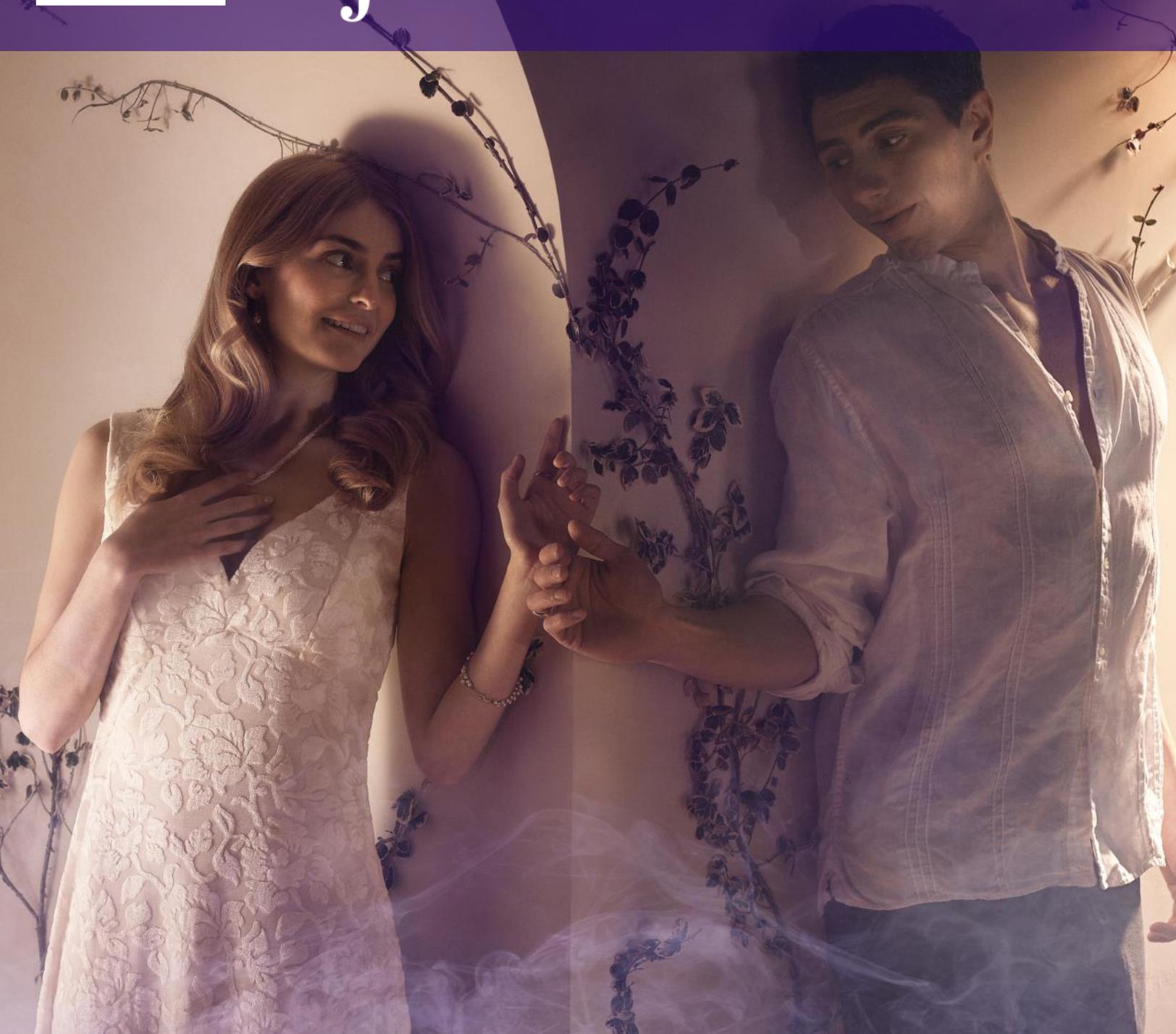


GREAT  
LAKES  
THEATER

# ROMEO *and* JULIET

TEACHER  
PREPARATION  
GUIDE



By WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Directed by SARA BRUNER

# INDEX

3	Dear Educator
4	A Note to Students: What to Expect at the Theater
5	Director's Note
7	Summary
8	About the Author
9	Dramatis Personae
10	William Shakespeare's Life Timeline
12	The Globe Theatre
12	Timeline of William Shakespeare's Plays
13	Playnotes
17	Through the Ages
21	From Page to Stage
24	Costume Design
27	Scenic Design
28	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> Onstage at Idaho Shakespeare Festival
30	Questions for Discussion: Before Attending the Performance
35	Writing Prompts & Activities
48	How to Write a Review
49	A Sample Review Written by a Student
50	Vocabulary
53	Questions for Discussion: After Attending the Performance
60	A Brief Glossary of Theater Terms
62	Learning Standards
63	2022-2023 Student Matinee Season
64	Residency Program
65	Generous Support
66	About Great Lakes Theater



Fall 2022

Dear Educator,

Thank you for your student matinee ticket order to Great Lakes Theater’s production of *Romeo and Juliet*, by William Shakespeare which will be performed in the beautiful Hanna Theatre at Playhouse Square from October 21 through November 9, 2022.

Shakespeare’s powerful, poetic tale of star-crossed lovers abides as one of the greatest love stories ever told. Two young lovers with feuding families navigate their budding relationship as uncontrollable circumstances lead to a tragic end. Love leads to loss, then grace, in this everlasting tale that has captivated audiences throughout history.

**Special note: While *Romeo and Juliet* is the best known romance in the English language, someone experiencing the story for the very first time may be entirely unaware that it ends with both protagonists dying by suicide. Or, even if you have read the play and know how it ends, some audience members may be surprised to see these tragic deaths performed on stage. It may be true that the children in our care see violence portrayed on television and gaming all the time, it is quite another thing to see it right in front of you. We hope you and your students have a wonderful time enjoying this production, and that you were also aware of a potentially upsetting conclusion.**

This guide is designed – through essays, discussion questions and classroom activities – to give students both an introduction to, and a point of entry for, a personal exploration of *Romeo and Juliet*. We offer special thanks to arts educator Jodi Kirk for her outstanding contributions to this guide.

Great Lakes Theater is proud to provide you with the finest in classic theater and the necessary educational resources to support your work in the classroom. We are thrilled that you will be coming to see us and we welcome your input on how best to support your classroom preparation for our work. Please let us know what you think!

Sincerely,

Kelly Schaffer Florian  
Director of Educational Services  
[Kflorian@greatlakestheater.org](mailto:Kflorian@greatlakestheater.org)

David Hansen  
Education Outreach Associate  
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**A note to pass on to students.**

*Asking for help is not a weakness.*

If you found yourself in a seemingly unsolvable situation, who would you go to for help? Who is your “go to” adult?

Help is available. Speak or text with someone today.

**988 Suicide and  
Crisis Lifeline**



## A NOTE TO STUDENTS: WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE THEATER

You may or may not have attended a live theater performance before. To increase your enjoyment, it might be helpful to look at the unique qualities of this art form — because it is so different from movies or video.

The live theatrical performance not only involves the actors on the stage; it is meant to involve you, the audience, in ways that film and television cannot. In truth, although you are sitting in an auditorium and the actors are on stage, there is very little separating the audience from the performers. How you react to the play *deeply affects* the actors. Something as seemingly trivial as *whispering* or *unwrapping a candy bar* can distract them and disrupt the mood and tone of their performance. Due to the important relationship between actors and audience members, there are certain, perhaps obvious, provisions of live theater we wish to call to your attention.

In the Hanna Theatre, it is important to know that the taking of pictures, either with or without a flash, is strictly prohibited. Also, it is essential that all electronic equipment, including cell phones, music players (even with headphones), alarm watches, etc., be completely powered off once you have entered the theatre. Even the glow from a watch or a silent cell phone (used for checking the time, text messaging, or posting social network updates, for example) can be very distracting to fellow audience members, even if you try to mask it under your hand or an article of clothing. Our goal is to provide every person in the audience with the best possible theatrical experience, so we appreciate your respectful cooperation during the performance.

Other differences live theater provides: in film or video, the camera and editing define what we will see. In the theater, however, each of us works as our own camera and editor, choosing our own personal points of focus. And in the Hanna Theatre, you should know that often we do not use microphones. As audience members you'll need to actively listen and "tune in" to the sound of the unamplified human voice.

As for our lighting and scenery, it might surprise you to know that these are not necessarily meant to be realistic. In this production, for example, there may be design elements that are abstract or metaphorical.

The theater's ability to focus on human experience — distilled through the dialogue and behavior of people on stage and enhanced by the scenery, costumes, lighting, music and dance — is a centuries-old tradition. Being part of the communal magic when performer and audience connect — whether at a baseball game, music concert or theater performance — cannot be duplicated.

The performance you will see at Great Lakes Theater will happen only once. It is unique and personal. Though this play will be performed more than a dozen times, the performance you see belongs only to you.

We hope you enjoy it, and we'd like you to share your response with us.



# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

by Sara Bruner

Shakespeare's version of *Romeo and Juliet* has the distinction of being one of the single most recognizable stories in our collective culture. The title alone is likely to summon some type of memory for almost everyone sitting in this audience—which is a double-edged sword. On one hand it's really useful to have a hold on a Shakespeare piece before we see it—it allows us to sit back a bit more and watch how this particular version unfolds—we are not experiencing a new story, so we don't have to track characters and plot points the same way that we would if we were coming to see a story that had never been told. On the flip side, our curiosity can be dulled if we come in with a rigid set of assumptions, preferences and opinions.

I invite you to hear and watch this play as if it were a new piece of work. Even those of us who have a long and deep history with *Romeo and Juliet* are still making

discoveries — lines that we've never heard, moments that are landing in a new way. One of the most striking elements of this show for me this time around is the way that the plague is featured in the story — though as theater goes we often take this plot point for granted. Let me remind you how it all falls out — you may have forgotten — or never noticed: When Mercutio is killed he curses both the Capulets and Montagues, feeling that their feud is responsible for his untimely end. In his final moments he repeats the phrase “a plague o' both your houses” — he is essentially using his last moments to curse, or jinx these families. Now, let's fast forward a bit. Friar Laurence devises a plan with Juliet in which she will drink a “distilled liquor” that will make her appear dead causing Juliet's family to mourn her death and inter her in the family tomb. Meanwhile, the Friar will write a letter to Romeo letting him know that Juliet is feigning death. The letter further asks that Romeo meet the Friar in Capulet's tomb to witness Juliet's waking. The final step being, of course, that Romeo and Juliet will secretly be reunited and live out their days in Mantua together. Most of you remember that the letter that the Friar writes never makes it into Romeo's

hands, but do you remember why? Mercutio's “plague” moves from figurative to literal and seals the fate of the star-crossed lovers. The messenger that Friar Laurence employs to carry the letter from Verona to Mantua is not allowed to leave the city walls because he has recently visited the sick and was exposed to the plague. They fear he is infectious and so, he is quarantined. Mercutio's “a plague o' both your houses” is made manifest and Romeo and Juliet both die in the tomb that very night.

All of this is to say, we both do and do not know these plays. In some cases, our memories are not serving us, in other instances we just miss things because the language is so dense that it's impossible to hear everything that is packed into the text, and in other instances our lives happen to us, and our ears get tuned in new ways. Suddenly, something pops in a way that it never has before — like the plague plot did for me. If you allow yourself to, you can always hear these plays anew. So, with that, I challenge you to lean in and see what *Romeo and Juliet* has in store for you this time.



Ángela Utrera & Benjamin Bonenfant,  
Idaho Shakespeare Festival

## SUMMARY

Verona is home to two feuding noble houses, the Montagues and the Capulets. In response to the constant brawling between members of these families, the Prince of Verona has issued an edict that will impose a death sentence on anyone caught dueling. Against this backdrop, young Romeo of the house of Montague has recently been infatuated with Rosaline, a niece of Capulet. Rosaline is quickly forgotten, however, when Romeo and his friends disguise themselves and slip into a masque ball at Capulet's house. During the festivities, Romeo catches his first glimpse of Juliet, Capulet's daughter. Romeo steals into the garden and professes his love to Juliet, who stands above on her balcony. The two young lovers, with the aid of Friar Lawrence, make plans to be married in secret.

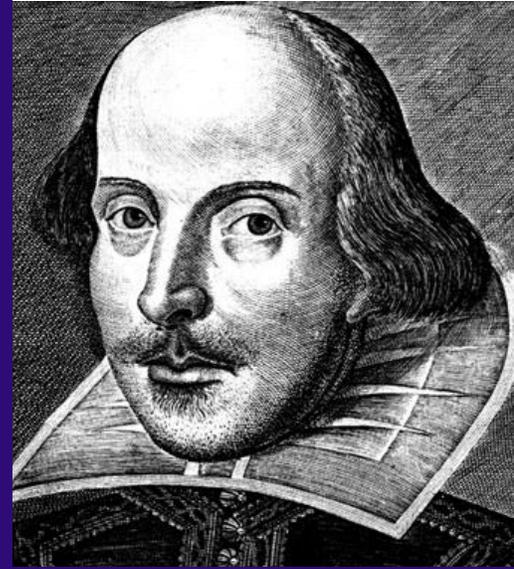
Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, later discovers that Romeo has attended the ball, and he sets out to teach the young Montague a lesson. Romeo is challenged by Tybalt, but tries to avoid a duel since he is now married to Juliet (making Tybalt a kinsman). Mercutio, Romeo's best friend, takes up Tybalt's challenge and is killed in the ensuing fight. Enraged, Romeo slays Tybalt. As a result, the Prince banishes Romeo from Verona. Romeo bids farewell to Juliet, though he hopes to be reunited with her once the Capulets learn they are husband and wife.

