

Romeo and Juliet : characters

Match the character name in the boxes below to the description of each character.
Write the name in the box provided.

Benvolio	Tybalt	Friar Lawrence	Lady Montague	Lady Capulet
Juliet	Nurse	Prince Escalus	Lord Montague	Lord Capulet
Romeo	Mercutio	Benvolio	Tybalt	

	<p>When we think about this character we try to find redeeming qualities. It is not easy. He can be respectful but most of the time he is simply confrontational. He is loyal to his family but his words are bitter and full of hatred. In his final speech he calls Romeo a 'wretched boy'. He likes to be the centre of attention and so he teases and taunts.</p>
	<p>His calm presence is much valued and Shakespeare uses him to bring stability to volatile situations. Or at least that is the idea. Very often he wants something to happen but it never actually does. For example, he advises Mercutio to take his leave on the hot day when the 'mad blood' is stirring but his advice is ignored. Had he been taken more seriously, the events might have taken a very different course.</p>
	<p>He is referred to as 'brave' and a 'gentleman'. His passionate speeches make the audience smile but they also introduce a note of irrationality and doom. When he first speaks he refers to Romeo as 'gentle'. His relationship with Romeo is used to introduce a shocking and violent twist. He offers words of wisdom. For example, he says to Romeo that 'if love be rough' then Romeo should be 'rough with love.' He is cruelly murdered.</p>
	<p>The audience finds this character witty and playful; they are full of energy and love life. They have a tough side though. When required, they adopt a serious tone and they let their experience come through. They are full of love and Shakespeare uses her to provide information about Juliet's childhood and her upbringing.</p>
	<p>Sometimes happy and sometimes sad; sometimes tender and sometimes violent; sometimes passive and sometimes active. He is full of contradictions and Shakespeare often reflects this in his language. He wants to live a peaceful life but fate often conspires against him. When we first meet him he wants to be loved. When he DOES find love it completely changes his life and critics have suggested that he is too impetuous.</p>
	<p>This character is strong and demands to be respected. His language is often forceful, sometimes violent, but he can also enjoy himself as well; being in the company of others is a joy to him and he likes to make people feel welcome. He is dismissive of Tybalt at the masque and the audience feels as if he wants the feuding to end. His relationship with Juliet is tempestuous.</p>

	<p>Shakespeare uses this character sparingly but to good effect. His first question informs the audience that the feuding between the families has been going on for many years. He is trusting and caring and also very anxious, not just about the fighting but about his own family. He is also forgiving. He is happy to let Benvolio speak to Romeo in order to discover why Romeo has been ‘adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs.’</p>
	<p>Shakespeare uses this character to counterbalance the theme of rebellion. Indeed his first word in the play is ‘rebellious’. He also has a significant role to play in terms of the plot. What would have happened if Romeo had not been banished from Verona? His speeches are forceful and convincing. He is a man to be feared and obeyed.</p>
	<p>The first words from this character are in the form of a question. We see a dutiful and respectful person. Sometimes petulant, sometimes lyrical, sometimes foolhardy and sometimes happy, she is a complex character whom Shakespeare develops with great skill and sensitivity. She changes quickly and becomes increasingly independent and single-minded as the action develops. She threatens suicide.</p>
	<p>This character has very few lines in the play but she is needed by Shakespeare to establish the family feud which is central to everything that happens in the play. Her only words consist of a rhyming couplet where she reveals her love for Romeo and her relief that he was not present at the ‘fray’.</p>
	<p>The first words from this character are in the form of a question. Indeed, she asks many questions throughout the play. She can be forceful and overbearing but her motives are admirable, especially when we consider the social and historical context. She is loving but also full of hatred. She wants justice. When Tybalt is murdered she says ‘we will have vengeance for it.’</p>
	<p>Critics argue that this character is central to our appreciation of the play; he is crucial to the plot. He is a skilful man, prepared to take risks and share his knowledge with others. We see him on stage with both Romeo and Juliet and he is influential in their young lives. He is shocked to discover that Romeo has fallen in love with Juliet, so soon after he had feelings for Rosaline.</p>
	<p>Shakespeare establishes this character in Act 1 with the words ‘look upon thy death’ which sets the tone of his language for the rest of the play. He is playful and jocular. He is rarely on stage but when he is, he makes an explosive impact. He is full of anger and aggression and is rarely conciliatory. Shakespeare uses animal imagery to describe him. He is eventually murdered.</p>
	<p>His first words display rationality, a characteristic which endears him towards the audience. Some would say that he displays cowardice and naivety but he does have a sense of humour and he can be witty. Shakespeare often uses him to give the audience information, such as background details in the opening scene about Romeo. He is diplomatic and he is a sensitive advisor, especially towards Romeo.</p>