

# InsideOUT

PRODUCED BY THE DENVER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

## ROMEO & JULIET

*ROMEO & JULIET*  
BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Denver Center  
**THEATRE**  
KENT THOMPSON,  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR **COMPANY**

**DENVERCENTER.ORG**  
**Box Office 303.893.4100**

**2012/13**  
SEASON SPONSORS



**STEINBERG**  
CHARITABLE TRUST

**LARIMER SQUARE**



**THE DENVER POST**  
COMMUNITY

Use of study guide materials for publication requires permission from the Marketing Department of The Denver Center for the Performing Arts.

©2013 Denver Center Theatre Company

# InsideOUT

Douglas Langworthy ..... Editor  
Sally Gass ..... Contributing Writer  
David Saphier ..... Education Contributor  
Tina Risch ..... Community Services Manager

Administration 303.893.4000

Box Office 303.893.4100

denvercenter.org

Denver Center Theatre Company Season Sponsors



STEINBERG  
CHARITABLE TRUST



Producing Partners:

Sheri & Lee  
ARCHER

Katy  
ATKINSON

Isabelle  
CLARK

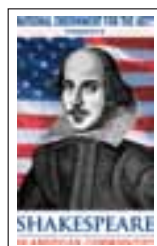
Mike & Diana  
KINSEY

Dennis & Anita  
LACEY

Alison & Jim  
SHETTER

June  
TRAVIS

*Romeo & Juliet* is part of Shakespeare for a New Generation, a national program of the National Endowment for the Arts in cooperation with Arts Midwest.



*Special thanks to the following donors for their support of significant education programs with this play:*

The Anschutz Foundation  
Willis Ashby & Karen Burch  
Denver Post Community  
Alan & Katie Fox  
Margot & Allan Frank  
Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Gary

National Corporate Theatre Fund  
The Ponzio Family  
Walter S. Rosenberry, III  
Charitable Trust  
U.S. Bank  
Xcel Energy Foundation



## Synopsis

*For never was a story of more woe  
Than that of Juliet and her Romeo.*

—*Romeo and Juliet*, V, iii

Verona is the home of two feuding noble houses, the Montagues and the Capulets. In response to the constant brawling between the members of these families, the Prince of Verona has issued an edict that imposes a death sentence on anyone caught dueling.

Against this backdrop, young Romeo of the Montague house has become infatuated with Rosaline, a niece of Capulet. Rosaline is quickly forgotten, however, when Romeo and friends disguise themselves and slip into a masked ball at the Capulet house where Romeo catches his first glimpse of Juliet and falls madly in love. In a memorable scene, Romeo steals into the garden and professes his love to Juliet standing above him on her balcony. With the aid of Friar Laurence, who hopes their union might put an end to the Montague/Capulet feud, he marries the two young lovers in secret.

Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, discovers that Romeo has attended the ball uninvited and plans to teach him a lesson. He challenges Romeo, but Romeo backs off, trying to avoid a duel with Tybalt since Tybalt is now his cousin by marriage. Mercutio, Romeo's best friend, takes up Tybalt's challenge however and is slain in the ensuing fight. Now enraged, Romeo kills Tybalt in return. As a result of this bloodshed, the Prince banishes Romeo from Verona for his actions. Romeo barely has time to consummate his marriage and bid farewell to Juliet, though he hopes they

---

will be reunited once the Capulets learn that he and Juliet are man and wife.

**M**eanwhile, the Capulets are pressing for Juliet to marry Paris, a cousin to the Prince. Friar Laurence devises a desperate plan to help Juliet avoid her parent's wishes by giving her a drug that will make her seem dead for 42 hours; while she is in this state, the Friar will send word of the situation to Romeo so that he can return and rescue her at the tomb.

Unfortunately, fate will not be kind; the letter from Friar Laurence is delayed. Instead, the second-hand news Romeo gets is that Juliet is dead. Grief-stricken, he purchases poison and rushes to Juliet's tomb to die at her side. When Friar Laurence discovers to his horror that his letter did not reach Romeo, he plans to take Juliet away until he can set things right.

**A**t the tomb Romeo encounters Paris, who is mourning the loss of Juliet; in his grief, Romeo slays Paris, enters the tomb and, finding Juliet seemingly dead, he downs his poison. When Juliet awakens and finds Romeo dead, she kills herself with his dagger.

Friar Laurence relates to all the tragic tale of Romeo and Juliet's secret marriage and their senseless suicides. When faced with the terrible tragedy their feud has exacted, the Montagues and Capulets vow to put an end to the enmity between their two houses. ■

---

# WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: AN ENCAPSULATED BIOGRAPHY

---

**F**or all of his fame and celebrity, William Shakespeare's personal history largely remains a mystery. There are just two primary sources of information on the Bard—his works and various legal and church documents that have survived from Elizabethan times—but these tell us little about Shakespeare the man.

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, on or about April 23, 1564. Church records from Holy Trinity Church indicate that he was baptized there on April 26, 1564. William was the son of John Shakespeare, a glover and leather merchant, and Mary Arden, a landed heiress. According to the church register, William was the third of eight children in the Shakespeare household—three of whom died in childhood. John Shakespeare had a remarkable run of success as a merchant and later as an alderman and high bailiff of Stratford. His fortunes declined, however, in the 1570s.

