, the plague; and every aspect of our experience of Romeo and Juliet in the theater engages us in this phenomenon.

—MICHAEL GOLDMAN, SCHOLAR, 1972

Voluntarily Romeo enters the world of the tragedy. There is no question but that he believes in the efficacy of dreams of warning, but he chooses nonetheless to disregard them...Romeo's denial of the dream is more than behavior, more than device. It seals him as an actor in a world he only partially comprehends. It is an act and a sign at once. From this point the tragedy extends.

—MARJORIE GARBER, SCHOLAR, 1974

The lovers themselves have neither the time nor the inclination to attempt to come to terms with the hostility and lack of understanding of their world.

—DERICK R.C. MARSH, AUTHOR, 1976

The feud in a realistic social sense is the primary tragic force in the play—not the feud as agent of fate, but the feud as an extreme and peculiar expression of patriarchal society, which Shakespeare shows us to be tragically self-destructive. The feud is the deadly rite-de-passage which promotes masculinity at the price of life.

—COPPELIA KAHN, SCHOLAR, 1977

In Mercutio's sudden, violent death, Shakespeare makes the birth of tragedy coincide exactly with the symbolic death of comedy. The alternative view, the element of freedom and play, dies with Mercutio. Where many courses were open before, now there seems only one.

—SUSAN SNYDER, SCHOLAR, 1979

# WHAT THE CRITICS & ARTISTS SAY

## 1900s

When we first hear of Romeo in Shakespeare's play he is described in the attitude of a typical Elizabethan melancholy lover; he is young and untried, but there is at first an element of parody in Shakespeare's presentation of him; his conventionality and bookishness are obvious in the first words he speaks, all absurdly stereotyped paradox and similitude.

—BRIAN GIBBONS, EDITOR, 1980

[Romeo's] unwillingness to look into circumstances and his headlong pursuit of suicide demonstrate that his assumptions about his life and death have been made before the immediate events of the play take place.

—MARILYN L. WILLIAMSON, SCHOLAR, 1981

Even when Juliet's language seems to place her in the same imaginative world with Romeo, there is often a contrast between the tendency of his metaphors to keep love distant and remote, and hers to bring it up close, and make it possible. Romeo's preoccupation with the light of beauty, for instance, isolates the object of his desire, and mystifies the distance that separates him from it. When Juliet has recourse to the idea, however, beauty's light becomes an enabling force that emanates from the consummated relationship.

—EDWARD SNOW, SCHOLAR, 1985

The two of them enter into a dialogue that's an exquisitely turned extended (eighteen-line) sonnet. That's not 'realistic,' of course: in whatever real life may be, lovers don't start cooing in sonnet form. What has happened belongs to reality, not to realism; or rather, the God of Love...has swooped down on two perhaps rather commonplace adolescents and blasted them into another dimension of reality altogether.

—NORTHROP FRYE, SCHOLAR, 1986

There's something about the story itself that can take any amount of mistreatment from stupid producing and bad casting. I've seen a performance with a middle-aged and corseted Juliet who could have thrown Romeo over her shoulder and walked to Mantua with him, and yet the audience was in tears at the end.

—NORTHROP FRYE, SCHOLAR, 1986

Their kind of passion would soon burn up the world of heavy fathers and snarling Tybalts and gabby Nurses if it stayed there. Our perception of this helps us to accept the play as a whole, instead of feeling only that a great love went wrong. It didn't go wrong: it went only where it could, out. It always was, as we say, out of this world.

—NORTHROP FRYE, SCHOLAR, 1986

Romeo's line 'He jests at scars that never felt a wound' not only ironically prefigures the nature of Mercutio's death, but also suggests that Romeo is unaware of the depth of Mercutio's feelings for him.

—ROGER ALLAM, ACTOR, 1988

Juliet is, I think, consistently positive about the relationship. From the beginning right up to the moment when she discovers Romeo dead, she is hopeful, willing their love to work. Her foreboding remarks—'my grave is like to prove my wedding bed,' 'I have no joy in this contract tonight,' etc.—come from a kind of sixth sense, below conscious thought. They are remarks for the audience to absorb... but they have no effect on the positive attitude they both take to the relationship. ... To play Juliet as if she is conscious of the inevitability of tragedy is the same thing as to play her wisely aware of all the faults of the society she lives in.

—NIAMH CUSACK, ACTOR, 1988



Christopher Allen as Romeo and Nicholas Harazin as Benvolio in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2013 production of *Short Shakespeare! Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Rachel Rockwell. Photo by Michael Brosilow.

# WHAT THE CRITICS & ARTISTS SAY

## 1900s

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[Romeo] has deliberately cast aside as 'effeminate' the gentle and forgiving qualities he has learned from his love of Juliet and thus is guilty of a rash and self-destructive action. To ascribe the cause of the tragedy in Aristotelian fashion to his and Juliet's impulsiveness is, however, to ignore much of the rest of the play.

—DAVID BEVINGTON, SCHOLAR, 1992

With *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare was trying to write a new kind of tragedy. Traditional tragedies were about good deaths: protagonists who rose to the challenge of the worst life brings to us, accepting with calm and fortitude that every life must have an end. The essence of a good death was readiness for it: accounts settled, old scores paid off, enemies forgiven, last words said. A bad death was one which came too quickly for preparation: by accident, sudden violence or murder, random and unexpected. By definition, all young deaths are bad deaths, coming too soon, before the young victim has lived long enough to learn how to leave the world behind. The death of young people could scarcely be tragic, consoling or edifying in any way. It was simply horrifying, a breach in nature, a wound to the cycle of the community's existence. Shakespeare wants the deaths of *Romeo and Juliet* to be all those things—they must horrify Verona into ending their families' feud.

—RONALD BRYDEN, SCHOLAR, 1992

Recent work by social historians on the history of private life in Western European culture offers a complicating perspective on the timelessness of *Romeo and Juliet*. At the core of the play's evident accessibility is the importance and privilege modern Western culture grants to desire, regarding it as deeply expressive of individual identity and central to the personal fulfillment of women no less than men. But, as these historians have argued, such conceptions of desire reflect cultural changes in human consciousness in ways of imagining and articulating the nature of desire. In England until the late sixteenth century, individual identity had been imagined not so much as the result of autonomous, personal growth in consciousness but rather as a function of social station, an individual's place in a network of social and kinship structures.

—GAIL KERN PASTER, SCHOLAR, 1992

Is *Romeo and Juliet* a tragedy of fate or a tragedy of character? In Shakespeare's other tragedies, the fault lies within the hero's nature, and he dies with the knowledge of his fatal flaw. But *Romeo and Juliet* are victims of a universe not of their making. They are "star-crossed," born in a fateful hour; Shakespeare's only romantic tragedy is a dram of missed chances, poor timing, accidents, and mistakes. The teenaged lovers are also victims of the older generation who, failing to understand them, contribute to their deaths.

—NORRIE EPSTEIN, SCHOLAR, 1993

Though Shakespeare allows to neither of his protagonists in this play the full tragic realization of what has happened to them that he will allow such later figures as *Hamlet* and *Othello*, much less any anguished questionings about their own contribution to it, both do eventually reach a maturity of feeling, if not of understanding, that was not theirs at the play's beginning.

—MAYNARD MACK, SCHOLAR, 1993

We have not shied away from clashing low comedy with high tragedy, which is the style of the play, for it's the low comedy that allows you to embrace the very high emotions of the tragedy...Everything that is in the movie is drawn from Shakespeare's play. Violence, murder, lust, love, poison, drugs that mimic death, it's all there.

—BAZ LURHMANN, DIRECTOR, 1996

The play's configuration of Juliet's womanhood and Romeo's manhood actually runs counter to the sense of the rites of passage proper to the opposed genders. Romeo swerves away from the phallic violence of the feud and when he meets adversity, the banishment decreed by the Prince, can only weep and moan in a fashion scorned as womanish. Juliet embraces her 'fall' into eros as precociously as the Nurse's husband predicted but with a courage and resolution that her culture would call masculine, resists her father's will to the death.

—COPPELIA KAHN, SCHOLAR, 1998

The permanent popularity, now of mythic intensity, of *Romeo and Juliet* is more than justified, since the play is the largest and most pervasive celebration of romantic love in Western literature.

—HAROLD BLOOM, SCHOLAR, 1998

# WHAT THE CRITICS & ARTISTS SAY

## 2000s

*Romeo and Juliet's* love [. . .] is defiant of authority, figuratively linked with violence, and associated with outcast, criminal status. Like the political riots in the minds of their participants, it transgresses a traditional order in the name of a higher principle. Like the impassioned popular initiatives of moral redress that the authorities called riots, its course of action offers, through a temporary and problematic disruption, the potential of a lasting harmony when all its clearly understood—and in this the play shows it to be successful.

—CHRIS FITTER, SCHOLAR, 2000

Rather like the 'two households, both alike in dignity,' ... males and females in *Romeo and Juliet* do not mingle much in public, and not coincidentally, when they do mingle it is in moments of chaos or some other form of social disorder.

—THOMAS MOISAN, SCHOLAR, 2000

We are encouraged to read their death through an image of their life and love and to feel some redemption. If we take the bait we may be resounding to our own wishful desire that passionate love and marriage are compatible ... Shakespeare and many of his contemporaries acknowledged the madness in love; but for many modern interpreters not even self-destruction can dampen our relentless glorification of love madness. Love, it seems, remains one of the last bastions of modern life that we are unwilling to demystify.

—IVO KAMPS, SCHOLAR, 2000

The lesson the Chorus teaches is to use the opening lines not merely as a premise against which to test the unquestioned statements of characters in the play and then, in turn, to examine the play not for its events but for its choices ... In the end, the dead teach us, the living: *Romeo and Juliet*, through their actions, experiences, and choices, finally meld paradox and parable ... They displace the earlier, more limited Chorus because their wider, deeper comment on the risk and cost of life is one that the Chorus never understood.

—ARTHUR F. KINNEY, SCHOLAR, 2000



Julia Coffey as Juliet in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2005 production of *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Mark Lamos. Photo by Liz Lauren.

The play was in its way experimental; the usual source of tragedy was an ancient hero or some comparably great figure. Here the story comes from a modern novella and is set in modern Verona. This innovation called for new thinking about tragic experience, now less remote from ordinary life. The play is sometimes said not to be truly tragic, that Romeo's late arrival is simply accident. But that may be an aspect of its modernity. We use the word 'tragic' differently nowadays, and a change of sentiment in regard to tragedy may be sensed in *Romeo and Juliet*.

—THOMAS MOISAN, SCHOLAR, 2000

There may have been little hope for Hamlet's survival in the rotten state of Denmark, or even for the adulterous love of Antony and Cleopatra caught up in the snares of Roman politics, but for these great lovers of Verona, things could so easily have been otherwise ... It is, in a sense, a problem of genre that there is no such thing as a romantic narrative after marriage: somehow or other the story seems to end. In the major tragedies, the prognosis for more fully developed love relationships, especially marriages, is not very promising.

—DYMUNA C. CALLAGHAN, SCHOLAR, 2002

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While *Romeo and Juliet* has rarely been off the stage since Shakespeare's time, it has rarely—if ever—been there as Shakespeare wrote it. Wide discrepancies between the two quarto texts suggest a degree of instability in the play even in Shakespeare's day, and since the theaters reopened after the Restoration the play has undergone radical transformations. It has always been popular, but it has also always been edited, adapted, and rewritten. In spite, or perhaps because, of its enduring appeal as the definitive love story, *Romeo and Juliet* has been a dynamic and unstable performance text, endlessly reinvented to suit differing cultural needs.

—JAMES N. LOEHLIN, SCHOLAR, 2002

In *Romeo and Juliet* violence breaks out spontaneously, it seems, for although any cause for hostility between the Capulets and Montagues is buried in history and his no longer remembered, the mindset of the young of both houses and their followers guarantees that bloodshed will continue. The lost historical cause in effect becomes an excuse for them to do what they want to do and indulge in the competitive verbal and physical hostilities that given them excitement. The play shows the terrible consequences such violence can have for those who need to escape from it, and offers no prospect that the cycle of violence will be halted.

—R.A. FOAKES, SCHOLAR, 2003

Power in this play is all about expression—not about the weapons its characters eventually resort to. They use language as their survival tool. We have the potential within us to resolve conflict with our words. That's power. Language is power. Diplomacy requires a lot of clarity; aggression, on the other hand, is all about acting. I truly believe that tragedy happens—in this play and in our world—when language breaks down.

—GARY GRIFFIN, DIRECTOR, 2003

With *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare created a force field that surrounds points of tension, polarities that are based on resemblance: love/hate, ideal/real, young/old, innocence/worldliness, deliberation/haste, spontaneity/calculation, lyrical/prosaic, personal/social. All of these polarities—and more like them—are embraced by the tragicomic mode that governs Shakespeare's approach.

A production of *Romeo and Juliet* will succeed to the extent that it captures and expresses these polarities. No film version of the play entirely succeeds in reproducing the essential richness of Shakespeare's text; each sacrifices some points of tension for the sake of others or, more often, slights one of the paired terms in favor of the other.

—MICHAEL ANDEREGG, SCHOLAR, 2004

*Romeo and Juliet* embodies problems specific not to Verona or to sixteenth-century England, to young love or ancient grudge, but to language generally: the relation between word and meaning, and between name and being. It is the lovers' attempt to negotiate an identity independent of family name which leads to Juliet's famous antinomialist soliloquy: 'What's in a name?'

—LAURIE E. MAGUIRE, AUTHOR, 2004

The romantic love of *Romeo and Juliet* impedes the Capulets' desire to enhance their new money by marrying their daughter to title and lineage. Act 5's gold monuments, which the grieving parents propose to erect as memorials to their dead teenagers, indicate that Verona's mercantile values have not been altered by tragedy...

—LAURIE E. MAGUIRE, AUTHOR, 2004

In the great legends of medieval romance, the obstacle to love can sometimes appear more or less manufactured: the sword that lies between Tristan and Iseult; the endless trials that, ever more fantastical, keep Lancelot from Guinevere. These old stories were not aiming for verisimilitude: instead they set up laboratory conditions under which this peculiar thing that is romantic love could be ratcheted up to ever more exquisite and refined degrees. Shakespeare's mimetic drama, by contrast, moves in the opposite direction. By producing a simulation of real life it works to maintain our collective faith in this passion we so passionately want to believe in. The illusion that things might have been otherwise—if only circumstances had been different...is, of course, no less artful than any other literary form, but it is a different kind of art: the art that conceals art, the collective illusion of the stage-play world.

—CATHERINE BATES, SCHOLAR, 2004

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Romeo's urgency is sketched rather cursorily; it is Juliet's that is given much fuller scope and intensity. Similarly, it is eminently likely that Anne [Hathaway], three months pregnant, rather than the young Will, was the prime source of the impatience that led to the bond. To be sure, this was Elizabethan and not Victorian England: an unmarried mother in the 1580s did not, as she would in the 1880s, routinely face fierce, unrelenting social stigmatization. But the shame and social disgrace in Shakespeare's time were real enough.

—STEPHEN GREENBLATT, SCHOLAR, 2004

It's sort of the quintessential play where you want to stand up and say "No! No! No! No! Don't do that, don't do that!"—the way you do in children's theater. And I think that's also part of its appeal: we know often in Shakespeare what mistake the character is making; we've been given the information, and we know what the problem is. It's what makes *Cymbeline* (or *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) so funny so much of the time, because you're in this godlike position and know who's who. We are given information ahead of all the characters, and that serves to give the play both its tragic and comic edge. We don't know that much in *Hamlet*. Here, just as in a comedy, we know she's alive when Romeo kills himself, and that's why it's just "this close" to comedy. It's that closeness that's so dangerous, but that's also what gives it its tremendous light.

—MARK LAMOS, DIRECTOR, 2004

Juliet is very isolated in life. She's never out by herself, she always has a guard with her because of the violent street fighting between the Capulets and Montagues. The only places she goes to are her bedroom, the atrium of the castle, maybe a couple of parties in her own castle, and church. That's it. Fortunately she's educated because she is of a certain class. Why else can she say these amazing words? She's not given an opportunity to voice her mind to anybody until she meets Romeo; it's in meeting him that she finds herself.

—JULIA COFFEY, ACTOR, 2005

[Lady Capulet] I don't think of her as unfeeling or unloving; she's not a bad person. In fact, she stands up to Capulet when she sees him getting angrier and angrier at Juliet...However she only goes so far; she knows her duty, and her powers were very limited then.

—SUSAN HART, ACTOR, 2005

Fate is a powerful force in *Romeo and Juliet*, and the main characters are highly aware of it. Romeo, for instance, has premonitions of his own death several times. Despite Romeo trying to avoid killing Tybalt, Fate intervenes, and the consequences are inevitable. Juliet should recover from the sleeping potion and all should be well, but Fate, in the form of a plague, has kept Friar John from delivering Friar Laurence's message; Romeo and Juliet's predetermined destiny thwarts every strategy that could have saved them from death.

—PAUL MOLIKEN, EDITOR, 2005

Benvolio is the peacemaker and is the most even-tempered of everyone in the play. He's the person who can always get a straight answer from him. He describes everyone truthfully: Tybalt is fiery, Mercutio is bold and brave, and he asks the right questions of Romeo such that you (and he) can see his heart.

—ROBERT PETKOFF, ACTOR, 2005

The Prince comes in at the beginning, middle, and end, and there is almost a choric structure to his speeches. He is very formal and his language reflects that. He bears a lot of responsibility for the way the events unfolded. Not only did he banish Romeo, he also could have stopped the feud earlier but he didn't. He might have escalated it, in fact, by meeting with each party separately and ordering them to stop instead of meeting with them together and dealing with the issues.

—NICK SANDYS, ACTOR, 2005

Mercutio, by contrast, has more of the philosopher in him, and this aspect takes shape in terms of fencing. Unafraid of motion, he can, nonetheless, step back and observe. In ways no other character in the play does, Mercutio recollects knowledge; he understands numbers and technical terms. As the Queen Mab speech brilliantly shows, he has the capacity to reflect on the nature of motion and Shakespeare indulges him with impressive set speeches...Whereas Romeo and Tybalt embody motion, Mercutio puts motion to the test, but his pupils always fumble over the examination.

—DARYL W. PALMER, SCHOLAR, 2006

An apparently minor character who actually plays a critical role in *Romeo and Juliet*, Tybalt, Juliet's cousin is the catalyst for two (nearly three) brawls between

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the Montagues and Capulets, the last of which causes his own and Mercutio's violent deaths, plus the banishment of Romeo and the sequences of events that inevitably eventually resolve the tragic drama. He is hungrily belligerent at every appearance and, more so than any other character in the play, symbolizes the unreasonable feud between the warring families, as well as the tragedy's ubiquitous cruel irony...if anyone in this tragedy of circumstance can be characterized as a villain, beyond the 'crossed' stars and Fates, then Tybalt himself fits that bill.

—R. BRIGHAM LAMPERT, AUTHOR, 2008

Although Romeo and Juliet's love represents not only youth, but also the future—implying a generalized hope, plus particular familiar reunion and growth—what prevents such progress is their families' hatred, so historical and ingrained that neither the cause nor the time of its inception is ever divulged, if even remembered. In short, the past prevents the potential future from occurring, creating instead an imminent future that may include sorrowful regret and reconciliation, but will be totally devoid of love.

R. BRIGHAM LAMPERT, AUTHOR, 2008

People think of it as a love story and a tragedy because two people fall in love and kill themselves in the end. And that's true; that's what happens. But what I think this play is about is generations, about a younger generation not served by the older generation. One generation inherits the anger and violence of their parents. It might just as well be passed along in the mother's milk. No one even remembers who started the war or why. They're just fighting and they've been fighting for as long as anyone can remember. Does all this sound familiar? Tybalt does exactly what he's been brought up to do. The strangers in this world are Romeo and Juliet.

—GALE EDWARDS, DIRECTOR, 2010

When Romeo is introduced, he is already lovesick, and very poetic and direct about it. What he's feeling isn't withheld to create a revelation at the end of act one. Because it defines Romeo, it comes out in his opening scene. Further, the dramatic purpose of his introduction isn't to make a statement about the kind of character he

is. It's to show a young man in the anguish of first love that will quickly be tested.

—BILL JOHNSON, AUTHOR, 2012

What Shakespeare gives us in Romeo and Juliet is a couple that resists all of the conventional forms of consolation available for spouses confronting their mortality, a couple that will stake everything on the pleasures of "one short minute" without anticipating anything more.

—RAMIE TARGOFF, SCHOLAR, 2012

In Shakespeare's sources, the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet's death was softened by the idea, articulated by the lovers themselves, that their souls would share some form of a meaningful afterlife. Shakespeare removed any such vision of posthumous love from his play. In doing so, he created his most potent expression of what it meant for love to be mortal.

—RAMIE TARGOFF, SCHOLAR, 2012

In the view that Romeo's love for Rosaline was not real, I perceive a residue of the belief, characteristic of Victorian fiction, that there is for each of us only one true love. Perhaps Shakespeare, like the twenty-first century, is less innocent, or more realistic, recognizing that each successive new love always seems to be the genuine one... In love with Juliet, Romeo becomes altogether more active, more heroic, leaping orchard walls and risking death in the process. If Romeo is now energetic, less inclined to mope, that may be, as he says, because his new love does not reject him.

—CATHERINE BELSEY, SCHOLAR, 2014

The play offers a foil for Romeo in 'The fiery Tybalt', whose aggressive masculinity is not in question. He longs to pick a quarrel even at the feast, and roundly declares that he hates the word peace. Would we admire Romeo more, or aspire to be like him, if he were more like Tybalt? In the end, it is (effeminating) love that resolves the feud, but not before (manly) violence has done a good deal more harm. In a violent society bloodshed alters the course of love itself.

—CATHERINE BELSEY, SCHOLAR, 2014

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If Romeo as well as Mercutio and Tybalt demonstrate the lack of judgment that characterizes youth, Friar Laurence and the Nurse join the Capulets and the Montagues in dispelling any promise that years bring wisdom.

—JULIA REINHARD LUPTON, SCHOLAR, 2016

From the micro to the macro level, *Romeo and Juliet*—in a characteristic Shakespearian move—invites us to attach ourselves to simplistic, formulaic assumptions and then exposes us to their costs and limitations. It offers us neat binary oppositions, only to teach us that a seemingly opposed two can converge toward one, and thereby liberate an almost infinite set of possibilities. In other words, it becomes a love story.

—ROBERT N. WATSON, SCHOLAR, 2016

There is one other way in which this story of *Romeo and Juliet* is groundbreaking—both in world literature and in Shakespeare’s canon. The woman enjoys absolute equality with the man. Shakespeare wrote about Juliet with much insight, nuance, and detail as that with which he wrote about Romeo.

—TINA PACKER, ACTOR AND PLAYWRIGHT, 2015

What is emphasized if the actor who plays the Chorus also plays the Nurse, or Capulet’s wife? What happens if the actor who plays the Apothecary can play any other role with the exception of Romeo? What happens to one’s interpretation of the play when that role is doubled differently (say with Juliet or Montague)? . . . How would that casting decision affect [students’] interpretation of the play? How will this impact their own performances or readings in class? How will the class’s discussion about race, gender, sexuality, and ability impact their decision about doubling? . . . While doubling clearly grew out of necessity, the decision to employ doubling offers rich opportunities to interrogate the text and the performance of identity in the text.

—AYANNA THOMPSON AND LAURA TURCHI,  
SCHOLARS AND EDUCATORS, 2016

Audiences anticipating the discovery and Juliet might easily overlook the striking news that Mercutio and Paris are kinsmen—a fact never before mentioned in the play. The two are related by blood but are also linked thematically: Mercutio is a friend of Romeo’s who becomes an unexpected rival (when he exits the

stage railing); Paris is rival for Juliet’s affection and an unexpected friend (Romeo praises him and complies with his wishes after the duel); both are hurt “under [Romeo’s] arm.” The casual revelation of the two slain characters’ relationship gains additional energy if the roles are doubled . . . Moments after we learn that Paris and Mercutio are kinsmen, the Prince reports that he is also a “kinsman” to them both. This revelation will also gain interest, rendering the play more complete and coherent, when all three roles are assigned to one actor.

—BRETT GAMBOA, SCHOLAR, 2018

[D]espite the fact that *Romeo and Juliet* has achieved iconic status as a phrase that is synonymous with not any kind of love, but, rather, ‘true love,’ the play is marked by surprising eruptions of violence that belies its generic status as a love story.

—COURTNEY LEHMANN, SCHOLAR, 2018

When productions and adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* cast the actors playing the Montagues and the Capulets as contrasting racial or ethnic groups, they root the feud in difference that then seem to be inescapable sources of conflict. Students should explore how productions use stereotypes or other shorthand to present difference. When we teach productions that make those kinds of casting and performance choices, we can help students recognize that cultural conflict is both historical and current, but not inevitable.

—LAURA TURCHI AND ANN C. CHRISTENSEN,  
SCHOLARS AND EDUCATORS, 2018

Lady Capulet occupies space throughout the play, though she still shrinks steadily before the audience’s eyes. A kind of restriction governs her behavior, rendering her ineffective and registering as hazardous, especially when held up next to her husband’s indisputable sovereignty, her daughter’s burgeoning autonomy and the Nurse’s rhetorical license. Crucially, when a performer embodies her on stage, Lady Capulet’s constriction is not devoid of consciousness—she may herself feel disgraced and diminished by her circumstances. Emaciated textually, critically and, as it turns out, emotionally, Lady Capulet has an experience not fully accessible from the outside, whatever others may say are her motives . . .

—PAIGE MARTIN REYNOLDS, ACTOR AND SCHOLAR, 2019

# A PLAY COMES TO LIFE

## A LOOK BACK AT ROMEO AND JULIET IN PERFORMANCE

***Whether his dramas should be taken as plays or as literature has been disputed. But surely they should be taken as both. Acted, or seen on the stage, they disclose things hidden to the reader. Read, they reveal what no actor or theater can convey.***

—HAROLD C. GODDARD, 1951

*Romeo and Juliet.* Despite being solely fictional characters, the young lovers' names have become part of everyday language through our idioms: "He's a real Romeo," someone might say about a flirtatious young man, or perhaps a new movie's advertising campaign proclaims it "a *Romeo and Juliet* for our times." All around the world people use these names to signify romantic love, even if they haven't read or seen *Romeo and Juliet*. The longevity and familiarity of the "star-crossed lovers" story from many centuries ago is a strong testament to the play's timelessness and popularity.

*Romeo and Juliet* was one of Shakespeare's early tragedies; it was written in the same period as some of his best-known comedies, such as *A Midsummer Night's*

*Dream* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. The title page in first printed text of the play, published in 1597, asserted that the play had been performed often and "with great applause." The presence of stage directions in this first printed script—unusual in Shakespeare's plays—suggests that this edition may have been written down from the memories of actors following a production.

The first written documentation of a performance comes sixty-five years later once the Monarchy was restored to the throne and the theaters reopened, from the 1662 diary entry of the apparently unimpressed Samuel Pepys. Though Mr. Pepys disliked the play, it must have been well received by others, because another revival opened just a few years later. This version was directed by James Howard, who rewrote a happy ending to the play with and the lovers quite alive and in love. In addition to using his new ending, Howard also staged the original ending, and alternated the sad and happy endings staged from night to night so that audience members could see whichever they liked! The theater-going tastes of the Restoration period were vastly different from those of Elizabethan and Jacobean England, and during this time, many of Shakespeare's plays were adapted, rewritten and reinterpreted.

In 1748 the well-known actor-manager David Garrick staged his adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*. He simplified the language, cut a few characters, eliminated all the bawdy



Jeff Lillico as Romeo and Joy Farmer-Clary as Juliet in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2010 production of *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Gale Edwards. Photo by Liz Lauren.

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references, and included some additional speeches. Garrick's version would be performed for the next 100 years, with his changes helping to make *Romeo and Juliet* the most popular of Shakespeare's plays through the late eighteenth century. Subsequent nineteenth-century productions restored Shakespeare's text (they still made cuts, as do today's directors), but frequently rearranged scenes to accommodate the elaborate scenery in vogue at the time. Often cuts were made so that famous actors in the title roles would be assured more stage time than anyone else.

Though Shakespeare makes it clear that Juliet is not yet fourteen and Romeo not much older, it was not unusual for the actors in these roles to be in their thirties or even forties. Though the basic story stays the same despite the age of the actors, having younger actors closer in age to Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* can certainly change the way the audience interprets the play. In a 1912 speech about William Poel's 1905 production of *Romeo and Juliet*, George Bernard Shaw said:

*When Poel found that a child of fourteen was wanted, his critics exclaimed 'Ah—but she was an Italian child, and an Italian child of fourteen looks exactly the same as an English woman of forty-five.' William Poel did not believe it. He said, 'I will get a child of fourteen,' and accordingly he performed Romeo and Juliet in that way, and for the first time it became endurable.*

One of the milestone English productions of the play was staged at London's New Theatre in 1935. John Gielgud directed the play and played Mercutio, Laurence Olivier portrayed Romeo, Peggy Ashcroft played Juliet, and Edith Evan was the Nurse. Olivier and Gielgud, each fascinated with both Romeo and Mercutio, switched roles after six weeks. The switch was well received; critics and audiences praised each actor for the different qualities they brought to both parts.

By the 1930s, as with many of Shakespeare's plays, *Romeo and Juliet*'s original text had been restored, but directors still cut most of Shakespeare's sexual references, so plentiful in this play. The comedy in *Romeo and Juliet* relies on bawdiness and innuendo, but until the 1960s many productions focused more on the tragedy and romance of the play. In the 1960s, productions around the world began to work with the play's sexual humor, pointing up the contrast between the play's notion of sex as vulgarity and the ideal love that Romeo and Juliet share. It was

discovered that a production set in the sexually repressed Victorian era could contrast the "dirty" jokes of the all-male street scenes with the "clean" sexuality of the lovers.

One famous production was staged at The Old Vic Theatre in 1960 by Italian director Franco Zeffirelli. In keeping with the more permissive atmosphere of the Sixties, Zeffirelli restored the comic bawdry, and emphasized the youth and passion of the lovers. Although critics complained that some of Shakespeare's language was neglected, audiences loved the vitality and sexuality of Zeffirelli's interpretation. This production was revived in 1964 in Verona, Italy (where Shakespeare set the play); critics loved the way the scenic design "blended...harmoniously with the surrounding city architecture." The culmination of Zeffirelli's stage productions was his 1968 film version starring Leonard Whiting and Olivia Hussey. The youth and beauty of the lovers was emphasized, and the movie, with its beautiful sets and music, was a great hit with teenagers, who strongly identified with the characters.