The Capulets, meanwhile, press for Juliet to marry Paris, a cousin to the Prince. Juliet, relying again on Friar Lawrence, devises a desperate plan to avoid her parents' wishes. She obtains a drug that will make her seem dead for forty-two hours; while she is in this state, Friar Lawrence will send word to Romeo of the situation so that he can rescue her from her tomb. Unfortunately, the letter from Friar Lawrence is delayed. Romeo instead hears second-hand news that Juliet has died. Grief-stricken, Romeo purchases poison and hastens to Juliet's tomb to die at her side. Meanwhile, Friar Lawrence has discovered to his horror that his letter did not arrive, and he means to take Juliet away until he can set things aright.

At the tomb, Romeo encounters Paris, mourning Juliet. Romeo slays Paris, then enters the tomb and drinks his poison. As Friar Lawrence comes upon the scene, Juliet awakens only to find the lifeless body of her beloved Romeo. The friar scurries away, and Juliet takes the dagger from Romeo's belt and plunges it into her body. Upon this scene, the Prince arrives—along with the Montague and Capulet parents—demanding to know what has happened. The families look in horror at the tragic consequences of their fatal feud.

*From [www.bardweb.net](http://www.bardweb.net)*

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR: WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



William Shakespeare (1564-1616), English playwright and poet, is recognized in much of the world as the greatest of all dramatists. Shakespeare's plays communicate a profound knowledge of the wellsprings of human behavior, revealed through portrayals of a wide variety of characters. His use of poetic and dramatic means to create a unified aesthetic effect out of a multiplicity of vocal expressions and actions is recognized as a singular achievement, and his use of poetry within his plays to express the deepest levels of human motivation in individual, social, and universal situations is considered one of the greatest accomplishments in literary history.

A complete, authoritative account of Shakespeare's life is lacking, and thus much supposition surrounds relatively few facts. It is commonly accepted that he was born in 1564, and it is known that he was baptized in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire. The third of eight children, he was probably educated at the local grammar school. As the eldest son, Shakespeare ordinarily would have been apprenticed to his father's shop so that he could learn and eventually take over the business, but according to one account he was apprenticed to a butcher because of declines in his father's financial situation. According to another account, he became a schoolmaster. In 1582 Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, the daughter of a farmer. He is supposed to have left Stratford after he was caught poaching in the deer park of Sir Thomas Lucy, a local justice of the peace. Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway had a daughter, Susanna, in 1583 and twins—Hamnet and Judith—in 1585. Hamnet did not survive childhood.

Shakespeare apparently arrived in London about 1588 and by 1592 had attained success as an actor and a playwright. Shortly thereafter he secured the patronage of Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton. The publication of Shakespeare's two fashionably erotic narrative poems *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594) and of his *Sonnets* (published 1609, but circulated previously in manuscript form) established his reputation as a gifted and popular poet of the Renaissance (14th century to 17th century). The *Sonnets* describe the devotion of a character, often identified as the poet himself, to a young man whose beauty and virtue he praises and to a mysterious and faithless dark lady with whom the poet is infatuated. The ensuing triangular situation, resulting from the attraction of the poet's friend to the dark lady, is treated with passionate intensity and psychological insight. Shakespeare's modern reputation, however, is based primarily on the 38 plays that he apparently wrote, modified, or collaborated on. Although generally popular in his time, these plays were frequently little esteemed by his educated contemporaries, who considered English plays of their own day to be only vulgar entertainment.

Shakespeare's professional life in London was marked by a number of financially advantageous arrangements that permitted him to share in the profits of his acting company, the Chamberlain's Men, later called the King's Men, and its two theaters, the Globe Theatre and the Blackfriars. His plays were given special presentation at the courts of Queen Elizabeth I and King James more frequently than those of any other contemporary dramatist. It is known that he risked losing royal favor only once, in 1599, when his company performed "the

play of the deposing and killing of King Richard II” at the request of a group of conspirators against Elizabeth. In the subsequent inquiry, Shakespeare’s company was absolved of complicity in the conspiracy.

After about 1608, Shakespeare’s dramatic production lessened and it seems that he spent more time in Stratford, where he had established his family in an imposing house called New Place and had become a leading local citizen. He died in 1616, and was buried in the Stratford church.

Until the 18th century, Shakespeare was generally thought to have been no more than a rough and untutored genius. Theories were advanced that his plays had actually been written by someone more educated, perhaps statesman and philosopher Sir Francis Bacon or the Earl of Southampton, who was Shakespeare’s patron. However, he was celebrated in his own time by English writer Ben Johnson and others who saw in him a brilliance that would endure. Since the 19th century, Shakespeare’s achievements have been more consistently recognized, and throughout the Western world he has come to be regarded as the greatest dramatist ever.

*Shakespeare, William*, Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2001

**Contributed By:** A. Kent Hieatt, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of English, University of Western Ontario. Author of *Chaucer, Spenser, Milton: Mythopoetic Continuities and Transformations*.

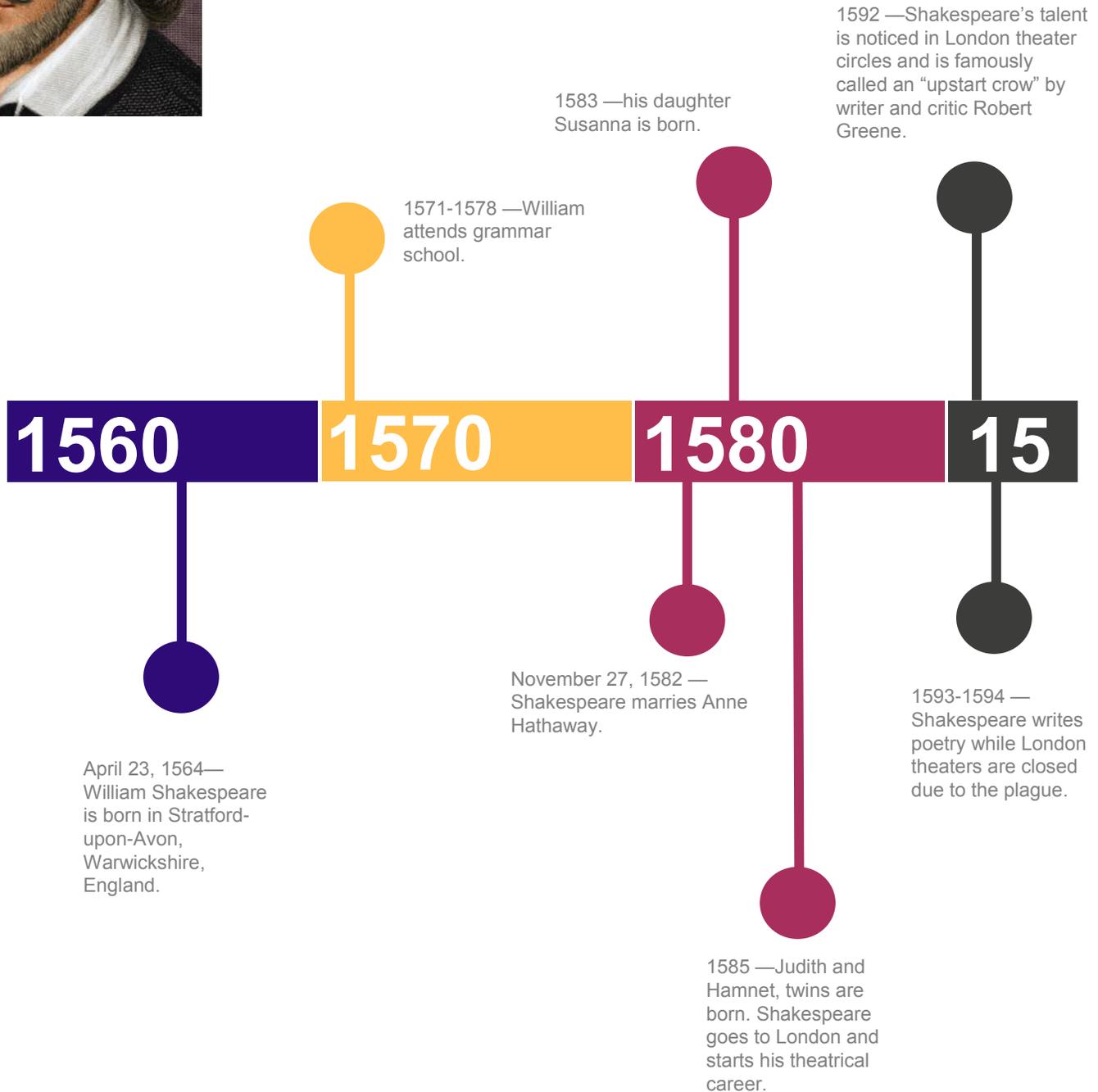
## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

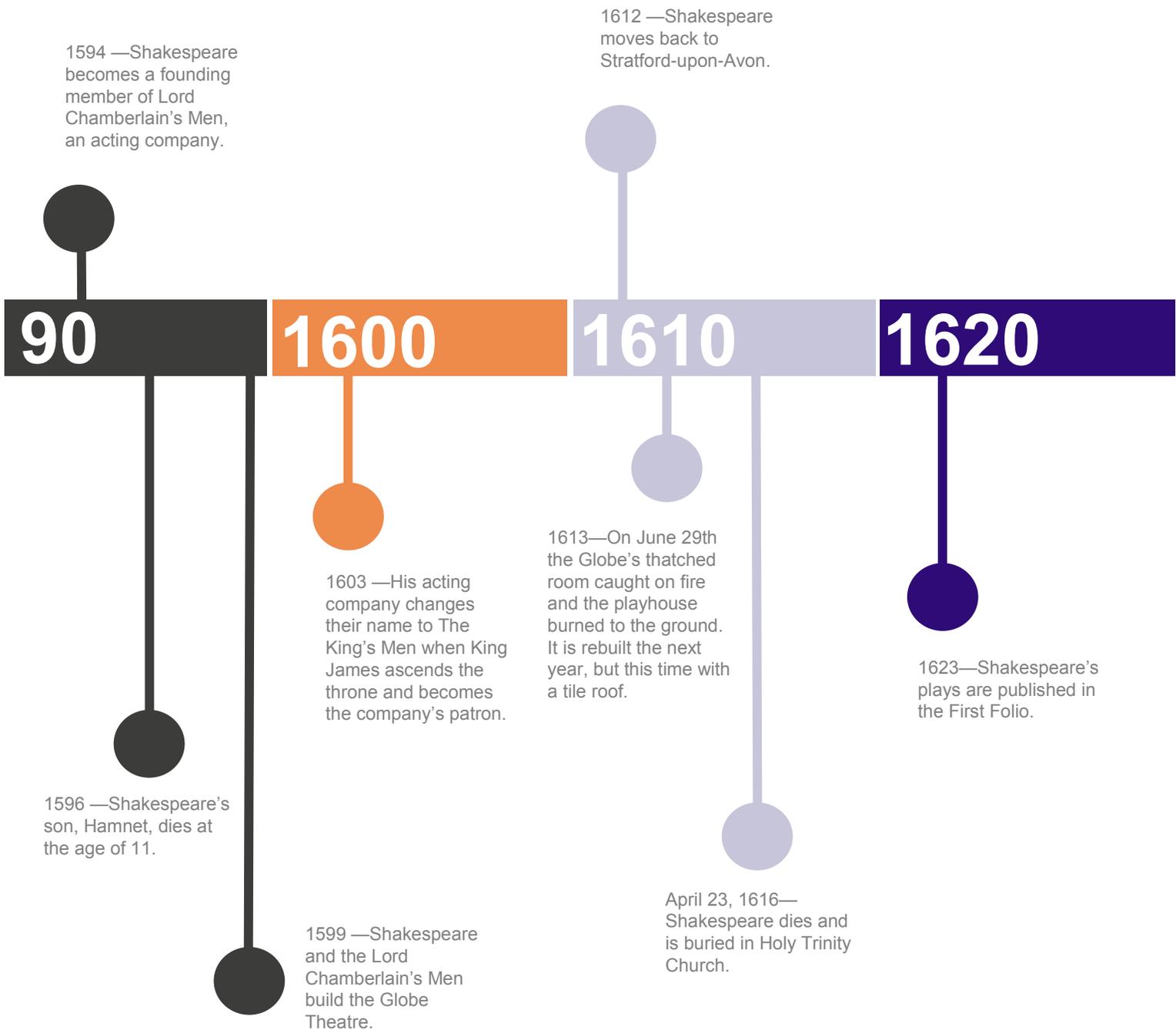
Chorus.....	J.T. Snow, Amar-Malik Culbreth, Jaime Nebeker, Michael Burns, Danny Bó, Avery LaMar Pope
Prince Escalus .....	Alex Syiek*
Mercutio.....	Stephen Michael Spencer*
Paris .....	Nick Steen*
Page to Paris .....	J.T. Snow
Montague .....	Aled Davies*
Lady Montague .....	Jessie Cope Miller*
Romeo.....	Benjamin Bonenfant*
Benvolio .....	Amar-Malik Culbreth
Abram .....	Jaime Nebeker
Balthazar.....	Michael Burns
Capulet .....	Maggie Kettering*
Juliet.....	Ángela Utrera*
Tybalt.....	Joe Wegner*
Nurse .....	Kate Mulligan*
Peter.....	M.A. Taylor*
Sampson .....	Danny Bó
Gregory.....	Avery LaMar Pope
Friar Laurence.....	Jeffrey King*
Friar John.....	Lynn Robert Berg*
Apothecary .....	Stephen Michael Spencer*
Ensemble .....	Amar-Malik Culbreth, Jaime Nebeker, Danny Bó, Avery LaMar Pope, Jessie Cope Miller*, J.T. Snow

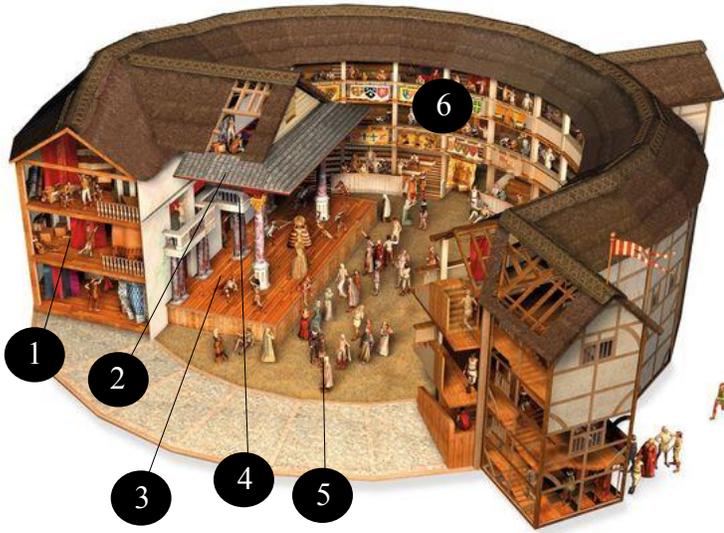
\*Members of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States



# William Shakespeare's Life Timeline







## The Globe Theatre

The Globe was built in London in 1599 by Shakespeare's playing company, The Lord Chamberlain's Men. It was built on the South Bank of the Thames River and was destroyed by fire in 1613. A new Globe Theatre was built on the same site and remained open until it was closed in 1642. In 1997 a modern reconstruction of the Globe, named "Shakespeare's Globe" was built approximately 750 feet from the original site.