**T**here is great conjecture about Shakespeare's childhood years, especially regarding his education. Scholars surmise that Shakespeare attended the free grammar school in Stratford, which at the time had a reputation to rival Eton's. While there are no surviving records to prove this, Shakespeare's knowledge of Latin and Classical Greek tend to support this theory. As a Stratford official, John Shakespeare would have been granted a waiver of tuition for his son. Since the records do not exist, we don't know how long William attended the school, but certainly the literary quality of his works suggest a solid education. What is certain is that William Shakespeare never went on to university, which has stirred some of the debate concerning the authorship of his works.

The next documented event in Shakespeare's life is his marriage to Anne Hathaway on November 28, 1582. William was 18 at the time and Anne was 26—and pregnant. Their first daughter, Susanna, was born on May 26, 1583. The couple later had twins, Hamnet and Judith, born February 2, 1585 and christened at Holy Trinity. Hamnet died in childhood at the age of 11, on August 11, 1596.

---

**F**or seven years, William Shakespeare effectively disappears from all records, turning up in London circa 1592. One theory is that he might have gone into hiding for poaching game from the local landlord, Sir Thomas Lucy. Another possibility is that he might have been working as an assistant schoolmaster in Lancashire.

It is estimated that Shakespeare arrived in London around 1588 and began to establish himself as an actor and playwright. Evidently, Shakespeare was envied early on for his talent, as related by the critical attack of Robert Greene, a London playwright, in 1592: “—an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tiger’s heart wrapped in a player’s hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you: and being an absolute Johannes factotum, is in his own conceit the only Shakescene in country.”<sup>1</sup>

**G**reene’s own bombast notwithstanding, Shakespeare must have shown considerable promise. By 1594, he was not only acting and writing for the Lord Chamberlain’s Men (called the King’s Men after the ascension of James I in 1603), but was a managing partner in the operation as well. With Will Kempe, a master comedian, and Richard Burbage, the leading tragic actor of the day, the Lord Chamberlain’s Men became a favorite London troupe, patronized by royalty and made popular by the theatre-going public. When the plague forced theatre closings in the mid-1590s, Shakespeare and his company made plans for the Globe Theatre in the Bankside district, which was across the river from London proper.

Shakespeare’s success is apparent when studied against other playwrights of his age. His company was the most successful in London. He had plays published and sold in octavo editions, or “penny-copies” to the more literate of his audiences. It is noted that never before had a playwright enjoyed sufficient acclaim to see his works published and sold as popular literature in the midst of his career. While Shakespeare could not be accounted as wealthy, by London standards, his success allowed him to purchase New House and retire in comfort to Stratford in 1611.

**W**illiam Shakespeare wrote his will that same year, bequeathing his properties to his daughter Susanna (married in 1607 to Dr. John Hall). To his surviving daughter Judith, he left 300 pounds, and to his wife Anne he left “my second best bed.” Shakespeare may have died on his birthday, April 23, 1616, but this is probably more romantic myth than

---

reality. He was interred at Holy Trinity in Stratford on April 25.

**I**n 1623 two working companions of Shakespeare's from the Lord Chamberlain's Men, John Heminges and Henry Condell, printed the First Folio edition of the *Collected Works*, of which half the plays contained therein were previously unpublished. The First Folio also contained Shakespeare's sonnets.

William Shakespeare's works have endured for almost 450 years and still reach across the centuries as powerfully as ever. ■

---

1. [www. bardweb](http://www.bardweb.net)

<http://www.bardweb.net/man.html>

---

# SOURCES OF THE STORY

---

In 1476, Masuccio Salernitano (of Salerno on Italy's Amalfi coast) produced his version of the lovers' tragedy entitled *Mariotto and Ganozza*, in which the title characters fall in love and are secretly married. Mariotto is exiled and Ganozza takes a sleeping potion so that she can avoid the man she is supposed to marry. Mariotto believes her dead, returns home and is killed. Ganozza discovers him dead and instantly dies herself.

In 1530, Luigi da Porta adapted this story, setting the events in Verona and using the family names of Montecchi and Cappelletti. The story continued to evolve until Arthur Brook wrote his poem *Tragedie of Romeus and Juliet* in 1562. This is considered the main source for Shakespeare's play. Shakespeare put his touch on every speech and event, heightening the dramatic effect. ■

.....

Hager, Alan. *Understanding Romeo and Juliet: a Student Casebook to Issues, Sources and Historical Documents*. London: Greenwood Press, 1999.



---

# MAJOR THEMES IN ROMEO & JULIET

---

One of the major themes of the play is love, and it is developed by contrast. In the first scene, the Capulet servants Sampson and Gregory present carnal love in their ribald jests. “Affected” love is introduced next in Romeo’s lovesick posturing for Rosaline. Mercutio satirizes love, while the Friar recognizes its shallowness. “Conventional” love is portrayed by Paris and Capulet when they arrange the marriage of Juliet. Finally, there is the “true love” of Romeo and Juliet, which is also a defiant love because they are scions of the feuding families.

Another powerful theme is civil disorder or violence. It is established in the opening scene in a quarrel, which erupts into a riot involving the servants of the Montague and Capulet households. In Act III a dispute between Mercutio and Tybalt results in a street brawl with neutral citizens and the Prince. This time two key men are killed and the tragic pattern of the play begins. In Act V Romeo and Paris meet and Paris is killed by Romeo.