The story of the young, star-crossed lovers has proven to be widely accessible, despite language or cultural differences. Productions in Communist nations like the former Soviet Union have tended to emphasize the politics of the play over the love story; in these productions the lovers' union defied not only their families but also a corrupt medieval government. Other stagings have picked up on the theme of political corruption, setting the play in places like Fascist Italy or Margaret Thatcher's England. Many recent American productions have cast the Capulets and Montagues as different racial or ethnic groups in an effort to make their feud relevant to contemporary audiences. One of the first versions of the play to attribute ethnic hatred as the cause of the feud was the musical *West Side Story*. It updated *Romeo and Juliet*, calling the lovers Tony and Maria and setting the story in New York City in the 1950s. Its feud became one between rival gangs, one Puerto Rican and the other melting-pot white American; Maria's brother is the leader of the Sharks and Tony's best friend heads the Jets.

In 1996 the 33-year-old Australian film director, Baz Luhrmann (whose previous film *Strictly Ballroom* showed the artist's propensity for a quirky, operatic directorial vision), decided to take on the world's most famous love story. Luhrmann's title, *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*, flagged the association to his source that many critics of the film dismissed. He set his story not in a distant, long-forgotten Verona, but instead in a very Latin, very Catholic, Verona Beach—a violent, multicultural, amphetamine-driven city, where the guns and switchblades

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of deadly street gangs have replaced rapiers and daggers. Like Zeffirelli, Lurhmann, too, cast two young actors in the title roles; however unlike his predecessor, he chose two of the leading teenage heartthrobs of the day—Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes. Mercutio is portrayed as a black drag queen and the Friar as a tough, tattooed clergyman of the streets. Some dismissed Lurhmann's production as having very little in common with its titular playwright and play; they were frustrated by his liberal cutting of Shakespeare's text (approximately half of the original found its way to the screen) and the young actors' flattened delivery of the language. Other scholars and critics hailed the production's bold expression of its source material, and how palpably frightening Verona's violence became in the hands of Lurhmann's street thugs.

The story has been adapted and made accessible to younger generations. In 1998 Disney released a sequel to *The Lion King*, called *The Lion King 2: Simba's Pride*, which shares a plot similar to *Romeo and Juliet*. In this animated interpretation the young lovers are portrayed as lions belonging to two different prides. *Gnomeo and Juliet*, released in 2011, is another animated film telling this familiar story: the main characters are garden gnomes brought to life. Garden gnome Gnomeo falls in love with garden gnome Juliet and the two try to be together, despite the divide between their two backyards. In both of these interpretations for younger audiences, the lovers do not commit suicide, but there are still some fight scenes where tensions are high.

Chicago Shakespeare Theater has previously staged *Romeo and Juliet* as an abridged production for students

and families nine times, most recently in 2017 when it was adapted and directed by Marti Lyons. Past abridged productions of the play have been set in contexts as diverse as the American prairie of the early settlers and Renaissance Italy.

*Romeo and Juliet* was first staged at CST as a full-length production in 2005, directed by former Hartford Stage Artistic Director Mark Lamos, who focused on the musicality of Shakespeare's language. Set in lavish fourteenth-century Italian Renaissance dress, the stage was awash with vivid color. A second full-length production was staged at CST in 2009, interpreted by Australian director Gale Edwards. Choosing to focus on the violent world of the play, she set the production in a once-elegant world that was now disintegrating; it was a shadowy world in which Juliet brought light into the dark.

In addition to these abridged and full-length productions, three notable adaptations of the play have been staged at CST: a musical spoof by The Second City, entitled *The People vs. Friar Laurence, the Man Who Killed Romeo and Juliet*; a staged reading of a bilingual adaptation of the play called *Romeo y Julieta*; and *Shakespeare's R and J*, a modern retelling through the eyes of four adolescent, prep school boys, discovering the play and their own sexuality.

*Romeo and Juliet* will continue to be performed around the world, and its "star-crossed lovers" immortalized in operas, ballets, films, and paintings yet to be realized. It is a story that has inspired the creative genius of artist after artist, and continues to touch the imagination of audiences worldwide. ■



Ora Jones as the Nurse and Joy Farmer-Clary as Juliet in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2010 production of *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Gale Edwards. Photo by Liz Lauren.

# CPS SHAKESPEARE!

## CELEBRATING “CPS SHAKESPEARE!”

In its ten-year history, this transformational arts program brought CPS teachers and students together to perform Shakespeare as an intergenerational ensemble, working together for six weeks of intensive workshops and rehearsals. CPS Shakespeare! *Romeo and Juliet* was staged twice in the Courtyard Theater, fully realized with the help of a team of professional artists working alongside Director Kirsten Kelly and the entire Chicago Shakespeare education team. In 2014, CPS Shakespeare! received the highest honor in the US for arts after-school programming, honored at the White House by First Lady Michelle Obama. Taking the expanse of learning from *CPS Shakespeare!*, Chicago Shakespeare developed and launched a new program in 2017 called the Chicago Shakespeare Slam, which brings students together from across the region's public, private and parochial schools to celebrate Shakespeare and our diverse community in a slam-style arena.



Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2011 production of CPS Shakespeare! *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Kirsten Kelly. Photo by Liz Lauren.



Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2007 production of CPS Shakespeare! *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Kirsten Kelly. Photo by Michael Brosilow.



Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2011 production of CPS Shakespeare! *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Kirsten Kelly. Photo by Liz Lauren.

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## CONVERSATION WITH THE DIRECTOR

**Chicago Shakespeare Artistic Director Barbara Gaines talked with members of the Education Department about her upcoming production of *Romeo and Juliet*.**

**You've been directing Shakespeare for more than three decades now, but this is the first time that you've directed *Romeo and Juliet*. Why now?**

**Barbara Gaines:** For a long time I couldn't find my way into this play. Young love just didn't seem to open up the story for me. But a couple of years ago I decided to re-read the play since Chicago Shakespeare hadn't done it in quite a while. I was overwhelmed. I didn't read it any longer as a play primarily about young love. Instead, that relationship became a metaphor for the larger pain of an entire community, uprooted by conflict. A metaphor for lost innocence, for the dream of romance and true love. All that is good is savagely torn apart by the hatred between their two families—and all the violence that comes from all that anger.

**Does violence, or perhaps anti-violence, become the central theme for this production?**

**Gaines:** Yes, very much so—Shakespeare's message in this play is profoundly antiviolence. This story, Shakespeare's "Verona," could take place in any city today where there are entirely too many young deaths sprung from hatred—hatreds of decades and centuries ago. Shakespeare calls these "ancient grudges." Characters will still call their city "Verona," but it takes place in a modern city. In truth, it could be any city torn apart insensibly by all that seems to divide us. Though our production opens in November 2019, and closes before the new year, this *Romeo and Juliet* takes place in August 2020. I deliberately want to set it in the future because these events don't have to happen.

**Since this is a contemporary production, can you talk about the design?**

**Gaines:** When I read plays, I picture them happening, almost like I'm watching a movie. When I re-read *Romeo and Juliet*, I kept picturing the work of Chicago painter Kerry James Marshall. Marshall changed the art world with his painting. What he paints is authentic and magnificent. Visually it cuts right through your heart. The design of our production is very much inspired by Marshall's use of color, heat, and dynamic. The play—and the first brawl—starts out at a basketball

court. From there we move to other areas of their urban landscape. The Capulets live in a bungalow, not an Italianate villa; most of the action takes place in the Capulets' backyard. Juliet and the Nurse always meet in the hair salon because that's the one safe place they can speak privately—there's no safe place in the Capulets' house. When Romeo and Juliet are alone, it's on a beach. And the fight between Romeo, Mercutio, and Tybalt takes place under the train tracks. It should all feel very familiar.

**Productions often focus on the differences between these two families. For you, what distinguishes the Capulets and the Montagues?**

**Gaines:** This is a play about how violence destroys everything of value, everything that matters. I'm not making a *Romeo and Juliet* about gangs or racial difference. I've seen many productions like that—they're fascinating and they work, but this one is about violence—unnecessary violence that does only harm in the world. The two families both reflect diversity, helping us see that there are no real differences between them. I'm imagining, through costuming choices, that the Montagues are more artistic, the Capulets more practical. But there are no real differences between these two families—only their "ancient grudge." The parents hate, and they teach their children to hate. And they don't even really know why.

**How will your interpretation highlight the multi-generational conflict?**

**Gaines:** Shakespeare begins with the Chorus, which I've cut. Then his first scene brings the servants of the two houses—Sampson, Gregory, and Abraham—and they start a fight. Well, that doesn't really help me show that these are part of generations of hatred—which are talked about from the beginning to the end of this play. Instead, in our production, it's August 2020. And as we know, the summer heat only fuels more violence. The lights come up on all the Capulets—the young ones and Mr. and Mrs. Capulet. The younger ones are playing basketball. When the Montagues enter, one says, "Do you bite your thumb at me, sir?" We start out at the very beginning taking the servants' lines and giving them instead to Romeo and Juliet's parents. Having them start the fight, the patriarchs of the Capulets and the Montagues are not just part of that fight from the very beginning, they are its instigators. Right from the first moments of this production, I want to establish this generational, truly tribal hatred, and the horror—not the romance—of violence.

# A PLAY COMES TO LIFE

**How does one stage violence and not in some way glorify it?**

**Gaines:** You have to stage violence or you're not telling this story. One must do it. But there are no guns in this production. This is a world of hitting, punching, of knives and daggers. Part of the way that we'll demonstrate the brutality of violence is by humanizing characters we don't typically care much about—by helping the audience see that all of these characters are complex. In the party scene, we'll see Tybalt and the Nurse dancing and having fun—and we'll understand why they like each other. I want us to fall a bit in love with Tybalt. And of course, it's easy to fall in love with Mercutio because he makes us laugh. No one ever falls in love with Tybalt because we don't see the other side of Tybalt. What I'm trying to do is make sure nobody is the enemy—they're all just like us, really.

In the end, the stage is littered with bodies—many young people senselessly die for their parents' hatred (and their grandparents' hatred). In the final moments of the play, we'll see a memorial fence erected in Romeo and Juliet's memory—and that's how we end it. There is nothing romantic about their deaths—it's tragic and it's senseless. When that memorial comes down, it's so familiar to us. We've seen them all over this country. We've seen them in Paris, we've seen them in Belgium. I don't want to see any more in my lifetime.

**What changes for these families at the end of the play? Do the deaths of Romeo and Juliet finally end the violence?**

**Gaines:** I wish I knew. Perhaps not—maybe the tragedy of the play is that they don't really change. They build their memorial but nothing really changes. The hatred goes on from decade to decade. We all have to fight against violence in our own ways. The thing I can do in my life is to hopefully shift people's perspective through art-making. When I read *Romeo and Juliet* a couple of summers ago, I just couldn't believe how much wisdom there was in this play. I found words, I found lines, I found another current running through this story about young lovers. We will enjoy watching them fall in love. That both of them die is a tragedy. My goal is to show that this culture is not the only answer. There are other ways to live our lives. Violence only perpetuates more violence. And ultimately, it will destroy even the most beautiful of hearts. There has to be a different way to solve our problems.



Emma Ladi as Juliet in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2017 production of *Short Shakespeare! Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Marti Lyons. Photo by Liz Lauren.

**Romeo witnesses his best friend die—the grief and rage he feels possesses him, and he, in turn, kills. How does *Romeo and Juliet* help us think about the role that grief plays in the perpetuation of violence?**

**Gaines:** Violence can be triggered by grief, by fear, by lack of hope, by a lack of love. There are so many triggers for violence, I don't begin to know them all. But I also know that when violence is perpetrated, you can become reactive: you hit me, I'm going to hit you back. Or you can behave in a proactive way, which tries to find a better solution. William S. Burroughs once said, "Whenever you are threatened by a hostile presence...emit a thick cloud of love like an octopus squirts out ink." I have tried that, and it does work. Benvolio tries to. He tries to stop the fights, to be the peacemaker. He emits a thick cloud of love throughout the play. It will take hundreds of thousands of clouds of love to change the world. Enlightenment happens one soul at a time. ■



Set design by Scott Davis for Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2019 production of *Romeo and Juliet*.

# BEFORE YOU READ THE PLAY

[To the teacher: all line numbers in this handbook refer to the Cambridge School Shakespeare Edition of Romeo and Juliet.]

## AS A CLASS

### 1. LINE “DANCING”

[To the teacher: when reviewing the text before class reading, pull significant short lines from throughout the script, and arrange them chronologically—or consider our suggestions below! **See Appendix A for printable lines ready to cut and distribute.**]

With a classmate with the same line of text as you, decide who will read the first half of the line, and who will read the second. Together, read the line quietly three times. As a class, share any unfamiliar words, and discuss what they might mean.

Back with your partner, choose one word from each half of the line that stands out most to you—that’s particularly “juicy”—and then think of a big physical gesture that helps illuminate the word’s meaning. Now, arrange yourselves in numerical order in a circle with the rest of the class. Starting with line #1, read your half of the line—sharing a big gesture on your chosen word—followed by your partner doing the same with his/her half of the line. Then, read your line a second time, with the rest of your classmates mirroring your gesture.

Continue to read the lines in chronological order, with the full group mirroring each pair’s gesture on the second reading. Once you’ve heard three pairs, go back to the first pair and string several lines together, building a kind of dance comprised of each pair’s gestures.

*If ever you disturb our streets again, / Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.  
Be ruled by me, / Forget to think of her.  
If you be not the house of Montagues, / I pray come and crush a cup of wine.  
Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight! / For ne’er saw true beauty till this night.  
My only love sprung from my only hate! / Too early seen unknown, and known too late!  
It is my lady, / O it is my love.  
Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo? / Deny thy father and refuse they name.  
Young men’s love then lines not truly in their hearts, / But in their eyes.  
This alliance may so happy prove / To turn your households’ rancor to pure love.  
Romeo, the love I bear thee can afford no better term than this: / Thou art a villain.  
Why the dev’l came you between us? I was hurt under your arm. / A plague a ’ both your houses!  
'Tis torture, and not mercy. / Heaven is here where Juliet lives.  
And you be mine, I'll give you to my friend; / And you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets.  
O true apothecary! They drugs are quick. / Thus with a kiss I die.  
O happy dagger, this is thy sheath; / There rust, and let me die.  
See what a scourge is laid upon your hate, / That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love!*

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L3, SL1**

### 2. EXEUNT!

[To the teacher: for students who might struggle reading a line of Shakespeare “cold,” consider using the Line “Dancing” exercise above as a scaffold. You may also want to consider breaking up the script below into smaller chunks, perhaps using parts of the Exeunt script as a teaser before starting a new act. We’ve found, too, that creating placards with the characters’ names on them is useful. A student volunteer who may find it easier to participate initially without enacting parts of the story can help distribute the name placards as you tap students to become characters. **See Appendix B for a printable version of the script below.**]

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS SL2, R3**

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## NARRATOR SCRIPT!

Standing in a large circle, listen closely as the story of *Romeo and Juliet* is narrated. When you are tapped by the narrator to become a character, listen to the narration and, stepping into the center of the circle, act out your role, which may include reading a quote aloud. When the center of the circle needs clearing to move on, an exuberant “Exeunt!” will sweep everyone back to their spots in the circle.

### ACT 1

In the city of Verona, two powerful families, the Capulets and the Montagues, have been fighting one another longer than anyone can remember. Their **servants** confront each other one sweltering summer day, in the town center: **[Montague Servant]** *“Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?”* **[Capulet Servant]** *“I do bite my thumb, sir.”* Words lead to blows. Romeo’s cousin, **Benvolio**, tries to stop the fight, but he’s challenged by Lord Capulet’s nephew, **Tybalt**. Then the fathers, **Lord Montague** and **Lord Capulet**, join the brawl. **Prince Escalus** enters and forbids any more fighting between them. **[Prince]** *“If ever you disturb our streets again, your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace ... On pain of death, all men depart!”*

EXEUNT!

**Lord and Lady Montague** discuss their son Romeo’s sulking with **Benvolio**, who offers to find out what’s troubling him. **Romeo** says he’s in love with Rosaline, but she’s not interested. Benvolio tells his cousin to forget about her. **[Benvolio]** *“Be ruled by me, forget to think of her.”* But Romeo’s answers: **[Romeo]** *“O, teach me how I should forget to think.”*

Meanwhile, **Lord Capulet** arranges his daughter Juliet’s marriage to **Count Paris**, a rich relative to the Prince himself. As **Juliet** prepares for the party that night, **Lady Capulet** speaks to her about marriage. Juliet replies, **[Juliet]** *“It is an honor that I dream not of.”* Her mother tells her: **[Lady Capulet]** *“The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.”* Juliet obediently agrees to entertain her suitor at their party.

EXEUNT!

### ACT 2

**Lord Capulet’s Servant**, delivering the invitations, meets **Benvolio** and **Romeo**. He says **[Capulet Servant]**: *“If you be not of the house of Montagues, I pray come and crush a cup of wine.”* They decide to attend, but in disguise.

**Lord and Lady Capulet, Juliet, Tybalt** and the **Nurse** gather as Capulet welcomes his guests. Romeo spots Juliet across the room and in that moment forgets Rosaline

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

completely. **[Romeo]** *"Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight! For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night."* Tybalt recognizes Romeo behind his disguise, with **Benvolio** and **Mercutio** and says to Capulet: **[Tybalt]** *"Uncle, this is a Montague, our foe."* Capulet forbids any confrontation, and Tybalt storms off, vowing revenge. Romeo approaches Juliet, and they fall in love at first sight. Romeo asks the Nurse who the young lady is. **[Nurse]** *"Her mother is the lady of the house."* Benvolio insists they leave. The Nurse reveals to Juliet: **[Nurse]** *"His name is Romeo, and a Montague, the only son of your great enemy."* Juliet cries out: **[Juliet]** *"My only love sprung from my only hate! Too early seen unknown and known too late!"*

EXEUNT!

As **Romeo** leaves the party, he slips away from his friends and hides in the Capulets' garden, where he sees **Juliet** at her bedroom window. **[Romeo]** *"It is my lady, O it is my love."* Believing she is alone, Juliet asks: **[Juliet]** *"O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo? Deny thy father and refuse thy name."* Romeo reveals his presence, and both confess their love. Juliet says that she'll send a messenger to him the next day to find out where and when they can meet to wed.

EXEUNT!

The next morning, Romeo visits **Friar Laurence** and asks him to marry him and Juliet. The Friar is surprised that Romeo has forgotten Rosaline. **[Friar]** *"Young men's love then lies not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes."* But hoping to end the their families' feud, he agrees to marry them. **[Friar]** *"This alliance may so happy prove to turn your households' rancor to pure love."*

**Juliet** impatiently awaits the Nurse to return home with news from Romeo. The Nurse returns exhausted and refusing to talk. **[Nurse]** *"Do you not see that I am out of breath?"* But she shares the plan and Juliet leaves for Friar Laurence's cell, where the couple is secretly married.

EXEUNT!

ACT 3

**Tybalt** and the **Capulets** are looking for Romeo, but they find **Benvolio** and **Mercutio** instead. Tybalt and Mercutio almost come to blows as Benvolio tries to separate them: **[Benvolio]** *"Either withdraw unto some private place... Or else depart; here all eyes gaze on us."* **Romeo** arrives, and Tybalt insults him. **[Tybalt]** *"Romeo, the love I bear thee can afford no better term than this: Thou art a villain."* When Romeo refuses to take the bait, Mercutio steps into the fray. As Romeo tries to separate the two, Tybalt's sword strikes

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

its target and Mercutio falls. Mercutio blames Romeo: **[Mercutio]** *"Why the dev'l came you between us? I was hurt under your arm. A plague a' both your houses!"* Mercutio dies. In a blind rage, Romeo kills Tybalt, then flees to the Friar's. **Prince Escalus, Lord and Lady Capulet** and **Lord and Lady Montague** enter, shocked by the tragic scene. Lord Capulet demands death for Romeo. **[Lord Capulet]** *"Romeo must not live."* But the Prince's sentence is banishment instead, and Romeo must leave Verona forever.

EXEUNT!

**Juliet** anxiously awaits her new husband, but instead her **Nurse** comes with news of Tybalt's murder and Romeo's banishment. The Nurse promises: **[Nurse]** *"I'll find Romeo to comfort you."* **Friar Laurence** informs **Romeo** of the Prince's sentence of banishment, and Romeo cries out: **[Romeo]** *"'Tis torture, and not mercy. Heaven is here where Juliet lives."* The Nurse finds Romeo there sobbing. Friar Laurence advises Romeo to spend this one night with his bride, then flee to Mantua alone until their secret marriage can be revealed.

EXEUNT!

As **Romeo** and **Juliet** spend their wedding night together, Lord Capulet agrees with Paris upon his daughter's wedding—in three days. At dawn, the **Nurse** warns the couple that Lady Capulet is on her way, and they say their goodbyes. **Lady Capulet** tells Juliet that she will marry Paris in three days, and when she refuses, **Lord Capulet** swears that he will disown her. **[Lord Capulet]** *"And you be mine, I'll give you to my friend; and you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets."* Juliet ignores her Nurse's advice to forget Romeo, and leaves to seek Friar Laurence's help.

EXEUNT!

ACT 4

**Juliet** confesses her despair to the **Friar** and talks of killing herself. He persuades her instead to follow this plan: to return home and consent to marry Paris; then, on the night before the wedding, to drink an herbal potion, which would cause a deathlike trance. Taken for dead, she would be laid to rest in the Capulet tomb, where Romeo would come and take her away with him to Mantua until their families were reconciled.

Juliet returns home, and, apologizing to her **father** for her disobedience, agrees to marry Paris. Alone in her room, Juliet fears that the potion will kill her or that she will be trapped in the tomb with Tybalt's corpse. But she drinks the potion. **[Juliet]** *"Romeo, Romeo, Romeo! Here's drink – I drink to thee."* The next morning, the **Nurse** discovers Juliet's lifeless body. Her **family** and **Paris** are devastated.

EXEUNT!

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## ACT 5

Sent by the Friar with a letter to Romeo explaining the whole secret plan, Friar John is turned away from Mantua and cannot deliver Friar Laurence's letter. Instead, **Romeo** learns of Juliet's death from his friend **Balthasar**, and, resolves to join her in death. He buys poison from a poor **Apothecary**. **[Apothecary]** *"Put this in any liquid thing you will and drink it off, and if you had the strength of twenty men, it would dispatch you straight."* When **Friar Laurence** hears that Friar John was unable to deliver his letter, he leaves for the Capulet tomb to avoid disaster there. Romeo arrives first, where he encounters **Paris**, though he doesn't recognize him in the dark. But Paris knows Romeo, and challenges him to a duel. Romeo urges him to get away, but Paris refuses. Romeo kills Paris before recognizing him.

Beside Juliet, Romeo takes the poison: **[Romeo]** *"O true apothecary! Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die."* The **Friar** enters as Juliet awakens. He begs her to leave, but she refuses. He leaves her alone as they hear people outside, and she stabs herself with her husband's dagger. **[Juliet]** *"O happy dagger, this is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die."* The **two families** and the **Prince** enter the tomb. The Friar recounts the story, and the Prince blames the deaths upon their parents' hatred. **[Prince]** *"See what a scourge is laid upon your hate, that heaven finds means to kill your joys with love!"* The two fathers resolve to abandon their feud, and the **[Prince]** concludes: *"For never was a story of more woe than this Juliet and her Romeo."*

EXEUNT!



Andrew L. Saenz as a Capulet, Andrea San Miguel as Benvolio, and Cage Sebastian Pierre as Balthazar in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2017 production of *Short Shakespeare! Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Marti Lyons. Photo by Liz Lauren.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## 3. MIND MAP

Mind map *Romeo and Juliet* on a large wall or bulletin board. Discuss as a group what you know about the play (perhaps what you discovered through “Exeunt” activity above) and about Shakespeare in general. Use the big ideas from this discussion as branches.

*[To the teacher: you may want to suggest other important thematic elements if they don't come up in discussion, such as star-crossed lovers, parents, marriage, violence, and death.]*

Cut out photos, articles, phrases, words, that, in your mind, link to each branch, and add them to the map. Based on these images, words and ideas, what expectations do you have of *Romeo and Juliet*? What kind of play could it be? As you read the play, revisit the mind map after each act to add new content or themes, and discuss again what you think might happen next. When you've finished the play as a class, create your own individual mind map to reflect on your own connections to the play.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, R7**

## 4. KINESTHETIC IAMBIC PENTAMETER

Shakespeare often wrote in “iambic pentameter”—ten syllables or beats to a line of text, and (like the “de-dum” of our heartbeat), alternating the stress on every other syllable or beat, starting with stress upon the second beat and ending with the stress upon the tenth beat. And though actors in performance never emphasize the rhythm enough that we hear it, verse has a different impact because it is so similar to the rhythm of our heart and breath.

Take the prologue at the opening of *Romeo and Juliet* and read it silently first to yourself. Count out the number of syllables in each line—there may be a couple that aren't “a perfect 10.” Now, as a class, get up and form a circle. Walking around in the circle, read the lines out loud. Let the rhythm of the writing set the pace. Don't think too hard about this, just read the passage and walk the walk. When you reach the end, just pick right up at the beginning again. Soon you should notice the rhythm affecting the pace of your steps. You're walking in iambs!

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARD L1**

## 5. LINE WALKABOUT

*[To the teacher: Excerpt from the play one line for each student. Choose lines that are rich in Shakespeare's language or are descriptive of character—or consider our suggestions below! **See Appendix C for printable lines ready to cut and distribute.** Distribute a line to each student on a slip of paper, not revealing the character who spoke it.]*

Look at your line(s) and, as you all walk around the room say it aloud again and again—without addressing anyone. Let the nature of the line and the way you say it affect the rhythm and pace at which you walk around the room. Say your line for at least five other people, and listen closely as they share their line with you. Continue walking around the room, silently, making eye contact with each person you pass. Now begin investigating different ways of moving with these prompts:

- *Pick up and slow down pace. If “1” is slow motion and “5” is running, start at “3.” Each time you take on a new pace, say your line to at least one other student. Slow down to a “2.” Speed up to a “4.” Back to “3.” Down to “1,” etc.*
- *Alter your posture. Walk upright with your chest out. Hunch your shoulders. Strut with swagger. Shuffle your feet. Fold your arms. Swing your arms freely by your side. Each time you explore a new posture, say your line to at least one other student.*
- *Change your status. If “1” is the lowest status in a society and “10” is royalty, begin walking at a “5.” Now change to a “10.” What does a “1” feel like? Continue repeating your line to a fellow student each time you switch your status.*

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

Now regroup in a circle, each student delivering their line to a classmate opposite them in the circle, at the pace, posture, and status level that feels best to you. Sit down as a group and discuss the lines. What do you imagine about the character who spoke your line? Are there lines that might possibly have been spoken by the same character? What pace felt best with your line? What size? What status? Did any sounds of the words you spoke aloud in your line tell you anything about the emotions of the character? After the discussion, try saying your line one more time using the information you talked about with the class to help you make a new choice for your delivery.

1. *My child is yet a stranger in the world, she hath not seen the change of fourteen years.*
2. *Read o'er the volume of young Paris' face, and find delight writ there with beauty's pen.*
3. *True, I talk of dreams, which are the children of an idle brain.*
4. *O swear not by the moon, th'inconstant moon, that monthly changes in her circled orb.*
5. *This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath, may prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.*
6. *The earth that's nature's mother is her tomb; what is her burying grave, that is her womb.*
7. *Thou shamest the music of sweet news by playing it to me with so sour a face.*
8. *How art thou out of breath, when thou hast breath to say to me that thou art out of breath?*
9. *Fire-eyed fury be my conduct now!*
10. *O, I have bought the mansion of a love, but not possessed it.*
11. *Alack the day, he's gone, he's killed, he's dead!*
12. *Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st: A damnèd saint, an honorable villain!*
13. *In what vile part of this anatomy doth my name lodge?*
14. *I think she will be ruled in all respects by me.*
15. *I must be gone and live, or stay and die.*
16. *What, wilt thou wash him from his grave with tears?*
17. *O how my heart abhors to hear him named and cannot come to him!*
18. *O, he's a lovely gentleman! Romeo's a dishclout to him.*
19. *'Twixt my extremes and me this bloody knife shall play the umpire.*
20. *The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade to wanny ashes.*
21. *Pardon, I beseech you! Henceforth I am ever ruled by you.*
22. *I'll have this knot knit up tomorrow morning.*
23. *I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins that almost freezes up the heat of life.*
24. *Death lies on her like an untimely frost upon the sweetest flower of all the field.*
25. *She's not well married that lives married long, but she's best married that dies married young.*
26. *All things that we ordained festival, turn from their office to black funeral.*
27. *O mischief, thou art swift to enter in the thoughts of desperate men!*
28. *His looks I fear, and his intents I doubt.*
29. *Condemnèd villain, I do apprehend thee. Obey and go with me, for thou must die.*
30. *Some shall be pardoned, and some punished.*

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R4, SL1**

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## IN SMALL GROUPS OR PAIRS

### 6. PICTURES INTO WORDS

[To the teacher: find three images of different moments from various productions/movies of *Romeo and Juliet* and, duplicating them in sets, give each group a set of pictures.]

In small groups, examine each image in your packet. Keeping in mind that this is exploratory and based on inference (and that there's not one "right" set of answers), what do you imagine might be going on and what is the relationship between the people in the picture? Where does the scene take place? What is happening? Silently, take turns looking at the photos and write your responses down by each picture. You can also respond in writing to comments your other group members have already made.

As a class, share what you discovered during this process. Did any of your classmates write something that helped you to make your own connection to a photo? Based on these few images, what inferences could you make about the story of *Romeo and Juliet*?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, R7**

### 7. HOW INSULTING!

[To the teacher: **see Appendix D for printable insults ready to cut and distribute.**]

In groups of five or six, practice aloud—at each other with feeling!—the insults below that characters from *Romeo and Juliet* sling at each other. If the meaning of a word is not clear, don't get stuck! Keep repeating the insult and you'll be closer to the meaning than you might think... Then, taking one quote, imagine a contemporary situation that might prompt such a rebuke. (For example, if you had a crush on someone but then found out they were a jerk, you might say, "O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face") Staying in your groups, reconvene as a class. Each group presents in turn your insult-provoking situation to the rest of the class.