**1**  
Tiring House— wardrobe, storage and dressing rooms where actors rested between scenes and changed into costumes. The door to the tiring rooms served as actors' main entrances and exits.

**2**  
The "Heavens"—a canopy that protected the actors from weather and represented the sky and heavens. It was painted with heavenly scenes and gold stars.

**3**  
Stage—the stage was comprised of inner stage with curtains and the main stage where most outdoor action took place. A trap door in the floor of the stage led to a cell underneath referred to as "Hell."

**4**  
Upper Stage—this chamber was used for most bedroom and balcony scenes. The balcony above it was used for musicians.

**5**  
Yard—the least expensive audience area where the "groundlings" stood to watch the play. This area was open to the weather and the floor was often covered with litter.

**6**  
Galleries—three levels of seating on wooden benches for audience members who could afford to pay a bit more. The galleries were covered by a thatched roof, which provided shade and kept out the rain.

## Timeline of Shakespeare's Plays

Earliest Period

*The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1589–1591)

*The Taming of the Shrew* (1590–1591)

*Henry VI, Part 2* (1591)

*Henry VI, Part 3* (1591)

*Henry VI, Part 1* (1591–1592)

*Titus Andronicus* (1591–1592)

1594

The Lord Chamberlain's

*Richard III* (1592–1593)

*Edward III* (1592–1593)

*The Comedy of Errors* (1594)

*Love's Labour's Lost* (1594–1595)

*Love's Labour's Won* (1595–1596)

*Richard II* (1595)

*Romeo and Juliet* (1595)

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595)



1599

Globe Theatre

*King John* (1596)

*The Merchant of Venice* (1596–1597)

*Henry IV, Part 1* (1596–1597)

*The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1597)

*Henry IV, Part 2* (1597–1598)

*Much Ado About Nothing* (1598–1599)

1603

The King's Men

*Henry V* (1599)

*Julius Caesar* (1599)

*As You Like It* (1599–1600)

*Hamlet* (1599–1601)

*Twelfth Night* (1601)

*Troilus and Cressida* (1600–1602)

*Sir Thomas More* (1592–1595; Shakespeare's involvement, 1603–1604)

*Measure for Measure* (1603–1604)

*Othello* (1603–1604)

*All's Well That Ends Well* (1604–1605)

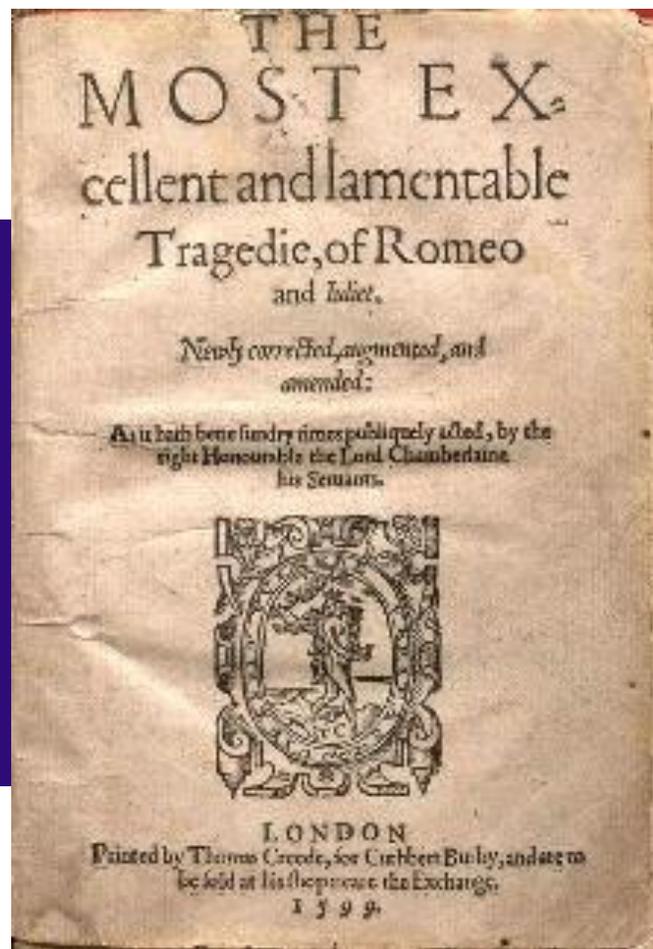


### Shakespeare's Globe

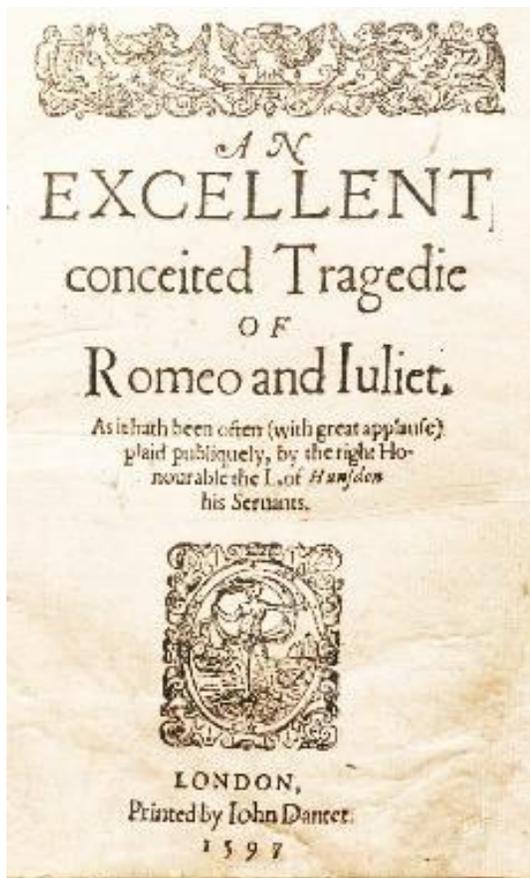
Shakespeare's Globe is a reconstruction of the original that opened in 1997 with a production of *Henry V*. It was founded by actor and director Sam Wanamaker and built about 750 ft. from the original site.

# PLAYNOTES

BY MARGARET LYNCH



The second printing, issued in 1599 by a reputable bookseller, was proclaimed to be "Newly corrected, augmented, and amended." *Romeo and Juliet* had three printings during the playwright's lifetime and was one of only 18 of Shakespeare's verified 38 plays to be published during that timeframe.



The first printing of *Romeo and Juliet* in 1597 was probably "pirated" without the involvement of the playwright. Mistakes and gaps in the text abound. One or more actors may have helped to reconstruct the script. The title page features the name of the theater company rather than the writer's.

In early 1595, Shakespeare was hitting his stride as a playwright. His credits at that time included a slew of history plays, a handful of romantic comedies — *Comedy of Errors*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* — and a gory revenge drama, *Titus Andronicus*. He was in the public eye. In 1592, he'd been attacked in print by a more established, and jealous, writer named Robert Greene. He had a long narrative poem, *Venus and Adonis*, published in 1593, followed soon after by several plays.

By 1595, Shakespeare was a principal member of the Lord Chamberlain's Company. Along with leading actor Richard Burbage and comedian Will Kempe, he was mentioned in a court document as handling logistics for the theater company's performances at court that year. Two years later, he had earned enough money to purchase the second-largest house in his native town of Stratford.

The plays that Shakespeare wrote circa 1595 — *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Richard II* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* — only enhanced his reputation. Even during that productive stretch, *Romeo and Juliet* was a standout.

A pirated edition was rushed into print in 1597, with an assist from actors who reconstructed the script. A corrected" edition, possibly based on Shakespeare's rough draft, came out two years later under the auspices of a prominent book seller, Cuthbert Burby, who shopped some of the most fashionable writers of the day. The title pages of both editions claimed that *Romeo and Juliet* had been presented "publicly" — "often (with great applause)" insisted the 1597 edition, "sundry times" boasted the 1599 quarto. *Romeo and Juliet* was noticed. It was mentioned in two widely shared reviews of English writers of the day — one published by Cambridge student John Weever in 1598, and the other by schoolteacher Francis Meres in 1599. So-called "commonplace" books were popular at the time, consisting of excerpts from admired plays, poems or works of prose. Of all Shakespeare's plays, *Romeo and Juliet* was one of the most quoted in commonplace books during the writer's lifetime.

In the second "quarto" edition of *Romeo and Juliet*, based on a manuscript more directly associated with Shakespeare, the character of Peter, a messenger, was identified as "Will Kempe." A celebrated comedian, Kempe was a shareholder in the Lord Chamberlain's Men. He left the company in 1599, publishing an account, with frontispiece, of his traveling solo act, "Kempe's Nine Days Wonder," in 1600.

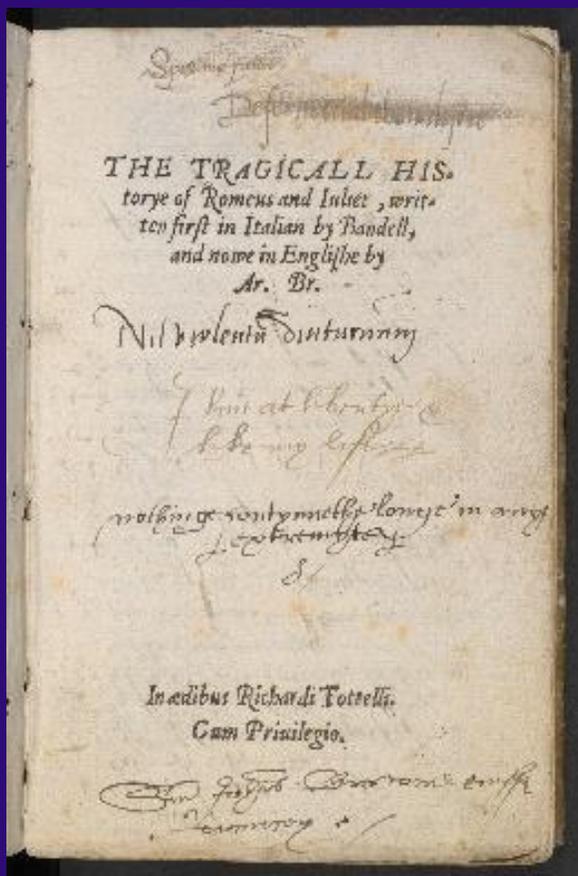


The play made such an impression that one of the leading satirists of the day, John Marston, mocked the character of Romeo in his 1598 anthology, "The Scourge of Villainy." Marston was famously engaged in the so-called "Poetomachia," or "war of the poets," with Ben Johnson and others at the time. Shakespeare's balcony scene was parodied by Thomas Dekker, another of the poet-warriors, in his 1607 comedy, *Blurt, Master Constable*.



Although *Romeo and Juliet* represented an early foray into tragedy, it shares literary DNA with the comedies written at about the same time — *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Love's Labour's*

Shakespeare's growing stature during his lifetime can be tracked in part by the ways in which contemporary writers took notice of him. John Marston and Thomas Dekker, who, along with Ben Johnson, were prominent participants in the witty "war of the theaters" that took place in London between 1599 and 1602. Marston and Dekker mocked and parodied elements of *Romeo and Juliet*.



The London theaters in Shakespeare's day ran through content quickly. It was common practice to update and recycle older stories. Shakespeare based his play on a 1562 poem by Arthur Brooke, which itself recycled a French translation of an Italian "novelle."

*Lost* (both from 1594-1595), as well as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595-1596) — and later romantic comedies such as *Much Ado About Nothing*. The comedies and this early tragedy share young lovers vying with out-of-touch parents or other authority figures over who controls matchmaking.

*Romeo and Juliet* balances on a razor's edge between the conceits of comedy — such as disguises and secret assignations — and the missteps of tragedy. A pair of bumbling adults — Friar Lawrence and the Nurse — do try to help the young lovers. Despite and because of their bungling efforts, up until the last moment it seems possible that a comic reversal could overturn all the misunderstandings and cross-purposes.

Commentators have often drawn a distinction between Shakespeare's early tragedy and his "mature" tragedies of the next decade. The heartbreaking events of *Romeo and Juliet* do not stem from a tragic character flaw — unless the impulsive naiveté of youth could itself be considered a flaw. Shakespearean critic Bertrand Evans would term the play a "tragedy of unawareness" in which the juxtaposition of unforeseen and unfortunate events plays a greater role than character.