Other themes are light versus dark. When Romeo first sees Juliet he compares her to the sun. (“It is the east and Juliet is the sun”. III, ii, 3). But light becomes the negative form of darkness when the lovers part at dawn. Darkness triumphs over light when the Prince appears at the tomb in the last act and says, “A glooming peace this morning with it brings/The sun for sorrow will not show his head.” (V,iii, 304-305.)

Youth is compared with age. The feuding families are aging while Romeo and Juliet are young and impetuous. Romeo’s haste is especially noted when he rushes to the apothecary to buy poison after hearing that Juliet is dead. Along with aging is the theme of death versus life. Death is not far away as shown by such images as “death marked,” “untimely death” and “death-bed.” ■

---

Carey, G.K. *Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet*. Lincoln, Nebraska: Cliff Notes, Inc., 1996.

Gibson, Rex, ed. *Cambridge School Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005.



---

# HUMOR IN ROMEO AND JULIET

---

**M**ercutio is Romeo's quick-tempered, witty friend who links the comic and violent action of the play. He is first presented as a playful rogue who makes bawdy jokes and puns. Quite a contrast to Romeo, Mercutio mocks Romeo as a helpless victim of an unsatisfied love, a creature in love with love. In his Queen Mab speech (I, iv), Mercutio presents his vision of a fantasy world in which dreams are the products of people's desires. His speech begins with sweet dreams and ends with nightmares; it reflects both Mercutio's wit and his aggressive disposition.

Like Mercutio, Juliet's Nurse views love as a purely sexual and temporary relationship. Her bawdy humor is less sophisticated than Mercutio's; her comedy comes from her misunderstanding of language, her repetitions and her good nature.

**S**hakespeare uses the comic roles of Mercutio and the Nurse to develop the roles of Romeo and Juliet as the young tragic lovers. Both comic characters' rejection of the ideal of love emphasizes the vulnerable quality of that love and its inability to survive in this world. ■

.....

[http://www.cliffnotes.com/study\\_guide/literature/romeo\\_and\\_juliet/critical\\_essays/role\\_of\\_comic\\_characters\\_a\\_tragedy.htm](http://www.cliffnotes.com/study_guide/literature/romeo_and_juliet/critical_essays/role_of_comic_characters_a_tragedy.htm)

[http://www.mannmuseum.com/analysis\\_of\\_the\\_queen\\_mab\\_speech\\_from\\_romeo\\_and\\_juliet](http://www.mannmuseum.com/analysis_of_the_queen_mab_speech_from_romeo_and_juliet)

---

# VERONA

---

*“There is no world without Verona’s walls,  
But purgatory, torture, hell itself:  
Hence ‘banished’ is banished from the world.”*  
—Romeo, III, iii

---

**T**he details of Verona’s early history remain vague. In 569 A.D., the city was taken from the Gauls by Albion, King of the Lombards, when it became the second most important city in his kingdom. Albion was slain by his own wife in 572. Once Charlemagne conquered Verona in 774, the city became the primary residence of the kings of Italy, the government of the city becoming hereditary in the Count Milo family.

**O**tto I bore a son Alberto who, as *capitano* (1277-1302), waged incessant war against the counts of San Bonifacio, who were aided by the house of Este, a European princely dynasty. Alberto’s son Cangrande I (1308) noted as a warrior, prince and patron of the arts, shared the government. He protected Dante, Petrarch and Giotto. By war or treaty, he controlled the cities of Padua (1328), Treviso (1308) and Vincenza.

Martino II (1329-1351), one of the sons of Albion, continued his uncle’s policy, conquering Brescia in 1332 and exerting power beyond the Po River. After the King of France, he was the richest prince of his time. But a powerful league was formed against him in 1337 consisting of the rulers of Florence, Venice, the Visconti, the Este and the Gonzaga. After a three-year war, his dominion was reduced to Verona and Vincenza.

**M**artino’s son, Canagrande II (1351-1359), was a cruel, dissolute and suspicious tyrant who surrounded himself with Brandenburg mercenaries. His brother, Cansignorino (1359-1395), killed him and beautified the city with palaces, provided it with aqueducts, and bridges and founded the state treasury. Fratricide seems to have run rampant in this family, for Antonio, Consignorino’s brother, slew his brother Bartolomeo, “thereby arousing the indignation of the people.”<sup>1</sup> In 1797 Verona was occupied by Napoleon, but the populace rose and drove out the French.

---

The Italian vendettas, or blood feuds, were a long-standing tradition that most city and town officials tried to break. This was a difficult task since, by Italian standards, a family's honor required that adequate vengeance be taken for the injury or death of a family member. Unfortunately, innocent bystanders could be killed or injured; many laws were enacted in an attempt to reduce the violence of vendettas. Funerals and large family gatherings were restricted to daylight hours in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Now Verona is an important thriving city, active in the economy as well as a tourist attraction. ■

---

1. wiki/Verona

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verona>

[http://www.ucalgary.ca/applied\\_history/tutor/endmiddle/bluedot/vendettas.html](http://www.ucalgary.ca/applied_history/tutor/endmiddle/bluedot/vendettas.html)

---

# HONOR

---

**D**uring the Renaissance, honor was a delicate sentiment that could easily be lost through slights or insults. A man of honor had to be constantly on guard to defend his stature.