<i>Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit.</i>	1.3.42
<i>He heareth not, he stirreth not, he moveth not: The ape is dead.</i>	2.1.15–16
<i>O that she were an open-arse and thou a poperin pear!</i>	2.1.37–38
<i>Her vestal Livery is but sick and green and none but fools do wear it.</i>	2.2.8–9
<i>She speaks, yet she says nothing.</i>	2.2.12
<i>These strange flies, these fashion-mongers, these `pardon-me's'!</i>	2.4.32–33
<i>O flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified.</i>	2.4.38–39
<i>In such a case as mine a man may strain courtesy.</i>	2.4.52–53
<i>I will bite thee by the ear for that jest.</i>	2.4.78
<i>What saucy merchant was this that was so full of his ropery?</i>	2.4.142–143
<i>Thy head is as full of quarrels as an egg is full of meat.</i>	3.1.22
<i>The love I bear thee can afford no better term than this:     <i>thou art a villain.</i></i>	3.1.59–60
<i>O calm, dishonorable, vile submission.</i>	3.1.72
<i>O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face.</i>	
<i>Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?</i>	3.2.73–74
<i>Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical,     <i>Dove-feather'd raven, wolfish-ravens lamb!</i></i>	3.2.75–76
<i>Blister'd be thy tongue for such a wish.</i>	3.2.90–91
<i>Thou cut'st my head off with a golden axe     <i>And smilest upon the stroke that murders me.</i></i>	3.3.22–23
<i>Thy noble shape is but a form of wax</i>	3.3.125

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

<i>Peace, you mumbling fool!</i>	3.5.173
<i>[Your] foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in.</i>	4.3.34
<i>Thou detestable maw, thou womb of death.</i>	5.3.45
<i>I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,</i>	5.3.47
<i>I'll cram thee with more food.</i>	5.3.48
<i>Remain with worms that are thy chambermaids.</i>	5.3.108–109

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R4, L3**

## 8. CHARACTER STUDY, PART 1

Working in pairs, imagine that you are the actor and understudy for one of the parts in *Romeo and Juliet*. Select a character from the Dramatis Personae to explore through the play. Skim through the text and copy any speeches or lines that seem to well represent your character into an actor's notebook. Select three to four small segments that seem to best portray your character and prepare to present your findings to the class. This is how Elizabethan actors learned their roles too! They were given only their own lines and the cue lines that immediately preceded theirs, but they were never given an entire script. (At the end of your study of *Romeo and Juliet*, go back and repeat this exercise with the same character. As a class, discuss the differences in your interpretation now that you've read the play. If you see CST's production of *Romeo and Juliet*, look to activity 69, CHARACTER STUDY, PART 2 to compare your class's interpretation of the characters to that of director Barbara Gaines.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, SL4**

## ON YOUR OWN

## 9. FOCUSED FREE-WRITING

One of the reasons that Shakespeare's plays are still so enjoyed is that their stories relate to our own experiences in life. *Romeo and Juliet* has many situations which may seem familiar to you. Free-write some of your ideas about one of the following situations:

- Think about a significant time in your life when you acted impulsively without thinking the situation and your options through completely. What was the situation? What about the circumstances launched you into making your decision too quickly? What were the consequences? Looking back with some perspective now, what other way might you have acted if you'd taken more time and thought things through? Where do you imagine that "road not taken" might have taken you?
- Think about an important event in your own life that happened by accident. What happened, and how did it change things that followed? What's your understanding—did it happen simply by accident, or was something like fate (or a higher power) involved? What part, if any, did decisions you made have something to do with the course of events? Or did things happen that, regardless of any decision you could make, seemed destined to happen anyway? Looking back, has your point of view changed at all?
- Think about the threat of violence in your life. When and where do you feel the most vulnerable? Where do you feel safest? Have you ever decided to do something new—follow a new interest, begin a new friendship, etc.—despite the fact that it might put you in danger? What compelled you to do so?
- Think about a time in your life when you and your parents disagreed over a choice you had to make. What was the situation? What did you want to do? Why? What did your parents want you to do? Why do you think they wanted what they did? What happened? How did you feel about it in the moment? Looking back, have your feelings changed at all?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS W10**

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## 10. ROMEO AND JULIET IN A SNAP!

### What students will learn and be able to do:

- Gain an introductory understanding of the story.
- Speak and hear some of the key lines of the play.
- Gain comprehension through physically activating the language.
- Work collaboratively to explore varying interpretations of the text.

*[To the teacher: copy the sheet of the lines—along with their numbers—and cut them into strips. Divide the class into small groups of 3-4 people, giving each group several lines to share in their work together. Prior to class, write the quote numbers, 1-25, in sequence on the board so you can silently point to each, cuing the next group without interrupting the narrative. For a more-detailed synopsis activity, see Exeunt! below.]*

In your small groups, read your lines aloud a few times. Discuss what questions you have about the lines.

Then, working with one line at a time, decide how you want to physicalize it to help bring its meaning alive for your audience. Your choices don't need to be literal, but they should help your audience to better understand the line as you play with the words' meaning or sounds.

Practice saying your line as a group with your gesture—either in a choral reading or dividing up the words between you. But everyone needs to speak at least part of each line! Repeat this process for the rest of your lines.

As a class, stand in a circle. As the story is read, watch for the moment the narrator points to your line numbers and jump in with your line and gesture.

### TABLEAU (EXTENSION)

#### What students will learn and be able to do:

- Develop visualization skills to understand text structure and deepen comprehension.
- Work together collaboratively to create a single interpretation.
- Actively engage as an audience in reading and reshaping tableaux as text.

### CREATING A TABLEAU

Each group creates a visual picture with their bodies of one of their lines of text—a frozen snapshot.

- The line of text may be spoken by one person or divided up amongst members of the group.
- Use different levels—low, medium, high
- Find depth in the tableau. (Avoid the straight line...)
- Use proximity and distance as tools to convey meaning.
- Employ your entire body (head to toe) including facial expressions.

### SCULPTING A TABLEAU

Taking tableau work to the next level, this actively involves the audience—as readers, observers, interpreters—and even as sculptors.

- In staging a tableau, the group “donates” their work to the class.
- The class “reads” the tableau and offers suggestions for possible reshaping, while honoring the group's interpretation.

### REFLECTION

- What thoughts/feelings does this picture evoke for you?
- How did incorporating levels, depth, and distance help to shape the tableau?
- To the tableau-makers: What did the group intend to communicate?
- To the audience: Observing their picture and hearing their intentions, what aspect/s could be made clearer?
- How would you suggest that they continue to sculpt their tableaux?
- What more have we learned about the line through tableau?

### CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, SL2

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## “ROMEO AND JULIET” IN A SNAP...

[1]! [2]! A big fight breaks out in the streets of Verona . . . again. The culprits? The **Montague** and **Capulet** families . . . yet again. So what started it up this time? Well, this time, it's a Capulet who first provokes a Montague [3], with his guaranteed-to-offend gesture. The ancient feud is hitting everyone hard. The **Prince** has had enough, and so declares: [4].

That's out on Verona's streets. Meanwhile, there's two teenagers having private problems of their own in the relationship department. There's **Romeo** (the Montagues' son), with a huge crush on **Rosaline** that's brought him down with a catastrophic case of lovesickness. Moping around, he tells his friend **Benvolio**: [5]. Then, there's **Juliet** (the Capulets' daughter) who's just celebrated her lucky 13th birthday, and **Paris**—THE most eligible bachelor in Verona—has his eye on her. Juliet's mom, **Lady Capulet**, seems pretty psyched that [6], but Juliet is less than enthused by his proposal, since marriage [7].

That night, **Capulet** and **Lady Capulet** host the hottest party in town. Romeo's heart-throb Rosaline will be there, but there's, like, no way that a Montague is ever going to get an invite. That's when the three musketeers, Romeo, Benvolio, and **Mercutio**, decide to crash the party to check out [8]. Call it fate or free will, but all bets are off when Romeo spots Juliet across the room and instantly falls in love like he's never been in love before: [9]. Rosaline who??? Juliet's **Nurse** comes in hot with the big reveal, telling Romeo he's just been dancing with the Capulet's daughter, which means there's just one tiny problem: [10]. But hey, what relationship isn't without its challenges?

Juliet decides she's so over the family drama [11] and Romeo's just as smitten... [12]. Romeo exits the dance floor to gaze up at Juliet's window. There's a balcony. It's all very romantic, and our two young lovers decide to take their 60-minute relationship to the next level when Juliet suddenly springs into an action plan: [13]. I hear wedding bells! Remember, like, two seconds ago when Juliet had never, not once, even thought about marriage??? Time for Romeo to get going [14]. He's got a wedding to plan! He tracks down his favorite Friar, **Laurence**, who agrees to perform a secret ceremony. Sure, he thinks young love is charming, but he's hoping [15]. In other words, to put an end to all the drama between these Capulets and Montagues.

Day One of married life doesn't quite live up to the Friar's hopes and dreams. Juliet's cousin **Tybalt** wants to pretty much destroy Romeo after last night's party-crashing, telling him [16]. That's when Mercutio steps in, defending his BFF, while Romeo knows full well that beating up his bride's best cousin is NOT the best idea, he tells Tybalt that

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

he **[17]**. This turn-the-other-cheek mentality doesn't last long when Tybalt fatally stabs Mercutio—who in his last breath curses **[18]**. Romeo—shocked at this too sudden turn of events—lunges at Tybalt, killing him. Benvolio warns him to get out of there, fast: **[19]**. He runs to the Friar, who tells him of his banishment, to which Romeo says: **[20]**, but we might want to ask Mercutio and Tybalt for their thoughts on this...

Juliet's dad sees his daughter is super depressed, concludes that **[21]**, AND has just the thing to cheer her up. Marriage! To Paris! In two days! No! Make it tomorrow! The Nurse thinks that she should move on to Paris since **[22]**—Wow, everyone really thinks Paris is so dreamy.

So much for the Nurse as lifelong confidante... Juliet heads to Friar Laurence—who, thank goodness, has the perfect escape plan: she should take a drug to make her **[23]**. And it works! The whole family thinks **[24]** **[25]**—the perfect set-up for the Friar to swoop in and escort her to the Capulet tomb.

So far, so good with the Friar's plan. I mean, what could possibly go wrong? Until... Romeo hears that Juliet's "dead," and decides the logical next step is to take some poison... **[26]** and be reunited with his bride **\*\*SPOILER ALERT\*\*** in death **[27]**. After Juliet wakes up and sees Romeo's body, she takes this **[28]** and **\*\*SPOILER ALERT\*\*** **[29]**. But as the Chorus told us all the way back in the Prologue, Romeo and Juliet **[30]** so we can't really be *too* surprised by the ending: **[31]**.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

#1: Down with the Capulets!

#2: Down with the Montagues!

#3: I DO bite my thumb, sir.

#4: If you ever disturb our streets again, your lives shall pay.

#5: In sadness, cousin, I do love a woman.

#6: The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.

#7 Is an honor I dream not of.

#8: The fair Rosaline whom thou so loves.

#9: Did my heart love till now?

#10: My only love sprung from my only hate.

#11: What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other word would smell as sweet.

#12: But soft, what light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

#13 If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully.

#14: Parting is such sweet sorrow, that I should say good night till it be morrow.

#15: This alliance may so happy prove to turn your households' rancor to pure love.

#16: I bear thee I can afford no better term than this: thou art a villain.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

#17: Never injured thee but love thee better than thou canst devise.

#18: A plague on both your houses.

#19: Stand not amazed. The prince will doom thee death!

#20: Ha, banishment? Be merciful, say 'death'!

#21: She's evermore weeping for your cousin's death.

#22: Romeo's a dishclout to him.

#23: Still and start and cold appear like death.

#24: She's dead, deceased.

#25: She's dead, alack the day!

#26: O true apothecary! Thy drugs are quick.

#27: Thus with a kiss I die.

#28: O happy dagger, this thy sheath; there rust.

#29: Let me die.

#30: Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.

#31: For never was there a story of more woe than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## AS YOU READ THE PLAY

### BELL-RINGERS

*[To the teacher: the following are brief introductory activities, two to five minutes each, to set the stage for classroom study. They can help students begin to create an inclusive, collaborative learning community, an essential dynamic when bringing drama-based learning into the study of Shakespeare. Many of these activities work well as class conclusions, emergency substitute activities, and creative full-class activities, as well.]*

#### 11. ROMEO AND JULIET TODAY

Do a brief “show-and-tell” presentation connected to the scenes and characters you are studying that day. Each day, what—locally or around the world—makes you think of the play? What connections are you making between *Romeo and Juliet* and your personal lives as young adults?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS SL4**

#### 12. PASSAGE PULL

Go back into the act you just read and pull the quote you found that you feel best illustrates a theme in the play. In a small group, pick the one you all agree on and present it to the class. Explain why you chose it and its significance to the play.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2**

#### 13. THIS JUST IN

To review what the class read the day before, present a quick ten-second “sound-bite.” You can either use newspaper-type headlines to grab our attention or rap or rhyme to encapsulate what just transpired. Listen to a few summaries each time to get an idea of how the same text can be synthesized and interpreted in a variety of ways.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS SL4, W4**

### AS A CLASS

#### 14. BARD BLOG

*[To the teacher: a blog can offer a way for your students to keep track of their thoughts, from pre-reading through post-viewing. It provides a place where students can make text-to-text, text-to-self and text-to-world connections. They will be asked to find modern-day texts that relate back to Shakespeare's work, aspects of their own personality that relate to the characters, and real-world situations that relate back to the play. Don't yet have a class blog? Check out <http://www.kidblog.org>, a free and simple website for teachers to create class blogs. You may also want to explore <http://wordpress.com/classrooms>, another resource for building a classroom website.]*

As you begin to enter Shakespeare's text, use these ideas to get your Bard Blog started, or modify other activities in this section to a blogging format:

- Choose a character to follow through the play. Keep a running list of text references for that character—both their lines and other characters' lines about them. What does s/he feel about the other characters? How do they feel about him/her? How much does your character reveal about themselves through their own words and how much did you learn from other characters? Based on the notes you've taken, write a short summary of your character. What qualities do you think are most important to highlight about your character?
- At the end of each act, list five of the major characters in *Romeo and Juliet*. Write a single sentence for each

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

that begins, “What I most want is...” Take a risk—there’s not just one right answer! Then write a sentence for each character that begins, “What I’m most afraid of is...” (Is there ever a situation when what one most wants is also what one most fears?)

- One of the best ways to get at the “through-line” or dramatic progression in a play is to give each scene a name or title that captures the heart of the action. Directors often use this technique to help actors (and themselves) during the rehearsal process. As you read, give each of the scenes a name or title that you feel gets at the essence of the scene. Be as creative and specific as you can in naming each scene.

## CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, W3, W6, W10 TIME FLIES

The events in *Romeo and Juliet* happen very fast—you’ll be surprised by just *how* fast when you track the events on a timeline. As you move from day to day in the script, make a note of it on your timeline. And if you know the time of day, make a note of that too. Compare your timeline at the end of the play with your classmates’. Do situations in real life happen as quickly? Why might Shakespeare have handled time in the way he does?

## CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3

## ACT 1

### AS A CLASS

#### 15. SPEAK THE SPEECH

As a class, sit in a circle and read Prince Escalus’s speech from Act 1, scene 1, lines 72-94 (starting with “Rebellious subjects” and ending with “Once more, on pain of death, all men depart.”), switching readers at each punctuation mark. Then in small groups, take one line of the speech to examine. Look up definitions to words you do not know, and after your group has a better understanding of the line, create a big physical gesture that illuminates the meaning of the whole line to a listener. Come back together as a class, and present the lines in order with your accompanying gestures. After listening through, discuss as a class what you now understand about the speech and address if you have remaining questions.

## CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R4, L4

#### 16. THOUGHTS OUT LOUD

In Shakespeare’s plays, as in real life, you can sometimes tell more from what characters *don’t* say in a conversation than from what they do say. The conversation between Lady Capulet and Juliet in Act 1, scene 3, is a good example. Lady Capulet talks to her daughter about marrying Count Paris, but Juliet doesn’t say very much. Choose three volunteers from the class to play Lady Capulet, Juliet, and the Nurse. Throughout the scene, you may call out “Freeze!” to stop the action. With the volunteers frozen, turn to the audience and ask them to call out what Juliet (or any other character) might be thinking in that moment. Encourage students to listen to each other and build on one another’s ideas. Resume the action with “Action.” Repeat throughout the scene. After one read-through, discuss whether there are other possible interpretations or reasons for Juliet’s reticence. Choose three new volunteers and repeat the exercise.

## CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS SL2, SL3

#### 17. INTRODUCING SHAKESPEARE’S LANGUAGE

Actor Michael Tolaydo developed the following exercise as a way to introduce Shakespeare’s language and style to students unfamiliar with his work. Tolaydo emphasizes that Shakespeare’s plays are not always just about the plot, but are an exploration of human nature and the use of language. Most important, his plays were written to be performed, not simply read.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

*[To the teacher: This activity may take two class sessions to complete, but is well worth it! The exercise is a performed group scene, involving five or more characters from the play. This is not a “staged” performance, so there should be no heavy focus on acting skills; rather, this should be approached as a learning experience involving exploration of plot, character, language, play structure, and play style. For our purposes, Act 1, scene 5 will work very well. The script should be photocopied and typed in a large font (at least 13 point), with no text notes or glossary, and enough copies for every student in the classroom. In selecting readers for the speaking roles, it is important to remember that the play is not being “cast,” but rather that the students are actively exploring the text; your students need not be aspiring actors in order to learn from this exercise!]*

While the scene is being read for the first time, the rest of the class listens rather than reads along, so no open books. Don't worry about the correct pronunciation of unfamiliar words or phrases. Say them the way you think they would sound.

Follow the first reading with a second one, with new readers for each part—not to give a “better” reading of the scene but to provide an opportunity for others to expand their familiarity with the text, and possibly gain new information or clearer understanding of a particular passage. This time, the rest of the class can follow along in the script and circle any words they are unfamiliar with.

After this second reading, engage in a question-and-answer session. Answers to the questions asked should come only from the scene being read, and not rely on any further knowledge of the play outside the scene at hand. Some examples of the questions to be discussed: Who are these people? Where are they? Why are they there? What are they doing? What are their relationships to each other? What do their actions say about their characters? What else is confusing in this scene? Use specific lines from the scene to support your answers. If there is disagreement, take a class vote. Majority rules! Remember, there is no one right answer, but a myriad of possibilities—as long as the conclusions are supported by this section of text.

Now that you've explored the scene a bit, return to the words or phrases that stumped you. What can you sort out from the context? What clues does the script hold? If there are still words after your discussion that the class hasn't figured out, visit [www.shakespeareswords.com](http://www.shakespeareswords.com), a free online Shakespeare dictionary. After this, you may choose to read the scene a few more times, with new sets of readers, followed by more questions.

The “fast read-through” is next. Stand in a circle; each student reads a line up to a punctuation mark and then the next student picks up. The point of this is to get as smooth and as quick of a read as possible, so that the thoughts flow, even though they are being read by more than one person—much like the passing of a baton in a relay race. After you finish this read-through, read it as a class once more, this time changing readers at each full stop—a period, exclamation point, or question mark.

The final step is to put the scene “on its feet.” Select a cast to read the scene, while the rest of the class directs. No one is uninvolved. There are many ways to explore and stage this scene—there is no one “right” way, and everyone's input is important. Some questions to consider during this process are: Where does the scene take place? What time of year? What's around them? Any question that helps you clarify the action is fair game! Use available materials to set up the scene. Establish entrances and exits. (This should all come from clues in the text!) In making your decisions, remember to use the ideas you discovered from the earlier readings. After the advice from the “directors” has been completed, the cast acts out the scene. After this first “run-through,” make any changes necessary, then do the scene again using the same cast or a completely new one. Ask the students to comment on the process.

The process of getting the scene off the page and on its feet enables students to come to an understanding of Shakespeare's text on their own, without the use of notes or explanatory materials. A familiarity with the scene and the language is developed, beginning a process of literary analysis of the text and establishing a relationship with the play and with Shakespeare.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R7, SL1, SL2**

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## IN SMALL GROUPS OR PAIRS

### 18. ANTITHESIS STATUES

*Romeo and Juliet* is full of contradictory words that together create a vivid and unexpected picture. Romeo's lines in Act 1, scene 1 (lines 167-185) are full of antitheses (also called oxymorons), such as "heavy lightness" and "serious vanity." Be on the lookout for these as you read Act 1. As a class, create a master list of all the antitheses you find. Then in pairs, choose one that you think is particularly vivid. Each pair should choose a different image.

With your partner, illustrate your antithesis by forming a single statue that expresses the contradiction, and share it with the class. After viewing all of the statues, come back together to discuss the imagery that you found and created. What are repeating themes in these antitheses? Think about the characters who are using these words—their age, their status, their emotional status. What might be the reason for including so many of these antitheses? What effect does it have on you as the listener/viewer?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R4, L5**

### 19. SO MUCH PUN

In Act 1, scene 4, Mercutio, Benvolio, and Romeo banter with each other, one-upping their friends as they play with words. In groups of four, three classmates read the scene aloud (lines 1–43), with the fourth listening closely and jotting down all the puns you hear. When you finish, the listener shares his/her list of puns. Were they each clear in the language as you read aloud? If not, discuss what can be done to emphasize them. Repeat this exercise once more, switching the listener, who will now listen for any additional puns. See if you can find ways of pointing out the puns to the listener as you read. What must actors do to help the audience understand the humor of this scene?

*[To the teacher: if you have some leeway in your classroom to discuss sexual innuendos in Shakespeare, a book entitled Shakespeare's Bawdy may be a classroom resource to consider since so many of Shakespeare's puns are double entendres.]*

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R4, L5**

### 20. CUE ME IN

*[To the teacher: see Appendix E for printable scripts ready to distribute.]*

If you've seen the movie *Shakespeare in Love*, you've had a glimpse into how playwrights in Shakespeare's time worked. In a society where new play scripts were furiously being written and rewritten, and where pirating plays between rival theater companies was common, the complete script existed in only one or two people's hands—and was closely held. Therefore (plus the fact that paper was enormously expensive), actors were not given copies of the entire play, but instead were handed copies of their own characters' lines, with a line or so from the end of the speech preceding their own, prompting them when to speak. These were called "cue lines"—and an actor's turn to speak is still known as his "cue." Having only his own lines plus a cue line forced an actor to truly listen to his fellow actors. Not only did the actor have to memorize lines this way, he also had to get to know his character—just from his own lines!

Divide the class into six groups, each group taking one of three character's lines—Romeo, Benvolio or Mercutio—in Act 1, scene 4, lines 1–48. Choose one member of the group to read aloud any line immediately preceding your character's lines and another member to read that character's lines. What do you learn about your character from what he says in the scene? Are you still able to follow the scene's conversation and action?

Now come back together as a class and choose one person to play each of the three characters. Seeing—or performing in—the scene as a whole for the first time, how did the lines resonate differently within the context of the entire scene?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L3, R5**

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## 21. THE LANGUAGE OF DREAMS

In Shakespeare's day, before movies or television, people went to the theater to experience far away, magical places. Without the technology that theaters later developed, Shakespeare's most reliable tool to transport his audience was his words. In Mercutio's speech in Act 1, scene 4, lines 59-94, he is describing Queen Mab, the maker of dreams, to his friend Romeo. With a partner, translate Mercutio's speech from Shakespeare's language into your own, keeping the rich imagery and detail. You can go word by word, line by line, or rewrite entire sections as you see fit. While translating, think about the reasons why Mercutio is sharing this story with his friend, and what the most important parts are. When you are finished, read it over and see what you think this speech reveals about Mercutio's character and his relationship to Romeo.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS W3, L5A**

## 22. "DUEL-LOGUE"

Shakespeare used duologues—the conversations between two people—to heighten a play's intensity and to reveal information about each character and about the complexity of the relationship between them. The duologue can have the feel of a duel between two combatants whose "swords" are their words. Working in pairs, read the duologue between Lord Capulet and Tybalt in Act 1, scene 5, lines 54–91 (from "What dares the slave..." to "...convert to bitt'rest gall") aloud. Now, stand face to face with your partner and gently press your palms together. Read the scene again, but this time, press against your partner's palm every time your character seizes power in the duel-logue, using slight pressure to guide your partner backwards. As you read your lines, try to get a feel for the way the duologue positions you for attack and retreat. The lines, like two swords, "cut and thrust." At what point specifically is the conflict at its highest tension? At what line is the tension released?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R5, R6**

## 23. PALMER'S KISS

The first meeting of *Romeo and Juliet* occurs at the end of Act 1, scene 5, lines 92-109. Many people believe that for the two characters, it is love at first sight—but is it?

Explore the introduction between *Romeo and Juliet* in pairs with one partner playing Romeo and the other Juliet. Start by standing six feet apart with your hand up in front of you, like you would high five. Each time your character says a line either take a step closer to your partner, or a step farther away, depending upon whether you think your character is indicating their interest in the other person or not. React to your partner's advances and retreats as well with your own steps. If you get to the point where you and your partner are standing face to face, have your hands touch in a "palmer's kiss." After reading, discuss with your partners what you found about the characters. Did *Romeo and Juliet* always want to be close at the same time? Were there moments when your character said one way but felt another? Did your "kisses" line up with Shakespeare's stage directions?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, SL1**

## ON YOUR OWN

## 24. LINES THAT RESONATE

As you read *Romeo and Juliet*, make note in a journal of the lines that strike you. When you finish the play, choose one line that "speaks" to you. This will be your line from *Romeo and Juliet*. Using it as your catalyst, write about the line and your personal response to it. What is the significance to the character/s in the play? What is the significance to you? If there are any obscure words or phrases in it, make sure that you wrestle with their meanings. This is a very personal response to some of Shakespeare's language—there's no one right answer. (When you see the play, listen for the line in performance. Was the mood of the line what you imagined? If you read the line differently, how so? Did hearing it spoken in any way change your understanding or appreciation of the line? And if the line was actually cut from the production's play script, what did we lose by its absence for you?)

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L4, W3**

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## ACT 2

### AS A CLASS

#### 25. PLAYING THE “BALCONY SCENE”

Every production of *Romeo and Juliet* is unique, since every production must make countless acting and staging choices. Act 2, scene 2 is a particularly iconic scene, often called the “balcony scene” (even though Shakespeare doesn’t mention a balcony!). Every production must decide how to stage this memorable scene. As a class, view five different film versions of this scene at: <http://tinyurl.com/balconyinterpreted>.

*Romeo and Juliet* directed by George Cukor (1936), Norma Shearer as Juliet

*Romeo and Juliet* directed by Franco Zeffirelli (1968), Olivia Hussey as Juliet

*Romeo and Juliet* directed by Alvin Rakoff (1976), Rebecca Saire as Juliet

*Romeo + Juliet* directed by Baz Luhrmann (1996), Claire Danes as Juliet

*Romeo and Juliet* directed by Rupert Goold (2010), Mariah Gale as Juliet

Using a graphic organizer (**see Appendix F**), record your observations about some of the following prompts:

- How is Romeo masked from view?
- Are there any costume choices that impact your perception of a character?
- How would you describe each Juliet? What factors impact your perception of her?
- Are there any lines that stood out to you because of the way they were delivered?
- Which casting choices “work” for you? Are there any that didn’t?

As a class, discuss which interpretation you agree with most, and why—be sure to support your stance with evidence from Shakespeare’s text.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R6, R9**

### IN SMALL GROUPS OR PAIRS

#### 26. DISCOVERY ON-AND THROUGH-THE WORDS

Shakespeare wrote his characters to speak their thoughts and feelings out loud. Actor and CST verse coach Larry Yando explains that Shakespeare’s characters “speak as they’re figuring something out—how they feel, what they’re going to do, what their place is in this situation, what their place is in the world at large. This is all done through speaking—and speaking with a great sense of flair.”

Once on your own, read through Juliet’s soliloquy in Act 2, scene 2, lines 33-48 (beginning with “O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?” and ending at “Take all myself”). Read through the text one more time and mark each moment when you think Juliet experiences another “light-bulb moment” discovery in the speech.

Find two other classmates, and come to some consensus on the moments when Juliet discovers something new, combining your markings into one script. Together, jot down what Juliet is discovering in each moment (for example, “That which we call a rose/By another other word would smell as sweet”) and then perform the soliloquy aloud, switching readers each time you come to a new discovery.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L3, R1, SL3**

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## 27. CUTTING SHAKESPEARE

[To the teacher: **see Appendix G for cut and uncut versions of Act 2, scene 3.**]

Rarely is one of Shakespeare's plays performed in its entirety. Most would last between three and four hours—even without an intermission! The Prologue of *Romeo and Juliet* refers to “two hours of traffic on our stage,” but these days, if performed in its entirety, the play would last at least three hours.

You can learn a lot about Shakespeare's use of language by reducing a longer speech or scene while trying to retain its original meaning, its poetic language and approximate ten-beat meter whenever possible, and its purpose in furthering the plot. In your small groups, work together to edit. Act 2, scene 3 might be a good one to practice on—the scene in which Romeo visits Friar Laurence and asks him to perform the marriage vows between himself and Juliet. Uncut, the scene is 94 lines. In your small groups, your task as directors is to cut it down to approximately 45-50 lines.

Read the scene through aloud once. Talk about the story line: what's going on in this scene between these two characters? How is the plot being advanced? What must be preserved for clarity? If you cut part of a verse line, your goal is to “protect” the meter by tagging it to another partial line. Since this scene is written in couplets, try to protect the rhyme scheme when possible.

What do you cut? Consider cutting repeated information or ideas, extraneous information, archaic words, obtuse references, and/or convoluted phrasing. After you've made your choices, read your cut interpretation of the scene aloud, and revise any choices you've made that aren't working for you. Then, compare your cut script to CST's abridged scene in its most recent abridged production (2016), directed by Marti Lyons. Where do your cutting choices converge with the choices similar, and how do they differ?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R5, R6**



Lily Mojekwu as Lady Capulet, Karen Janes Woditsch as Nurse, and Emma Ladji as Juliet in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2017 production of *Short Shakespeare! Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Marti Lyons. Photo by Liz Lauren.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## ON YOUR OWN

### 28. PUNCTUATION EXPLORATION

Punctuation and the fundamentals of grammar are some of the tools of the trade for poets and writers, similar to a carpenter's set of tools. Read aloud the verse passage below, stripped of all punctuation. Read it again several times aloud, listening for the rhythm and to find the sense of the verse. When you feel you have grasped the meaning, add punctuation and compare it with your text—which, by the way, will be different from one version of a Shakespeare play to another, depending upon each editor's decisions. Why did *you* punctuate where and how you did? How do your choices of punctuation alter the way an actor might deliver a line? Could different choices in punctuation even change the meaning of what the character is saying?