While *Romeo and Juliet* may not match the later tragedies for depth of character exploration, the earlier play already demonstrates Shakespeare's considerable skills. The basic story of *Romeo and Juliet* can be found in a variety of sources — first in several Italian “novelles” of the 15th century and then in French and English adaptations made a century later. While Shakespeare may have had access to several of the versions, he relied most heavily on a narrative poem translated from the French by English writer Arthur Brooke in 1562 under the title “The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet.”

Shakespeare compressed Brooke's timeline significantly. Action that takes place over the course of nine months in Brooke's poem now takes place during a

few feverish days. While Brooke's Juliet wondered aloud to herself about how suddenly she fell for Romeo at the ball, Shakespeare invents a way for his Romeo to overhear Juliet's confession of love. The playwright's device allows the lovers to skip several stages of conventional courtship, contributing to the sense of haste in the play — and its intensity. Shakespeare reinforces this compression with vivid language about time and love that “too swift arrives.”

Any supposed “deficiencies” in tragic structure have never diminished the appeal of *Romeo and Juliet*. Its elemental conflict between parents and children, breathless pace, suspension between comedy and tragedy, and its stunning imagery and lyrical language have always struck a chord.

Throughout Shakespeare's career as a writer, outbreaks of the plague intermittently forced the London theaters to close. A plague epidemic forms the backdrop for the action in *Romeo and Juliet*. The plague also figures in pamphlets and plays written by Thomas Dekker. This striking woodcut illustrated his *God's Tokens: A Rod for Run-aways* (1625).



# THROUGH THE AGES

*Romeo and Juliet* has always been one of Shakespeare's most popular plays — in his lifetime and beyond:

- ◆ After Charles II was restored to the English throne in 1660 and permitted theaters to reopen, theater manager William Davenant presented a production of *Romeo and Juliet* starring Mary Saunderson, one of the first women to play the role of Juliet professionally. A granddaughter of Shakespeare's lead actor, Richard Burbage, Saunderson was married to Davenant's lead actor, Thomas Betterton, who took the role of Mercutio rather than Romeo.
- ◆ Some 18th-century theater managers, such as David Garrick, catered to the tastes of the day by softening the stark endings of Shakespeare's tragedies. For nearly a century, theatergoers saw versions of *Romeo and Juliet* that allowed the lovers to live.
- ◆ The emotional and changeable character of Romeo opened the door for women to play the role in the 18th century. The best known was Charlotte Cushman, an American who restored Shakespeare's original tragic ending and developed a production that served as a vehicle for herself and her sister Susan in the roles of *Romeo and Juliet*.



Mary Saunderson — granddaughter to one famous actor (Richard Burbage), wife of another (Thomas Betterton) — was one of the first women to act professionally on the English stage. She played Juliet in a production presented by William Davenant after the theaters reopened in England in 1663.

This miniature painting of David Garrick as Romeo and George Anne Bellamy as Juliet recreates the moment in Garrick's influential 18th century adaptation of the play when Juliet wakes up in the "nick of time" to prevent Romeo's suicide.





In the mid-1840s, American actress Charlotte Cushman and her sister Susan toured a production of *Romeo and Juliet* across the US and Great Britain. Charlotte, who engaged in liaisons with women artists and writers along the way, played Romeo while her younger sister played Juliet.

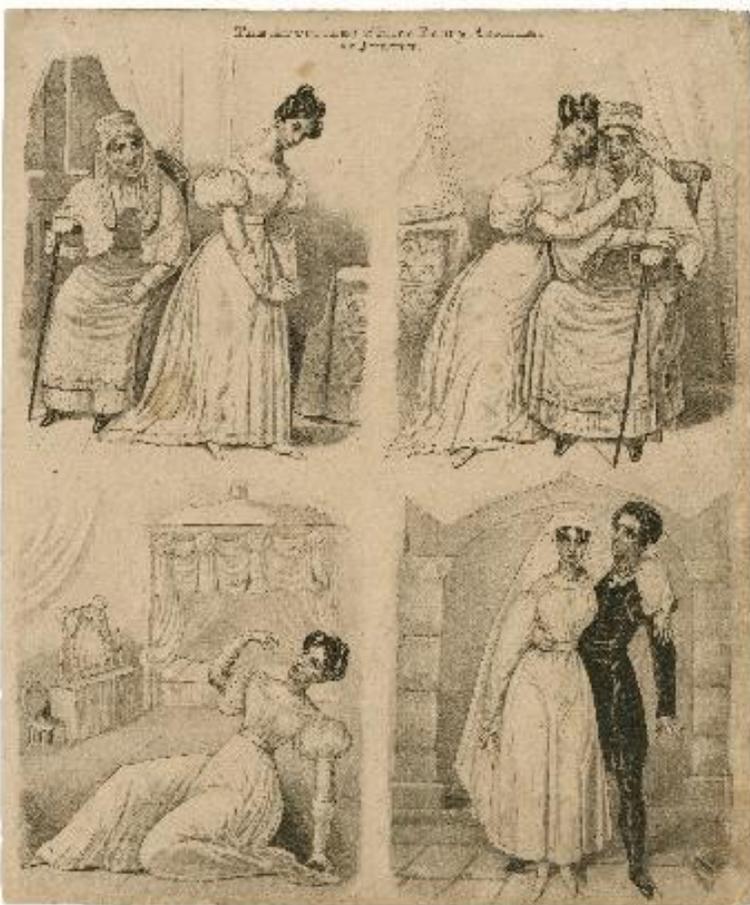


In 1869, Edwin Booth launched his own theater in New York with an inaugural production of *Romeo and Juliet*. A lithographic advertisement in the elaborate playbill commemorated Booth and his wife-to-be, Mary McVicker, in the play's starring roles.

- ◆ Even with its poignancy restored, the play's popularity was such that it was often chosen as the ideal production for launching a new theater. The American tragedian Edwin Booth opened his theater in New York in 1869 with a production starring himself and his soon-to-be wife Mary McVicker.

- ◆ Leading actors and actresses of the 18th- and 19th-centuries looked for plays that would showcase their particular talents, and some became identified with specific roles. Fanny Kemble — the daughter of actor Charles Kemble and niece of John Philip Kemble and Sarah Siddons — debuted in the role of Juliet on October 26, 1829, at the age of 20, and immediately became a fan favorite in the role. It was remarked at the time that her popular performances as Juliet helped to keep her father's theater afloat despite his poor management skills.

- ◆ By the late 19th-century, theatergoers expected stars — and elaborate scenery. Theater manager Henry Irving teamed up with leading lady Ellen Terry at London's well-appointed Lyceum Theater to deliver a sumptuous production of *Romeo and Juliet* in 1882.

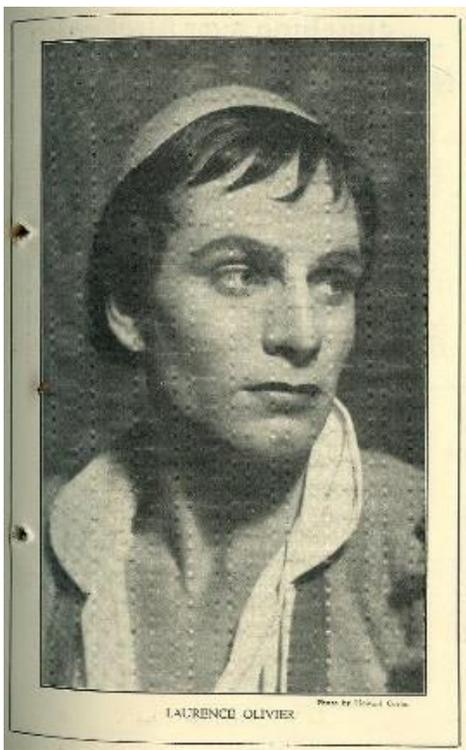


Images of Fanny Kemble playing Juliet were often featured in the 1830s in contemporary newspapers and periodicals.



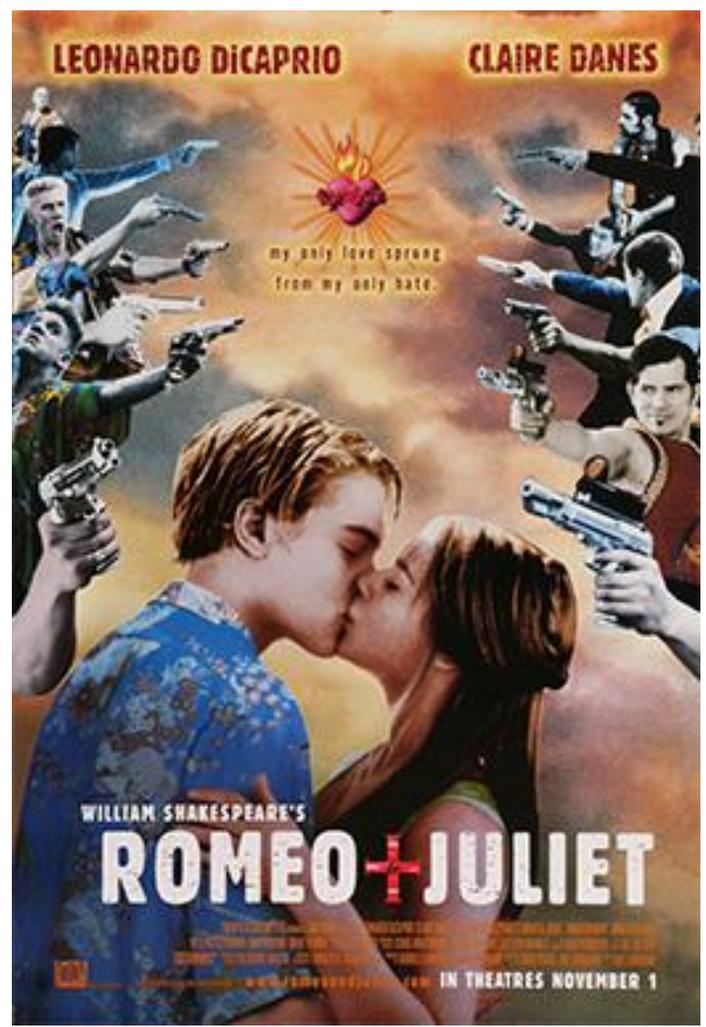
In the late 19th century, Ellen Terry's avid followers eagerly collected postcard images of Terry, such as this one featuring her as Juliet in the serene repose of death. Official images for the 1882 production, starring theater manager Henry Irving along with Terry, tended to focus more on Irving and the elaborate sets that he was known for delivering.

- ◆ In 1935, John Gielgud began assembling a cast for a production of *Romeo and Juliet* at the New Theatre in London. Conflicted about whether to play Romeo or Mercutio, he approached the younger and up-and-coming Laurence Olivier about rotating with him in both roles. Their approaches to the roles were at odds. Gielgud was known for his lyrical speaking voice, while Olivier embraced what he would later term “earth, blood, humanity ... I was trying to sell realism in Shakespeare.”
- ◆ George Cukor's 1936 film, starring Norma Shearer and Leslie Howard at ages 34 and 43, represented the culmination of a centuries-long tradition of actors playing these parts at the heights of their careers. Two later 20th-century film adaptations overturned that tradition, and each in turn became the best-selling Shakespeare film of the day. In 1968, Franco Zeffereilli tapped two unknown teenagers, Olivia Hussey and Leonard Whiting, to play Shakespeare's young lovers, while Baz Luhrmann chose the better-known Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes. Zeffereilli's lush and sensuous production didn't shy away from the story's sexual heat, while Luhrmann's tapped into its vein of violence.



Laurence Olivier (pictured on the left) and John Gielgud traded the roles of Romeo and Mercutio in a high profile 1935 production.

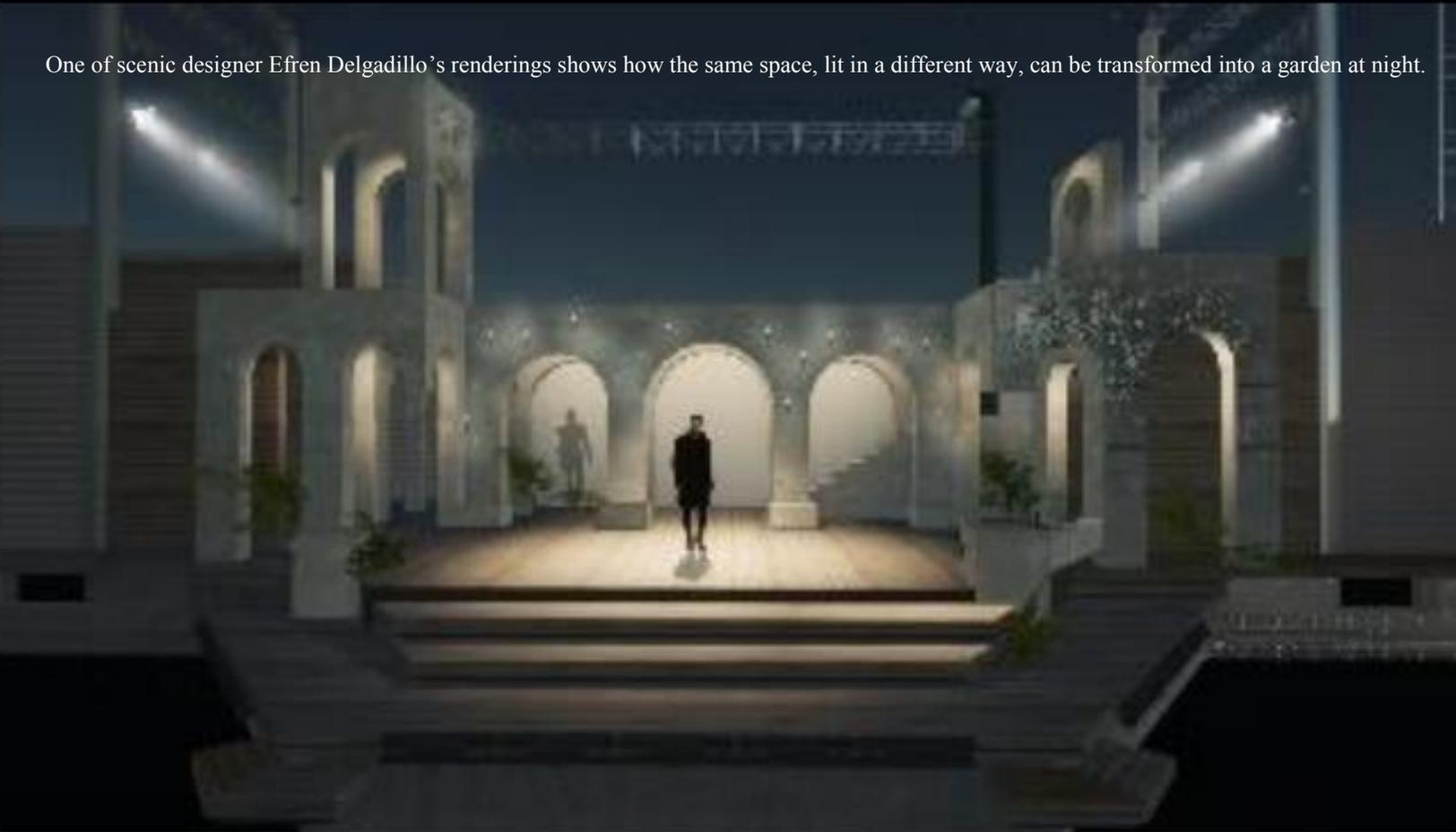
The leading actors and actresses of the day tended to play the parts of Romeo and Juliet well into their mature years. Leslie Howard was 43 and Norma Shearer 34 when they tackled the roles in George Cukor's 1936 film.