Jill Levenson, in Jay Halio's book on *Romeo and Juliet*, asserts that "Rank [is] identified with honor, which in turn was identified, for men at least, with public reputation for courage." <sup>1</sup>.

In Curtis Brown Watson's book *Shakespeare and the Renaissance Code of Honor*, he writes, "For the Renaissance aristocracy, honor, good name, credit, reputation and glory came close to the very center of their ethical values" <sup>2</sup>.

**T**here were numerous rules about honor. For example, mostly men of nobility were worthy of honor and thereby could participate in it. Rules were stipulated about whom you could insult (only equals) and who was out of range. Then there were regulations about the forms of insult. "There was the contemptuous insult, which reduced one's dignity by belittling it. The spiteful insult was one given just for the heck of it and didn't benefit anyone. Finally, there was the insult of insolence, which consisted of mistreating everyone in general so as to prove one's superiority." <sup>3</sup>.

**I**n Italy this obsession with honor caused many family feuds or vendettas. In the first scene of the play, the Capulet servant Sampson brags about his bravery. Enter two Montague servants, Abram and Balthasar. Sampson bites his thumb at them, which is the Renaissance equivalent of an insult. After much bantering between both sides, Abram calls Sampson a liar and a brawl begins. ■

---

1. Levenson in Halio, p. 93.

2. Watson, p. 64.

3. Olster and Hamilton, p. viii.

<http://web.uvic.ca/~mbest1/Shakespeare/Resources/Honour/Honour.html>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francois\\_Rabelais](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francois_Rabelais)  
Halio, Jay, ed. *Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: Texts, Contexts*

---

*and Interpretations*. London: Associated University Press, 1995.

Hamilton, Rick and Olster, Fredi. *Romeo and Juliet: a Workbook for Students*.

Lyme, NH: Smith and Kraus, 1996.

Watson, Curtis Brown. *Shakespeare and the Renaissance Concept of Honor*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968.

---

# DUELING

---

*“Thou hast spoken in prejudice of mine honor, honestie and credite  
and therefore doest lie.”*  
—Sir William Seger.

---

A duel is a fight, but it is a very controlled sort of fight. In a duel two men face each other on equal terms (only rarely did women duel). Duels follow an agreed upon set of rules, begin at a specified time and occur at a specific place. The word itself comes from the Latin *duellum*, a contraction of *due* (two) and *bellum* (war).

Dueling was practiced from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Western societies. In Elizabethan England honor was the recognition of one's place in society and the realization of virtuous action, not necessarily a virtuous person. To Elizabethans life wasn't worth living without honor; once it was lost it could never be recovered. Honor meant the recognition of worth, and, in accordance with one's rank in the world, one had to eliminate all challenge to that place.

In Dymphna Callaghan's book, *William Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet: Texts and Contexts*, she writes, "Sword fighting or fencing in Elizabethan London was predominately a male sport. Taught and practiced in fencing schools, it was enormously popular and used both in competition, military and civil combat. Enthusiasts followed the intricacies of swordplay with intense relish."<sup>1</sup>

Dueling had a specific etiquette one had to follow. First was the Offense: one party would demand satisfaction from the offender. One could signal this demand with an inescapably insulting gesture, such as throwing his glove before him. This was followed by the Challenge: one must challenge the other person by letter or messenger if one believes he's been insulted. Then came the Acceptance, which required the party to accept all challenges or apologize and admit wrongdoing, thereby losing honor. Decision on location, time of fight and weapons were discussed next. Duels were often held in open fields or as public events on a stage. Seconds (or stand-ins) were optional as well as the invitation to spectators. The rules of fighting were agreed upon; a duel could begin immediately or more ceremoniously depending on one's social class. Presumably the fight took place next with

---

participants combating until they were wounded or dead. Finally, if still alive or even dying, one could claim victory and say this duel proved his honor in the eyes of God and country.

**T**he rapier was the modern technology of the duel. It was relatively new to Elizabethan England but quickly became available to the ordinary man. Rather than wearing a heavy sword, one could now wear an elegantly thin rapier that would wound the enemy with the tip instead of slicing him with the edge of a sword. Introduced from Italy, the rapier was fast, deadly, portable and bought by all men who could afford them. Gone was the old way of fighting using brute force and endurance; the new ways of violence required physical technique and mental discipline and fencing schools proliferated.<sup>2</sup>

**D**ueling ended between 1590 and 1610. France passed a series of laws which punished dueling by death by hanging, denial of a Christian burial and the confiscation of estates by the Crown. In England King James ascended the throne in 1603 and in 1613 he issued a declaration stopping all duels. The aristocracy now had a loophole out of the code of honor. ■

---

1. Callaghan, p. 194.

2. *Inside Out*, study guide to *Romeo and Juliet*, 2001.

<http://rtravers/webs.com/lessonone.htm>

<http://uvic.ca/~mbest/Shakespeare/Resources/Honour/Honour.html>

Callaghan, Dymna, ed. *William Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet: Texts and Contexts*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2003.

Shamas, Laura. "Dueling, Feuding and the Bard." *Study Guide to Romeo and Juliet*. Denver: Denver Center for the Performing Arts, 1994.

Watson, Curtis Brown. *Shakespeare and the Renaissance Code of Honor*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966.