**Juliet**

**Act 2, scene 2**

*Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face  
else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek  
for that which thou hast heard me speak to-night  
fain would I dwell on form fain fain deny  
what I have spoke but farewell compliment  
dost thou love me I know thou wilt say Ay  
and I will take thy word yet if thou swear'st  
thou mayst prove false at lovers' perjuries  
they say Jove laughs o gentle Romeo  
if thou dost love pronounce it faithfully  
or if thou think'st I am too quickly won  
I'll frown and be perverse an say thee nay  
so thou wilt woo but else not for the world  
in truth fair Montague I am too fond  
and therefore thou mayst think my behavior light  
but trust me gentleman I'll prove more true  
than those that have more cunning to be strange  
I should have been more strange I must confess  
but that thou overheard'st ere I was ware  
my true love's passion therefore pardon me  
and not impute this yielding to light love  
which the dark night hath so discovered*

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L2**

### 29. PROMPTS

Directors and stage managers use "prompt books," or scripts with line and technical notes, to keep track of what happens on stage at any given moment in the production. Make a photocopy of Act 2, scene 5. Attach the sheet in the middle of a legal-size piece of paper, turned on its side. On the right hand side, write in red suggestions to the actors concerning how the lines should be said. On the left side, in another color, write suggestions to the stage manager about lighting and sound effects. You can also make any "blocking" notes that indicate where you think the characters should move and position themselves on stage.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, W9**

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## ACT 3

### AS A CLASS

#### 30. ROMEO AND JULIET'S "GEOGRAPHIC CENTER"

As you read Shakespeare, you'll learn a lot by not only reading "between the lines," but also "between the scenes"—in other words, by watching out for the way the playwright arranges the scenes, one after another. Often the juxtaposition of two very different scenes will give you important clues into the behavior of characters or the story's most important ideas. The "geographic center" of *Romeo and Juliet* falls between Act 2, scene 6 and Act 3, scene 1: the secret wedding, followed by the street brawl that ends in Tybalt's death. According to scholar Stephen Shapiro, the reversal that takes place in these two scenes encapsulates the meaning of the play. As a class, explore this idea. Why do you think Shakespeare might follow Act 3, scene 1 hard on the heels of Act 2, scene 6? What are the contrasts? Are there any similarities? What might Shakespeare be up to?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R5**

### IN SMALL GROUPS OR PAIRS

#### 31. STAGE DIRECTIONS

Shakespeare is known for his brevity—at least when it comes to writing stage directions! He rarely indicates more than an "Enter" or "Exeunt," which means that actors and directors get to make a lot of creative decisions as they bring his plays to life. (As a contrast, take a look at the lengthy, very detailed stage directions of later playwrights, like Henrik Ibsen: <http://stagebeauty.net/plays/th-doll1.html> or George Bernard Shaw: <http://tinyurl.com/shawsarmsandtheman>).

In small groups, write your own stage directions for Act 3, scene 1. There are many actions implied by the text, such as: "Draw, Benvolio, beat down their weapons." Look for other lines in this scene that give the actors clues about their actions and movements on stage, and write your own stage directions, making them as detailed as your imagination paints the picture. Consider how old are the characters, and how will age affect their movements? Will the characters' clothes affect their movements? What are their states of mind during the scene and how might that affect how they move?

Now in small groups, perform this scene for your classmates, incorporating your stage directions. Compare and contrast various choices. Did some choices work better than others?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, W3**

#### 32. SHAKESPEARE'S POETIC DEVICES

Exactly what Shakespeare's schooling included that might have prepared him to write the kind of poetry and characters he did is the subject of much argument among scholars and enthusiasts alike. But we *do* know that grammar school education at the time Shakespeare was in school focused on the principles of rhetoric, and the power of the spoken word. At the height of the Renaissance, when Shakespeare was composing his plays, the English were having a kind of love affair with words and with the seemingly boundless potential of the power of language in speech and play—very much like hip hop artists today.

Shakespeare's plays are filled with poetic devices, which add emotion, punch, flavor, intensity to the story and characters—and many of these devices you may already know about from studying poetry and other literature:

- Repetition of words and phrases
- Repetition of consonant sounds (alliteration)
- Repetition of vowel sounds (assonance)
- Rhyme
- Antithesis (words or ideas in opposition to one another)

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

Juliet's soliloquy at the start of Act 3, scene 2, as she waits for night to come so that she can be with Romeo, is chockful of these literary devices. In pairs, read *aloud* (it's imperative or you won't hear the repetition of sounds!), and mark the text whenever you hear: repetition, alliteration, assonance, rhyme or antithesis. As a class, listen to one or two readings of the speech, encouraging your classmates to overemphasize the poetic devices they have identified.

Discuss your clue-finding—because these devices are actually clues that help Shakespeare's actors discover their characters. Did emphasizing certain clues help to reveal anything about Juliet's character?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L5, SL2**

## 33. ECHO THE DARKNESS

In groups of three, sit or stand in a close circle facing each other. Turn to Juliet's "Gallop apace..." speech (Act 3, scene 2, lines 1-34). As one person reads the speech out loud, the rest echo the words in the speech that relate to darkness, blindness, or night—for example, "cloudy night," "wink," etc.

Repeat the exercise with a new reader, but this time echo words that relate to light or day. Were there more or fewer words echoed this time? Finally, the last reader will read the speech aloud while the other two echo anytime they hear the word "love." When you've completed the exercise, talk together about the echoed words. Why are they significant? Why do you think Juliet chooses these words to express herself at this moment? Why do these word choices reveal about Juliet's personality and/or her emotional state in this moment of the play?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, R4**

## 34. SUBTEXT

There are many ways the same words can be spoken in a script—just as we can all convey so many different (sometimes opposite!) meanings in the way we say a simple "Good morning." What we imagine the character to be thinking but not saying as he speaks is called the "subtext." In playing a role, the actor must make decisions about what he thinks his lines' subtext is, and in so doing will imbue the line with a specific mood, tone, inflection, volume and pace. In your small groups, practice saying "Good morning" to one another to express these very different subtexts...

- *I can't possibly talk to you right now. I'm in a hurry.*
- *I'm so glad to see you.*
- *You're the 200th person my job has required me to say good morning to already.*
- *I'm not pleased to see you after that fight we had last night.*
- *I'm very pleased to see you after our date last night...*

Now look at the beginning of Act 3, scene 5, and imagine different possibilities for the characters' subtexts. What if Juliet is feeling loving? Bossy? Sleepy? Impatient? Fearful? What if Romeo is loving? Afraid? Irritable? Secretly wishing to go? Are all of these possibilities from the lines in front of us? Practice with them, and see what you discover.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, R6**

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## 35. LIVING STATUES

A tableau is a wordless picture composed of motionless bodies. Theater productions sometimes end in a still life “picture” or tableau. Tableaux are fun to play with, and can help you look below the surface of some of Shakespeare’s metaphors and images. In your small groups, look at each of the passages below from Act 3, and create a tableau for each that illustrates the meaning of each passage.

<i>O then I see that mad men have no ears.</i>	3.3.61–62
<i>Thou art wedded to calamity.</i>	3.3.3
<i>In one little body</i>	
<i>Thou counterfeits a bank, a sea, wind...</i>	3.5.130–1
<i>What sorrow craves acquaintance at my hand</i>	
<i>That I yet know not?</i>	3.3.5–6
<i>There is no world without Verona walls,</i>	
<i>But purgatory, torture, hell itself.</i>	3.3.17–18
<i>Thy wit.../Like powder in a skillless soldier's flask,</i>	
<i>Is set afire by thine own ignorance.</i>	3.3.130–3

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS SL2, L5**

## ON YOUR OWN

## 36. FIGURATIVE DOODLING

In Act 3, scene 4, Mercutio calls Tybalt “Prince of Cats” and “King of Cats”—examples of the figurative language, specifically metaphors, found throughout Shakespeare’s works. In *Romeo and Juliet*, other instances of metaphors can be found in the Prologue where the title characters are referred to as “a pair of star-crossed lovers,” or in Juliet’s line in Act 3, scene 2, “Civil night/Thou sober suited matron all in black.” On your own, choose from one of these metaphors, or find your own example from anywhere in the play. Read the line out loud to yourself a few times, trying different ways of saying it. Then pick out a word or phrase from the line that evokes a strong visual image. Draw a picture of this image if taken as a literal interpretation of the text. When you are finished, discuss how your literal picture compares to the figurative meaning Shakespeare builds into his word choice.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R4, L5**



## Teacher Resource Center

If you have an activity or lesson plan that was a classroom success with your students, we want to hear about it! Consider donating your lesson plan to the Teacher Resource Center, and become part of our ever-growing, permanent collection! Need inspiration? If you are looking for the perfect activity or “proven” lesson plan, visit the Center to access hundred of teaching resources.

**Call the Education Department, 312.595.5678, to make an appointment.**

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## ACT 4

### AS A CLASS

#### 37. MOURNING FOR JULIET

When Juliet's family discovers her body in her bedroom, there is a lot of weeping and wailing going on—especially by the Nurse, Lady and Lord Capulet, and Paris. Do you view their grief as genuine? Do you think it is exaggerated—perhaps by a sense of guilt that they played a part in her “death”?

As a class, read Act 4, scene 5. Then, with five students playing the Nurse, Lord and Lady Capulet, Paris, and Friar Laurence, create a tableau of your characters' reactions to Juliet's death. Discuss as a class the different ways everyone reacts, and if you feel each character's reaction matches their personality.

Using this information, five other students will create a second tableau. This time, each person chooses three words to speak in the scene: something the character would say out loud so that the other people in the room could hear them. Then present your picture to the class.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, W9, SL4**

### IN SMALL GROUPS OR PAIRS

#### 38. BLOCKING ACT 4, SCENE 1

One of the primary tasks of taking a scene from page to stage is in imagining just how characters stand in proximity to one another and to whom they address particular lines. The moment near the top of Act 4, as Juliet enters the Friar's cell and finds Paris there, provides a great place to practice different ways that a scene might be “blocked.”

In groups of four (with a director, Paris, Juliet and Friar) take lines 17 (“Look sir, here comes the lady...”) through 45 (Juliet's lines after Paris leaves, “Come weep with me...”), and explore at least two very different ways that these three characters come together and leave. Who is standing near whom? How can distance impact the scene? Who is addressed and who is ignored—and how can you *show* that in your stance, movement, and gaze? After seeing several different interpretations staged in front of the class, what do you learn about the characters by different choices in the staging? (And when you come to see Chicago Shakespeare's production, watch for the way in which Director Barbara Gaines and her actors chose to stage this same exchange between these three characters.)

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, R6**

#### 39. JULIET'S DREAD

In small groups, read through Juliet's soliloquy in Act 4, scene 3, that begins with the line, “God knows when we shall meet again.” Juliet is wrestling with an array of disturbing thoughts and fears—not the least of which is whether she can truly trust the Friar. As a class, list all the things that Juliet is afraid of. Divide into groups with each group taking one fear. Within your group, create a tableau for Juliet's specific fear. Then come together as a class, with each group reading the lines for their fear and presenting their tableau.

Come back together as a class to discuss. Were there any groups whose tableaux surprised you? Were some of Juliet's fears things we would still be afraid of today? In the end, what does Juliet decide to do? How does she arrive at this decision?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS SL1, R4**

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## 40. SHARED LINES

Shakespeare's text contained many clues to help his actors, who had only a few days to rehearse a play. You'll notice that some lines are deeply indented, starting well to the right of other lines. This happens when two speakers share a ten-syllable (sometimes eleven...) verse line. By sharing a line, Shakespeare indicates to his actors that the pace is fast, and the two lines are to be delivered as one. There should be no pause between the end of one character's line and the beginning of the next.

Lady Capulet and the Nurse share some lines in Act 4, scene 5. First, identify which lines they share. Then read silently from the beginning of the scene to line 32. In a group of three, read these scenes to one another, each person choosing a part between the Nurse, Lady Capulet, and Lord Capulet. Whenever a single verse line is split between characters, keep practicing until you get to the point that there is no pause between where one character's line ends and the other's begins. You can also use a ball (like a hot potato!) for this activity to throw back and forth as you toss the lines to each other. Discuss what the shared lines suggest about Lady Capulet and the Nurse's relationship as well as their emotional state of being. What does it mean that Lord Capulet does not share any lines in this scene?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R5, SL1**

## 41. JULIET'S FAÇADE

Juliet's journey through Act 4 is a remarkable one. Many of her lines—to Paris, to her Nurse, and to both her mother and father—are in direct opposition to what she is actually feeling and thinking at the time. Dividing the class into three, each group will be responsible for a different section: Act 4, scene 1, lines 18-43 (3 people per small group); scene 2, lines 14-35 (4 per small group); scene 3, lines 1-14 (3 people per small group).

In your small groups, determine who will play each character. First, read through your lines once, standing in a circle, facing one another. For a second read-through, Juliet will stand with her back to the others. In a third read-through, Juliet will face the others—whose backs are turned to her. And for a final read-through, return to your original circle, but this time with your backs to one another.

How do these different readings affect your characters? What specific lines resonate differently from reading to reading? What did you discover about your characters through these various readings?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, SL2**

## ACT 5

### AS A CLASS

## 42. PHYSICALIZING ROMEO'S GRIEF

Standing in front of a chair, read Romeo's lines in Act 5, scene 3, lines 74-120 ("Let me peruse this face" through "Thus with a kiss I die.") aloud. When you come to the first punctuation mark, sit down, and then when you come to the next, stand up. Continue sitting down or standing up with each punctuation mark.

Compare his manner of speech in this scene to that found at the beginning of the play—for a comparison, look back at Act 2, scene 2, lines 2-32 ("But soft" through "the bosom of the air"). What do you discover? Has his language changed? Has his speech pattern changed? What can we learn about his journey as a character from examining the way he speaks and the way it changes over the course of the play?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, L3**

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## 43. FINAL IMAGE

The play ends with Prince Escalus promising to bring justice to Verona in the wake of the deaths of so many, including his own relative. Before the lights come down at the play's end, it is the director's job to give the audience one final image of the play to remember and reflect on. Divide the class into two groups, with each creating the image they would use for this final moment. Decide which characters you want in the scene. Would it be only the ones mentioned in the script, or would other family members and servants be present? Cast these characters, and have the rest of the class act as the directors. The directors decide what the final look should be. Will the stage be empty, or will characters freeze in a final tableau before the curtain closes? Where is each person in position to the bodies? How do the characters react to the deaths and to the Prince's decree? After working with the actors, each group will present its final stage picture. Talk with your class about what each image says about the story of *Romeo and Juliet*. What are the differences in the two stage pictures? How would the audience feel if they saw one image versus the other?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R6, R9, SL3**

## IN SMALL GROUPS OR PAIRS

## 44. THE FRIAR'S CUT

Dumbshows became a popular theatrical device in the sixteenth century, in which the characters of a play witness a miming act that mirrors the main action of the show; Prince Hamlet, for example, requests a troupe of traveling players to stage a dumbshow enacting the murder of a king by his brother—as he suspects of his uncle, who is present in the audience.

Using Friar Laurence's speech, in Act 5, scene 3, lines 229-269, create a dumbshow of the abridged story of *Romeo and Juliet* as the Friar tells it. Take turns having one of your group members read the speech aloud, slowly, while the rest of your group acts out in silence each of the over thirty incidents Friar Laurence lists. Then choose the three most important incidents in the story, and create a miming act that shows how the Friar describes them. Share your dumbshow with your classmates, and note what each group found to be the most important events. Do you think Friar Laurence missed anything that the Prince, the Capulets, or the Montagues should have known?

Now look back to the opening prologue. This too summarizes the events of *Romeo and Juliet*, but in a very different style from the Friar. Have a group member read the prologue as the rest of your group acts out the events described, again, silently. With your group, discuss the following questions: What was different between acting out this text versus your dumbshow? How do these two summaries compare? What is the difference in the content, language and style? What do you think Shakespeare was trying to accomplish with both sets of text?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS SL2, R3**

## 45. EXTRA! EXTRA!

Based on the scenes you are studying, create a newspaper for Verona. Creative sections could be: local news, world news, obituaries, "Dear Dr. Phil," entertainment, sports, business, personals, classified ads, political cartoons, etc. In small groups develop and design your newspaper. Newspaper articles are often supported by quotes from citizens. Make sure you quote characters from *Romeo and Juliet* as you write articles about the stage of affairs in Verona.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS W3, W4**

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## ON YOUR OWN

### 46. IMAGINING THE APOTHECARY

The Apothecary is vividly illustrated in Romeo's description in Act 5, scene 1. Draw a picture that conjures up these images in your mind. What mood do you want to convey? How does your picture set about doing that? Which of Romeo's words convey a similar mood?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1**

### 47. THE HERO'S JOURNEY

[To the teacher: **see Appendix H for a corresponding graphic organizer for this exercise.**]

The "hero's journey" is described by Joseph Campbell, a scholar of mythology, as one that leads the individual into unknown and dangerous territory—unknown geographically as well as psychologically. The hero faces many obstacles and barriers (some physical, some emotional), and through his/her journey, overcomes them. Trace Romeo's "hero's journey"—complete with all the references you can find in Shakespeare's script to barriers and obstacles in his way. As Romeo, write about your journey, or part of it if you prefer to focus on one part of the story.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, W3, W9**

### 48. LOVE STORY

Over time, many people have adapted the story of *Romeo and Juliet*, keeping the famous characters, but giving the story a different spin. In 2008, Taylor Swift released the song "Love Story," her version on the tale of *Romeo and Juliet*. The song references many of the iconic moments from the play, but has a very different ending. Listen to the song and read the lyrics at <http://youtube.com/watch?v=jqEhTmgPQSk>. Then write your own version of *Romeo and Juliet*, keeping elements of the original but creating new moments as well. If you are musically inclined, set your version to music.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS W3, W4**



Elizabeth Laidlaw as the Apothecary and Nate Santana as Romeo in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2017 production of *Short Shakespeare! Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Marti Lyons. Photo by Liz Lauren.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## AFTER YOU'VE READ THE PLAY

### 49. BLAME GAME

Shakespeare closely followed his primary source for *Romeo and Juliet*, a long narrative poem entitled “The Tragical Historye of Romeus and Juliet,” composed by Arthur Brooke in 1562. At the end of Brooke’s poem, the Prince decrees that the Nurse is banished and the Apothecary hanged. But the Friar, “Because that many times he woorthely did serve / The comen welth, and in his lyfe was never found to swerve.” is exonerated. Imagine that it is now up to your class to put on trial any and all of the guilty parties for the deaths of *Romeo and Juliet*.

On your own, select one of the remaining characters from the play and respond to the questions listed on the “Think Sheet” to help you prepare to take on the role of this character.

Come back together as a class. One student volunteers to take on the role of the character they have selected. The rest of the class acts as lawyers, asking the tough questions about this character’s contribution to *Romeo and Juliet*’s tragic deaths. The student playing the character on trial takes the “hotseat” and defends their actions in the first person, citing evidence from the text whenever possible.

[To the teacher: **see Appendix I for the “Think Sheet” described above, and a corresponding rubric.** When students take the stand, take on the role of moderator to keep the questions on-course, probe more deeply when necessary or take the questions in a different direction. Allow each student to answer several questions before switching to a new student or character.]

At the end of the trial, take a class vote. Who is to blame for the death of these two young people? Can the blame be pinned on a single character? What should the sentence be for the guilty party or parties?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, W9, SL**

### 50. ROMEO AND JULIET IN MUSIC

A song called “*Romeo and Juliet*” was written by the group Dire Straits (there is also a version of the song recorded by The Indigo Girls). Read the lyrics below to yourself. If anyone has a copy they can bring to class, listen to the song as you read, and then discuss the song. You can find a live performance of the song at <http://tinyurl.com/direstraits-rj>. Which characters do these musicians seem to sympathize with most? What aspects of the song are true to Shakespeare’s play, and when do the musicians use artistic license to expand the story in different ways?

*a lovestruck romeo sings the streets a serenade  
laying everybody low with a lovesong that he made  
finds a streetlight steps out of the shade  
says something like you and me babe how about it?  
juliet says hey it's romeo you nearly gave me a heart attack  
he's underneath the window she's singing hey la my boyfriend's back  
you shouldn't come around here singing up at people like that  
anyway what you gonna do about it?  
juliet the dice were loaded from the start  
and I bet and you exploded in my heart  
and I forget I forget the movie song  
when you gonna realize it was just that the time was wrong juliet?  
come up on different streets they both were streets of shame  
both dirty both mean yes and the dream was just the same  
and I dream your dream for you and now your dream is real  
how can you look at me as I was just another one of your deals?  
well you can fall for chains of silver you can fall for chains of gold*

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

*you can fall for pretty strangers and the promises they hold  
you promised me everything you promised me thick and thin  
now you just say oh romeo yeah you know I used to have a scene with him  
juliet when we made love you used to cry  
you said I love you like the stars above I'll love you till I die  
there's a place for us you know the movie song  
when you gonna realize it was just that the time was wrong?  
I can't do the talk like the talk on the tv  
and I can't do a love song like the way it's meant to be  
I can't do everything but I'd do anything for you  
can't do anything except be in love with you  
and all I do is miss you and the way we used to be  
all I do is keep the beat the bad company  
all I do is kiss you through the bars of Orion  
julie I'd do the stars with you any time  
juliet when we made love you used to cry  
you said I love you like the stars above I'll love you till I die  
there's a place for us you know the movie song  
when you gonna realize it was just that the time was wrong?  
a lovestruck romeo sings the streets a serenade  
laying everybody low with a lovesong that he made  
finds a convenient streetlight steps out of the shade  
says something like you and me babe how about it?*

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R7, R9, SL2**



The cast of Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2017 production of *Short Shakespeare! Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Marti Lyons. Photo by Liz Lauren.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## 51. ROMEO AND JULIET IN ART

[To the teacher: "Shakespeare Illustrated" is a helpful website that provides Shakespeare-inspired artwork to support this activity. Visit [http://english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare\\_Illustrated/R&JPaintings.html](http://english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/R&JPaintings.html) to select visual interpretations of Shakespeare's play.]

Like music, visual art has also been inspired by Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Analyze one of these works and respond to the following questions:

- Which characters are illustrated?
- What scene is being depicted?
- What is the significance of the scene?
- What details did the artist accentuate and for what purpose?
- What details in the artwork allude to the previous scene?
- Are there any foretelling details of the plot yet to come?
- What imagery is strong in the illustration, and how?
- If you had to articulate the painter's interpretation in a single sentence, what would it be?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R7, R9, SL2**

## 52. CHARACTER ARC

[To the teacher: Cut up and distribute, one per student, the lines below including the character's name. If your class is smaller, cut a character out before distributing lines. **See Appendix J for a printable version of the lines ready to cut and distribute.**]

Receiving your quote, whisper-read it to yourself three times. Then begin to walk around the room, reading your quote to your classmates. Listen to your classmates' quotes to find all those who have quotes from your character (for a challenge, don't reveal your character name when you read the quote!). Once you've found everyone who shares the same character, form a group together.

With your small group, take turns reading the lines aloud and noticing the plot clues in them. Work with one another to determine the order in which your character speaks these lines in the play, and arrange yourselves in a line. Then individually, come up with a still-frame position you think your character would assume onstage at the moment he/she says that line.

One group at a time, assume your character positions and read the lines in order. Repeat once more so your classmates have a chance to take in your lines and your physical stances. As a class discuss:

- What stood out to your ears as you listened to the lines?
- What stood out to your eyes as you watched their physical stances?
- Do any lines need to be placed in a different order?
- What new understandings do we have about this character?

### Lord Capulet

<i>My sword, I say! old Montague is come,</i>	1.1.68-69
<i>And flourishes his blade in spite of me.</i>	1.2.16
<i>But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart</i>	1.5.79
<i>You'll make a mutiny among my guests!</i>	
<i>I tell thee what: get thee to church a'Thursday,</i>	
<i>Or never after look me in the face.</i>	3.5.161-2
<i>Death lies on her like an untimely frost</i>	4.5.28
<i>Brother Montague, give me thy hand.</i>	5.3.296

### Friar Laurence

<i>Is Rosaline, that thou didst love so dear,</i>	
<i>So soon forsaken?</i>	2.3.66-67

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

<i>For by your leaves, you shall not stay alone Till Holy Church incorporate two in one. Thou shalt continue two and forty hours, And then awake as from a pleasant sleep.</i>	2.6.36-37 4.1.105-106
<i>Thy husband in thy bosom there lies dead; But then a noise did scare me from the tomb, And she too desperate would not go with me</i>	5.3.155 5.3.262-263
<b>Juliet</b> <i>It is an honor that I dream not of. 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy; That villain cousin would have killed my husband. What if this mixture do not work at all? This is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die.</i>	1.3.67 2.2.38 3.2.101 4.3.21 5.3.169-170
<b>Nurse</b> <i>Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nursed. ...my young lady bid me enquire you out; Then hie you hence to Friar Laurence' cell, There stays a husband to make you a wife. Romeo that killed him, he is banishèd. O woeful day, O woeful day!</i>	1.3.61 2.4.134-135 2.5.67-68 3.2.70 4.5.54
<b>Paris</b> <i>Younger than she are happy mothers made. Immoderately she weeps for Tybalt's death Thy face is mine, and thou has slandered it. The obsequie that I for thee will keep Nightly shall be to strew thy grave and weep. Can vengeance be pursued further than death? Condemned villain, I do apprehend thee.</i>	1.2.12 4.1.6 4.1.35 5.3.16-17 5.3.55
<b>Romeo</b> <i>She hath forsworn to love, and in that vow Do I live dead, that live to tell it now. Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight! For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night. Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized; Henceforth I never will be Romeo I do protest I never injured thee, But love thee better than thou canst devise 'Tis torture, and not mercy. Heaven is here Where Juliet lives... Here's to my love! O true apothecary! Thy drugs are quick.</i>	1.1.214-215 1.5.51-52 2.2.51-52 3.1.61-62 3.3.29-30 5.3.119-120

CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, SL1



## CST for \$20

Chicago Shakespeare is committed to making our productions accessible for everyone, so CST for \$20 was designed to fit the budget of students and young professionals. We have allocated thousands of tickets across the entire season, giving our fans under 35 the opportunity to see world-class theater at an everyday price. Anyone under 35 can buy up to two \$20 tickets per production.

You can find out more at [www.chicagoshakes.com/cst20](http://www.chicagoshakes.com/cst20)

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## IN SMALL GROUPS

### 53. TWITTER ROMEO AND JULIET

[To the teacher: Divide the twenty-four scenes of the play into the number of students in your class, assigning each scene to one or two students.]

As an omniscient observer of the action of the action of *Romeo and Juliet*, you must “tweet” an assigned scene from the play, working to whittle the action of the scene down to its bare essentials.

- First, review your scene, and write a short summary that includes the main idea, supporting details and two to three significant quotes.
- Exchange summaries with a classmate. Read his/her summary, and circle the lines/words/phrases that are really getting at the essence of the scene. Cross out the parts that seem unnecessary. Return the summaries to one another.
- With your own summary back, create a tweet-length summary of 140 characters or fewer. You must include one quote (and yes, even quotation marks count as characters!) containing a minimum of three consecutive words. And, for this assignment, textspeak is completely acceptable!
- In order of the play, read your tweets aloud with your classmates, hearing a concise summary of the entire play’s events.

Here are a couple of tweeted examples from other Shakespeare plays:

*The Tempest’s opening scene: Sailors during a storm tried to keep it afloat, but passengers in the way, sailor yelled, “You do assist the storm!”*

*Twelfth Night’s Act 2, scene 2: Malvolio throws ring to Viola. Viola realizes Olivia loves Cesario. She exclaims, “Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness!”*

## CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, W3, W4

### 54. COMPARING TWO TEXTS

“Pyramus and Thisbe,” a story told in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, shares elements with *Romeo and Juliet*: feuding families; a pair of star-crossed lovers; and a secret plan that goes horribly awry, causing the deaths of the titular characters. In Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, a troupe of amateur performers stages this tragic story to great comedic effect (Act 5, scene 1).

Compare and contrast Pyramus’s final words with Romeo’s. In small groups, try reading each of the passages out loud. What similarities do you see in the passages? Are there poetic devices (such as metaphor, alliteration, simile, imagery, rhythm, rhyme, etc.) used by Shakespeare in both passages? What poetic devices make Pyramus’s speech comedic and Romeo’s tragic?

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## ***A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 5, scene 1**

BOTTOM (as Pyramus)  
Come tears, confound!  
Out sword, and wound!  
The pap of Pyramus,  
Ay, that left pap,  
Where heart doth hop:  
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus! [*Stabs himself.*]  
Now am I dead,  
Now am I fled;  
My soul is in the sky.  
Tongue, lose thy light;  
Moon, take thy flight;  
Now die, die, die, die, die. [*He dies.*]

## ***Romeo and Juliet*, Act 5, scene 3**

ROMEO  
Eyes, look your last!  
Arms, take your last embrace! And, lips, O you  
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss  
A dateless bargain to engrossing Death!  
Come, bitter conduct, come, unsavory guide!  
Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on  
The dashing rocks thy seasick weary bark!  
Here's to my love! [*Drinks.*] O true apothecary!  
Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die. [*Dies.*]

[To the teacher: After your students compare the passages, you may wish to show them a video of the speech in performance. There are several film versions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in performance, including Sir Peter Hall's 1968 version: <http://tinyurl.com/Hall-Midsummer>. Even the Beatles performed a version of this scene: <http://tinyurl.com/Midsummer-Beatles>. Your students may also enjoy seeing other students perform this text. There are several examples on YouTube, some of which include: <http://tinyurl.com/Midsummer-MasterWorks>, <http://tinyurl.com/Midsummer-Rice>, and <http://tinyurl.com/Midsummer-GeorgiaSW>. After viewing a clip, guide a short reflection: What did the students find funny? How did the actors use voice and physicality to comedic effect?]

In your groups, transpose a short passage from *Romeo and Juliet* from high tragedy to low comedy, incorporating the comedic rhetorical devices you discovered through the exercise above. You may wish to keep some of Shakespeare's original language. Suggested passages include:

- Act 3, scene 3, lines 64-91 (*Romeo laments his banishment*)
- Act 4, scene 3, lines 14-58 (*Juliet drinks the potion*)

Rehearse your parodies, incorporating elements of physical comedy that you saw in the clips of Pyramus's death. In the Mechanicals' performance in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, actors give voice to scenery such as the moon and a wall. As you prepare your performances, make sure everyone in your group has a role, even if that means some non-human roles...

Share your parodies with the class and conclude with a discussion. How did the parody change or clarify your understanding of *Romeo and Juliet*? How would you describe each group's point of view on a scene? Which characters did they lampoon? Which characters retained your sympathy?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS L3, R9, W3**

## **55. PEARLS ON A STRING**

[To the teacher: consider playing this exercise with a very well-known story—like The Three Little Pigs—so that the students can get familiar with the structure and then can apply it to *Romeo and Juliet* once they've mastered the game. You may also want to watch this video of the exercise on your own or with your students: <http://tinyurl.com/pearlsonastring>.]

This improvisation exercise offers a dynamic, kinesthetic way to review the events of the play. Eight to twelve students form a line (with space in front to be able to step forward), while the rest of the class observes. One at a time, step forward to share one major event from the play. The first student who steps forward must give the first line of the story, and the second student to step forward must give the last line of the story. Everyone else must fill in the events in the middle, taking the appropriate place on the line so that the story is told in the correct order. Each time a student takes her place in the line, the story is retold from the very beginning.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

Once all eight to twelve students have contributed a line, the remaining class gives feedback. Is everything in the right order? Are there any major plot-points missing? If so, additional students can jump in to fill in the missing points.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, SL2**

## ON YOUR OWN

[To the teacher: the following writing exercises make great additions to a Bard Blog if your class is using an online publishing platform.]