Franco Zeffirelli rejected the long tradition of casting experienced (and older) actors in the roles by casting two unknown teenagers in his sensuous film production in 1968.

Still fairly young, but better known when they were cast, Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes were tapped by Baz Luhrmann for his violent and intense screen production in 1996.

One of scenic designer Efren Delgadillo's renderings shows how the same space, lit in a different way, can be transformed into a garden at night.



## FROM PAGE TO STAGE

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As an actor and director with Great Lakes Theater, Idaho Shakespeare Festival and Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Sara Bruner says she has “been on a journey with *Romeo and Juliet* throughout most of my professional career.” She’s performed in the play, directed it and adapted it for an outreach touring program.

*Romeo and Juliet* has also threaded through the history of Great Lakes Theater. It’s been performed during each artistic director’s tenure, six times in all. The current production marks the seventh.

Each new artistic team that engages with the play sees it through a different lens. Thinking about the play this time around, in the waning days of a global pandemic, Sara Bruner was struck by the fact that the play’s action takes place against the backdrop of a plague outbreak that prevents a crucial message from reaching Romeo. She began to reflect on how “the plague” becomes a metaphor in the play for the strife infecting the world the lovers struggle against.



R+J

LADY MIE

A rustic color palette of greens and russets—and less businesslike silhouettes—distinguish the Montague family and their retainers in this production.

Layering a skirt-like “over-robe” with pants accommodates the gender-bending casting of a woman playing one of Romeo’s retainers.



R+J

ABRAM



.5

LADY CAPULET

A decision was made to dress the Capulets in more businesslike attire. For Lady Capulet, who combines the roles of both father and mother in this production, costume designer Mieka van der Ploeg provided an interpretation of navy pinstriped trousers that balances contemporary and period influences.

Mid-process, Bruner shared these observations: “We live in a polarized world right now, and *Romeo and Juliet* is a story about polarization — between the Capulets and the Montagues, between life and death, between comedy and tragedy. What happens to a young person who is ‘in between,’ who strays from a society’s hardened, polarized belief systems?”

While the play has often been presented and discussed as a great, though tragic, love story, it can also be viewed, Bruner insists, “as a story about how communities fail their young people.” Romeo and Juliet are teenagers caught up in impulse and naïve hope, trapped by the pressures of societal expectations. Unable to communicate with their parents, they rely on secret and desperate schemes that lead them to take their own lives. “In a world where ‘violent

delights have violent ends,’ Bruner adds, “these two young people pay the ultimate price.”

Finding resonances between Shakespeare’s play and today’s world is always one of Bruner’s priorities. Casting choices are one tool. Bruner decided to make Lady Capulet a “single parent,” collapsing the roles of Juliet’s father and mother into one role. This choice allowed director and cast to explore how Lord Capulet’s controlling rage — a shocking element of Shakespeare’s script — translates when grounded in the pressures of single motherhood.

Clothing is another tool. When Bruner asked costume designer Mieka van der Ploeg to meld period and contemporary influences, the designer came up with a look that she laughingly calls “Gothic

Medieval.” Modern takes on Tudor silhouettes — such as “over-ropes” — also enabled the designer to create a layering effect that accommodated several gender-bending casting choices.

Bruner also immediately thinks of a play in physical terms. As scenic designer Efen Delgadillo observes, “There’s a lot of action in the way she describes a play.” Romeo and Juliet offers the particular challenge of embodying the dynamics of youth vs age. Sword fighting, climbing, and hiding are among the physical expressions of youth in the play. The fabrics chosen for clothing had to be light and breathable enough to support sudden movement comfortably.

The scenic world of the play also had to provide open spaces for the many public confrontations that erupt throughout the

course of the play while also providing spaces for intimate encounters. Scenic designer Delgadillo quips, “Solve the balcony, the bed, and the tomb, and you’ve solved the play.”

Delgadillo found in the work of Spanish architect Xavier Corberó an exemplar and inspiration for using a contemporary material — stark, white concrete — to render intriguing juxtapositions of such traditional spaces as open plazas, arched colonnades, and flying buttresses.

In TYVEK, a lightweight, breathable synthetic fabric, Delgadillo found an appropriate material for creating such spaces on stage. He and lighting designer Rick Martin worked closely together to illuminate the fabric from within. Together they created a visual translation of the passion that pulses through the play.

The work of Spanish architect Xavier Corberó provided scenic designer Efen Delgadillo with an exemplar for combining modern materials and ancient shapes and for juxtaposing open with more intimate spaces.



# COSTUME DESIGN

by Mieka Van der Ploeg



JULIET



ROMEO



NURSE



LADY CAPULET



MERUCCIO



FERRAR



PAEIS



BENVOLIO



JYBALT



PRINCE



MONT



LADY MONTAGUE



APOTHECARY



ABRAH



PETER



ADAM PAGE



GREGORY



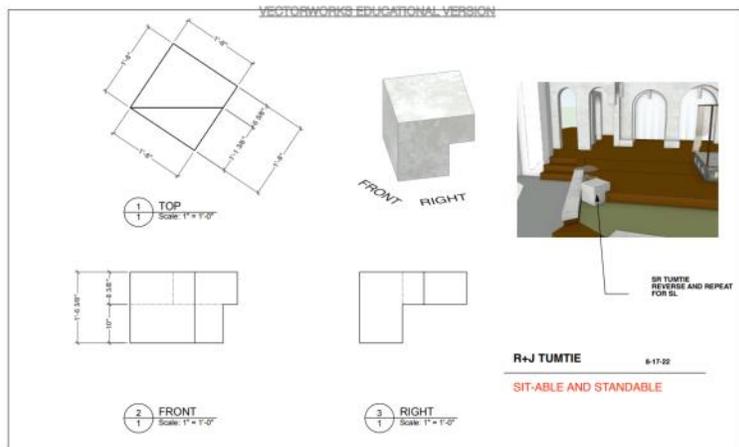
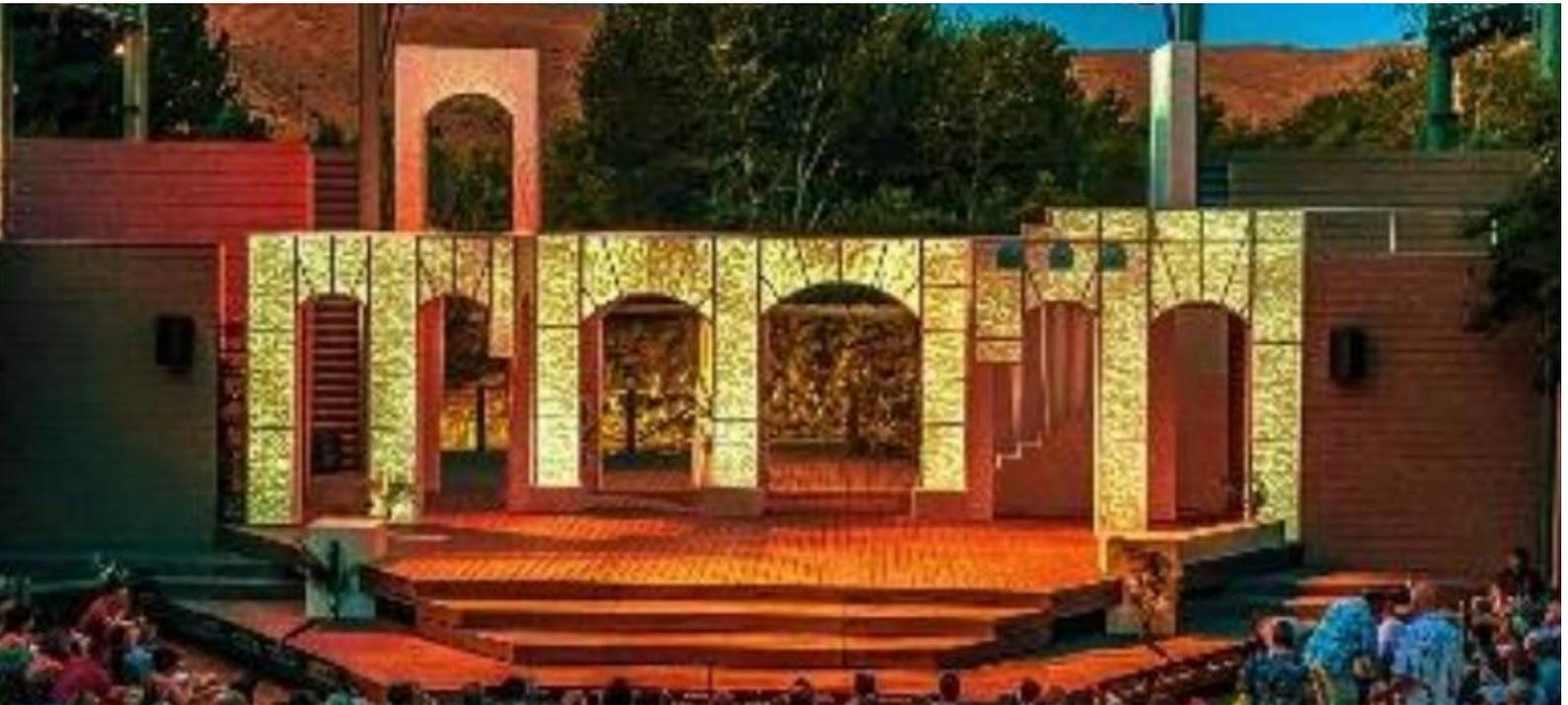
STANSON



BALTHAZAR

# SCENIC DESIGN

by Efren Deldadillo



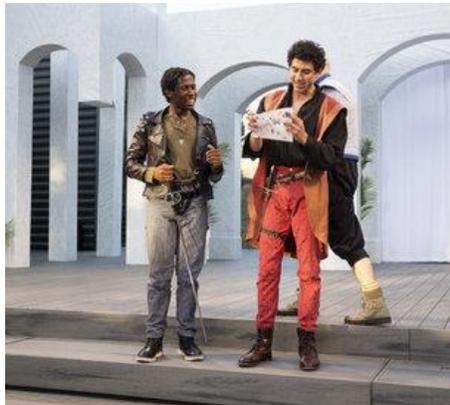
Top: Pre-set lighting for this production of *Romeo and Juliet*—captured here on stage this summer at the Idaho Shakespeare Festival—conveys the intensity of the theatrical experience to come.

Middle left: The company of *Romeo and Juliet* perform at Great Lakes Theater's sister company Idaho Shakespeare Festival in Boise, Idaho.

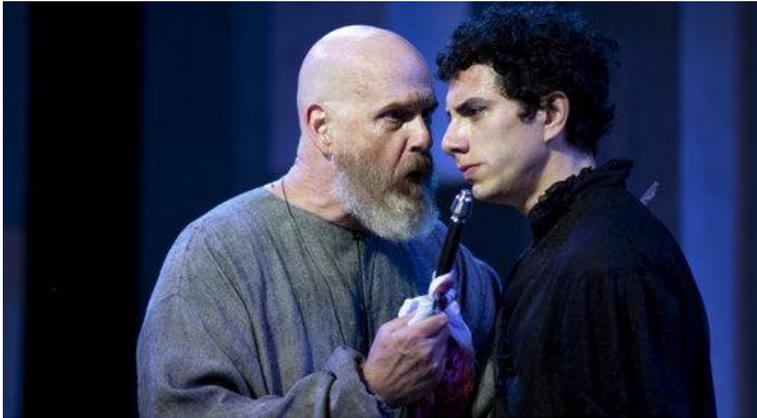
Middle right: Designer Efren Deldadillo provided the director and scene shop with a 3-D version of the set.