---

# IMAGERY AND SYMBOLS

---

One of the play's most consistent visual images is the contrast between light and dark. The flash and sparkle of eyes, jewels, stars, fire, lightning, torches, the sun and moon are set against the darker world of night. Light is not always good and dark is not always evil. One of the most important examples of this motif is Romeo's lengthy speech on the sun and moon during the balcony scene.

There are numerous symbols in the play. One is poison. Friar Laurence says that nothing exists in nature that cannot be put to both good and evil uses. Poison is not intrinsically evil until it gets into human hands. Thumb biting by the buffoonish Sampson is another symbol. It is a meaningless gesture representing the foolishness of the Capulet and Montague feud. Queen Mab and her carriage symbolize the dreams of sleepers and the power of waking fantasies, daydreams and desires. Flowers are a symbol as Juliet says, "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." She also portrays her affection for Romeo as a "bud of love." Stars were important to the Elizabethans for they believed the stars determined a person's destiny. Therefore, Romeo and Juliet are star-crossed lovers.

Another symbol from nature that Shakespeare incorporates into the play are birds. Juliet is called "ladybird" by the Nurse, as Juliet waits for the Nurse's return with word from Romeo, she describes the words of love as born by the dove who is not the swiftest bird around. Finally, Shakespeare uses the symbolism of a nightingale and a lark to portray night and morning to the newly married lovers. ■

.....

1. Gibson, ed. p. 210.

Gibson, Rex, ed. *Cambridge School Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

<http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/romeojuliet/themes.html>

<http://www.helium.com/items/1180805-symbolism-in-romeo-and-juliet>

---

# COURTLY LOVE

---

*“Every lover is a warrior, and Cupid has his camps.”*

—Ovid, *Amores*, I, ix, i

.....

**T**he “courtly love” relationship was modeled on the feudal relationship between a knight and his lord. The knight served a courtly lady with the same obedience and loyalty he owed to his nobleman. She was in complete control of the relationship while he owed her obedience and submission. The knight’s love for his lady inspired him to do great deeds in order to be worthy of her love or to win her favor. Thus, “courtly love” was originally meant as an ennobling force whether or not it was consummated or even if the lady was unaware of the knight’s love.

The courtly love relationship typically was not between husband and wife, not because the poets and audience were inherently immoral, but because it was an idealized sort of relationship that could not exist within the context of “real life” medieval marriages. In the middle ages marriages among the nobility were typically based on practical and dynastic concerns rather than on love. But the audience for romance was perfectly aware that these romances were fictions, not models for actual behavior.

**S**ocial historians such as Eric Kohler and Georges Duby have hypothesized that “courtly love may have served a useful social purpose: providing a model of behavior for a class of unmarried young men that might otherwise have threatened social stability.”<sup>1</sup> Knights were typically young brothers without land of their own (therefore, unable to support a wife) who became members of the household of the feudal lords whom they served. One reason why the lady in the courtly love relationship was typically older, married and of higher social status than the knight may be because she was modeled on the wife of the feudal lord and might possibly become the focus of the young unmarried knight’s desire.

**T**he behavior of the knight and lady in love was drawn partly from troubadour poetry and partly from a set of literary conventions derived from the Latin poet Ovid, who described the symptoms of love as if it were a sickness. The

.....

“lovesick” knight became a conventional character in medieval romance. Typical symptoms of lovesickness were sighing, turning pale, turning red, fever, inability to eat or drink. ■

.....

1. [cla.calpoly.edu](http://cla.calpoly.edu)

<http://cla.calpoly.edu/~dschwart/eng1513/courtly/courtly.htm>.

<http://research.uvu.edu/mcdonald/britquestions/courtlylove.html>

---

# LOVE AND MARRIAGE IN RENAISSANCE ITALY

---

**A**rranged marriages were common during the Italian Renaissance. A good reason for early marriage was the fear of death; this was a time, after all, of primitive medical care, ignorance of basic sanitation and its role in preventing disease. Some of these young marriages were arranged hastily—the result of impulse or the impatience of passion. But far more often, marriages were not for love but for obtaining strategic alliances that elevated power or wealth. Marriages were contracted between families with go-betweens negotiating the best possible financial and social terms.

The first step in arranged marriages was the *impalamento*, the negotiation. Usually parents of the bride and groom made the arrangements for an impending wedding, but sometimes a marriage broker was brought in and the two parties decided on what formalities would take place. An agreement was confirmed in writing, specifying exactly what the dowry would be and how all transfers of property were to be handled.

**T**he next step was the *sponsalia*: the sponsorship. This was a meeting between only the male members of the families who went over the contractual arrangements and asked for assurances on the part of both families that the terms were realistic and equitable. Although the bride was not present at this strictly ceremonial meeting it was assumed that she would consent to its terms and conditions.

*Matrimonium* followed. The marriage did not take place in a church, but more often in the bride's home before a notary. After all the parties were satisfied that the requirements had been met, then a ring was placed on the bride's finger.

**I**n arranged marriages portrait paintings took on a very important role. Without official recordings of marriages—there were no government offices of vital records—and with the vulnerability of the papers on which negotiations and agreements were written, paintings became valuable proof that a marriage had taken place.