### 56. PERSONAL SLOGANS

If you had to pick out one line that might serve as a character's personal slogan that sums up his/her point of view in the story, what would it be? Choose a character that interests you. Then choose a quote or phrase from any part of the play that you could see this character use as their slogan. Write a short argument detailing why you chose this quote to encompass your character, and what, if anything, this quote misses about the character's views.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS W9**

### 57. FATE OR CHOICE

Use *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, <http://quotationspage.com/subjects>, or a similar reference source of quotations to come up with three quotes about fate, not all expressing the same point of view. Then pick out three quotes about choice. Think about the role of fate and choice in this play. Return to the script to find words and moments that suggest fate's role, on the one hand, and personal choice and decision on the other. Write about which quotes come closest to supporting your points of view.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, W1**



Lynn Robert Berg as Friar Laurence and Laura Rook as Juliet in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2013 production of *Short Shakespeare! Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Rachel Rockwell. Photo by Michael Brosilow.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## THE PERFORMANCE: PREPARING AND REFLECTING

### AS A CLASS

#### 58. CHORAL POEM MONTAGE

[To the teacher: divide the class in half. One half will work with Romeo's final monologue in Act 5, scene 3, lines 88-120. The other half will use an excerpt from The New York Times' article "A Weekend in Chicago." See Appendix K for both selections.]

The world that *Romeo and Juliet* live in is a violent one. Aspects of death are mentioned in *Romeo and Juliet* over a hundred times. In CST's production, Director Barbara Gaines intends to foreground the danger that Verona's citizen's experience in their daily lives to understand how Romeo and Juliet are affected by—and are an effect of—the unending violence. Though this play was written over 400 years ago (and CST's production sets the play in the Renaissance), it's not hard to imagine some of the story's violence taking place in our city and in our lives today. In this exercise, the class will combine two texts to create a group poem.

Divide the class in half, one half working with the play, the other half with a news article focusing on Chicago's violence. Read your excerpt quietly aloud, underlining any words or sections that are confusing. Read the passage again, circle any particularly vivid words, phrases or sentences that jump off the page at you.

As a class, discuss anything that was confusing to you. Find a partner who worked on the other text. Exchange texts and read through the passage, noting what your partner circled. Among those circled by your partner, select the phrase, word or single sentence that you feel best captures the character's or author's voice, mood and tone. [Bracket] your choice. Discuss in your pair why you chose to bracket the word/phrase/sentence you did, and how it best reflects the overall tone and/or "big idea" contained in this passage.

With your own text back in hand, join with two other groups (three *Romeo and Juliet*'s, three *New York Times*) and work on your feet (so that the words are being said and heard) to create a poem that includes notated words or phrases from all six annotated texts. Edit as much as you need in order to create the most powerful poem you can. You can repeat words, phrases or lines, and you can decide to say some in unison, but be sure to incorporate all six contributions.

Each group takes a turn presenting its choral poem to the class. The rest of the class then becomes the editors of the living poem, asking the group to make whatever revisions will help strengthen the writing.

Come back together as a class and discuss any new insights that were discovered through your choral poems. Discuss the varying texts' points of view and the different insights you gained from them.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, SL2, W3**

#### 59. DIRECTOR'S POINT OF VIEW

The first time we meet Juliet is in Act 1, scene 3, when her mother suggests the prospect of marriage to her fourteen-year-old daughter. The scene reveals a great deal to the audience about a director's interpretation of the relationship between mother and daughter. Zeffirelli's 1968 film and Baz Luhrmann's more recent 1996 production are readily available—and offer two very different interpretations of this scene. As a class, talk about Zeffirelli's and Luhrmann's points of view. How does each view Juliet? Her mother? Do you notice any differences in the way the scene is cut? Where is it shot, and what are they doing? After you "read" these two directors' interpretations, you'll have the opportunity when you attend Chicago Shakespeare's play to compare Barbara Gaines' take on this revealing scene between mother and daughter.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R6, R7, R9**

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## 60. LINE WALKABOUT, PART 2

[To the teacher: excerpt from the play one line for each student. Choose lines that are rich in Shakespeare's language or are descriptive of character—or consider our suggestions below! **See Appendix C for printable lines ready to cut and distribute.** Distribute a line to each student on a slip of paper.]

Part of an actor's job in creating a character is discovering the particular way that his or her character moves, which is different from the way that the actor moves. What changes in emotion, status or age lead to the pace or posture a character walks with? Take a slip of paper with a line from the play, then determine which character says your line. If your class completed LINE WALKABOUT, PART 1 (Activity #5), choose the same character but think about what you know about that character's life now having read *Romeo and Juliet*.

Begin to walk around the room, saying the line aloud again and again—without addressing anyone. As your character, think back to the circumstances in which you said this line: What has just happened? What are you feeling? Who are you talking to? What is your relationship to this person? Use your responses to this question to affect how you deliver the line, both vocally and physically. Play with the pace at which you speak and walk, as well as your posture. Think about your overall status in the play, as well as your status compared to the person you are talking to. Say your line for at least five other people, and listen closely as they share their line with you.

Then, switch lines with someone who shares your character. Practice this new line using the same questions to guide your delivery. After sharing your line with five new people and listening to their lines, come back together as a class. Discuss how your character changed between the time they spoke their lines in the play. What was different about your voice and movement? How did the circumstances affect these changes? What about your interpretation of the character stayed the same? When attending the performance at CST, notice how each actor must make these decisions for their character.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, SL4**

## 61. SWEET SORROW

After you see CST's production, think back to the final moments. What happened? What were the final words spoken, and by whom? What was the final image we're left with? As a class, take a look at the last few frames of Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*. After the camera pulls back from *Romeo and Juliet*'s bodies, it zooms in for a close-up of Juliet's ring, inscribed "I love thee." Finally we see the couple again as they appeared in the balcony scene—underwater and embracing. How do you read Luhrmann's choices for his ending? How do you understand his choices in contrast to CST Director Barbara Gaines' choices for the stage? What does the stage allow that film does not—and vice versa? Beyond the medium, what do you think about the respective viewpoints about the story revealed by the choices each director made for the end of his/her production?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R6, R7, R9**

## IN SMALL GROUPS OR PAIRS

## 62. CASTING A PRODUCTION

Chicago Shakespeare Theater's casting director is responsible for finding the right person for every character you see on our stage—no small task! After you've read the play, think about each character—how do they look, sound, move, and behave? Think of television and film celebrities who fit your image of the character and, in groups, discuss who your "dream team" would be for your version. Since it's all fantasy, you might choose a blend of two or more people. Your vision of Romeo might be the edgy looks of Michael B. Jordan mixed with the romantic personality of Timothée Chalamet. Print or post on your class blog images to create "headshots" for your perfect cast. Then present your cast to the other groups, explaining why you made each decision, and compare your ideas with everybody else's, using specific textual evidence whenever possible. After you see the play, contrast your vision to that of director Marti Lyons and the actors whom she and the CST's casting director have assembled.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, SL5**

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## 63. DESIGNING FOR A TIME AND PLACE

Designers play a critical role in the interpretation of a play. The decisions they make about costume, set design, props, sound and music must work logically in conjunction with the director's vision of the production. The visual and tactile elements of the costumes and the sets help set the mood for the audience watching the play, as do sounds and music. What do you think *Romeo and Juliet's* Verona is like? In what time period will you set the play? What pace and style of music will accompany the scenes? Use magazines, catalogues and the Internet to find ideas and pictures, as well as the "Performance History" essay from this handbook to help you.

With your small group, choose one of the follow design "departments" to work within:

- **Costumes:** You will design the costumes for *Romeo and Juliet*—you need not be artists! Use pencils, markers, and paper with which to sketch out your ideas. The sketches can be very rough, but when you are done, find sample swatches of fabric for your designs. Aim to create costumes for three or four major characters in the play. At least one character should be a Montague, and at least one should be a Capulet. To build on this exercise, you can bring in articles of clothing and/or accessories, or explore a thrift store for costume pieces that could be hung on the walls or used for group presentations during the study of the play.
- **Setting:** Many directors take a traditional approach aiming to set Shakespeare's plays as they imagine it to be played in Elizabethan England. In the world of theater, there are no rules about how to present a Shakespearean play. What time period will you choose? What is Verona like? What do you want your audience to see when they first enter the theater? What colors will you use? What mood do you want to create? Is there a particular landscape you want to represent? Bring in color samples, inspirational images, or rough sketches to show us what your set would look like. Remember to take into account the shape of the stage of your theater as well.
- **Sound and Music:** Would you like to incorporate any sound and/or music into your version of *Romeo and Juliet*? Brainstorm adjectives, mood ideas and songs that come to mind. Make a list of songs and/or music that you think might fit your ideas for the play. If you know how to play an instrument, compose your own pieces or perform for the class—all ideas are welcome when designing a play!

As a class, use cardboard or poster-board to build a "production design board" with samples from each department. The samples can be attached using staples, pins, or glue. Then discuss the implications of the decisions made by the groups. What impact would certain designs have on specific audiences? How would audiences respond to specific characters based simply on how they look? How could a single costume, a style of design or a piece of music affect the interpretation and presentation of the play as a whole?

After you see CST's production, come back together with your group to discuss how your area of design was utilized to create a unique interpretation of *Romeo and Juliet*. Outline the choices made in your area, and how those choices either supported or didn't effectively support the storytelling. Share your findings with the other groups.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, R6, SL2, SL5**

## 64. AND THE PROLOGUE GOES TO...

*Romeo and Juliet* opens with a prologue spoken by the Chorus. Part of the director's job in deciding how to cast the show is choosing the actor or actors who will deliver the Prologue. Directors frequently choose one of the characters to speak it, such as the Prince did in a 1973 production directed by Terry Hands for the Royal Shakespeare Company. Another technique, common in film, is to use an unseen narrator as a voiceover, like Laurence Olivier was in the 1968 Zeffirelli film. Other directors have introduced new characters to say these lines: a production in 1882 cast an actor as the classical Italian poet Dante to speak the Prologue. Even Shakespeare himself—or, at least, an actor playing him—has delivered the Prologue in a 1954 film version.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

Return to the play's Prologue with the knowledge you now have of Shakespeare's story. Who would you choose to deliver the Prologue? Why? How does this fit in the world of your show? After you see the performance at CST, compare your choice with that of Director Barbara Gaines. What are some possible reasons to have chosen to cut the Prologue as she does?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R6, R7**

## 65. DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION

When approaching a scene, a director must think of how to make the scene live in a dramatic way that enriches Shakespeare's words. Turn to Act 2, scene 2, the famous balcony scene, where Romeo secretly visits Juliet hours after they meet. After watching Chicago Shakespeare Theater's production, view a clip of this scene from Zeffirelli's 1968 production, which can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/ZeffirelliBalcony>. Compare the ways in which each interpretation enriched Shakespeare's scene. What did each interpretation tell you about the relationship between *Romeo and Juliet*? How did either vary from the text you read? Did the changes you mentioned help or hinder the scene? If you were to approach directing this scene, how would you bring it to life?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R6, R7, R9**

## 66. MARKETING A PRODUCTION

After you see CST's production of *Romeo and Juliet*, design a "take-one"—a small flyer advertising the show. A take-one is only three inches wide by seven inches long, so it is important to utilize your marketing space by choosing only the most important aspects of the show to highlight. What is a key image from the production that you think the take-one should include? Are there any particular quotations from the play you would use to grab people's interest? What type of audience would most enjoy the production and how can your marketing piece be directed towards that audience? Choose a few key words to incorporate into your take-one to evoke the mood of the production at a glance. Design so that the relevant information is easy to read and eye-catching. Discuss your choices and display your group's take-one in class.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, W9**

## ON YOUR OWN

*[To the teacher: the following writing exercises make great additions to a Bard Blog if your class is using an online publishing platform.]*

## 67. "CRITICAL" ARGUMENT

Before seeing the performance, select one of the quotations about *Romeo and Juliet* from the "What the Critics Say" section of the handbook with which you either strongly agree or disagree. Write an argument about this quotation. Cite specific examples from the text to support your assertions. Does your argument still hold up after seeing the performance? Be specific about moments in the production and use lines of text that support your viewpoint. If you've chosen a quote older than you are, do you think that the social and historical context has changed at all since the time it was written?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS W1, W10**

## 68. CHARACTER STUDY, PART 2

Each actor brings his or her own unique quality to a character. They make specific choices based on the director's vision, chemistry with the ensemble of other actors, and their own interpretation of what motivates their character to action. Choose a character to follow closely when you see CST's performance. If you completed Activity #8, CHARACTER STUDY, PART 1, use the same character you wrote about in your actor's notebook. As you watch

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

the actor playing your chosen character, note the acting choices he or she makes through voice, movement and “subtext”—the inner feelings beneath the spoken words. That same day of your performance (while it’s still fresh in your memory), write down your observations of the actor’s interpretation of the character. How does the actor in CST’s production differ from what you had imagined? What choices did the actor make that enhanced your understanding of the character?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, W9**

## 69. WRITING A THEATER REVIEW

A scaffold for this activity: Before you write your review, read three different theater reviews of current plays at Theatre in Chicago’s Critics Review Round-Up: <http://www.theatreinchicago.com/reviewlistings.php>. Analyze the structure of a review, identifying key elements. Based on these key elements, describe the style you found most helpful (or least helpful) in communicating a play’s appeal for potential theater-goers.

Now, write your own critical review of CST’s *Romeo and Juliet*. Briefly recount the plot. Discuss the parts of the production—including the casting, acting, setting, music, dance, costumes, cuts—you thought worked particularly well, or did not work well and explain how you thought each worked to tell the story. Consider publishing your piece in a school newspaper or the Bard Blog. Use some of the questions below to generate ideas for your review:

- What aspect of the play captivated your attention?
- How did the production’s interpretation compare with your own interpretation of the play? Do you believe it stayed true to Shakespeare’s intention?
- Were there particular performances that you believed were powerful? Why?
- Would you recommend this play to others? Who would most enjoy it?
- Based on your answers to the above questions, how many stars (out of a possible five) would you give this production?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS W1, W4**

## 70. TOOLS OF THEATER

Consider all the different tools of theater that can help bring a story to life, including:

- Acting (vocal, physical and character choices made by the actors)
- Blocking (the actors’ movement and positioning on stage)
- Set design
- Costume design
- Lighting Design
- Music and sound design
- Props
- Special effects

In each of these arenas, there are countless choices made by the director, designers and actors, contributing to their unique interpretation of the story. Before you see CST’s production, choose one of the above tools of theater to focus on. As you watch the performance, note the specific ways that tool is used throughout and how those choices help to support the storytelling.

After you see CST’s production, write an analysis of how your chosen tool was utilized to create a unique interpretation of *Romeo and Juliet*. Outline the choices made using that tool, and how those choices either supported or didn’t effectively support the storytelling.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R6, W1**

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## 71. TEACHING *ROMEO AND JULIET* WITH GRAPHIC NOVELS

Comics are a sequential art form. Unlike the cartoon, which is a single image, comics tell a story unfolding in time through the use of sequential images. Much like storytellers who use language to establish pacing, characterization and mood, comic artists use visual tools such as panel size and shape, spacing between panels, perspective shifts, and thickness of line to give the reader not only a visual experience but also an emotional one. Comics, like narratives, give readers of all abilities opportunities for interpreting and analyzing.

Comics do more than simplify a story into images. Because comics are told through a sequence of still images, readers of comic books learn to mentally connect isolated images, filling in the gaps with details from their own experiences. This process, known as **closure**, can personalize Shakespeare for readers who struggle with complex texts. The accompanying pictorial language of a comic book can also help readers learn new words through visual context clues. Thus, comics and graphic novels can be useful—and rigorous—tools for reluctant readers and English language learners.

There are several excellent graphic novel adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*. As you introduce the following exercises in your classroom, consider using one or more of the following graphic novels:

- **Hinds, Gareth, and William Shakespeare.** *Romeo and Juliet*. Somerville, 2013.
- **Leong, Sonia.** *Manga Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet*. New York, 2007.
- **Sexton, Adam, and Yali Lin.** *Romeo and Juliet: The Manga Edition*. Hoboken, 2008.

## 72. STORYTELLING THROUGH PICTURES

In small groups of four, find Romeo and Benvolio's first conversation (Act 1, scene 1, lines 151-229) in your graphic novel. Read their conversation aloud, with one group member reading Romeo's lines and another reading Benvolio's lines. Switch readers, and read through the scene again.

Now, begin to discuss the section you have just read, exploring the following questions:

- Who is Romeo? Who is Benvolio? What do we know about each of them from this one scene alone? Which lines or images support your ideas about each of them?
- Where are Romeo and Benvolio? What do you see in the artist's drawings that support the location you have chosen?

*[To the teacher: Assign each group a page of the scene. Most graphic novel editions of Romeo and Juliet spread this scene across many pages. If your edition does not, assign by half-page sections.]* Looking now just at your assigned section of the graphic novel, choose one person in your group to read Romeo's lines, and another person to read Benvolio's lines. Choose one person to describe Romeo's actions, and another to describe Benvolio's. What movements does each of them make? What tone of voice do they use? What is each feeling? Go through your page panel by panel, capturing as much characterization as possible. Switch roles and repeat.

Looking at your page as a whole, discuss with your group:

- What scenic details did the artist include?
- What time of day is it?
- What do the backgrounds, whether literal or abstract, convey about the scene or the characters' states of mind?

Close your book. Drawing on your previous analysis of the scene, tell the story depicted in your panels in a round robin, using as much detail as you can. Don't worry about remembering Romeo and Benvolio's lines accurately; instead, paraphrase as you go. After this initial round robin, discuss with your group what details were left out that you wish to include in your next telling. You may consult your book if you wish.

Tell the story in a round robin again, making sure that each group member gets the chance to tell a different section than they told the last time. This time, deliver Romeo and Benvolio's lines with feeling, characterizing them through your tone of voice and energy.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

Now, as a class, tell the full story of the scene in sequence. Every person in the class should contribute to their group's retelling of their section. Don't worry about memorizing the story; instead, make the story your own!

As a class, reflect on this activity. Some questions to consider:

- What clues in the images helped you understand the actions in the scene? How did the artist convey motions through still images?
- Did the shape of the panels influence how you understood the character's emotions? How so?
- Did you encounter any unfamiliar words? How did you deduce their meaning?
- This artist's rendering is only one way, of many, to depict this scene. If you were the artist, where might you set the scene? How might you represent the characters differently?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, R2, R7, SL1, SL4, L4**

## 73. COMPARING TWO TEXTS

*[To the teacher: See Appendix L for printable images from two different graphic novel editions of Romeo and Juliet. Split the class into small groups and give each group one copy of each scene.]*

Much like a theater director, a graphic artist has to make choices about how to tell a story. The tools of theater include acting, blocking, scenery, costumes, lighting, props and sound. The tools of comics include panel size, shape, and spacing; light and shadow; angle of focus; facial expressions and body language; line, shape, and color; and text style and placement. These elements interact to involve the reader in the story.

Read each graphic representation of Act 3, scene 1, the scene in which Romeo realizes Mercutio is dead and decides to avenge his death. Though the language comes from the same scene in the play, each artist has made unique choices to bring Shakespeare's story to life on the page.

Each small group will become an expert on how one tool or a group of related tools is employed in each representation of the scene. Prepare to present on one of the following tools, as assigned by your teacher:

- **Panel size, shape, and spacing:** What does the artist depict inside larger panels? In smaller panels? How do smaller, more segmented panels feel compared to longer, expansive panels that fill the width of a page? How do the shape and/or quantity of panels express emotion and pace of action? Are there any panels that include overlapping scenes?
- **Light and shadow:** How does the artist employ light and shadow to draw the reader's focus to important details? What does the use of contrast tell us about the characters' emotional states?
- **Angle of focus:** The angle of focus is the "camera" angle in the scene. It places the reader in relation to the scene. If angle of focus gives a bird's eye view, for instance, the reader may feel detached from the scene—an outside observer. What is the angle of focus in each panel? What effect does the angle of focus have on the reader? How does the artist use of close-up or wide-angle panels to convey important details about the scene?
- **Facial expressions and body language:** How does the artist depict Romeo, Mercutio, Benvolio and Tybalt? What does their body language tell us about them? How would you describe their emotions? Which characters do you think the artist wants the reader to connect with emotionally?
- **Line, shape and color:** Lines can have "character." A thinly drawn line will create a different feel than a bold line. How does the style of line change in different panels? How does the style of the line impact your understanding of the scene? How does the use of line, shape, and color convey the feeling of motion throughout the scene? (Comic book theorist Scott McCloud argues that color draws more attention to shape, and can limit the feeling of motion in a scene. Looking at Gareth Hinds' rendering, do you agree?)
- **Text placement and style:** Comics are an entirely visual medium. How does each artist convey the sounds of the scene through text placement and style? How does the shape of the speech balloons help you understand the tone of voice each character uses?

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

Present your findings to the class, teaching them about the tool of comics that you studied. After each group has presented, discuss your findings:

- In some comics, the pictures illustrate the words. In others, words clarify a picture. But in most comics, the pictures and words are interdependent. How would you describe the relationship between text and image in each artist's rendering?
- After analyzing each comic in depth, what do you think each artist wanted the reader to experience and feel?
- Which rendering did you respond to most strongly? Why?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R3, R6, R9, SL4**

## 74. TEXT TO TABLEAUX

Comic artists have to use panels efficiently to convey action. In an animated movie, each minute gesture would be captured in a frame. But comics don't have that luxury: readers would get bored! An artist has to use each panel to establish important details about a scene and convey the scene's main events. In sequence, the frozen panels of a comic strip tell a story.

The closest theatrical parallel to a comic panel is the tableau. In a tableau, people freeze in a position that tells a story, using their frozen bodies to express actions, relationships, and emotions.

As a class, read Act 3, scene 2 aloud, beginning with the Nurse's entrance. Read the scene aloud in a circle, changing readers at each full stop. Discuss the scene. Some questions to consider:

- What are the main events of the scene?
- How does Juliet feel at the beginning of the scene? How do her feelings change over the course of the scene?
- What does the Nurse decide to do at the end of the scene? Why does she make this decision?

In groups of four, decide on the five main events of the scene to represent in tableaux. Create the tableaux, using your bodies to express the actions and emotions of the scene. Like a comic book artist, who must attach text (representative of speech) to a frozen image, decide on the text you want to attach to each image. (This will require a lot of cutting! Choose only the lines that you think are most important to tell the story.) Practice performing your tableaux in sequence. The group members who are not in the tableaux can speak the text from the sidelines! Share your tableaux with the class. What similarities and differences did you see among the groups?

*[To the teacher: One effective method of sharing tableaux can be through the "Curtain Down, Curtain Up" method. When you say "Curtain Down," everyone in the audience closes their eyes while the group gets into position for their first tableau. Count down from 10 and then say "Curtain Up." The audience then opens their eyes to look at the tableau in front of them. Repeat for each tableau. This method allows the audience to see each tableau as a truly isolated image.]*

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, R3, SL5**

## 75. MATCHING IMAGES TO TEXT

*[To the teacher: Choose a scene from your graphic novel—we recommend the section of Act 5, scene 3 when Paris apprehends Romeo at the Capulet's crypt. Any scene where the artist clearly establishes location and time of day will do, provided that the scene includes speech. Using whiteout, eliminate all dialogue, leaving the speech bubbles empty. Distribute copies to your students.]*

As you discovered when creating tableaux from text, it can be challenging and rewarding to condense a scene into still images. Comic book artists are experts at paring action down into panels. Looking at these images without the accompanying text, what can you infer about the scene? Where are the characters? What do they seem to be doing?

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

Using a script, look for the scene that you feel best matches the images. Use lines from the scene to fill in the speech bubbles. Graphic novels model concise language, which requires lots of cutting! Which lines are necessary to tell the story, and which lines can be cut? Look for language that compliments the artist's rendering.

Share your work in small groups. Did you make the same choices? Discuss why you chose the lines you used. How did the artist's rendering guide you?

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R1, R7**

## 76. FINAL IMAGE, PART 2

*Romeo and Juliet* ends with this declaration:

*Some shall be pardoned, and some punished:  
For never was a story of more woe  
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo. (5.3.308-310)*

In a theatrical production of *Romeo and Juliet*, the final "stage picture" might take place in or outside of the crypt, the final location in the play. You might see the crypt and the people inside: *Romeo and Juliet*, the Capulets, the Montagues, the Prince, the Friar, and some pages and guards. But a graphic novel isn't bound by the same constraints as the stage. The final image of a graphic novel can zero in on specific people or symbols in the scene, or even depict an altogether separate scene in the past or future.

After reading *Romeo and Juliet*, what are you left with? If you were a comic artist, how could you use a final image to impact the reader and give them closure? In Shakespeare's original text, the Prince speaks the final words. However, in a graphic novel, his words could be attributed to anyone. They could even be written as a caption instead of as dialogue.

Considering how one image can symbolize a larger idea or theme, sketch a final image to accompany the closing words of *Romeo and Juliet*. Don't worry about your artistic skill—instead, embrace what makes your artwork unique.

**CONSIDER COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS R2, W9**



Andrea San Miguel as Benvolio and Brian Grey as Mercutio in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2017 production of *Short Shakespeare! Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Marti Lyons. Photo by Liz Lauren.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## TEACHING “ROMEO AND JULIET” WITH FILM

BY MARY T. CHRISTEL

Given that Shakespeare as a playwright in Elizabethan England found himself at the epicenter of popular culture, one wonders if he would be writing screenplays if he were alive today. It is up to the savvy teacher to determine how to help students “read” Shakespeare in the three ways Mary Ellen Dakin suggests: as text, as performance, and as film. Dakin’s book, *Reading Shakespeare Film First*, might seem contradictory to the approach many English/Language Arts teachers take. How can one “read Shakespeare” studying film first? Film frequently follows the reading of a play and functions as “dessert” at the unit’s end. The strategies that follow are intended to help teachers reconsider how and when film can be used in order to motivate, clarify, and enrich students’ engagement with the play.

### FILMS CAN BE USED BEFORE READING...

#### ...to preview the story, characters and themes

Many of the stories that Shakespeare dramatized were familiar, even well known, to his audience, so providing students with a broad outline of the plot prior to reading would be consistent with the knowledge that Renaissance audiences brought to many of the plays they saw performed on stage. For an easy and quick way to introduce the play, you might screen *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales – Hamlet* (1992) with your students, an animated short that aired on HBO in the 1990s and now is distributed on DVD by Ambrose Video. This twenty-five minute, condensed animation retains the play’s original language and presents the essentials of the story. To give students a viewing focus, each can be assigned a particular character or plot thread to track through the film and write a summary about the importance of their assigned element to the work as a whole. Charged with becoming an “expert” on that element, students can use their summary as a focus while reading the play or seeing the performance, helping those who may feel overwhelmed by understanding a complicated narrative or Shakespeare’s language.

#### ...to create context

Film can be utilized as an introductory element to a unit to provide context prior to reading. Historian Michael Wood takes viewers on a lively tour of various locations throughout contemporary England to explore Shakespeare’s life, times, and plays in this acclaimed four-part series, *In Search of Shakespeare* (2004). Teachers can provide context by showing a commercially released film that “sets the stage” for the Elizabethan era, enabling students to get a sense of the politics, social customs, and “look” of the times. A film like *Elizabeth* (1998) starring Cate Blanchett has little to do with Shakespeare, but provides a vivid glimpse into the monarch’s struggle to claim and maintain the throne. *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) and *Anonymous* (2011) offer glimpses into the world of early modern theater practice and Shakespeare himself, but the liberties these films take with conventional understandings of historical events may create more confusion than clarity for some students. Excerpts, however, can help students visualize the time and the occasion of attending the theater. Films Media Group (<http://ffh.films.com/>) has an extensive catalogue of films useful in providing context; many titles are available as streaming video.

### FILMS CAN BE USED DURING READING...

#### ...to clarify understanding

For students who are having difficulty visualizing the action or fully comprehending the language, it can be beneficial to watch a film adaptation incrementally, act by act, in conjunction with reading the play. A dynamic way of approaching the play in class could involve three components:

- studying and discussing key scenes and speeches
- viewing portions of a film version (to fill in the gaps between what students are reading or to revisit moments that students found confusing)

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

- exploring key scenes and speeches through “active Shakespeare” strategies found in the Classroom Activities portion of this handbook.

The “Terms to Explore the Page-to-Screen Process” and “Key Questions for Classroom Discussion” on the following pages offer students the tools to “read” films as a visual text.

## ...to make comparisons

Just as the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries adapted Shakespeare’s scripts to fit the fashion and tastes of audiences Shakespeare’s scripts are often transformed to support the spectacle of the cinema. Every cinematic adapter of a complex dramatic text must grapple with the question: What can the art of film visually reveal through a close-up, crosscut, or a montage that effectively augments or replaces the text? In the past thirty years, Shakespeare’s plays have been transported to modern settings that maintain the broad outlines of plot and character but replace Shakespeare’s blank verse with contemporary language and colloquialisms. Viewing such adaptations in class allows students to see varied interpretations of the same story, opening up the idea that Shakespeare’s plays can be interpreted in a multitude of ways. See the Film Finder on page 91 for suggested adaptations.

## TERMS TO EXAMINE THE PAGE-TO-SCREEN PROCESS *(adapted from Film Adaptation, ed. James Naremore)*

**Fidelity:** Much discussion in film adaptation criticism focuses on how faithful a film is to the source material. Obviously, film and literature use different narrative strategies and tools of composition. A fruitful way to have students approach the question of fidelity is to ask them to list the scenes, characters, motifs, and symbols that are essential to telling the story of the source text. Then as they watch a film adaptation, they can keep track of how those elements are handled by the film.

**Film as Digest:** This concept acknowledges that the written text is far more detailed and comprehensive in its ability to set a scene, develop a character, reveal a narrative point of view, or create a symbol. Film works best in developing plot and showing action.

**Condensation:** In film, characters and events need to be collapsed or composited in order to fit the limitations and conventions of the film adaptation. Students can explore this term by determining which characters can be combined based on their common functions in the text.

**Immediacy:** Viewing a film is a far more “immediate” cognitive experience than reading a play. We decode visual images much faster and more readily than the printed word.

**Point of View:** The camera can express a point of view, just as the narrator of a written text. Point of view in film is visual and subtle. Here are three ways to express or describe the point of view in a film:

- Neutral: the camera is merely recording events as they happen in a reportorial fashion. Most common shot.
- Subjective: the camera assumes the point of view of one of the character so the viewer sees what the character sees.
- Authorial: the director very deliberately focuses the camera on a feature of a sequence or shot to comment on the action or reveal something.

**Shot and Sequence:** As defined by *Basic Film Terms: A Visual Dictionary*, a “shot” is the “basic unit of film structure or an unbroken strip of film made by an uninterrupted running of the camera.” Think of a shot as a “still” image that is combined with other still images to create a moving picture. A shot captures its subject from a particular distance and angle. The camera can be stationary or moving as it captures its subject. Individual shots then are joined together by the editing process to create a sequence of action.

## KEY QUESTIONS FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

### **Prior to viewing:**

- What are the essential scenes that must be included in an adaptation to cover the basic plot of Shakespeare’s play? What constitutes the exposition, inciting incident, central conflict, complications, climax and resolution to represent and streamline the central action?
- What point of view dominates the play? Who is the central character? Which character has the most soliloquies or asides and might have the strongest relationship with the audience as a result? How could the viewpoint of the

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

central character or the character that has the most direct connection with the audience be represented through the use of the camera?