Bottom: computer rendering of a scenic element

# ROMEO AND JULIET ON STAGE AT IDAHO SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL



Top, left to right: Danny Bo & Avery LaMar Pope; Amar-Malik Culbreth & Daniel Molina; Ángela Utrera & Kate Mulligan; Daniel Molina & Ángela Utrera; Ángela Utrera; Daniel Molina, Stephen Michael Spencer & Amar-Malik Culbreth



Top, left to right: Stephen Michael Spencer & Kate Mulligan; Joe Wegner & Stephen Michael Spencer; Maggie Kettering, Amar-Malik Culbreth & Stephen Michael Spencer; Kate Mulligan; Jeffrey King & Daniel Molina; Ángela Utrera; Daniel Molina & Ángela Utrera



# QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION: BEFORE ATTENDING THE PERFORMANCE

1. What are the first thoughts and/or images that come to mind when you hear “Shakespeare?” Why do you think that his plays continue to be read and produced almost 400 years after his death? What makes his work relevant to a modern audience? What are some of your expectations about seeing Great Lakes Theater’s production of *Romeo and Juliet*?
2. What makes a great love story? What is your favorite love story of all time? What makes it so memorable? What fictional romantic couple best captures your imagination and defines your understanding of romantic love? What is it about their connection, relationship and passion that stands out? How does the fictional portrayal of love and relationship – the media bombardment of what love and romance “should look like” – color the way you think about falling in love, dating, sex, marriage, etc.?
3. What makes “love” such a powerful emotion? What are the transcendent qualities of love? In what way can love transform your life?
4. Describe the qualities of your ideal romantic partner. How realistic is this portrait? When thinking of your ideal partner, are there traits or behaviors that are absolute requirements? What would you consider a deal breaker? Is it important to set a standard for yourself? Why? Can love and/or attraction truly be prescribed? In what ways — if any — do you have control over who you fall in love with? How is love different than marriage? What is the perfect age to get married? How do you know when you are ready to be in a committed relationship?
5. In what ways does “love” make us vulnerable? What are the benefits and costs of vulnerability? What does it feel like to have your heart broken? Does love serve to empower or weaken your sense of self? Explain. In what way does love make you susceptible to rash emotion and/or overall recklessness? Can the same be said of “hate?” Explain. What feeds “hate?” Is “hate” instinctual or is it taught? How can hatred be silenced? What does it take for *you* to truly hate? How does hate make you feel? What actions does hatred inspire? Which is easier to nurture and sustain — love or hate? Discuss your answers.
6. Have you ever been so overcome with hurt, frustration and/or hate that your desire to get even cancelled out all rational thought and decent behavior? What happens when you act on that primal desire to strike back? Is revenge sweeter in thought or deed? Explain. Have you ever regretted a moment when you did seek retribution? Why?
7. Have you ever witnessed or participated in a fight? What makes a fight so exciting to watch? What does it take to squelch the urge to strike back? What are people’s responses/reactions if you choose not to fight? What is the difference between strength, courage and power? When — if ever — is violence necessary? What happens when violence gets out of hand? Why are some people seemingly hard wired to lash out? What do you do to control your temper?
8. *Romeo and Juliet* is one of Shakespeare’s greatest tragedies. Define tragedy. What lessons can one learn from tragic events in your personal life or that in the community at large? Explore the meaning and validity in the saying/idiom – “the gift in the problem.” What, if any, gifts can be seen in a tragedy the scope of *Romeo and Juliet*?

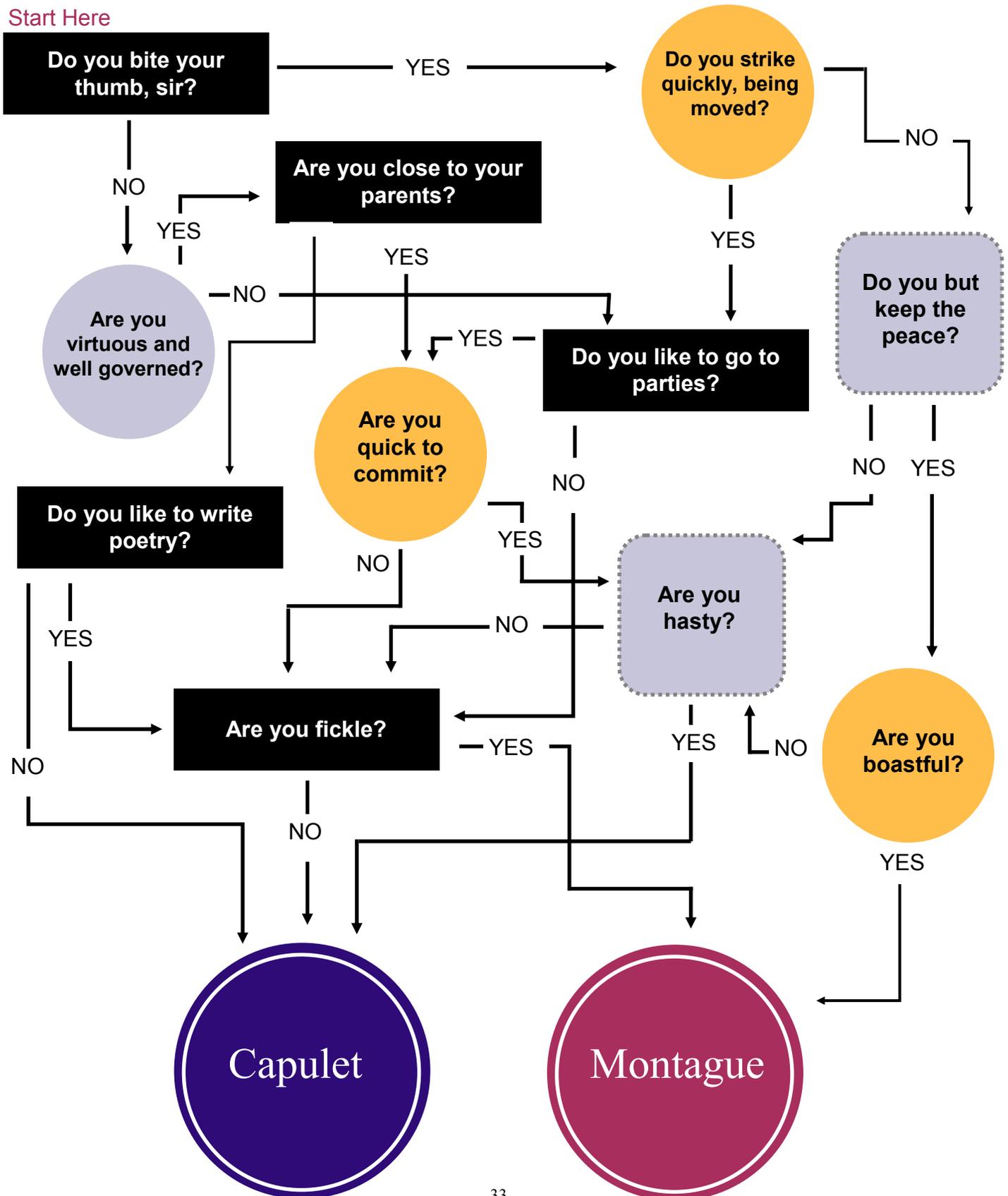
9. Some of the greatest love stories in literature and popular culture, including *Romeo and Juliet*, involve two people who come from very different worlds. How do these kind of pairings work in the *real* world? How can love transcend social, economic, racial, religious, educational, familial and even moral differences? What barriers/obstacles, if any, are impossible to overcome? Have you ever dated someone with whom your parents disapproved, or your friends disliked? What does it feel like to be caught between loyalties to your family and friends and your personal allegiance to your heart and partner?
10. Is it naive to believe that people of different backgrounds and/or belief systems can get along? Why? Does society need some kind of pecking order? What is the pecking order in your school or neighborhood? Who has the most status and most power? How is that status and power achieved and maintained?
11. Have you ever been excluded from a group? What did it feel like? How important is it to fit in? How do you stay true to yourself if your friends/peers don't seem to accept you for who you are? What would you willingly change about yourself in order to be part of the majority? Where do you draw the line? How do you choose your friends? Has the way in which you make friends changed as you have grown older? How?
12. What does it take to stand up for a belief and fight against the status quo? Have you ever fought for something that you felt was unjust? When is enough, enough? What is your personal trigger that says, "I can't stand this anymore, I need to speak up and take a stand?" What stops us from doing the right and/or difficult and unpopular thing? How do you know when to respect authority and abide by set rules and when to oppose them?
13. What does it feel like to be discriminated against or falsely judged because of your name, reputation, race, religion, gender, social class or sexual orientation? Why must there always be an 'other'? How does your reputation define you? What does it take for people to go beyond the various labels and group associations to see the real you? In what ways are people bound by their past histories or current 'roles'? What does it take to break free from people's perceptions of who you are? What does it take for someone to truly get to know you? Why is it sometimes difficult to reveal our authentic selves?
14. What does it take for you to trust someone? How are love and trust interconnected? What does it feel like to have trust and faith betrayed? Is there any way to get past a deep sense of betrayal? How do past loyalties shift when someone you love shocks and disappoints you? What does it take to forgive and move on? What is the difference between forgiving and forgetting? Which is more powerful?
15. Define prejudice. How does racism differ from prejudice? What is the difference between tolerance and acceptance? How do people get beyond social, racial and/or religious bias and stereotyping? What does it feel like to be judged based on race, religion, gender or sexual orientation? What is the best line of defense when you are physically or verbally attacked? When — if ever — does conflict resolution work? What does it take to change people's views and/or actions regarding people's differences? What accounts for this difference?
16. Why do parents and other adult authority figures place so many restrictions on teenagers? When does the intent to protect and teach cross over and serve to repress and shame? In what ways is rebelling against authority part of the adolescent/teenage experience? What is the best way to get your voices heard?
17. How has the relationship with your parents changed from when you were little to now? What is the thing that you wish they understood about being a teen that they just don't seem to get?

18. What do you believe should be your parent's primary responsibility in raising you? As a parent, how do you think you might strike the balance between freedom/experimentation and security/protection? How does making mistakes help us grow? What purpose do rules and restrictions serve? Is it better to have strict rules to help govern impulsive and, sometime, destructive behavior and experimentation, or is it best to provide little structure and just let things be?
19. In what way is exploration, experimentation and indulgence necessary in order to fully understand your sexual, moral and essential self? How does our past history, faith and childhood upbringing lay the groundwork for our understanding of morality and ethical behavior? What is the foundation for your personal moral guidelines?
20. Describe the perfect parent/child relationship. How do you keep the lines of communication open? What happens when either party experiences a great loss or hurt and fails to live up to their expectation? What does it feel like to have that trust and faith betrayed? How do past loyalties shift when the person you love shocks and disappoints you? Is there any way to get past that deep hurt? What does it take to forgive and heal those wounds?
21. How does the death of a loved one change us? What are the lasting effects of losing someone or something that is part of your heart? How do you grieve? How does healing happen?
22. What do you imagine it takes to produce a successful production of a classic tragedy, the scope of *Romeo and Juliet*? Do you believe that producing Shakespeare requires a different skill set from the actors, than a contemporary piece? What skills are required? What does it take for you to personally to lose yourself in the story and journey of the characters? Is this type of transcendence more difficult at a live performance? Why? How does the experience of witnessing live performance differ from going to the movie, renting a DVD, or sitting in front of the TV?

# ARE YOU A MONTAGUE OR A CAPULET?

Complete the flow-chart to pick a "house" then read Act I, scene i on the following page.

Start Here



# ROMEO AND JULIET

## Part 1, Scene 1

**ACT I, SCENE I**      **SAMPSON & GREGORY (CAPULETS), ABRAHAM & BALTHAZAR (MONTAGUES), BENVOLIO, TYBALT, PRINCE, CROWD.**

ABRAHAM                      Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

SAMPSON                     No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but I bite my thumb, sir.

GREGORY                    Do you quarrel, sir?

BALTHAZAR                 Quarrel sir? No, sir.

SAMPSON                    Draw, if you be men!

(SAMPSON AND ABRAHAM FIGHT; ENTER BENVOLIO)

BENVOLIO                  Part, fools, Put up your swords, you know not what you do.

(ENTER TYBALT)

TYBALT                      What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds?  
Turn thee, Benvolio, look upon thy death.

BENVOLIO                  I do but keep the peace, put up thy sword,  
Or manage it to part these men with me.

TYBALT                      What, drawn, and talk of peace? I hate the word,  
As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee:  
Have at thee, coward.

(TYBALT AND BENVOLIO FIGHT. ENTER PRINCE)

PRINCE                      Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,  
On pain of torture, from those bloody hands  
Throw your mistemper'd weapons to the ground,  
And hear the sentence of your moved prince.  
Three civil brawls bred of an airy word  
By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,  
Have thrice disturb'd the quiet of our streets.  
If ever you disturb our streets again  
Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.  
On pain of death, all men depart.

# WRITING PROMPTS & ACTIVITIES

## **SOCIAL NETWORKING**

The meeting between Romeo and Juliet is electric and the subsequent balcony scene is truly transcendent. Shakespeare's rich poetry and gorgeous prose captures the aching love and blooming passion of the star-crossed lovers to near perfection. In this day of social networking, how would an inspired Romeo reach out to his Juliet? Have some fun with some or all of the following ideas:

- Rewrite the balcony scene as text messages between Romeo and Juliet.
- Create a Romeo and Juliet inspired TikTok.
- Tweet about the Capulet bash.

How would the meeting of Romeo and Juliet set social media on fire? How does word of various hook-ups and connections spread in your circle? How does the immediacy of social media fuel the fires of love and hate? How would that reality have shaped and altered the classic tale of *Romeo and Juliet*?

## **ELEVATOR SPEECH**

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is one of the greatest love stories ever written and has had many interpretations and revisions including the classic Broadway musical *West Side Story*. Given the universal appeal of this classic tale, how would you re-tell this story? Either as a group or individually, prepare a movie pitch — an “elevator speech” — to Hollywood producers. Where will you set this film? What are the warring factors? What stars will you cast? What modern twist will you incorporate to make the piece more meaningful to a modern day audience? To make your pitch have more resonance, include images, music clips, location preferences, character names and descriptions as well as a basic plot outline.