---

The bride's dowry or *trousseau* of household items was kept in a wooden chest called a *cassone*. It was placed at the foot of the couple's bed and contained various items including tablecloths, coverlets, robes and dresses. The groom brought his own *cassone* with special gifts for the bride. ■

---

[http://www.worldandi.com/subscribers/feature\\_detail.asp?num=26602](http://www.worldandi.com/subscribers/feature_detail.asp?num=26602)

---

# PERFORMANCE HISTORY OF THE PLAY

---

**T**he first written documentation of a performance of *Romeo & Juliet* comes from the 1662 diary of Samuel Pepys. Though he did not like the play, it must have been well received by the audience because another revival opened just a few years later. This version was directed by James Howard, who rewrote the ending of the play and kept the lovers alive. He also staged the original ending, and alternated the sad and happy endings from night to night so that audience members could determine which one they liked better.

In 1748, the famous actor-manager David Garrick staged his adaptation of *Romeo & Juliet*. He simplified the language, cut a few characters, eliminated all the bawdy references and added some extra speeches. Garrick's version would be performed for the next 100 years, making *Romeo & Juliet* the most popular of Shakespeare's plays through the late 18<sup>th</sup> century—though it was Garrick's version and not Shakespeare's that was on the stage.

**S**ubsequent 19<sup>th</sup> century productions restored Shakespeare's text (directors still made cuts as they do today), 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 the main characters in the play are young, it was not unusual for actors in their thirties or forties to play them.

**B**y the 1930s, Shakespeare's original text had been restored, but directors still eliminated most of the bard's sexual references. Much of the comedy in *Romeo & Juliet* relies on bawdiness and sexual innuendo, but until the 1960s many productions focused more on the tragedy and romance of the play. One of the milestone English productions of *Romeo & Juliet* took place at London's New Theatre in 1935. John Gielgud directed and played Mercutio, Laurence Olivier played Romeo, Peggy Ashcroft played Juliet, while Edith Evans was the Nurse. Olivier and Gielgud, each fascinated with both Romeo and Mercutio, switched roles after six weeks. Critics and audiences praised each actor for the different qualities each brought to both parts.

In the late 1960s, directors 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. One famous production was staged at the Royal Shakespeare Company

---

in 1962 by Italian director Franco Zeffirelli. In keeping with the more permissive atmosphere of the 60s, Zeffirelli restored the comic bawdry while emphasizing the youth and passion of the lovers. Although some critics complained that some of Shakespeare's language was neglected, audiences loved the vitality and sexuality of the production. Critics praised the way the scenic design "blended harmoniously with the surrounding city architecture."<sup>1</sup> The stage production led to the 1968 film version starring Leonard Whiting and Olivia Hussey, both young and beautiful.

**T**he play also is popular in countries where English is not the native tongue. Productions in Communist countries such as the former Soviet Union have emphasized 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 picked up on the theme of political corruption, setting the play in places like fascist Italy or Thatcherite England. Many recent American productions have cast the Capulets and Montagues as different ethnic groups in an effort to make the feud relevant to modern audiences. One of the first versions of this play to explain the feud by ethnic hatred was the musical *West Side Story*. The play was set in 1950s New York City; the lovers are called Tony and Maria; the feud is between rival gangs, one Puerto Rican (the Sharks) and the other melting-pot white Americans (the Jets).

**I**n 1996 the Australian film director, Baz Luhrmann, set his story in a very Latin, very Catholic Verona Beach—"a violent, multicultural, amphetamine-driven city, where the guns and switchblades of deadly street gangs have replaced rapiers and daggers."<sup>2</sup> Luhrmann cast two popular young actors in the title roles, Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes. Mercutio was portrayed as a black drag queen and the Friar as a tattooed clergyman of the streets. Some critics dismissed the work as having little to do with Shakespeare while others praised it for its contemporary relevance and depiction of violence in the streets. ■

---

1. [www.chicagoshakes.com](http://www.chicagoshakes.com)

2. Ibid.

<http://www.chicagoshakes.com/maintaf?p=2,19,3,27,1,6>

Hager, Alan, ed. / *Understanding Romeo and Juliet: a Student Casebook to Issues, Sources, and Historical Documents*. London: Greenwood Press, 1999.



---

# HERBS: THEN, NOW, AND YET TO COME

---

## A closer look at the botany of herbs from the Renaissance and beyond

By Amanda L. Burns, Denver Botanical Gardens

.....

**T**he English Renaissance is known around the world as the time of William Shakespeare, theatre, poetry, and music; but moreover, it was a time of exploration and expansion. With this exploration, a vast variety of imports became available to Europe from neighboring countries. English herbalists gained access to novel and different culinary additives, modalities for treating illnesses, and new ways of caring for the home. Newly introduced herbs and plants quickly became coveted by the English people for their many uses and benefits. Shakespeare assimilates plants and their power through Friar Lawrence in *Romeo and Juliet* (Act II, Scene 3, Lines 11-14).

“O mickle is the powerful grace that lies  
In herbs, plants, stones, and their true qualities.  
For naught so vile that on earth doth live  
But to the earth some special good doth give;”

Today, the technology we use, as well as the strength and potency of our herbal medicines, is decidedly different than that of the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. While several uses of herbs for culinary and housekeeping purposes are still being used, other methods, such as for healing, have changed significantly. The majority of the changes can be accredited to the advancements in technology and the onset of western medicine. During the Renaissance era the term “doctor” could be defined as “professional, clinical herbalist,” while today one can be either a “doctor” or a “clinical herbalist,” but rarely both.