- What details does the play provide to guide the casting of principle actors for the central characters? Looking at the text carefully, which details regarding physical appearance, class, or behavior should be embodied by an actor to make an immediate impression on the viewer?
- Which supporting characters are essential to the development of the plot and main characters? Which characters serve the same functions in the story? How might several of those characters be combined in order to condense the story in helpful and necessary ways?
- Which central images, motifs, symbols, or metaphors are central to the play? How could one or two of these literary techniques be translated into visual or sound techniques to make their impact more immediate in order to support or to replace the play's language? How would they be represented on the screen or through the musical score?

## ***During viewing:***

- How much of the dialogue from the play is used in a scene?
- To what extent does the camera work seem unobtrusive, natural, obvious, or stylized?
- Which character(s) appears mostly in one shots?
- At what point in the scene are two shots used? What is the effect of their use at that point?
- What is the typical distance (close, medium, long) of the camera to the subject of the shots? To what extent does the manipulation of camera distance make the scene an intimate one or not?
- To what extent are most of the shots at eye level, slightly above, or slightly below? How do subtle changes in angle influence how the viewer perceives the character in the shot? Are extreme high or low angles incorporated at times? To what effect?
- To what extent does the camera move? When? What is the effect of the movement?
- To what extent does the sequence use music? If it does, when do you become aware of the music and how does it set a mood or punctuate parts of the dialogue?

## ***After viewing:***

- Which of the screenwriter's choices to condense or expand the events of the play are the most successful in translating Shakespeare's text to the screen? Which choices are less successful or satisfying?
- Which narrative elements (events, characters, key speeches) omitted from the screen adaptation shift the focus of the comedy, tragedy, or history in comparison to the original text?
- If any characters were composites of two or more characters, what was gained or lost by reducing the number of characters or altering the function of a particular character?
- Which actors performed their roles in expected and/or unexpected ways? Did Shakespeare's play dictate how roles should be performed?
- Which visual elements of the film made the strongest impression upon you as a viewer?
- How did the visuals help draw your attention to an element of plot, a character, or a symbol that you might have missed or failed to understand when reading the play?
- As a reader of the play, how did viewing the film help you to better understand the overall plot, a particular character, or specific symbol/theme?

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## FILMS CAN BE USED DURING READING...

### ...to clarify understanding

For students who are having difficulty visualizing the action or fully comprehending the language, it can be beneficial to watch a faithful adaptation incrementally, act by act. Again, Zeffirelli's version of *Romeo and Juliet* works well. The film is easily broken down act by act with all the critical incidents and speeches intact. Students should be given a focus for their viewing, through the lens of their own questions and quandaries that they retain after reading an act, along with thoughts on how the film might address them. As students become more comfortable with the reading/viewing rhythm as they work through the play, they can adopt a more "critical" attitude toward examining later acts to discuss choices made by the screenwriter/adaptor, director, designers and actors.

When working with students who are really struggling with the language and where listening to a recorded version of a play isn't particularly helpful or engaging, film can also be used in a "read along" fashion for the exposition and key scenes or speeches. Students follow in their own printed text while the film is running, and are coached to follow in their book while taking "peeks" at the screen when they need the support of the image to clarify their understanding of the language. Staged versions of a play with close adherence to the script (BBC, for example) are better choices for this application. More cinematic versions tend to be so visually rich that students have a hard time reading rather than watching. For example, the RSC filmed version of *Macbeth* (1979) featuring Ian McKellan and Judi Dench in the leading roles follows the standard text fairly closely in most of the interactions between *Macbeth* and Lady *Macbeth*. This strategy is best used for the analysis of short scenes or at moments of crisis in students' understanding. It is essential for teachers to prescreen scenes to make sure that they closely follow the edition of the play being studied as much as possible.

### ...to make comparisons

Just as the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries adapted Shakespeare's scripts to fit the fashion and tastes of the theatergoing audiences (as susceptible to trends as the fashion industry), once Shakespeare's work entered the multi-media performance space of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the text is often transformed to support the spectacle of the cinematic image. Every cinematic adapter of a complex dramatic text must consider the balance of "showing" versus "telling," sometimes choosing to emphasize the visual over the verbal. These adapters struggle with the question: What can the art of cinema reveal visually through a close-up, crosscut, or a montage that effectively augments or replaces the text? In the past thirty years, Shakespeare's comedies, tragedies, histories and romances have been transported to modern settings that maintain the broad outlines of plot and character but replace Shakespeare's blank verse with contemporary language and colloquialisms.

A sample list of adaptations includes:

<i>Zebrahead</i> (1992)	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
<i>Ten Things I Hate About You</i> (1999)	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
<i>O</i> (2001)	<i>Othello</i>
<i>She's the Man</i> (1996)	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
<i>My Own Private Idaho</i> (1991)	<i>Henry IV</i>
<i>Tempest</i> (1982)	<i>The Tempest</i>
<i>A Thousand Acres</i> (1997)	<i>King Lear</i>
<i>Scotland, PA</i> (2001)	<i>Macbeth</i>
<i>Men of Respect</i> (1990)	<i>Macbeth</i>

Additional adaptations of plot, characters and setting include four plays in the BBC series, entitled *Shakespeare Re-Told* (2005): *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Macbeth*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. A second type of adaptation shifts the plot and characters to another genre, such as the musical (*West Side Story/Romeo and Juliet* or *Kiss Me Kate/The Taming of the Shrew*), science fiction (*Forbidden Planet/The Tempest*) or the Western

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

(*Broken Lancel/King Lear*). *Royal Deceit* (aka *Prince of Jutland*, 1994) tells the story of the “historical” Prince *Hamlet* using Danish source material to differentiate the story from Shakespeare’s approach. Akira Kurosawa produced the best-known adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays placing them in a different cultural context with his films *Throne of Blood* (1957) based on *Macbeth*, and *Ran* (1985) based on *King Lear*. Soviet filmmaker Grigori Kozintsev adapted both *Hamlet* (1964) and *King Lear* (1991), which have been restored and released recently on DVD. For film historians and real curiosity seekers, a collection of adaptations, which run from a few minutes to over an hour, showcase the earliest eras of cinema, entitled *Silent Shakespeare*. Sharing these adaptations, in part or in full, can facilitate the discussion of the relevance of Shakespeare’s themes, conflicts and characters across time, cultures, and cinematic traditions.

## FILMS CAN BE USED AFTER READING...

### ...for culminating projects and summative assessment

Students can successfully engage in their own film production as a collaborative project. A movie trailer can tout an imagined film adaptation of the play they have just studied. The necessary steps involved can be found in *Lesson Plans for Creating Media-Rich Classrooms* (NCTE 2007), which includes Scott Williams’s lesson, “Turning Text into Movie Trailers: The *Romeo and Juliet* iMovie Experience.” Creating a trailer requires that students: first focus on the essential elements of plot, character and theme in order to convey excitement; and second, develop an imagined version in a highly condensed and persuasive form, which comes to life in a minute or two.

## TERMS TO EXAMINE THE PAGE-TO-SCREEN PROCESS

(adapted from *Film Adaptation*, ed. James Naremore)

### Fidelity:

Much discussion in film adaptation criticism focuses on how faithful a film is to the source material. Obviously, film and literature use very different narrative strategies and tools of composition. A fruitful way to have students approach the question of fidelity is to ask them to list the scenes, characters, motifs, and symbols that are essential to telling the story of the source text. Then as they watch a film adaptation, they can keep track of how those elements are handled by the film version.

### Film as Digest:

This concept acknowledges that the written text is far more detailed and comprehensive in its ability to set a scene, develop a character, reveal a narrative point of view, or create a symbol. Film works best in developing plot and showing action.

### Condensation:

Due to the “film as digest” phenomenon, characters and events need to be collapsed or composited in order to fit the limitations and conventions of the film adaptation. Students can explore this term by determining which characters can be combined based on their common functions in the text.

### Immediacy:

Viewing a film is a far more “immediate” experience cognitively than reading a book. We decode visual images much faster and more readily than the printed word.

### Point of View:

The camera can express a point of view, just as the narrator of a written text can and does. Voice-over narrators are seldom used in film, since it seems artificial and intrusive. Point of view in film is visual and subtle.

Here are three ways to express or describe the point of view in a film:

- Neutral: the camera is merely recording events as they happen in a reportorial fashion. This is the most common shot in filmmaking.
- Subjective: the camera assumes the point of view of one of the character so the viewer sees what the character sees.
- Authorial: the director very deliberately focuses the camera on a feature of a sequence or shot to comment on the action or reveal something.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## Shot and Sequence:

As defined by *Basic Film Terms: A Visual Dictionary*, a “shot” is the “basic unit of film structure or an unbroken strip of film made by an uninterrupted running of the camera.” Think of a shot as a “still” image that is combined with other still images to create a moving picture. A shot captures its subject from a particular distance and angle. The camera can be stationary or moving as it captures its subject. Individual shots then are joined together by the editing process to create a sequence of action.

## KEY QUESTIONS FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

### Prior to viewing:

- In order to maintain fidelity to Shakespeare’s play, what are the essential scenes that must be included in an adaptation to cover the basic plot? Considering that film is a digest of the original play, what constitutes the exposition, inciting incident, central conflict, complications, climax and resolution to represent and streamline the central action?
- What point of view dominates the play? Who is the central character? Which character has the most soliloquies or asides and might have the strongest relationship with the reader/viewer as a result? How could the viewpoint of the central character or the character that has the most direct connection with the audience be represented through the use of the camera? Or, should the camera maintain a neutral position to reveal the story and the characters?
- What details does the play provide to guide the casting of principle actors for the central characters? Looking at the text carefully, which details regarding physical appearance, class or behavior should be embodied by an actor to make an immediate impression on the viewer?
- Which supporting characters are essential to the development of the plot and main characters? Which characters serve the same functions in the story? How might several of those characters be composited in order to condense the story in helpful and necessary ways considering a film will normally be shorter than a stage production?
- Which central images, motifs, symbols or metaphors are central to the literary source? How could one or two of these literary techniques be translated into visual or sound techniques to make their impact more immediate in order to support or to replace the play’s language? How would they be represented on the screen or through the musical score?

### During viewing:

- How much of the actual dialogue from the play itself is used in a scene?
- To what extent does the camera work seem unobtrusive, natural or obvious, stylized?
- Which character(s) appears mostly in one shots?
- At what point in the scene are two shots used? What is the effect of their use at that point?
- What is the typical distance (close, medium, long) of the camera to the subject of the shots? To what extent does the manipulation of camera distance make the scene an intimate one or not?
- To what extent are most of the shots at eye level, slightly above, or slightly below? How do subtle changes in angle influence how the viewer perceives the character in the shot?
- To what extent does the scene make use of extreme high or low angles? To what effect?
- To what extent does the camera move? When? What is the effect of the movement?
- To what extent does the sequence use music? If it does, when do you become aware of the music and how does it set a mood or punctuate parts of the dialogue?

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## **After viewing:**

- Which choices made to condense the events of the play by the screenwriter are the most successful in translating the original text to the screen? Which choices are less successful or satisfying?
- Which narrative elements (events, characters, key speeches) omitted from the screen adaptation of the play shift the focus of the comedy, tragedy or history in comparison to the original text?
- If any characters were composites of two or more characters, what was gained or lost by reducing the number of characters or altering the function of a particular character?
- Which actors performed their roles in expected and/or unexpected ways? How did the original text dictate how roles should be performed?
- Which visual elements of the film made the strongest impression upon you as a viewer?
- How did the visuals help draw your attention to an element of plot, a character or a symbol that you might have missed or failed to understand when reading the play?
- As a reader of the play, how did viewing the film help you to better understand the overall plot, particular character, or specific symbol/theme?



Nate Santana as Romeo and Emma Ladji as Juliet in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2017 production of *Short Shakespeare! Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Marti Lyons. Photo by Liz Lauren.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## ROMEO AND JULIET FILM FINDER

BY MARY T. CHRISTEL

### TOP FIVE FILMS TO INVITE INTO YOUR CLASSROOM

1. *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales – Romeo and Juliet* (1992, 25 min.), Ambrose Video  
The Pre-viewing, Pre-reading Experience by Hitting the Highlights: This twenty-five minute condensation of the play provides the perfect overview of the characters and plot that prepares students for reading the play or seeing a performance.
2. *Shakespeare Uncovered: Romeo and Juliet with Joseph Fiennes* (2015, 55 min.), PBS  
Providing Context: Joseph Fiennes, the actor who played the Bard in the film *Shakespeare in Love*, explores the tragedy for examining its source material, its adaptation to ballet and musical theater as well as how the play connects with modern audiences through a discussion with night school students in London. Fiennes observes a rehearsal at The Globe where a contemporary male actor takes on the role of Juliet.  
Preview of episode:  
<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/shakespeare-uncovered/uncategorized/romeo-juliet-joseph-fiennes-full-episode/>
3. *Romeo Is Bleeding* (2015, 93 min., NR)  
Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHcgeQqsrrw>  
Viewing guide available at:  
<http://filmed.sffs.org/film-ed/lesson-library/sffs-viewing-guides/romeo-is-bleeding-sffs-viewing-guide>
4. *My Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet for a New Generation* (2005, 110 min, NR) PBS  
Preview: <http://www.films.com/ecTitleDetail.aspx?TitleID=20674>  
Finding Contemporary Relevance: Both *Romeo Is Bleeding* and *My Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet for a New Generation* are documentaries focus on nonprofessional actors coming together to explore Shakespeare's tragedy and discover how the play's conflicts and themes are absolutely relevant and powerful today. *Romeo Is Bleeding* follows spoken word artist Donte Clark, who works at a community arts center and adapts Shakespeare's tragedy as Te's Harmony to reflect the gang conflicts that divide Richmond, California. *My Shakespeare* traces the process of a professional actor who returns to his low-income neighborhood in London to cast, rehearse, and perform *Romeo and Juliet* with young minority residents, with film director Baz Luhrmann as his mentor.
5. *Warm Bodies* (2013, 98 min., PG-13)  
“Cold body. Warm heart”: Based on a YA novel, the zombie apocalypse meets *Romeo and Juliet*, when a sweet zombie named R saves a human named Julie, falls in love with her, and learns how to be human again—complete with a reworking of the balcony scene.  
Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07s-cNffDM>

### ADAPTATIONS

Films based on *Romeo and Juliet* number in the dozens, and traditionally, very seasoned adult actors portray the teenaged lovers. Norma Shearer was 34 when she played Juliet opposite 41-year-old Leslie Howard in the 1934 film version. Here is a selection that would appeal to students and are easy to find on DVD or to access online with mostly “age appropriate” actors in the roles. The first group of films situation the tragedy in a Renaissance setting.

#### Theatrical release films

1. Leonard Whiting and Olivia Hussey (1968, 138 min.), Directed by Franco Zeffirelli  
This version was the first film to use two “age appropriate” actors in the title roles. Winner of two Academy Awards for its costume design and cinematography, the film also produced a best selling soundtrack. This is a durable and accessible adaptation that is faithful to Shakespeare's themes, characters, and language.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

2. Douglas Booth & Hailee Stanfield (2013, 118 min.), directed by Carlo Carlei  
Julian Fellowes, the creator of *Downton Abbey*, wrote the adapted screenplay. This version also features Hailey Stanfield in her first major role after her 2010 Oscar nomination for *True Grit*. The film opens with a tournament of skill between Mercutio and Tybalt to establish the rivalry between the families, and Romeo is introduced sculpting a bust of his beloved Rosaline, so this version might be best screened after the students have read the play to discuss Fellowes choices that are not fully informed by clues in Shakespeare's text.

## Made for television

1. Patrick Ryecart and Rebecca Saire (1978, 168 min.), directed by Alvin Rakoff  
Part of the *BBC Television Shakespeare* series that original aired on PBS, this production presents a largely uncut version of the text that is easy to use if students need a read/view experience to preview key scenes. Alan Rickman appears in the role of Tybalt.

## Filmed stage productions

1. Antoni Cimilino and Megan Follows (1993, 162 min.), directed by Norman Campbell  
This Stratford Festival production emphasized the youth, impulsiveness, and inexperience of *Romeo and Juliet*. An interview with Megan Follows regarding this production can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kTHZ7T3bbUY>.
2. Adetomiwa Edun and Ellie Kendrick (2009, 171 min.), directed by Dominic Dromgoole  
Taped before a live audience at Shakespeare's Globe in London, this period production casts *Romeo and Juliet* as an interracial couple and this film is available on DVD and online through Globe Player.
3. Antoine Yared & Sara Farb (2018, 161 min.), directed by Scott Wentworth  
This production emphasizes the darker thematic elements of the play and emphasize the lack of control the young lovers have that leads to their tragic end.

## Adaptations situated in contemporary settings

1. Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes (1996, 130 min.), directed by Baz Luhrmann  
This clever modern adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* features sensitive performances of the two lead actors. Some of the more audacious choices Luhrmann makes with characterization, music, and cuts to the text might leave some students both intrigued and confused if they are new to reading and viewing a Shakespeare play.  
Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjxHdNxvSU>
2. Orlando Bloom and Condola Rashad (2014, 135 min.), directed by Don Roy King  
Directed for the stage by David Leveaux, this production features an interracial cast and marks Bloom's Broadway debut. Romeo is played as a "bad boy" against a more innocent Juliet. The set integrates elements that evoke the modern period and the play's Renaissance origins.  
Promo clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjOJAuXaCOc>

## TAKING THE PLAY TO OTHER TIMES, PLACES AND CONTEXTS

The following films use the template of *Romeo and Juliet* to dramatize the cultural and racial differences, which place young lovers in situations plagued by fresh, ingrained, or long forgotten grudges and prejudices that force them apart.

1. *Zebrahead* (1992, 102 min., R)  
Set in Detroit, a Jewish teenager falls in love with a friend's cousin, a black girl from New York. Their relationship creates friction at home and at school with violent consequences out on the neighborhood streets.  
Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7y3k6KjU4Sk>

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

2. *Solomon and Gaenor* (1999, 100 min., NR)  
Set in a Welsh mining town in 1911, a Jewish boy falls in love with a Welsh girl and engage in a reckless and passionate relationship, where Solomon poses as a Gentile in order to win Gaenor's family's acceptance.  
Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgpMsWsLgi0>
3. *Crazy/Beautiful* (2001, 135 min., PG-13)  
The rebellious, privileged daughter of a congressman cultivates a romance at her private school with a Latino classmate from a blue-collar neighborhood. Nicole's self-destructive behavior threatens Carlos's ambitions to transcend his humble origins and contributes to the drama and modern-day take.  
Trailer: <http://www.imdb.com/video/screenplay/vi4192731417>
4. *Bollywood Queen* (2002, 99 min., NR)  
Set in London, an Indian young woman, Geena, falls for a Scottish man, Jay. Not only do cultural differences make this relationship difficult, but their families become bitter rivals in the clothing industry. Despite the trauma and the drama—it's a musical!  
Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJxM05wUil>
5. *Rwanda and Juliet* (2016, 88 min., NR)  
In this uplifting documentary, an Ivy League professor directs a production of *Romeo and Juliet* in Rwanda with students from Tutsi and Hutu background years after the 1994 genocide 1,000,000 Tutsi deaths.  
Available online: <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/rwanda>.
6. *In Fair Palestine: A Story of Romeo and Juliet* (2008, 50 min., NR)  
Made by students from a Quaker-run high school on the West Bank, this film transfers *Romeo and Juliet* to modern-day Ramallah. Documentary elements are interspersed throughout the narrative that focuses on the lives of Palestinian teens.  
Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8bHw8gU4wWY>
7. *West Side Story* (1961, 152 min., NR)  
Probably the most well-known *Romeo and Juliet* adaptation of all, the Jets and the Sharks battle for turf on the mean streets of New York in the 1950s, while Tony and Maria fall in love at first sight at a dance in the gym and face tragic consequences after a rumble that the rival gangs call to settle a score.  
Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NF1L3NorO3E>
8. *West Bank Story* (2005, 21:20 min., NR)  
Israeli soldier and Palestinian fast food cashier fall in love in this Oscar-nominated short film, which creates a charming mash-up of *Romeo and Juliet*, *West Side Story*, and contemporary Middle Eastern politics.  
Full movie: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgQfCUNf0no>
9. *Rome and Jewel* (2008, 90 min.)  
Set in LA, this hip-hop adaptation brings together the son of a Compton preacher with the mayor's daughter. The hip-hop music relies on elements of Shakespeare's texts that could be excerpted for analysis and discussion.  
*Romeo and Juliet* also serves as a template in several films that address how LGBT couples are separated by prejudice and misunderstanding. These films would be best suited to college level classrooms or student selected, individual viewing for most high school applications.
10. *Verona* (2010, 22 min., NR)  
A provincial college town provides the setting for this adaptation, which complicates the relationship between two young men through the disapproval of their rival fraternities and the school's mission to groom students for success in corporate America. The film was shot to create interest in developing the short into a feature length film.  
Website: [http://www.veronathemovie.com/Verona\\_The\\_Movie/Verona\\_The\\_Movie\\_Official\\_Web\\_Site\\_About.html](http://www.veronathemovie.com/Verona_The_Movie/Verona_The_Movie_Official_Web_Site_About.html)

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

**11. *Private Romeo* (2011, 93 min., NR)**

Set in a military academy, an all-male cast performs Shakespeare's tragedy that leads to a relationship forming between the two young men playing *Romeo and Juliet*,

Website: <http://www.privateromeothemovie.com>

**AND, WHO THOUGHT THAT *ROMEO AND JULIET* COULD BE THE STUFF OF ROMANTIC COMEDY? THESE FILMS TAKE A LIGHTER LOOK AT THE STAR-CROSSED LOVERS.**

**1. *Shakespeare in Love* (1998, 137 min., R)**

This Oscar-winning film imagines Shakespeare battling writer's block while he attempts to write *Romeo and Ethel, the Pirates Daughter*, only to discover his muse. The results are a passionate affair, a woman in disguise on the London stage, and the birth of Shakespeare's most well known tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet*.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5R5La5f3eo>

**2. *Romeo and Juliet Get Married* (2005, 90 min., NR)**

This Brazilian comedy finds modern day *Romeo and Juliet* supporting rival soccer teams, and "Romeu" pretends to support "Julieta's" team to win her heart and gain her father's approval. Maybe R&J can finally live happily ever after!

**ROMEO AND JULIET GETS ANIMATED**

*Romeo and Juliet* runs so deeply into popular culture that the youngest of viewers can encounter the star-crossed lovers in family fare, while tweens and teens find it as the basis for a Japanese import anime series.

**1. *Gnomeo and Juliet* (2011, 84 min., G)**

In Stratford-upon-Avon, garden gnomes in rival neighbors' gardens feud among themselves all with their human owners until Gnomeo and Juliet fall in love.

**2. *Lion King II: Simba's Pride* (1998, 81 min., G)**

In this straight-to-video sequel, Simba and Nala's daughter, Kiara, falls for a rogue lion, Kuvo, from a banished pride, once loyal to the malicious Scar.

**3. *Romeo x Juliet* (2007, TV series, 24 episodes, NR)**

The rivalry between the Montagues and the Capulets erupts in a bloody coup on the island of Neo Verona. This anime adaptation draws from a number of Shakespeare's plays in addition to *Romeo and Juliet*.

**ALL ACTION, NO TALK: SILENT FILMS**

Shakespeare's tragic couple gets the silent treatment in three early films.

**1. 1908, directed by J. Stuart Blackton**

Filmed in Central Park, this short is the first version of *Romeo and Juliet* shot in the United States.

**2. 1916, directed by J. Gordon Edwards**

Produced by Fox studios, this film runs 70 minutes and features silent screen siren, Theda Bara, as Juliet.

**3. 1916, directed by John W. Noble and Francis X. Bushman, who also played Romeo**

Released three days before the Theda Bara film, this version was produced to commemorate the 300th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, and uses inter-titles to place text on screen to complement the action. Some prints of the Fox production with Theda Bara borrowed inter-titles from this film.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## ALL SONG, ALL DANCE: SET TO CLASSICAL MUSIC

In addition to the classic musical *West Side Story*, the tragedy has been adapted into a celebrated *Romeo and Juliette* by Charles Gonoud as well as memorable ballet by Sergei Prokofiev. Both works are available on DVD and as audio recordings performed by a number of notable opera and ballet companies.

## COMING ATTRACTIONS: HIP-HOP R&J

Netflix will debut a musical adaptation set on the streets of contemporary New York created by Slovan “Slick” Naim and produced by Will Smith.

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**MARY T. CHRISTEL** taught AP Literature and Composition as well as media and film studies courses at Adlai E. Stevenson High School, 1979-2012. She has published several works on media literacy, as well as contributing to a number of edited collections on teaching. She co-authored *Acting It Out: Using Drama in the Classroom to Improve Student Engagement, Reading, and Critical Thinking* (2017) with TimeLine Theatre.



Emma Ladji as Juliet and Nate Santana as Romeo in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2017 production of *Short Shakespeare! Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Marti Lyons. Photo by Liz Lauren.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## CLASSROOM WARM-UPS AND COMMUNITY BUILDERS

A brief physical and vocal warm-up can help your students move from a “classroom mode” to a “studio mode.” It sets the tone for a student learning Shakespeare in a theatrical sense as well as a literary sense. Try warming up every class, and you will find that after the first couple of times, your students’ nerves—and yours—will be unseated by energy and focus. A few rehearsals in the privacy of your own home can do a lot to bolster your courage!

Every actor develops his/her own set of physical and vocal warm-ups. Warm-ups help the actor prepare for rehearsal or performance not only physically, but also mentally. The actor has the chance to focus on the work at hand, forgetting all the day-to-day distractions of life, and beginning to assume the flexibility required to create a character. The body, the voice and the imagination are the actor’s (and the student’s) tools in mastering Shakespeare.

### PHYSICAL WARM-UPS

#### 1. GETTING STARTED

- creates focus on the immediate moment
- brings students to body awareness
- helps dispel tension

Begin by taking a comfortable stance with your feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointing straight ahead, knees relaxed. Inhale deeply through your nose, filling your lungs deep into your abdomen, and exhale through your mouth. Repeat this a few times. Notice how your lungs fill like a six-sided box, creating movement in all six directions.

#### 2. WARM-UP FROM THE TOP OF THE BODY DOWN *(approximately 7-10 minutes)*

- gentle movement helps increase circulation, flexibility, and body readiness
  - increases physical and spatial awareness
- a. Begin by doing head-rolls to the left and to the right, about four times each way, very slowly. Then do a series of shoulder rolls to the back and to the front, again very slowly, and emphasizing a full range of motion.
  - b. Stretch each arm toward the ceiling alternately, and try to pull all the way through the rib cage, repeating this motion six to eight times.
  - c. Next, with particular care to keep knees slightly bent, twist from the waist in each direction, trying to look behind. Again, repeat six to eight times.
  - d. From a standing position, starting with the top of the head, roll down with relaxed neck and arms until the body is hanging from the waist. Shake things around, making sure your body is relaxed. From this position, bend at the knees, putting both hands on the floor. Stretch back up to hanging. Repeat this action about four times. Then roll back up—starting from the base of the spine, stack each vertebra until the head is the last thing to come up.
  - e. Repeat the deep breathing from the beginning of the warm-up. Bring your feet together, bend your knees. Keeping your knees together, rotate them in a circle parallel to the ground six to eight times. Repeat in the other direction. Return to standing.
  - f. Pick up the right foot, rotate it inward six to eight times, and then do the same with the left foot. Repeat with outward rotation of the foot. Take a few moments and shake out the entire body.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## VOCAL WARM-UPS

*[Your vocal warm-up should follow your physical warm-up directly—approximately 7 minutes]*

### 3. GETTING STARTED

- helps connect physicality to vocality
- begins to open the imagination to performance possibilities
- a. Begin by gently massaging and pat the muscles of your face. This will help wake up the facial muscles.
- b. Stick out your tongue out as far as possible—repeat this with the tongue pointing up, down, and to each side. (This exercise will seem strange, but can be made silly and fun, while accomplishing the necessary vocal warm-up. When students see you going through these exercises with commitment, that's often all they need to draw them in.) Repeat this exercise once or twice.
- c. Put your lips gently together and blow air through them, creating a “raspberry.”
- d. Next, hum, quietly, loudly, and across the entire vocal range. The vocal instrument loves to hum. Explore all the resonating spaces in the body, by moving the sound around. Humming helps to lubricate.
- e. Create the vowel sounds, overemphasizing each shape with the face –A, E, I, O, and U—with no break.
- f. Choose two or three tongue-twisters—there are some listed below. Again overemphasizing the shape of each sound with the lips, tongue, jaw, and facial muscles, begin slowly with each tongue-twister, and gradually speed up, repeating until the speed is such that the enunciation is lost.

### 4. TONGUE TWISTERS

- red leather, yellow leather ... (focus on the vertical motion of the mouth)
- unique New York... (focus on the front to back movement of the face)
- rubber, baby, buggie, bumpers... (focus on the clear repetition of the soft plosives)
- Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers... (focus on the clear repetition of hard plosives)

**One of the actors at Chicago Shakespeare Theater likes to describe the experience of acting Shakespeare as the “Olympics of Acting.”** Shakespeare’s verse demands a very flexible vocal instrument, and an ability to express not only the flow of the text, but the emotional shifts which are suggested by the variations in rhythm and sound. In light of the sheer volume of words, some of which are rarely—if ever—used in modern vocabulary, the actor must also be prepared to help the audience with his body, as well. An actor acting Shakespeare must go through each word of his text, determine its meaning, and then express it clearly to his audience. This requires a very physically demanding style. The physical and vocal warm-up is the actor’s basis for each performance.

## COMMUNITY BUILDERS

Each of these exercises is meant to open and expand our imaginations, increase our sense of “ensemble” or teamwork, and encourage being “in the moment.” These are some of the most fundamental and crucial elements of an actor’s training—and, of course, they are fundamental, too, to the learning process in the classroom.

### 5. STAGE PICTURES *(approximately 10 minutes)*

- shows how varied interpretation is: there is no one “right” answer
- encourages the students to interpret concepts with their whole bodies
- begins to show how the body interprets emotion

You will need a list of very strong descriptive, colorful, emotional words from the script for this activity. Find your own, or use our examples below.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

<i>breathed defiance</i>	Benvolio, Act 1, scene 1
<i>love's light wings</i>	Romeo, Act 2, scene 2
<i>music of sweet news</i>	Juliet, Act 2, scene 5
<i>love-devouring Death</i>	Romeo, Act 2, scene 6
<i>blood lies a-bleeding</i>	Prince, Act 3, scene 1
<i>fiend angelical</i>	Juliet, Act 3, scene 2
<i>the honey of thy breath</i>	Romeo, Act 5, scene 3
<i>kill your joys with love</i>	Prince, Act 5, scene 3

Begin walking around the room. While walking, fill up the entire space, exploring pacing, what it would feel like to be a different weight or a different height. Move the center of your body into different places. For instance, try walking with your nose leading your body. Now try your hip, your knee, your elbow and so forth.