## **CHARACTER COLLAGES**

The characters in *Romeo and Juliet* are as complex as they are compelling. Their motivation, wants and relationships are multifaceted. Choose one of the central figures of the play — Romeo, Juliet, Friar Laurence, Lord Capulet, Tybalt, Benvolio, the Nurse, or Paris — and search for images, words, headlines, metaphors, colors and textures that best reflect and/or capture the essence of the character. Create a visual collage. Display the various collages throughout the classroom and have the class meander through museum style. Discuss what you see. Challenge students to articulate and defend the choices they made in putting together the collage. Were various characters easy to identify? Why? What similarities and differences were present? Discuss.

## **PLAYLIST**

Have students create a musical playlist that reflects the journey of one of the characters or underscores the full emotional spectrum of the play itself. Have the class share, discuss and defend their choices.



# ROMEO & JULIET Playlist



**SHUFFLE PLAY**

**Download**



Playlist or mixtape or CD—no matter the medium, curating a list of music for another person is a form of emotional self-expression, as well as an artistic gift. Create a playlist as Romeo for Juliet, as Juliet for Romeo or as Paris for Juliet. Consider the mood of the curated list and the message you want to get across. For the advanced curator, the order of the songs should tell a story, as well as fit together rhythmically.

_____	_____
_____	_____
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## Romeo and Juliet • Dire Straits



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## THE POWER OF WORDS/WRITING EXERCISE

Shakespeare's poetry and use of language is astounding in its depth, beauty and imagery but can also be off-putting to many students. The following exercise is a way to take Shakespeare's poetry out of context, to eliminate the need to interpret and elicit meaning. This activity allows the language to wash over the listener and allow whatever words and images that become illuminated to take a new shape and form. For the purposes of this exercise we will use Romeo's monologue when he first sees Juliet on the balcony:

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?  
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.  
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,  
Who is already sick and pale with grief,  
That thou her maid art far more fair than she:  
Be not her maid, since she is envious;  
Her vestal livery is but sick and green  
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.  
It is my lady, O, it is my love!  
O, that she knew she were!  
She speaks yet she says nothing: what of that?  
Her eye discourses; I will answer it.  
I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:  
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,  
Having some business, do entreat her eyes  
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.  
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?  
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,  
As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven  
Would through the airy region stream so bright  
That birds would sing and think it were not night.  
See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!  
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,  
That I might touch that cheek!

[Juliet's monologue right before she takes the potion]:

Farewell! God knows when we shall meet again.  
I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins,  
That almost freezes up the heat of life:  
I'll call them back again to comfort me:  
Nurse! What should she do here?  
My dismal scene I needs must act alone.  
Come, vial.  
What if this mixture do not work at all?  
Shall I be married then to-morrow morning?  
No, no: this shall forbid it: lie thou there.  
*(Laying down her dagger)*  
What if it be a poison, which the friar  
Subtly hath minister'd to have me dead,  
Lest in this marriage he should be dishonour'd,  
Because he married me before to Romeo?  
I fear it is: and yet, methinks, it should not,

For he hath still been tried a holy man.  
 How if, when I am laid into the tomb,  
 I wake before the time that Romeo  
 Come to redeem me? there's a fearful point!  
 Shall I not, then, be stifled in the vault,  
 To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,  
 And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?  
 Or, if I live, is it not very like,  
 The horrible conceit of death and night,  
 Together with the terror of the place,—  
 As in a vault, an ancient receptacle,  
 Where, for these many hundred years, the bones  
 Of all my buried ancestors are packed:  
 Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,  
 Lies festering in his shroud; where, as they say,  
 At some hours in the night spirits resort;—  
 Alack, alack, is it not like that I,  
 So early waking, what with loathsome smells,  
 And shrieks like mandrakes' torn out of the earth,  
 That living mortals, hearing them, run mad:—  
 O, if I wake, shall I not be distraught,  
 Environed with all these hideous fears?  
 And madly play with my forefather's joints?  
 And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud?  
 And, in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone,  
 As with a club, dash out my desperate brains?  
 O, look! methinks I see my cousin's ghost  
 Seeking out Romeo, that did spit his body  
 Upon a rapier's point: stay, Tybalt, stay!  
 Romeo, I come! this do I drink to thee.

The exercise will have **four** phases. The **first phase** involves the reading of the passage multiple times with different voices. Have 3 - 5 students read the passage out loud. The remainder of the class should allow the words and images to wash over them. They should write down any words or phrases that "*glisten*", stand out, or provide any kind of energy. The **second phase** involves meditation. Based on the chosen words and images, allow ideas to flow and release any thoughts or reactions that come to mind. Remind students not to edit themselves. This is a free writing exercise, The **third phase** is transforming those images, ideas and reactions into a new form — a poem, an essay, a journal reflection— whatever. The **final phase** focuses on contemplation and selective sharing. Ask students to sit with their discovery, what emerged from this exercise in terms of feeling, impressions and/or understanding. See if anyone wants to share either their writing or an idea/image that emerged from the exercise. Complete the exercise in its' entirety before introducing the second monologue. Compare and contrast the images and ideas that they evoke.

## EMOTIONAL GREETINGS and EMOTIONAL SCULPTURES

The emotional spectrum displayed in *Romeo and Juliet* is vast and deep. The following exercises will help your students get in touch with some of these primal feelings. The first activity can serve as an ice breaker. As the facilitator you need to push your students to be over the top and give them permission to be fully uninhibited. Have the class stand in a circle. Their objective is to “greet everyone in the circle with a simple handshake and/or salutation. You will continue this process, but each new “greeting” will be colored by an extreme emotion.

- a) incredible excitement — you are on a major sugar high
- b) love with a capital “L” — you are giddy and full of joy!
- c) secretive — you are carrying a secret that no one can know
- d) cocky — you own the streets, you have all the power
- e) fearful — you are in the wrong side of town at the wrong time
- f) rage/anger — the world is against you and there is nothing that can be done about it
- g) loss/grief — you must go on even after you have lost everything that matters
- h) return to neutral and greet each without any emotion attached.

How did the emotions shape your actions and or behavior? How did the class dynamic change with the various emotions? What emotions were easiest to tap into? What emotions felt the most 'real'? Why? What did it feel like to be on the receiving end of the various greetings? How did the group energy shape your actions and behavior?

Once you have processed the exercise with the class, you will move on to create group sculptures based on the emotional themes of the play. This is a silent exercise. Have the group count off in threes. Each group will collectively shape a living sculpture using their bodies to reflect the following images/themes and ideas: They need to be encouraged to try to capture the essence of the feeling or idea. They should avoid literal representations.

### GRIEF/LOSS

*Is there no pity sitting in the clouds,  
That sees into the bottom of my grief?*

### TRANSFORMATIONAL LOVE

*My bounty is as boundless as the sea,  
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,  
The more I have, for both are infinite.*

### HATRED/VIOLENCE

*What, drawn, and talk of peace! I hate the word,  
As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee:  
Have at thee, coward!*

### ANTICIPATION/IMPATIENCE

*Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,  
Towards Phoebus' lodging: such a wagoner  
As Phaethon would whip you to the west,  
And bring in cloudy night immediately.*

Give each group adequate time to prepare (about five minutes) and without revealing the source, have each group present their sculpture. Ask the remaining students to comment on what they see and to name the sculpture. Talk about the process of creating as a group. Were you able to effectively communicate the theme or idea? What surprised you by your classmates' interpretations?

## COMEDY AND TRAGEDY

*Romeo and Juliet* is one of Shakespeare's greatest tragedies and yet it is the paradoxical nature of the story that deepens its overall impact. Hate and love stand side by side. It has been said that comedy and tragedy are the opposite side of the same coin. As an exercise in exploration, discuss with your class the essence of comedy versus tragedy. What makes an actor or comedian "funny"? What are the traits or characteristics of great actors — actors that somehow touch your soul? Divide the class into groups of five and divide those groups into "COMEDY" and "TRAGEDY". Give the groups time to cast, stage and rehearse Juliet's death bed scene as either a comedy or tragedy. Encourage your students to go all out and to focus on both style and truth. Have the groups find costumes and props and even sound effects or musical underscoring to add to the performance of their scene. Have the groups perform the scene for the rest of the class. Discuss the various interpretations of the scene. How did viewing this moment of the play through different lenses enhance, deepen or contribute to your understanding of the character's and their motivations and emotional truths?

## SCENE V. Juliet's chamber.

*Enter NURSE*

**NURSE:** Mistress! what, mistress! Juliet! fast, I warrant her, she:  
Why, lamb! why, lady! fie, you slug-a-bed!  
Why, love, I say! madam! sweet-heart! why, bride!  
What, not a word? you take your pennyworths now;  
Sleep for a week; for the next night, I warrant,  
The County Paris hath set up his rest,  
That you shall rest but little. God forgive me,  
Marry, and amen, how sound is she asleep!  
I must needs wake her. Madam, madam, madam!  
Ay, let the county take you in your bed;  
He'll fright you up, i' faith. Will it not be?

*Undraws the curtains*

What, dress'd! and in your clothes! and down again!  
I must needs wake you; Lady! lady! lady!  
Alas, alas! Help, help! my lady's dead!  
O, well-a-day, that ever I was born!  
Some aqua vitae, ho! My lord! my lady!

*Enter LADY CAPULET*

**LADY CAPULET:** What noise is here?

**NURSE:** O lamentable day!

*LADY CAPULET:* What is the matter?

*NURSE:* Look, look! O heavy day!

*LADY CAPULET:* O me, O me! My child, my only life,  
Revive, look up, or I will die with thee!  
Help, help! Call help.

*Enter CAPULET*

*CAPULET:* For shame, bring Juliet forth; her lord is come.

*NURSE:* She's dead, deceased, she's dead; alack the day!

*LADY CAPULET:* Alack the day, she's dead, she's dead, she's dead!

*CAPULET:* Ha! let me see her: out, alas! she's cold:  
Her blood is settled, and her joints are stiff;  
Life and these lips have long been separated:  
Death lies on her like an untimely frost  
Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.

*NURSE:* O lamentable day!

*LADY CAPULET:* O woful time!

*CAPULET:* Death, that hath ta'en her hence to make me wail,  
Ties up my tongue, and will not let me speak.

*Enter FRIAR LAURENCE and PARIS, with Musicians*

*FRIAR LAURENCE:* Come, is the bride ready to go to church?

*CAPULET:* Ready to go, but never to return.  
O son! the night before thy wedding-day  
Hath Death lain with thy wife. There she lies,  
Flower as she was, deflowered by him.  
Death is my son-in-law, Death is my heir;  
My daughter he hath wedded: I will die,  
And leave him all; life, living, all is Death's.

*PARIS:* Have I thought long to see this morning's face,  
And doth it give me such a sight as this?

*LADY CAPULET:* Accursed, unhappy, wretched, hateful day!  
Most miserable hour that e'er time saw  
In lasting labour of his pilgrimage!  
But one, poor one, one poor and loving child,  
But one thing to rejoice and solace in,  
And cruel death hath catch'd it from my sight!

*NURSE:* O woe! O woful, woful, woful day!

Most lamentable day, most woful day,  
That ever, ever, I did yet behold!  
O day! O day! O day! O hateful day!  
Never was seen so black a day as this:  
O woful day, O woful day!

*PARIS:* Beguiled, divorced, wronged, spited, slain!  
Most detestable death, by thee beguil'd,  
By cruel cruel thee quite overthrown!  
O love! O life! not life, but love in death!

*CAPULET:* Despised, distressed, hated, martyr'd, kill'd!  
Uncomfortable time, why camest thou now  
To murder, murder our solemnity?  
O child! O child! my soul, and not my child!  
Dead art thou! Alack! my child is dead;  
And with my child my joys are buried.

*FRIAR LAURENCE:* Peace, ho, for shame! confusion's cure lives not  
In these confusions. Heaven and yourself  
Had part in this fair maid; now heaven hath all,  
And all the better is it for the maid:  
Your part in her you could not keep from death,  
But heaven keeps his part in eternal life.  
The most you sought was her promotion;  
For 'twas your heaven she should be advanced:  
And weep ye now, seeing she is advanced  
Above the clouds, as high as heaven itself?  
O, in this love, you love your child so ill,  
That you run mad, seeing that she is well:  
She's not well married that lives married long;  
But she's best married that dies married young.  
Dry up your tears, and stick your rosemary  
On this fair corse; and, as the custom is,  
In all her best array bear her to church:  
For though fond nature bids us an lament,  
Yet nature's tears are reason's merriment.

*CAPULET:* All things that we ordained festival,  
Turn from their office to black funeral;  
Our instruments to melancholy bells,  
Our wedding cheer to a sad burial feast,  
Our solemn hymns to sullen dirges change,  
Our bridal flowers serve for a buried corse,  
And all things change them to the contrary.

*FRIAR LAURENCE:* Sir, go you in; and, madam, go with him;  
And go, Sir Paris; every one prepare  
To follow this fair corse unto her grave:  
The heavens do lour upon you for some ill;  
Move them no more by crossing their high will.

*Exeunt CAPULET, LADY CAPULET, PARIS, and FRIAR LAURENCE*

## COMEDY AND TRAGEDY

Shakespeare wrote one of his greatest tragedies, *Romeo and Juliet*, and, best loved comedies, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in the same year. Compare death scene at tomb in *Romeo and Juliet* to the death scene of Pyramus and Thisbe in the play within a play in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Use this opportunity to give your students the opportunity to interact with the text, take on roles and share the scenes by actively rehearsing, staging and performing them. What similarities do you see in both of these famous scenes? How do you think writing both at approximately the same time influenced Shakespeare understanding of love, death and the style of both comedy and tragedy?