**H**erbalists during the Renaissance era held an esteemed position in society. Men such as John Gerard or John Parkinson were common household names and highly respected because of their influence as herbalists.<sup>1</sup> You can even see evidence of such respect in Shakespeare’s life. His son-in-law, John Hall, husband to his favorite and eldest daughter, Susanna,

---

was an herbalist. With all the positive allusions to doctors and herbs throughout Shakespeare's plays, as well as the fact that he and Hall were direct neighbors, it is possible that Shakespeare was quite familiar with the profession.

**H**erbs such as rue, hyssop and lavender were some of the more highly valued herbs for their medical qualities. Often times, herbs with higher value meant they were more expensive to obtain and therefore were only available to those that ranked in a higher class. Rue (or as Shakespeare called it "the herb of grace") was most commonly used as an antidote to poisons, a cure for madness, and as a disinfectant. Today, rue is no longer valued for its herbal properties, but instead as a small, decorative evergreen shrub.<sup>2</sup> Hyssop, which was commonly referred to as the "green wound remedy," would often be brewed in warm ale to improve one's complexion and skin color; even today it is often used for similar medical and cosmetic purposes.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, lavender, much like rue and hyssop, was also used as a healing remedy. Shakespeare referred to lavender as "hot lavender" because the aromatic oil in the flowers were used for "cold causes," sometimes with spices "to dry up the moisture of the cold brain," just as teas are still given for fevers and head colds.<sup>4</sup>

**W**hile the shift in medical uses of herbs is perhaps the most significant, the way in which we use herbs for cooking and housekeeping purposes has experienced a significant transformation. Certain herbs, such as marjoram, are not as commonly used today in cooking as they were during the time of Shakespeare. Herbs like basil and cilantro that were introduced into Europe later have replaced many of the culinary herbs used during the Renaissance and are now common household items. Additionally, the use of herbs for housecleaning purposes, such as strewing herbs (scattering or "strewing" fragrant herbs on the floor to release their scent when stepped upon) have also fallen by the wayside as our homes have become better constructed and bodies have become cleaner (thus, less need to cover our smell) and the use of actual herbs in housecleaning solutions has decreased significantly as a result of chemical additives and artificial fragrances.<sup>5</sup>

As we get further away from the time of Shakespeare and early exploration, and closer to a comprehensive global economy, one is left to wonder: what is in store for the future of botany, and what value will our future generations place on the benefits herbs and other plant classifications provide? Will herbs and natural remedies fall further out of favor or will the recent concern about toxic cleaning agents and synthetic pharmaceuticals swing in an herbal

resurgence? To be, or not to be, that is the question. ■

1. Arber, 108.
2. Rohde, 167.
3. Rohde, 170
4. Carter, 50
5. Kerr, 61

Arber, Agnes. *Herbals: Their Origin and Evolution*. Cambridge: University Press, 1912.

Carter, Annie Burnham. *Shakespeare Gardens*. Philadelphia: Dorrance and Company, 1937.

Kerr, Jessica. *Shakespeare's Flowers*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1969.

Rohde, Eleanor Sinclair. *Shakespeare's Wild Flowers: Fairy Lore, Gardens, Herbs, Gatherers of Simples and Bee Lore*. London: The Medici Society, LTD., 1935.

## Want to learn more about herbs and their uses?

Register for an herb-related class with Denver Botanic Gardens  
at [botanicgardens.org](http://botanicgardens.org) or call 720-865-3580.

**January 19**, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. Aromatherapy – Basics and Beyond

**February 6**, 6 – 9 p.m. Appetite for Seduction – Cooking Class

**February 21**, 6 – 8 p.m. Plant Based Remedies – Relieving Stress and Insomnia

**March 19**, 6 – 8 p.m. The Cook's Herb Garden

**March 23**, 6 – 8 p.m. Plant Based Remedies – The Healing Oils of the Bible

**June 12**, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Herbal Alternatives and Natural Baby Care

## Visit the Gardens!

Show your *Romeo & Juliet* ticket stub to receive  
\$1 off regular day-time admission to Denver Botanic Gardens.

---

# PARTICIPATE

---

Free events designed to spark dialogue between actors, experts and audiences.

---

**Perspectives** - Denver Center Theatre Company's own "Creative Team" and community experts host interactive, topical discussions with attendees that provide a unique perspective on the production. This provides an in-depth connection that makes the stage experience even more rewarding.

1/11, 6pm, Jones Theatre

**Talkbacks** - Perhaps the best way to fully appreciate a production is by engaging in a stimulating dialogue with your fellow audience members and the actors who bring it to life.

1/20, Post-show

**Theatre & Theology Discussions** - In our continued partnership with Pastor Dan Bollman with the Rocky Mountain Evangelical Lutheran Synod and cast members, this discussion examines the relevant connections to the productions through a theological lens.

1/22, Post-show

**Higher Education Advisory Discussions** - Audience members gain scholarly insight into the productions through discussions, facilitated by faculty members from regional colleges and universities.

1/27, Post-show

**DCTC@The TC: The Art of Making Art** - Join host Eden Lane (*In Focus with Eden Lane* Channel 12) for a behind the scenes take on the Denver Center Theatre Company production of *Romeo & Juliet*. How do they do those incredible sword fights? Geoff Kent, fight director and Paris in the production, along with Mark Christine (Benvolio) and Matthew Simpson (Tybalt) will tell all for The Art of Making Art.

2/13, second floor of the Tattered Cover LoDo (1628 16th St.)