Shakespeare's characters are often very physically broad. He created elderly characters and hunchbacked characters; clowns, star-crossed lovers and cold-blooded killers. These characters call for the actors to figure out how they move. If the character is greedy, should his center be in his/her gut? Or perhaps his/her chin? The actor must be prepared to experiment with the character's body.

Notice if you feel any emotional differences within these changes. After about three minutes of exploring these changes, see if you notice any particularly interesting discoveries. *[To the teacher: encourage these discoveries without necessarily drawing focus to individual students, as this is a self-reflective activity, but perhaps suggest to the group they might "Try what it feels like if you slow your pace, hunch your shoulders, droop your head, and move your center into your knees."]*

After a few minutes of this exploration, find a "neutral" walk. You are now going to create a stage picture as an entire group. Chose a word, and then count down from seven. After those seven beats, say freeze, and the class must create a photograph of the word you have chosen, with their entire body, collectively. Comment on the emotional quality the stage picture exudes. After a couple of words, split the group in half—half will be in the space and half will be audience. Repeat the process, asking the observing group:

- What do you notice?
- What emotions are evoked in the stage picture?
- What questions do you have about the stage picture?
- What changes would you like to suggest to strengthen or clarify the stage picture?
- What patterns do you see emerging from the stage picture?

## 6. MIRRORING (approximately 10 minutes)

- helps build trust within the ensemble
- encourages the students to "listen" with all their senses
- helps the students reach a state of "relaxed readiness," which will encourage their impulses, and discourage their internal censors

Many actors will tell you that learning the lines is the easy part; making it come out of their mouths as if for the first time is the hard part, especially with Shakespeare. Shakespeare can sound like a song, but how do you make it sound like real people talking to each other? Actors listen to each other, and try to respond to what they hear in the moment of the play. Listening is a very important part of acting; it keeps the moment real—and the characters believable.

Find a partner, then comfortably sit facing your partner, in fairly close proximity. You and your partner will be mirrors of each other. One partner will begin as the leader, and the other partner will move as their reflection. You must begin by using smaller, slower movements, and work up to the maximum range of movement that your partner can follow. Partners should make eye-contact and see each other as a whole picture, rather than following each other's small motions with their eyes. Switch leaders and repeat.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

After the second leader has had a turn, students will stand and increase their range of movement. Switch leaders and repeat. Keep going, but now there is no leader. See what happens, and then discuss.

## 7. **FOUR UP** (*approximately 5 minutes, but can also be extended*)

- helps the ensemble work together
- helps to slowly introduce physical activities in the classroom
- helps to bring focus to the classroom

For this game, everyone should be seated; it would be fine for the students to stay seated at their desks. The goal of this game is to have four people standing at all times. There are a few rules—everyone can stand up whenever they want, but only four should be standing at a time and they can only stand up for a maximum of 5 seconds. Finally everyone needs to pay attention to each other and everybody should participate and try to stand with a group of four.

A sense of community and having a strong focus can be the keys to a successful production (and classroom too!). This exercise can help to establish those things in a fun way that is also getting the students up on their feet.

## 8. **ZING! BALL** (*approximately 5 minutes, and requires a soft ball about 8-12 inches in diameter*)

- helps the ensemble grow together
- helps the students let go of their internal “censor” and begin tapping into their impulses
- brings the physical and the vocal actor tools together

Stand in a circle, facing into the center. In this game, the ball carries with it energy. This energy is like a feedback loop that increases the energy, speed, and focus of the entire group by the amount that each actor-student puts into the ball. The idea is to keep the ball moving in the circle without letting the energy drop. There should be no space between throw and catch. There should be no thought as to whom the student will throw the ball to next. As the ball is thrown, to keep the intensity of the energy, you must make eye contact with the person you are throwing the ball to, and at the moment of release, the person throwing should say “Zing!” Experiment with the way you say “Zing!” It could be loud or soft, in a character voice, or in whatever way you wish, as long as it is impulsive and with energy.

Shakespeare has love scenes, sword fights, betrayals, and all sorts of relationships in his plays. Actors must be able to experiment, follow their impulses, and create character without the fear of failure.

## 9. **ZING! BALL (WITHOUT A BALL)** (*approximately 5-7 minutes*)

- asks the students to make their imagination clear to the ensemble
- focuses the students on physical detail

This exercise builds on Zing! Ball. Take the ball out of the circle and set it aside. Take an imaginary Zing! Ball out of your pocket. Grow this ball from a tiny rubber ball into a huge balloon. Using “Zing!,” toss the ball to someone across the circle, and as it floats down, that person will try to catch it with the same weight and speed as you threw it. Then he/she will recreate the ball into a different weight and size, making it clear to the rest of the circle how it changed. In the same way as Zing! Ball, work around the circle.

The wide range of vocabulary in Shakespeare’s plays can often be intimidating as one reads the scripts. The actor’s job is to make the language clear, and this is often accomplished by very specific physical gesturing.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

## 10. **WAH!** (approximately 5-10 minutes)

- facilitates physical awareness and risk-taking
- encourages vocal projection
- helps actors increase their sense of timing and decrease response time

Stand in a circle, facing in. No one in the circle is a student or teacher any longer, but rather a fearsome warrior. Press the palms of your hands flat together to become a sword.

To begin the game, one warrior raises his or her sword straight up, then brings it down, pointing at another warrior in the circle. Warriors must make excellent eye contact to avoid confusion. As the warrior brings down his or her sword, he or she utters a fearsome battle cry, by saying, "Wah!" (Be wary, warriors, of shouting, which comes from the throat and leads to laryngitis, a warrior's worst enemy. Using the good support and deep breathing from your vocal warm-up will help you keep your vocal chords in top fighting condition.) When you become the recipient of "Wah!," raise your sword up above your head. While your sword is raised, the warriors on either side of you slash towards her stomach, as they cry "Wah!" in unison. Then make eye contact with someone else in the circle, slash your sword towards them with a final defiant "Wah!" Each "battle" should therefore include three cries of "Wah!"

As the group becomes familiar with the game, work to increase your speed and volume. This is a silly game; remember that warriors don't care about "looking cool" because they're too busy fighting unending battles. When a warrior misses his or her cue, stop the round and start it again until everyone is comfortable being loud and making big physical choices.

## 11. **ZIP ZAP ZOP!** (approximately 5 minutes)

- facilitates mental focus
- encourages eye contact and team work
- builds a sense of rhythm and pace

[To the teacher: For a demonstration of this community builder, watch this video, <http://www.tinyurl.com/zipzapzop>, for a demonstration and instructions.]

Stand in a circle, facing in. Bring your hands to your chest in a prayer pose. Make sure everyone can see each person in the circle. Eye contact is going to be very important! Point your hands like a laser, make clear eye contact at another person in the circle, and say "zip," "zap" or "zop," picking up your cue from the person before you. While maintaining the word sequence of zip, zap, zop as well as the rhythm, start slowly and eventually build speed.

## 12. **TO BE!** (approximately 5-10 minutes,)

- helps students to listen to and work with one another, creating a supportive learning community
- brings the physical and the vocal actor tools together
- facilitates mental focus
- introduces students to some of Shakespeare's language and characters

[To the teacher: consider using ZIP, ZAP, ZOP as a scaffold to this warm-up.]

Stand in a circle, facing in. One person will start as the keeper of the energy. There are multiple ways to pass the energy, all based off Shakespeare's plays and words. The idea is to keep the energy constantly in motion around and across the circle. Introduce each option one at a time, so students have time to experiment with each option as the game builds in complexity.

- "To be!"—make eye contact with the person to the left or right of you. Reach towards them with your hand (as if you are clutching Yorick's skull) while speaking this line from *Hamlet*. Now that person has the energy.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

- “Not to be!”—to change the direction the energy is flowing, hold up your hands in a “stop” gesture while speaking this line from *Hamlet*. The person who tried to pass you the energy now has to send it in another direction.
- “Get thee to a nunnery!”—to send the energy across the circle, point to someone and deliver this line from *Hamlet*. That person now has the energy
- “Out, damn spot!”—to “ricochet” the energy back across the circle in response to “Get thee to a nunnery!”, make an X with your arms as you speak this line from *Macbeth*. The person who tried to pass you the energy now has to send it in another direction.
- “Romeo!” “Juliet!”—to trade places with someone else in the circle, make eye contact and stretch your arm towards them as you cry, “Romeo!” They must then respond “Juliet!” Now run gracefully past each other. The person who cried “Juliet” now has the energy.
- “Double, double, toil and trouble!”—this line from *Macbeth* instructs everyone to change places at once, leading to a completely new circle. Whoever cried, “Double, double, toil and trouble!” keeps the energy.
- “A horse, a horse!”—Whoever has the energy may call out this line from *Richard III*. Everyone else in the circle must respond, “My kingdom for a horse!” while galloping in place like a horse. The energy stays with the person who gave the command.
- “Exit, pursued by a bear!”—point to someone across the circle as you speak this stage direction from *A Winter’s Tale*. Run through the circle to take their spot. Your classmate must now run around the outside of the circle to take your previous spot in the circle. That person now has the energy.
- Add your own rules! Choose short lines from the play you’re studying and match them with a gesture and action. Where does the energy travel?

Your goal as a group is to keep the energy moving in the circle without letting focus drop. As the class becomes more comfortable with each command, the game will get faster and faster, and you will need to think less and less about what to say next.

Experiment with the way you deliver the lines! There is no wrong way, as long as you speak the lines with energy.

## 13. WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

Form two parallel lines, and enough room in between for “action” to take place. The first student in one line, Student A, steps into the empty space between the two lines and begins miming any action (ex. bouncing a basketball). The first student in the opposite line, Student B, steps out and addresses Student A, saying their first name (a good name reinforcer!) and asking, “[Name], what are you doing?” Student A then states any action that is not what they are miming (e.g. “baking a cake”). Student B then begins miming the action that Student A has just stated, and the next student steps out to continue the exercise.

[To the teacher: Once students feel confident with the exercise, ask students to choose actions found in a chosen text. For instance, if you are teaching *Romeo and Juliet*, students might say, “I’m sword fighting.” or “I’m climbing a garden wall.”] ■

# TECHNO SHAKESPEARE

\*indicates specific focus on *Romeo and Juliet*, in addition to other plays

## CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER

### Chicago Shakespeare Theater's website\*

Access articles and teacher handbooks for twenty of Shakespeare's plays, as well as information on introducing your students to Shakespeare in performance.

[www.chicagoshakes.com/education](http://www.chicagoshakes.com/education)

## COMPREHENSIVE LINK SITES

### Absolute Shakespeare\*

Access a comprehensive collection of Shakespeare's work, including full texts and summaries, a timeline and lists of film adaptations.

[absoluteshakespeare.com](http://absoluteshakespeare.com)

### Shakespeare in Europe Sh:in:E

Access an array of web links categorized into criticism, theater and film, music, adaptation, education, and more.

Website created and maintained by Basel University in Switzerland.

[shine.unibas.ch/metasite.html](http://shine.unibas.ch/metasite.html)

### Shakespeare Resource Center\*

A collection of links and articles on teaching Shakespeare's plays.

<http://bardweb.net/index.html>

### The Reduced Shakespeare Company: The Complete Works of William Shakespeare Abridged

A comedy performance of abridged versions of all of Shakespeare's works.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vd4h16DWpdU>

## WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

### Open Source Shakespeare Concordance

Use this concordance to view all the uses of a word or word form in all of Shakespeare's works or in one play.

<http://www.opensourceshakespeare.com/concordance/findform.php>

### Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary

Part of Tufts University's Perseus Digital Library and created by Alexander Schmidt.

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.03.0079>

### Shakespeare's Words Glossary and Language Companion

Created by David Crystal and Ben Crystal, this site is a free online companion to the best-selling glossary and language companion, Shakespeare's Words.

[shakespeareswords.com](http://shakespeareswords.com)

# TECHNO SHAKESPEARE

## TEACHING ROMEO AND JULIET

### **BBC and RSC's Shakespeare Unlocked: *Romeo and Juliet*\***

Shakespeare Unlocked is aimed at teachers and young students of Shakespeare. It offers insights into character, dramatic devices and interpretative choices through performance.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/484GwDBByzcGTGCy5bvmhLF/romeo-and-juliet>

### **BBC's 60-second Shakespeare: *Romeo and Juliet*\***

An engaging introduction to the play, this site is written in the format of exclusive breaking news in a tabloid.

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/drama/shakespeare/60secondshakespeare/themes\\_romeojuliet.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/drama/shakespeare/60secondshakespeare/themes_romeojuliet.shtml)

### **The Folger Shakespeare Library\***

This website features lesson plans, primary sources and study guides for the most frequently taught plays and sonnets.

[folger.edu/education](http://folger.edu/education)

### ***Romeo and Juliet* Study Guide\***

Michael Cummings's study guide discusses themes, ingredients of comedy, figures of speech as well as providing a character list and summary.

<http://www.shakespearestudyguide.com/RomeoJul.html>

### **A Teacher's Guide to the Signet Edition: *Romeo and Juliet*\***

This teachers' guide provides summaries of each act in addition to study questions to consider while reading the play and follow up writing prompts.

<http://www.penguin.com/static/pdf/teachersguides/romeojuliet.pdf>

### **Web English Teacher: *Romeo and Juliet*\***

Links to lesson plans, links, and other resources for teaching *Romeo and Juliet*.

<http://www.varsitytutors.com/englishteacher/romeoandjuliet.html>

## TEXTS AND EARLY EDITIONS

### **The Complete Works of William Shakespeare\***

Access the first online web edition of the complete works, created by Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/>

### **The First Folio of William Shakespeare (University of Virginia)\***

Access *Romeo and Juliet* and others of Shakespeare's plays online in their first folio additions.

<http://search.lib.virginia.edu/catalog/003081548>

### **Interactive Folio: *Romeo and Juliet*\***

An interactive online folio that you can use while reading the script to select a word and read a lexicon definition, click on links for more information, or even watch relevant video clips. There is also detailed resources section. Created and maintained by Canadian Shakespeare.

<http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/folio/folio.html>

### **Introduction to the First Folio: Creating the First Folio**

This video by the Royal Shakespeare Company explains how Shakespeare was published during his lifetime and the creation of the First Folio after his death.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6\\_vCC9coaHY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_vCC9coaHY)

# TECHNO SHAKESPEARE

## **The Internet Shakespeare Editions\***

This website has transcriptions and high quality facsimiles of Shakespeare's folios and quartos, categorized by play with links to any articles written about the play that can be found on the website.

[internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Foyer/plays.html](http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Foyer/plays.html)

## **Shakespeare's First Folio**

This page from the British Library provides an easy to understand introduction to the First Folio.

[bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/landprint/shakespeare/](http://bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/landprint/shakespeare/)

## **Shakespeare Online\***

The full text of the play is provided with accompanying activities and information.

<http://www.shakespeare-online.com/plays/romeoscenes.html>

## **Treasures in Full: Shakespeare in Quarto\***

A copy of the quartos, available to compare side-by-side, as well as background information. This website was created and is maintained by the British Library.

<http://www.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/homepage.html>

## **What Is a Folio?**

This image shows how to read a Folio text; part of Massachusetts Institute of Technology's website "Hamlet on the Ramparts." <http://shea.mit.edu/ramparts/newstuff3.htm>

# SHAKESPEARE AND ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

## **The Elizabethan Costuming Page**

Read articles on what Elizabethan woman and men wore, with drawings.

<http://www.elizabethancostume.net/>

## **Elizabeth I: Ruler and Legend**

This web-based exhibit is a companion to The Newberry Library's 2003/2004 Queen Elizabeth exhibit.

<http://publications.newberry.org/elizabeth/exhibit/index.html>

## **The Elizabethan Theatre**

Read a lecture on Elizabethan Theatre by Professor Hilda D. Spear, University of Dundee, held at Cologne University.

[uni-koeln.de/phil-fak/englisch/shakespeare](http://uni-koeln.de/phil-fak/englisch/shakespeare)

## **Life in Elizabethan England: Betrothal and Wedding**

This site contains information on marriage contracts of the time, as well as links to other aspects of Elizabethan life.

<http://elizabethan.org/compendium/9.html>

## **The English Renaissance in Context\***

Multimedia tutorial about the English Renaissance, created and maintained by University of Pennsylvania.

<http://sceti.library.upenn.edu/sceti/furness/eric/teach/index.cfm>

## **The Map of Early Modern London Online**

This resource includes a detailed, searchable map of Shakespeare's London and an evolving encyclopedia of the places listed.

<http://mapoflondon.uvic.ca/index.htm>

# TECHNO SHAKESPEARE

## **Proper Elizabethan Accents**

A guide to speaking like an Elizabethan

<http://www.renfaire.com/Language/index.html>

## **Queen Elizabeth I**

Learn more about Queen Elizabeth and the people, events and concepts key to the study of the Elizabethan Age.

<http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/eliza.htm>

## **The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust**

Learn more about Shakespeare's life and birthplace through an extensive online collection.

<http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/home.html>

## **Shakespeare's Globe Theatre**

The Encyclopedia Britannica's entry includes a detailed biography, contextual articles on Elizabethan literature, art, theaters and culture, and brief entries on famous Shakespearean actors, directors and scholars.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Globe-Theatre>

## **Designing Shakespeare Collections\***

This link offers many production photos focusing on design practice at the Royal Shakespeare Company and other British theaters. The photos can be enlarged and used for a myriad of classroom activities and research.

<ahds.rhul.ac.uk/ahdscollections/docroot/shakespeare/playlist.do>

## **The History of Costume by Braun and Schneider**

View costume illustrations of different social classes and cultures from various historical times.

<siue.edu/COSTUMES/history.html>

## **The Internet Broadway Database\***

This online database of Broadway plays is a great place to search for 'Shakespeare' and learn about some productions of the Bard's works. This will only give information about shows performed on Broadway.

<ibdb.com>

## **The Internet Movie Database\***

Similar to IBDB, utilize this online movie database to search for 'Shakespeare' and learn about the different cinematic versions of his plays.

<imdb.com>

## **Shakespeare's Staging\***

This website surveys staging of Shakespeare's plays, from Shakespeare's lifetime through modern times.

<http://shakespearestaging.berkeley.edu/>

## SHAKESPEARE IN ART

### **The Faces of Elizabeth I**

Access a collection of paintings of Queen Elizabeth spanning her lifetime.

<http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/elizface.htm>

### **Folger Shakespeare Library Digital Image Collection\***

In August 2014, over 80,000 images from Folger's collection were released for use in the public domain. Images include production photos, books, manuscripts and art.

<http://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/view/all>

### **Shakespeare Illustrated\***

Harry Rusche, English professor at Emory University, created this website that explores nineteenth-century paintings depicting scenes from Shakespeare's plays. *Romeo and Juliet* has sixteen linked works of art; the website is searchable by play title and artist name.

[english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare\\_Illustrated/Shakespeare.html](http://english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/Shakespeare.html)

### **Tudor and Elizabethan Portrait Gallery**

England's National Portrait Gallery's Tudor and Elizabethan collection contains portraits from 1485-1603. These portraits are viewable on this website.

<http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/explore/by-period/tudor.php>

# SUGGESTED READING

Most of the books suggested here are available to peruse in our Teacher Resource Center, open after Teacher Workshops and by appointment by calling our Education Department at 312.595.5678.



Indicates a focus on methods for teaching Shakespeare through film.



Indicates a focus on methods for teaching Shakespeare using graphic novels.

Barton, John. *Playing Shakespeare*. London, 1986.

Bevington, David. *Action Is Eloquence: Shakespeare's Language of Gesture*. Cambridge, 1984.

Bevington, David. *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. New York, 1992.



Boose, Lynda E., and Richard Burt. *Shakespeare, the Movie: Popularizing the Plays on Film, TV, and Video*. London, 1997.

Brockbank, Philip, ed. *Players of Shakespeare, Volumes 1–6*. Cambridge (1998–2007).

Bullough, Geoffrey. *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*. New York, 1975.

Callaghan, Dymrna. *Romeo and Juliet: Texts and Contexts*. Boston, 2003.



Cartmell, Deborah. *Interpreting Shakespeare on Screen*. New York, 2000.

Chrisp, Peter. *Shakespeare*. London, 2002.



Christel, Mary T., and Scott Sullivan. *Lesson Plans for Creating Media-rich Classrooms*. Urbana, IL, 2007.



Coles, Jane. "Teaching Shakespeare with Film Adaptations." In *MasterClass in English Education: Transforming Teaching and Learning*. London, England: Bloomsbury, 2015. pp. 72-83.



Dakin, Mary Ellen. *Reading Shakespeare Film First*. Urbana, IL, 2013.



Davis, James E., and Ronald E. Salomone. *Teaching Shakespeare Today: Practical Approaches and Productive Strategies*. Urbana, IL, 1993.



Donaldson, Peter Samuel. *Shakespearean Films/Shakespearean Directors*. Boston, 1990.



Eisner, Will. *Comics & Sequential Art*. Tamarac, FL, 1985.

Fitter, Chris. "'The Quarrel is Between our Masters and Us Their Men': *Romeo and Juliet*, Dearth, and the London Riots." *English Literary Renaissance*, vol. 30 no. 2, 2000, 154-83.

Foakes, R.A. *Shakespeare and Violence*. Cambridge, 2003.

Foster, Cass. *Sixty-minute Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet*. Chandler, AZ, 2000.

Freeman, Neil. *The Tragedie of Romeo and Juliet*. Vancouver, 1998.

French, Marilyn. *Shakespeare's Division of Experience*. New York, 1981.

Gibson, Rex, ed. *Cambridge School Shakespeare*.

(This excellent series, used extensively as a resource in Chicago Shakespeare Theater's education efforts, includes *Romeo and Juliet*, along with approximately half of Shakespeare's other plays.

Gibson, Rex. *Teaching Shakespeare*. Cambridge, 1998.

Goddard, Harold C. *The Meaning of Shakespeare*. Chicago, 1951.

# SUGGESTED READING

Grun, Bernard. *The Timetables of History*. New York, 1991.

Hills and Öttchen. *Shakespeare's Insults: Educating Your Wit*. Ann Arbor, 1991.



Hinds, Gareth, and William Shakespeare. *Romeo and Juliet*. Somerville, 2013.

Hunt, Maurice, ed. *Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet*. New York, 2000.



Jaffe, Meryl. *Raising a Reader! How Comics & Graphic Novels Can Help Your Kids Love to Read!* New York, 2015.



Krueger, Ellen, and Mary T. Christel. *Seeing and Believing: How to Teach Media Literacy in the English Classroom*. Portsmouth, NH, 2001.



Lehmann, Courtney. *Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: The Relationship between Text and Film*. London, 2010.



Leong, Sonia. *Manga Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet*. New York, 2007.

Martin Reynolds, Paige. *Performing Shakespeare's Women: Playing Dead*. London, 2019.



McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York, 1994.

McDonald, Russ. "The Flaw in the Flaw," in *Shakespeare Set Free*. Peggy O'Brien, ed. New York, 1993.



McNicol, Sarah. "Releasing the Potential of Shakespearean Comic Book Adaptations in the Classroom: A Case Study of *Romeo and Juliet*." *Studies in Comics* 5.1, 2014.

Mullaney, Steven. *The Place of the Stage*. Chicago, 1988.



Naremore, James. *Film Adaptation*. New Brunswick, NJ, 2000.

O'Brien, Peggy. *Shakespeare Set Free, Volume 1*. New York, 1993.

Parsons, Keith and Mason, Pamela. *Shakespeare in Performance*. London, 1995.

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appending  
series

## Script Key:

*The following lines are printed twice for each pair of students sharing the same line. The two colors denote each student's half.*

**#1** If ever you disturb our streets again, / Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.

**#1** If ever you disturb our streets again, / Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.

**#2** Be ruled by me, / Forget to think of her.

**#2** Be ruled by me, / Forget to think of her.

**#3** If you be not the house of Montagues, / I pray come and crush a cup of wine.

**#3** If you be not the house of Montagues, / I pray come and crush a cup of wine.

**#4** Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight! / For ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

**#4** Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight! / For ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

**#5** My only love sprung from my only hate! / Too early seen unknown, and known too late!

**#5** My only love sprung from my only hate! / Too early seen unknown, and known too late!

**#6** It is my lady, / O it is my love.

**#6** It is my lady, / O it is my love.

**#7** Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo? / Deny thy father and refuse they name.

**#7** Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo? / Deny thy father and refuse they name.

**#8** Young men's love then lines not truly in their hearts, / But in their eyes.

**#8** Young men's love then lines not truly in their hearts, / But in their eyes.

**#9** This alliance may so happy prove / To turn your households' rancor to pure love.

**#9** This alliance may so happy prove / To turn your households' rancor to pure love.

**#10** Romeo, the love I bear thee can afford no better term than this: / Thou art a villain.

**#10** Romeo, the love I bear thee can afford no better term than this: / Thou art a villain.

**#11** Why the dev'l came you between us? I was hurt under your arm. / A plague a' both your houses!

**#11** Why the dev'l came you between us? I was hurt under your arm. / A plague a' both your houses!

**#12** 'Tis torture, and not mercy. / Heaven is here where Juliet lives.

**#12** 'Tis torture, and not mercy. / Heaven is here where Juliet lives.

**#13** And you be mine, I'll give you to my friend; / And you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets.

**#13** And you be mine, I'll give you to my friend; / And you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets.

**#14** O true apothecary! They drugs are quick. / Thus with a kiss I die.

**#14** O true apothecary! They drugs are quick. / Thus with a kiss I die.

**#15** O happy dagger, this is thy sheath; / There rust, and let me die.

**#15** O happy dagger, this is thy sheath; / There rust, and let me die.

**#16** See what a scourge is laid upon your hate, / That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love!

**#16** See what a scourge is laid upon your hate, / That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love!

## Script Key:

- Each time you come to a bolded word, select a new student to enter the circle and take on that character. (You may want to create name placards or use a shared costume piece to help students keep track of each character.)
- When you reach a highlighted line, ask the student portraying that character to read the line off of your script. (These are the same lines from the Line “Dancing” activity, so they may already be familiar to the students.)
- When you reach an “Exeunt!,” all students return to the outer circle, leaving the playing space empty.

## Act 1

In the city of Verona, two powerful families, the Capulets and the Montagues, have been fighting one another longer than anyone can remember. Their **servants** confront each other one sweltering summer day, in the town center: **[Montague Servant]** *“Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?”* **[Capulet Servant]** *“I do bite my thumb, sir.”* Words lead to blows. Romeo’s cousin, **Benvolio**, tries to stop the fight, but he’s challenged by Lord Capulet’s nephew, **Tybalt**. Then the fathers, **Lord Montague** and **Lord Capulet**, join the brawl. **Prince Escalus** enters and forbids any more fighting between them. **[Prince]** *“If ever you disturb our streets again, your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace ... On pain of death, all men depart!”*

## EXEUNT!

**Lord and Lady Montague** discuss their son Romeo’s sulking with **Benvolio**, who offers to find out what’s troubling him. **Romeo** says he’s in love with Rosaline, but she’s not interested. Benvolio tells his cousin to forget about her. **[Benvolio]** *“Be ruled by me, forget to think of her.”* But Romeo’s answers: **[Romeo]** *“O, teach me how I should forget to think.”*

Meanwhile, **Lord Capulet** arranges his daughter Juliet’s marriage to **Count Paris**, a rich relative to the Prince himself. As **Juliet** prepares for the party that night, **Lady Capulet** speaks to her about marriage. Juliet replies, **[Juliet]** *“It is an honor that I dream not of.”* Her mother tells her: **[Lady Capulet]** *“The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.”* Juliet obediently agrees to entertain her suitor at their party.

## EXEUNT!

## Act 2

**Lord Capulet’s Servant**, delivering the invitations, meets **Benvolio** and **Romeo**. He says **[Capulet Servant]**: *“If you be not of the house of Montagues, I pray come and crush a cup of wine.”* They decide to attend, but in disguise.

**Lord and Lady Capulet, Juliet, Tybalt** and the **Nurse** gather as Capulet welcomes his guests. Romeo spots Juliet across the room and in that moment forgets Rosaline completely. **[Romeo]** *“Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight! For I ne’er saw true beauty till this night.”* Tybalt recognizes Romeo behind his disguise, with **Benvolio** and **Mercutio** and says to Capulet: **[Tybalt]** *“Uncle, this is a Montague, our foe.”* Capulet forbids any confrontation, and Tybalt storms off, vowing revenge. Romeo approaches Juliet, and they fall in love at first sight. Romeo asks the Nurse who the young lady is. **[Nurse]** *“Her mother is the lady of the house.”* Benvolio insists they leave. The Nurse reveals to Juliet: **[Nurse]** *“His name is Romeo, and a Montague, the only son of your great enemy.”* Juliet cries out: **[Juliet]** *“My only love sprung from my only hate! Too early seen unknown and known too late!”*

## EXEUNT!

As **Romeo** leaves the party, he slips away from his friends and hides in the Capulets' garden, where he sees **Juliet** at her bedroom window. **[Romeo]** *"It is my lady, O it is my love."* Believing she is alone, Juliet asks: **[Juliet]** *"O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo? Deny thy father and refuse thy name."* Romeo reveals his presence, and both confess their love. Juliet says that she'll send a messenger to him the next day to find out where and when they can meet to wed.

### EXEUNT!

The next morning, Romeo visits **Friar Laurence** and asks him to marry him and Juliet. The Friar is surprised that Romeo has forgotten Rosaline. **[Friar]** *"Young men's love then lies not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes."* But hoping to end the their families' feud, he agrees to marry them. **[Friar]** *"This alliance may so happy prove to turn your households' rancor to pure love."*

**Juliet** impatiently awaits the Nurse to return home with news from Romeo. The Nurse returns exhausted and refusing to talk. **[Nurse]** *"Do you not see that I am out of breath?"* But she shares the plan and Juliet leaves for Friar Laurence's cell, where the couple is secretly married.

### EXEUNT!

## Act 3

**Tybalt** and the **Capulets** are looking for Romeo, but they find **Benvolio** and **Mercutio** instead. Tybalt and Mercutio almost come to blows as Benvolio tries to separate them: **[Benvolio]** *"Either withdraw unto some private place... Or else depart; here all eyes gaze on us."* **Romeo** arrives, and Tybalt insults him. **[Tybalt]** *"Romeo, the love I bear thee can afford no better term than this: Thou art a villain."* When Romeo refuses to take the bait, Mercutio steps into the fray. As Romeo tries to separate the two, Tybalt's sword strikes its target and Mercutio falls. Mercutio blames Romeo: **[Mercutio]** *"Why the dev'l came you between us? I was hurt under your arm. A plague a' both your houses!"* Mercutio dies. In a blind rage, Romeo kills Tybalt, then flees to the Friar's. **Prince Escalus, Lord and Lady Capulet** and **Lord and Lady Montague** enter, shocked by the tragic scene. Lord Capulet demands death for Romeo. **[Lord Capulet]** *"Romeo must not live."* But the Prince's sentence is banishment instead, and Romeo must leave Verona forever.