---

---

# QUESTIONS

---

## PRE-PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS

1. What causes a grudge? How do grudges affect the people that are directly involved? Can a grudge affect the people that are indirectly involved?
2. What is more important: loyalty to family or loyalty to a love interest?

## POST-PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS

1. What do you think could have caused the “ancient grudge” between the Capulets and Montagues?
2. How are the roles of parents portrayed in the play? How does each family treat their children?
3. Why does Lord Capulet arrange Juliet’s marriage to Paris? What are the benefits and drawbacks to an arranged marriage? How do Juliet’s views of marriage differ from her parents?
4. How would you describe the relationship between Romeo and Juliet?
5. Why do you think this story has stood the test of time? What has made this the iconic tragic love story?
6. How would you describe the relationship between Mercutio and Romeo? Why does Mercutio curse Romeo’s family?
7. How would you describe Tybalt? How does Juliet feel about her cousin’s death?
8. How is celestial imagery used in this play? Which characters make reference to it? Why are they referred to as “star cross’d lovers?”
9. Compare and contrast the characters Mercutio and Tybalt.
10. How is the banishment of Romeo treated? Why is he banished rather than executed as Escalus decreed?
11. How would you describe the Prince? What part does he play in the death of the lovers?
12. Could Friar Laurence and Juliet’s Nurse have prevented the outcome?
13. Which character or character’s struggle do you identify with the most? Cite an example from the play that is similar to your life.

---

# ACTIVITIES

---


## CHARACTER MAPPING

This activity looks at the internal and external characteristics of a certain character. Start with a circle in the middle of a piece of paper. As there will be writing inside and outside the circle, be careful to leave space. At the top of the page, either place a generic title such as “Lover,” “Parent,” etc. or the name of a character from the play. If this activity is played before seeing the production, start with generic titles.

Inside the circle, write descriptive words, phrases, or draw pictures that describe the characters’ perceptions of themselves. These descriptions are traits that we know and are the essential characteristics and also those that cannot be changed. For example, Juliet is female, the daughter of Capulet and beautiful.

Outside the circle, write descriptive words to describe how the characters are perceived by the other characters. These would be immediate qualities that are obvious or those traits that characterize the character. For example, Tybalt is hot-headed and has short temper.

After seeing the production or reading the text, create another circle for a specific character. For example, if the character is Juliet, in the circle, write quotes that Juliet uses to describe herself. On the outside of the circle, write quotes that the other characters use to describe her.



**Colorado Writing PG: Effectively use content-specific language, style, tone and text structure to compose or adapt writing for different audiences and purposes.**

**Colorado Writing PG: Write with clear focus, coherent organization, sufficient elaboration, and detail.**

**Colorado Drama and Theatre Arts PG: Employ drama and theatre skills, and articulate the aesthetics of a variety of characters and roles.**

---

## CHARACTER SHIELD

Pick a character from *Romeo and Juliet* and create a character shield or coat of arms. Each shield should be divided into four sections and a picture drawn for each of the following:

- a. The character's desire,
- b. The character's worst fear,
- c. The character's essential nature in symbolic form, preferably as an animal,
- d. A quote representing the character.

Use the template above to create a character shield for yourself.

After you have created a shield, distill the information to create a logo that best represents your family or an icon that best represents yourself. Make the logo or icon as striking as possible, but make sure that it conveys your personal values.

**Colorado Visual Art PG: Make informed critical evaluations of visual and material culture, information, and technologies**

**Colorado Visual Art PG: Explain, demonstrate, and interpret a range of purposes of art and design, recognizing that the making and study of art and design can be approached from a variety of viewpoints, intelligences, and perspectives.**

---

## DIARY ENTRY

Pick a scene from the play (example. Romeo and Juliet meeting at the dance or the Mercutio/Tybalt fight). From the perspective of the chosen character, create a diary entry. Describe what was happening around them and how your character was feeling when the scene was happening. Pay particular attention to details.

**Colorado Writing PG: Effectively use content-specific language, style, tone, and text structure to compose or adapt writing for different audiences and purposes.**

**Colorado Writing PG: Write with a clear focus, coherent organization, sufficient elaboration, and detail.**



---

# THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

at the Denver Center Theatre Company  
also offers the following programs:

---

.....

**Denver Center Theatre Academy On-Site Classes:** affordable, high-quality theatre classes for children, teens and adults taught by industry professionals. Classes are offered on-site four times a year. Classes are available for all interest and skill levels for ages 3-103. Scholarships are available. Call 303/446-4892 for information.

.....

.....

**Dramatic Learning:** Teaching Artists from the Academy bring the creative process into classrooms to support and enhance core curriculum. Workshops and residencies in any discipline are tailored for each classroom. Dramatic Learning benefits more than 90 schools and 5,000 students annually. Call 303/446-4897 for more information.

.....

.....

**Family Fun Forum:** This event is FREE. Families juggle, sing opera, and hula-hoop on the tightrope. These are just a sampling of the zany and fun things families learn in this two-hour skills hunt presented by Denver Theatre Academy teaching artists. Families will rotate from classroom to classroom, learning new skills and winning tokens for the entire family. Families spend their “earnings” on face painting, balloon animals, fun food and much more. Call 303/446-4892 for more information.

.....

For more information also check out our website at

[www.denvercenter.org](http://www.denvercenter.org)