### EXEUNT!

**Juliet** anxiously awaits her new husband, but instead her **Nurse** comes with news of Tybalt's murder and Romeo's banishment. The Nurse promises: **[Nurse]** *"I'll find Romeo to comfort you."* **Friar Laurence** informs **Romeo** of the Prince's sentence of banishment, and Romeo cries out: **[Romeo]** *"Tis torture, and not mercy. Heaven is here where Juliet lives."* The Nurse finds Romeo there sobbing. Friar Laurence advises Romeo to spend this one night with his bride, then flee to Mantua alone until their secret marriage can be revealed.

### EXEUNT!

As **Romeo and Juliet** spend their wedding night together, Lord Capulet agrees with Paris upon his daughter's wedding—in three days. At dawn, the **Nurse** warns the couple that Lady Capulet is on her way, and they say their goodbyes. **Lady Capulet** tells Juliet that she will marry Paris in three days, and when she refuses, **Lord Capulet** swears that he will disown her. **[Lord Capulet]** *"And you be mine, I'll give you to my friend; and you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets."* Juliet ignores her Nurse's advice to forget Romeo, and leaves to seek Friar Laurence's help.

### EXEUNT!

## Act 4

**Juliet** confesses her despair to the **Friar** and talks of killing herself. He persuades her instead to follow this plan: to return home and consent to marry Paris; then, on the night before the wedding, to drink an herbal potion, which would cause a deathlike trance. Taken for dead, she would be laid to rest in the Capulet tomb, where Romeo would come and take her away with him to Mantua until their families were reconciled.

Juliet returns home, and, apologizing to her **father** for her disobedience, agrees to marry Paris. Alone in her room, Juliet fears that the potion will kill her or that she will be trapped in the tomb with Tybalt's corpse. But she drinks the potion. **[Juliet]** *"Romeo, Romeo, Romeo! Here's drink – I drink to thee."* The next morning, the **Nurse** discovers Juliet's lifeless body. Her **family** and **Paris** are devastated.

**EXEUNT!**

## Act 5

Sent by the Friar with a letter to Romeo explaining the whole secret plan, Friar John is turned away from Mantua and cannot deliver Friar Laurence's letter. Instead, **Romeo** learns of Juliet's death from his friend **Balthasar**, and, resolves to join her in death. He buys poison from a poor **Apothecary**. **[Apothecary]** *"Put this in any liquid thing you will and drink it off, and if you had the strength of twenty men, it would dispatch you straight."* When **Friar Laurence** hears that Friar John was unable to deliver his letter, he leaves for the Capulet tomb to avoid disaster there. Romeo arrives first, where he encounters **Paris**, though he doesn't recognize him in the dark. But Paris knows Romeo, and challenges him to a duel. Romeo urges him to get away, but Paris refuses. Romeo kills Paris before recognizing him.

Beside Juliet, Romeo takes the poison: **[Romeo]** *"O true apothecary! Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die."* The **Friar** enters as Juliet awakens. He begs her to leave, but she refuses. He leaves her alone as they hear people outside, and she stabs herself with her husband's dagger. **[Juliet]** *"O happy dagger, this is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die."* The **two families** and the **Prince** enter the tomb. The Friar recounts the story, and the Prince blames the deaths upon their parents' hatred. **[Prince]** *"See what a scourge is laid upon your hate, that heaven finds means to kill your joys with love!"* The two fathers resolve to abandon their feud, and the **[Prince]** concludes: *"For never was a story of more woe than this Juliet and her Romeo."*

**EXEUNT!**

My child is yet a stranger in the world, she hath not seen the change of fourteen years.

Read o'er the volume of young Paris' face, and find delight writ there with beauty's pen.

True, I talk of dreams, which are the children of an idle brain.

O swear not by the moon, th'inconstant moon, that monthly changes in her circled orb.

This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath, may prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.

The earth that's nature's mother is her tomb; what is her burying grave, that is her womb.

Thou shamest the music of sweet news by playing it to me with so sour a face.

How art thou out of breath, when thou hast breath to say to me that thou art out of breath?

Fire-eyed fury be my conduct now!

O, I have bought the mansion of a love, but not possessed it.

Alack the day, he's gone, he's killed, he's dead!

Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st: A damnèd saint, an honorable villain!

In what vile part of this anatomy doth my name lodge?

I think she will be ruled in all respects by me.

I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

What, wilt thou wash him from his grave with tears?

O how my heart abhors to hear him named and cannot come to him!

O, he's a lovely gentleman! Romeo's a dishclout to him.

'Twixt my extremes and me this bloody knife shall play the umpire.

The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade to wanny ashes.

Pardon, I beseech you! Henceforth I am ever ruled by you.

I'll have this knot knit up tomorrow morning.

I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins that almost freezes up the heat of life.

Death lies on her like an untimely frost upon the sweetest flower of all the field.

She's not well married that lives married long, but she's best married that dies married young.

All things that we ordained festival, turn from their office to black funeral.

O mischief, thou art swift to enter in the thoughts of desperate men!

His looks I fear, and his intents I doubt.

Condemnèd villain, I do apprehend thee. Obey and go with me, for thou must die.

Some shall be pardoned, and some punished.

Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit. 1.3.42

He heareth not, he stirreth not, he moveth not: The ape is dead. 2.1.15–16

O that she were an open-arse and thou a poperin pear! 2.1.37–38

Her vestal Livery is but sick and green and none but fools do wear it. 2.2.8–9

She speaks, yet she says nothing. 2.2.12

These strange flies, these fashion-mongers, these 'pardon-me's'! 2.4.32–33

O flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified. 2.4.38–39

In such a case as mine a man may strain courtesy. 2.4.52–53

I will bite thee by the ear for that jest. 2.4.78

What saucy merchant was this that was so full of his ropery? 2.4.142–143

Thy head is as full of quarrels as an egg is full of meat. 3.1.22

The love I bear thee can afford no better term than this: thou art a villain. 3.1.59–60

O calm, dishonorable, vile submission. 3.1.72

O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face.

Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave? 3.2.73–74

Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical,

Dove-feather'd raven, wolvis-ravens lamb! 3.2.75–76

Blister'd be thy tongue for such a wish. 3.2.90–91

Thou cut'st my head off with a golden axe

And smilest upon the stroke that murders me. 3.3.22–23

Thy noble shape is but a form of wax

Digressing from the valor of a man. 3.3.125–126

Peace, you mumbling fool! Utter your gravity o'er the gossip's bowl,

For here we need it not. 3.5.173–175

[Your] foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in. 4.3.34

Thou detestable maw, thou womb of death. 5.3.47–48

Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,

And in despite I'll cram thee with more food. 5.3.47–48

Remain with worms that are thy chambermaids. 5.3.108–109

## Romeo Cue Script

ROMEO

What, shall this speech be spoke for our excuse?  
Or shall we on without apology?

BENVOLIO

... a measure and be gone.

ROMEO

Give me a torch, I am not for this ambling;  
Being but heavy, I will bear the light.

MERCUTIO

... we must have you dance.

ROMEO

Not I, believe me. You have dancing shoes  
With nimble soles, I have a soul of lead  
So stakes me to the ground I cannot move.

MERCUTIO

... above a common bound.

ROMEO

I am too sore enpierced with his shaft  
To soar with his light feathers, and so bound  
I cannot bound a pitch above dull woe:  
Under love's heavy burden do I sink.

MERCUTIO

... for a tender thing.

ROMEO

Is love a tender thing? It is too rough,  
Too rude, too boist'rous, and it pricks like thorn.

BENVOLIO

... betake him to his legs.

ROMEO

A torch for me: let wantons light of heart  
Tickle the senseless rushes with their heels;  
For I am proverbied with a grandsire phrase,  
I'll be a candle-holder and look on:  
The game was ne'er so fair, and I am done.

MERCUTIO

... we burn daylight, ho!

ROMEO

Nay that's not so.

MERCUTIO

... once in our five wits.

ROMEO

And we mean well in going to this mask,

But 'tis no wit to go.

### **Benvolio Cue Script**

ROMEO

... on without apology?

BENVOLIO

The date is out of such prolixity:

We'll have no Cupid hoodwinked with a scarf,

Bearing a Tartar's painted bow of lath,

Scaring the ladies like a crow-keeper,

Nor no without-book prologue, faintly spoke

After the prompter, for our entrance;

But let them measure us by what they will,

We'll measure them a measure and be gone.

MERCUTIO

...shall blush for me.

BENVOLIO

Come knock and enter, and no sooner in,

But every man betake him to his legs.

## Mercutio Cue Script

ROMEO

... I will bear the light.

MERCUTIO

Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.

ROMEO

... I cannot move.

MERCUTIO

You are a lover, borrow Cupid's wings,  
And soar with them above common bound.

ROMEO

... burden I do sink.

MERCUTIO

And to sink in it should you burden love,  
Too great oppression for a tender thing.

ROMEO

... it pricks like thorn.

MERCUTIO

If love be rough with you, be rough with love;  
Prick love for pricking, and you bead love down.  
Give me a case to put my visage in, [*puts on a mask*]  
A visor for a visor! What care I  
What curious eye doth cote deformities?  
Here are the beetle brows shall blush for me.

ROMEO

... and I am done.

MERCUTIO

Tut, dun's the mouse, the constable's own word.  
If thou art Dun, we'll draw thee from the mire,  
Or (save your reverence) love, where in thou stickest  
Up to the ears. Come, we burn daylight, ho!

ROMEO

.... not so

MERCUTIO

I mean sir, in delay  
We waste our lights in vain, like lights by day.  
Take our good meaning, for our judgement sits  
Five times in that ere once in our five wits.

<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> in Film	<b>George Cukor (1936)</b>	<b>Franco Zeffirelli (1968)</b>	<b>Alvin Rakoff (1976)</b>	<b>Baz Luhrmann (1996)</b>	<b>Rupert Goold (2010)</b>
How is Romeo masked from view?					
Costume choices that impact your perception of a character?					
How would you describe each Juliet? Factors impacting your perception of her?					
Lines that stood out to you because of the way they were delivered?					
Does the casting “work” for you? Why or why not?					
Any overarching similarities with other productions?					

Act 2, scene 3 – Original Text

FRIAR LAURENCE

The grey-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night,  
Check'ring the eastern clouds with streaks of light;  
And flecked darkness like a drunkard reels  
From forth day's path and Titan's fiery wheels:  
Now ere the sun advance his burning eye, 5  
The day to cheer, and night's dank dew to dry,  
I must upfill this osier cage of ours  
With baleful weeds and precious-juicèd flowers.  
The earth that's nature's mother is her tomb;  
What is her burying grave, that is her womb; 10  
And from her womb children of divers kind  
We sucking on her natural bosom find:  
Many for many virtues excellent,  
None but for some, and yet all different.  
O mickle is the powerful grace that lies 15  
In plants, herbs, stones, and their true qualities:  
For nought so vile, that on the earth doth live,  
But to the earth some special good doth give;  
Nor ought so good but, strained from that fair use,  
Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse. 20  
Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied,  
And vice sometimes by action dignified.

*Enter ROMEO.*

Within the infant rind of this small flower  
Poison hath residence, and medicine power:  
For this, being smelt, with that part cheers each part, 25

Act 2, scene 3 – Chicago Shakespeare Theater's  
2017 abridged script

FRIAR LAURENCE

The grey-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night,  
Check'ring the eastern clouds with streaks of light;  
~~And flecked darkness like a drunkard reels~~  
~~From forth day's path and Titan's fiery wheels:~~  
Now ere the sun advance his burning eye, 5  
~~The day to cheer, and night's dank dew to dry;~~  
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*Enter ROMEO.*

Within the infant rind of this small flower  
Poison hath residence, and medicine power:  
For this, being smelt, with that part cheers each part, 25

Being tasted, stays all senses with the heart.  
Two such opposèd kings encamp them still  
In man as well as herbs, grace and rude will;  
And where the worser is predominant,  
Full soon the canker death eats up that plant.

30

ROMEO

Good morrow, father.

FRIAR LAURENCE

Benedicite!

What early tongue so sweet saluteth me?  
Young son, it argues a distempered head  
So soon to bid good morrow to thy bed:  
Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye,  
And where care lodges, sleep will never lie;  
But where unbruised youth with unstuffed brain  
Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign.

35

Therefore thy earliness doth me assure

Thou art uproused by some distemp'rature;

40

Or if not so, then here I hit it right,

Our Romeo hath not been in bed tonight.

ROMEO

That last is true, the sweeter rest was mine.

FRIAR LAURENCE

God pardon sin! wast thou with Rosaline?

ROMEO

With Rosaline, my ghostly father? no;

45

I have forgot that name, and that name's woe.

FRIAR LAURENCE

That's my good son, but where hast thou been then?

ROMEO

I'll tell thee ere thou ask it me again:

~~Being tasted, stays all senses with the heart.~~

~~Two such opposèd kings encamp them still~~

~~In man as well as herbs, grace and rude will;~~

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~~ROMEO~~

~~With Rosaline, my ghostly father? no;~~

45

~~I have forgot that name, and that name's woe.~~

~~FRIAR LAURENCE~~

~~That's my good son, but where hast thou been then?~~

~~ROMEO~~

~~I'll tell thee ere thou ask it me again:~~

I have been feasting with mine enemy,  
Where on a sudden one hath wounded me 50  
That's by me wounded; both our remedies  
Within thy help and holy physic lies.  
I bear no hatred, blessed man; for, lo,  
My intercession likewise steads my foe.  
FRIAR LAURENCE  
Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift, 55  
Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift.  
ROMEO  
Then plainly know, my heart's dear love is set  
On the fair daughter of rich Capulet;  
As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine,  
And all combined, save what thou must combine 60  
By holy marriage. When and where and how  
We met, we wooed, and made exchange of vow,  
I'll tell thee as we pass, but this I pray,  
That thou consent to marry us today.  
FRIAR LAURENCE  
Holy Saint Francis, what a change is here! 65  
Is Rosaline, that thou didst love so dear,  
So soon forsaken? Young men's love then lies  
Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.  
Jesu Maria, what a deal of brine  
Hath washed thy sallow cheeks for Rosaline! 70  
How much salt water thrown away in waste,  
To season love, that of it doth not taste!  
The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears,  
Thy old groans yet ringing in my ancient ears;

I have been feasting with mine enemy,  
Where on a sudden one hath wounded me 50  
That's by me wounded; both our remedies  
Within thy help and holy physic lies.  
~~I bear no hatred, blessed man; for, lo,~~  
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~~Hath washed thy sallow cheeks for Rosaline!~~ 70  
~~How much salt water thrown away in waste,~~  
~~To season love, that of it doth not taste!~~  
~~The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears,~~  
~~Thy old groans yet ringing in my ancient ears;~~

Lo here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit 75  
 Of an old tear that is not washed off yet.  
 If e'er thou wast thyself, and these woes thine,  
 Thou and these woes were all for Rosaline.  
 And art thou changed? Pronounce this sentence then:  
 Women may fall, when there's no strength in men. 80

ROMEO  
 Thou chid'st me oft for loving Rosaline.

FRIAR LAURENCE  
 For doting, not for loving, pupil mine.

ROMEO  
 And bad'st me bury love.

FRIAR LAURENCE  
 Not in a grave,  
 To lay one in, another out to have.

ROMEO  
 I pray thee chide me not. She whom I love now 85  
 Doth grace for grace and love for love allow;  
 The other did not so.

FRIAR LAURENCE  
 O, she knew well  
 Thy love did read by rote, that could not spell.  
 But come, young waverer, come go with me,  
 In one respect I'll thy assistant be: 90  
 For this alliance may so happy prove  
 To turn your households' rancor to pure love.

ROMEO  
 O let us hence, I stand on sudden haste.

FRIAR LAURENCE  
 Wisely and slow; they stumble that run fast.

*Exeunt*

~~Lo here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit~~ 75  
~~Of an old tear that is not washed off yet.~~  
~~If e'er thou wast thyself, and these woes thine,~~  
~~Thou and these woes were all for Rosaline.~~  
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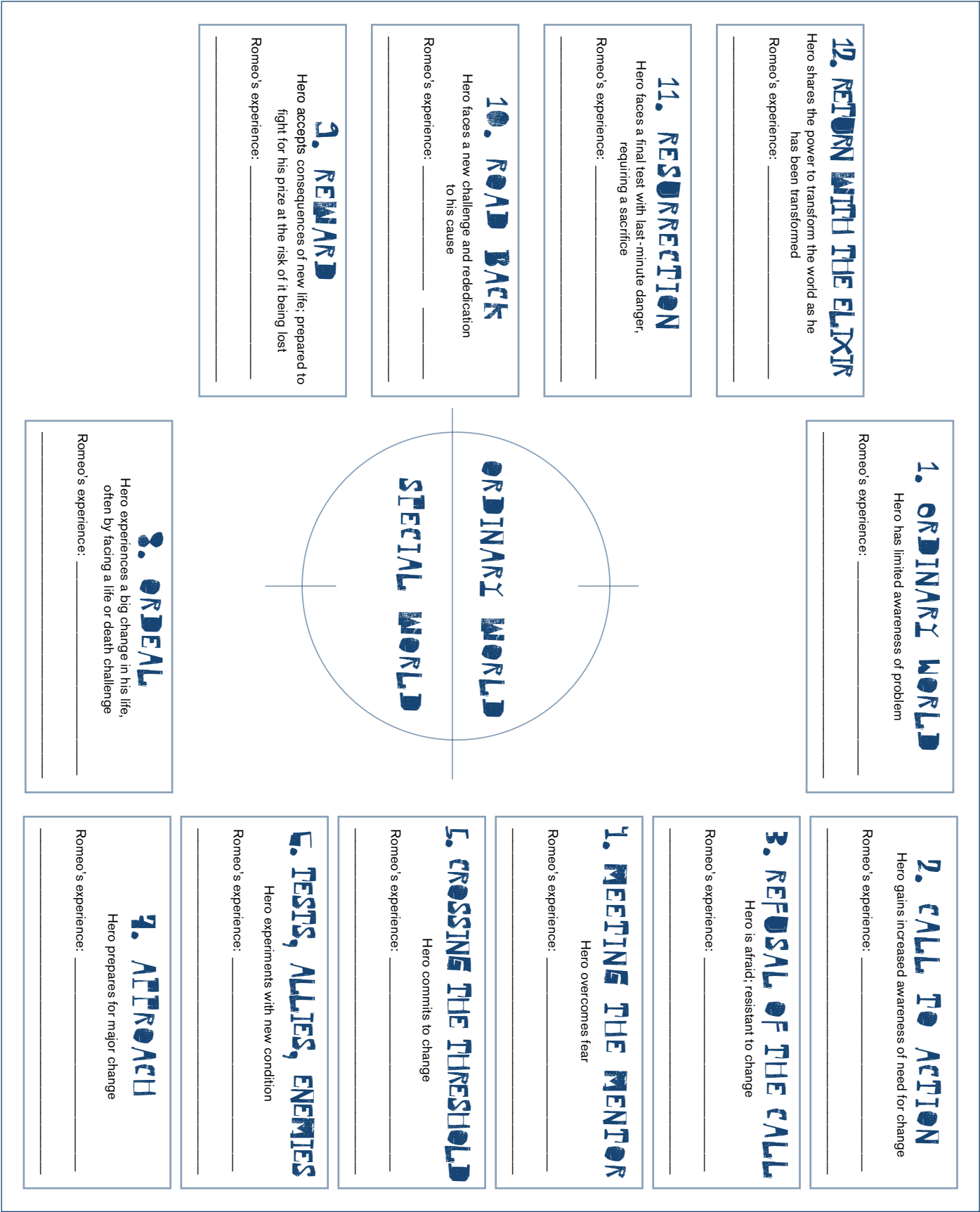
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FRIAR LAURENCE  
 Wisely and slow; they stumble that run fast.

*Exeunt*

Based on Christopher Volger’s interpretation in his book *The Writer’s Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* (2007) of “the monomyth” from Joseph Campbell’s *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949)



The Deaths of Romeo and Juliet: the only heirs to the feuding houses of Montague and Capulet have both killed themselves after secretly marrying. Was this their unstoppable fate, or is there someone to blame? Choose any of the characters in the play: \_\_\_\_\_. **As this character**, you will face trial for your part in Romeo's and Juliet's deaths. Answer the following questions to prepare yourself for court.

Who you are:

Your relationship to the lovers:

What you wanted at the beginning of the play:

What you did to get what you wanted:

How your actions affected Romeo and Juliet:

List one or two words that describe you. Use the text!

At least one quote that best reveals what you thought about Romeo (line #):

At least one quote that best reveals what you thought about Juliet (line #):

At least one quote that best reveals what you thought of Romeo and Juliet's love (line #):

**Do you think there was any way to avoid this tragedy? What could you have done?**

	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point
<b>Character's Frame</b>	Point-of-view, arguments, and solutions proposed were consistently in character.	Point-of-view, arguments, and solutions proposed were often in character.	Point-of-view, arguments, and solutions proposed were sometimes in character.	Point-of-view, arguments, and solutions proposed were rarely in character.
<b>Knowledge and Insight into Character Gained</b>	Student can clearly explain several ways in which the character "saw" things differently than other characters.	Student can clearly explain several ways in which the character "saw" things differently than other characters.	Student can clearly explain one way in which the character "saw" things differently than other characters.	Student cannot explain one way in which the character "saw" things differently from other characters.
<b>Hotseat Think Sheet</b>	Student included more information than was required.	Student included all of the information that was required.	Student included most of the information that was required.	Student included less information than was required.
<b>Voice and Diction</b>	Student had direct eye contact with audience throughout the presentation. Student spoke loud enough to be heard by all the audience.	Student had direct eye contact with most of the audience throughout the presentation. Student spoke loud enough to be heard by most of the audience.	Student had some eye contact with audience throughout the presentation. Student spoke loud enough to be heard by half the audience.	Student had little or no direct eye contact with audience throughout the presentation. Student could be heard by less than 25% of the audience.
<b>Argument Supported by Evidence</b>	Student's argument for guilt or innocence was clearly supported by more than one instance supported by text.	Student's argument for guilt or innocence was supported by text, but the argument had weak spots (holes).	Student's argument for guilt or innocence had some support from text, but argument was weak.	Student's argument was not supported by text.
<b>Totals (out of 20)</b>	/20	/20	/20	/20
<b>Comments:</b>				

**Lord Capulet**

My sword, I say! old Montague is come,  
And flourishes his blade in spite of me.

**Lord Capulet**

But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart

**Lord Capulet**

You'll make a mutiny among my guests!

**Lord Capulet**

I tell thee what: get thee to church a'Thursday,  
Or never after look me in the face.

**Lord Capulet**

Death lies on her like an untimely frost

**Lord Capulet**

Brother Montague, give me thy hand.

**Friar Laurence**

Is Rosaline, that thou didst love so dear,  
So soon forsaken?

**Friar Laurence**

For by your leaves, you shall not stay alone  
Till Holy Church incorporate two in one.

**Friar Laurence**

Thou shalt continue two and forty hours,  
And then awake as from a pleasant sleep.

**Friar Laurence**

Thy husband in thy bosom there lies dead;

**Friar Laurence**

But then a noise did scare me from the tomb,  
And she too desperate would not go with me

— — — — —  
**Juliet**

It is an honor that I dream not of.

— — — — —  
**Juliet**

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;

— — — — —  
**Juliet**

That villain cousin would have killed my husband.

— — — — —  
**Juliet**

What if this mixture do not work at all?

— — — — —  
**Juliet**

This is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die.

— — — — —  
**Nurse**

Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nurse.

— — — — —  
**Nurse**

...my young lady bid me enquire you out;

— — — — —  
**Nurse**

Then hie you hence to Friar Laurence' cell,  
There stays a husband to make you a wife.

— — — — —  
**Nurse**

Romeo that killed him, he is banishèd.

— — — — —  
**Nurse**

O woeful day, O woeful day!

— — — — —  
**Paris**

Younger than she are happy mothers made.

— — — — —

— — — — —

**Paris**

Immoderately she weeps for Tybalt's death

— — — — —

**Paris**

Thy face is mine and thou hast slandered it.

— — — — —

**Paris**

The obsequie that I for thee will keep  
Nightly shall be to strew thy grave and weep.

— — — — —

**Paris**

Can vengeance be pursued further than death?  
Condemned villain, I do apprehend thee.

— — — — —

**Romeo**

She hath forsworn to love, and in that vow  
Do I live dead, that live to tell it now.

— — — — —

**Romeo**

Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight!  
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

— — — — —

**Romeo**

Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;  
Henceforth I never will be Romeo

— — — — —

**Romeo**

I do protest I never injured thee,  
But love thee better than thou canst devise

— — — — —

**Romeo**

'Tis torture, and not mercy. Heaven is here  
Where Juliet lives...

— — — — —

**Romeo**

Here's to my love! O true apothecary!  
Thy drugs are quick.

— — — — —

## ROMEO

How oft when men are at the point of death  
 Have they been merry, which their keepers call  
 A light'ning before death! O how may I  
 Call this a light'ning? O my love, my wife,  
 Death, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath,  
 Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:  
 Thou art not conquered, beauty's ensign yet  
 Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,  
 And Death's pale flag is not advanced there.  
 Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet?  
 O, what more favor can I do to thee  
 Than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain  
 To sunder his that was thine enemy?  
 Forgive me, cousin. Ah, dear Juliet,  
 Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe  
 That unsubstantial Death is amorous,  
 And that the lean abhorred monster keeps  
 Thee here in dark to be his paramour?  
 For fear of that, I still will stay with thee,  
 And never from this palace of dim night  
 Depart again. Here, here will I remain  
 With worms that are thy chamber-maids; O here  
 Will I set up my everlasting rest,  
 And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars  
 From this world-wearied flesh. Eyes, look your last!  
 Arms, take your last embrace! and, lips, O you  
 The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss  
 A dateless bargain to engrossing Death!  
 Come, bitter conduct, come, unsavory guide!  
 Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on  
 The dashing rocks thy seasick weary bark!  
 Here's to my love! [*Drinks*] O true apothecary!  
 Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die.

–Act 5, scene 3

It is Friday night in Chicago, and the Memorial Day weekend is just getting started. Police Department officials plan to deploy more than a thousand extra officers to deal with the violence they fear will intensify with the unofficial start of summer.

There is no stopping the gunfire, which comes in bursts and waves, interrupting holiday barbecues, igniting gang rivalries, engulfing neighborhoods, blocks, families.

From Friday evening to the end of Monday, 64 people will have been shot in this city of 2.7 million, six of them fatally. In a population made up of nearly equal numbers of whites, blacks and Hispanics, 52 of the shooting victims are black, 11 Hispanic and one white. Eight are women, the rest men. Some 12 people are shot in cars, 11 along city sidewalks, and at least four on home porches.

It is a level of violence that has become the terrifying norm, particularly in predominantly black and Latino neighborhoods on the South and West Sides. With far fewer residents, Chicago has more homicides than Los Angeles or New York.

Friday, 3:00 p.m.

Rain is in the forecast, but Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson wants to make sure that his officers won't let their guard down as they head into the holiday weekend.

"I think you all know how important this weekend is," Mr. Johnson tells nearly 20 of Chicago's highest-ranking police officials at Public Safety Headquarters. "Violence from the previous Memorial Day weekends hasn't been good."

The year, so far, has been steeped in blood. Shootings – 1,177 as of the Friday morning before Memorial Day – are up by 50 percent for the year. Two hundred and thirty-three people are dead.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel is also pushing for a quiet weekend. At a community event promoting nonviolence on the South Side, he greets men playing basketball, watches children draw, and compliments a mural underway, which reads: "Hearts Up. ... Guns Down."

A few hours later, the shooting starts.

Saturday, 1:27 AM

A group of friends are crammed into a blue Jeep Grand Cherokee, music blaring. One of them, Jose Alvarez, calls himself "Chi Rack Alvarez" on Facebook, a play on Chicago's war-inspired nickname, Chiraq. He records a video of himself flashing signs disrespecting a gang, and posts it to Snapchat.

A recording of a Snapchat video by Jose Alvarez, made shortly before Veronica Lopez was shot and killed Saturday morning.

Mr. Alvarez, 28, is at the wheel as the Jeep heads north on Lake Shore Drive, speeding by the affluent neighborhoods of the North Side, when a dark vehicle pulls alongside and someone inside opens fire.

There are 15 shots in all, Mr. Alvarez estimates later from his hospital bed. He escapes with minor injuries: a bullet wound in the arm and a graze of his forehead.

Not his friend Veronica Lopez, 15.

*continued* ► ► ► ►

"I turned around, put my whole body on her, and hold her wound while they are still shooting through the door," Mr. Alvarez says. "I was trying to save her, and it didn't work."

Ms. Lopez, a high school freshman, becomes the youngest murder victim of the mayhem over Memorial Day weekend.

So much of Chicago's street violence is documented electronically that detectives scour the internet for the gang ties and grudges that often spark the gunfire. The police describe Mr. Alvarez as a gang member and say he may have been the intended target of the shooting. Mr. Alvarez insists that the police are wrong in labeling him part of a gang.

After Ms. Lopez's death, he changed his Facebook profile name to "Rip Princess Veronica."

He says he expects the killers to boast about the shooting on social media.

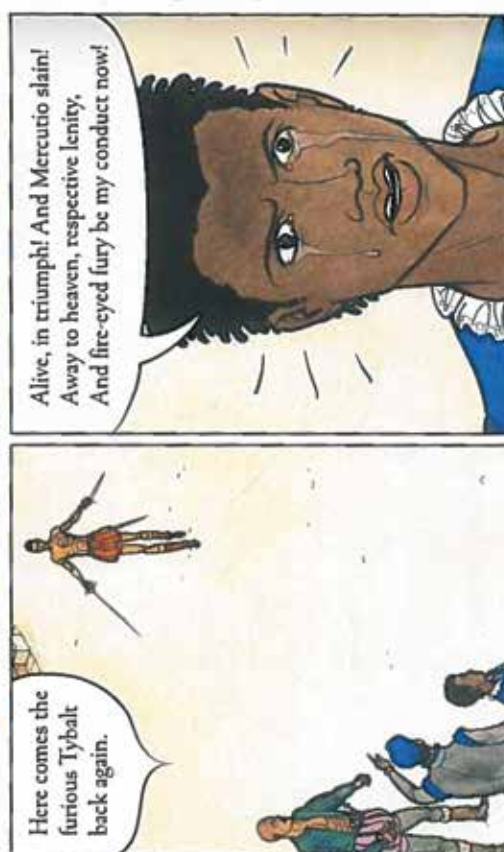
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Excerpted from *The New York Times*, June 2016

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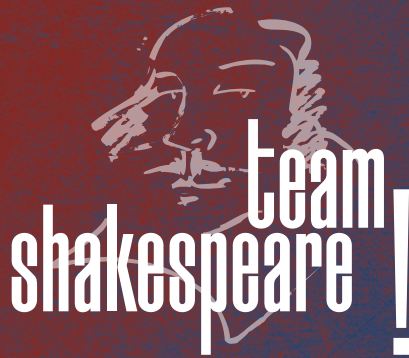
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