## WRITING PROMPTS

Write a love letter or poem to your ideal partner or dream mate.

Write a personal ad in search of your ideal partner.

Write a personal ad in search of your ideal mate from the perspective of your mother or father.

Interview a couple who you believe exemplify "true love."

## Journal Entries

"When I was young and naive, I used to believe..."

"Now that I am older I know ..."

"True love is like..."

"Lust is like..."

"Death feels like..."

"Prejudice exists because..."

"In order to form a perfect and just world, we all must..."

"Hatred is like..."

"When you are on the outside looking in, you feel..."

"I want to leave my children a world where..."

"Acceptance means..."

"Tolerance is another word for..."

"I wish..."

"My perfect love will..."

"Parents need to know that what their kids really need is..."

"I wish I could tell my parents that..."

"The best thing about falling in love is..."

"Salvation comes through..."

"Mercy exists when..."

"I know I'll be ready to get married when..."

"Saying good-bye to someone you love is like..."

"Grief feels like..."

"Love sounds like..."

"Hate sounds like..."

"Death sounds like..."

"Grief is..."

"In order to truly love, you must..."

"In order to hate, you must..."

# Romeo & Juliet

A graphic realization of  
Great Lakes Theater's 2022  
production of Romeo and Juliet.

ACT I: FOLLOWERS OF THE MONTAGUES AND  
CAPULET FAMILIES FIGHT IN THE STREET

I WILL BITE MY  
THUMB AT THEM



LATER: PARIS ARRIVES  
TO COURT JULIET!

ROMEO SEES JULIET  
AND THEY BEGIN TO  
FALL IN LOVE

THEY ARE SHOCKED  
TO DISCOVER EACH  
OTHER'S IDENTITIES



ACT II

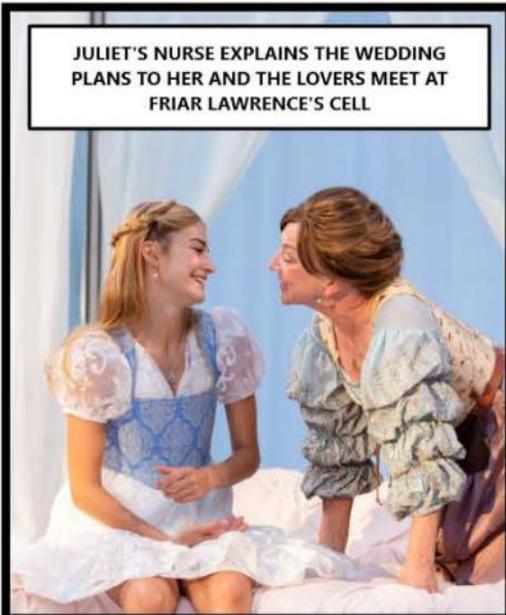
JULIET APPEARS AT HER  
WINDOW AND REVEALS  
HER LOVE FOR ROMEO

O ROMEO, ROMEO!  
WHEREFORE ART THOU  
ROMEO?

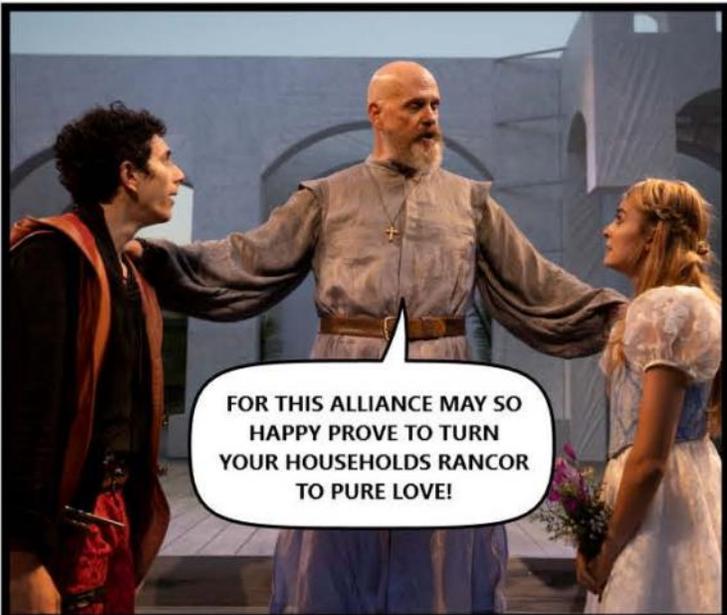
FRIAR LAWRENCE  
AGREES TO MARRY  
JULIET AND ROMEO

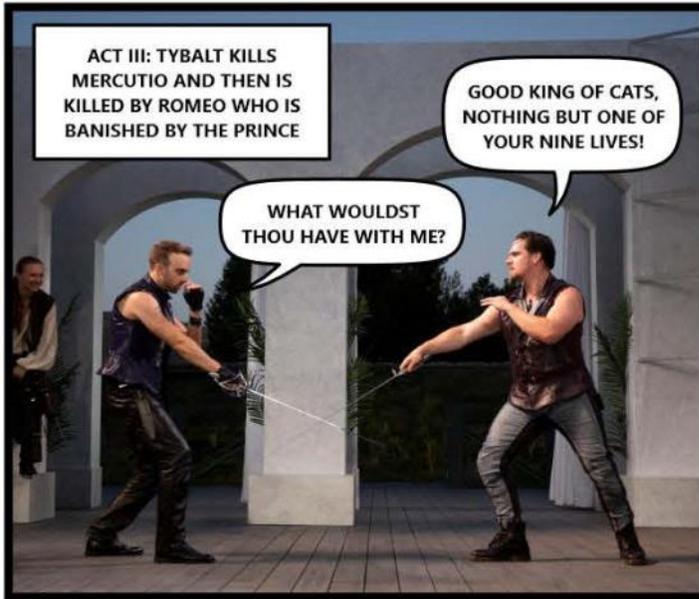


JULIET'S NURSE EXPLAINS THE WEDDING  
PLANS TO HER AND THE LOVERS MEET AT  
FRIAR LAWRENCE'S CELL



FOR THIS ALLIANCE MAY SO  
HAPPY PROVE TO TURN  
YOUR HOUSEHOLDS RANCOR  
TO PURE LOVE!





ACT III: TYBALT KILLS MERCUTIO AND THEN IS KILLED BY ROMEO WHO IS BANISHED BY THE PRINCE

GOOD KING OF CATS, NOTHING BUT ONE OF YOUR NINE LIVES!

WHAT WOULDST THOU HAVE WITH ME?



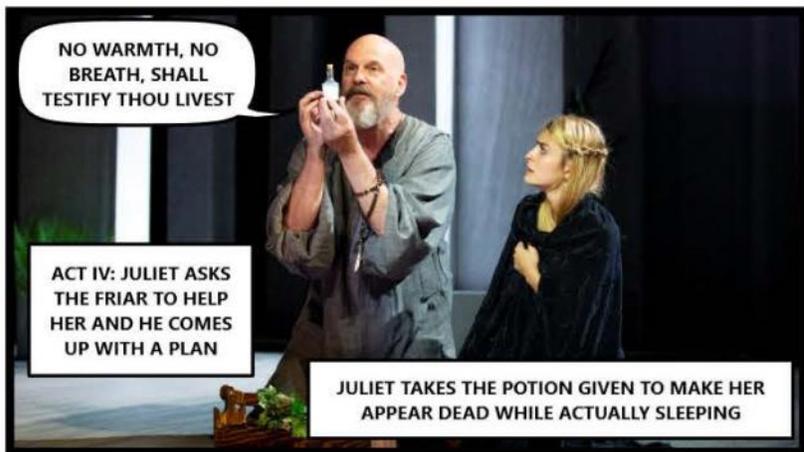
A PLAGUE O' BOTH YOUR HOUSES!!!



JULIET GRIEVES FOR BOTH TYBALT AND ROMEO

JULIET'S MOTHER WANTS HER TO MARRY PARIS AND SHE RELUCTANTLY AGREES

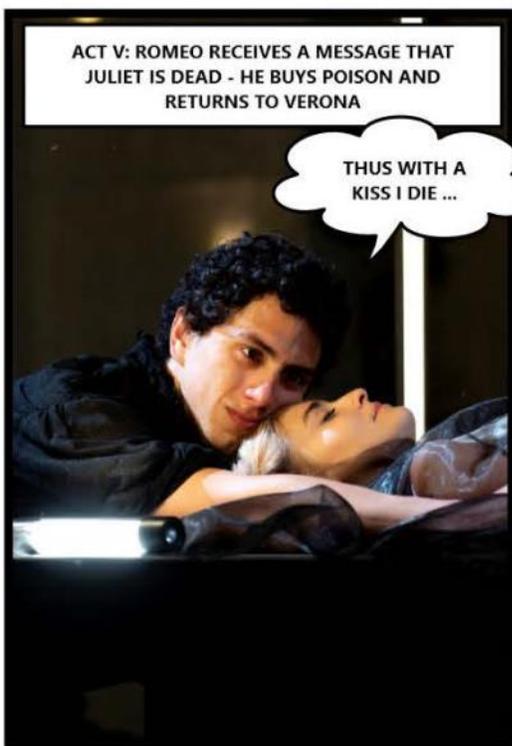
SHALL I SPEAK ILL OF HIM THAT IS MY HUSBAND?



NO WARMTH, NO BREATH, SHALL TESTIFY THOU LIVEST

ACT IV: JULIET ASKS THE FRIAR TO HELP HER AND HE COMES UP WITH A PLAN

JULIET TAKES THE POTION GIVEN TO MAKE HER APPEAR DEAD WHILE ACTUALLY SLEEPING



ACT V: ROMEO RECEIVES A MESSAGE THAT JULIET IS DEAD - HE BUYS POISON AND RETURNS TO VERONA

THUS WITH A KISS I DIE ...



ROMEO KILLS HIMSELF - JULIET AWAKENS, SEES ROMEO DEAD AND KILLS HERSELF

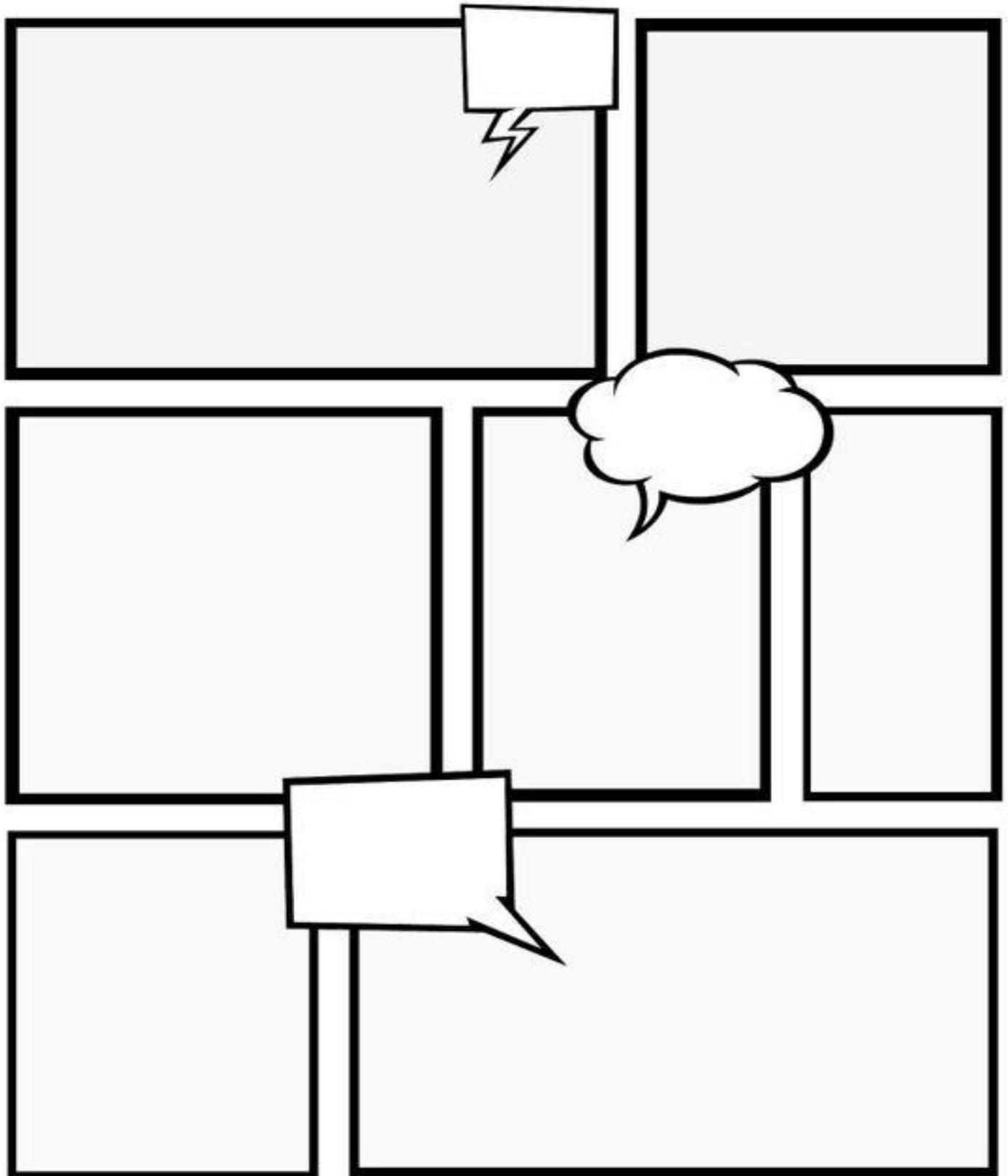
THE DEAD LOVERS ARE DISCOVERED AND THE CAPULETS AND MONTAGUES AGREE TO END THEIR FEUD

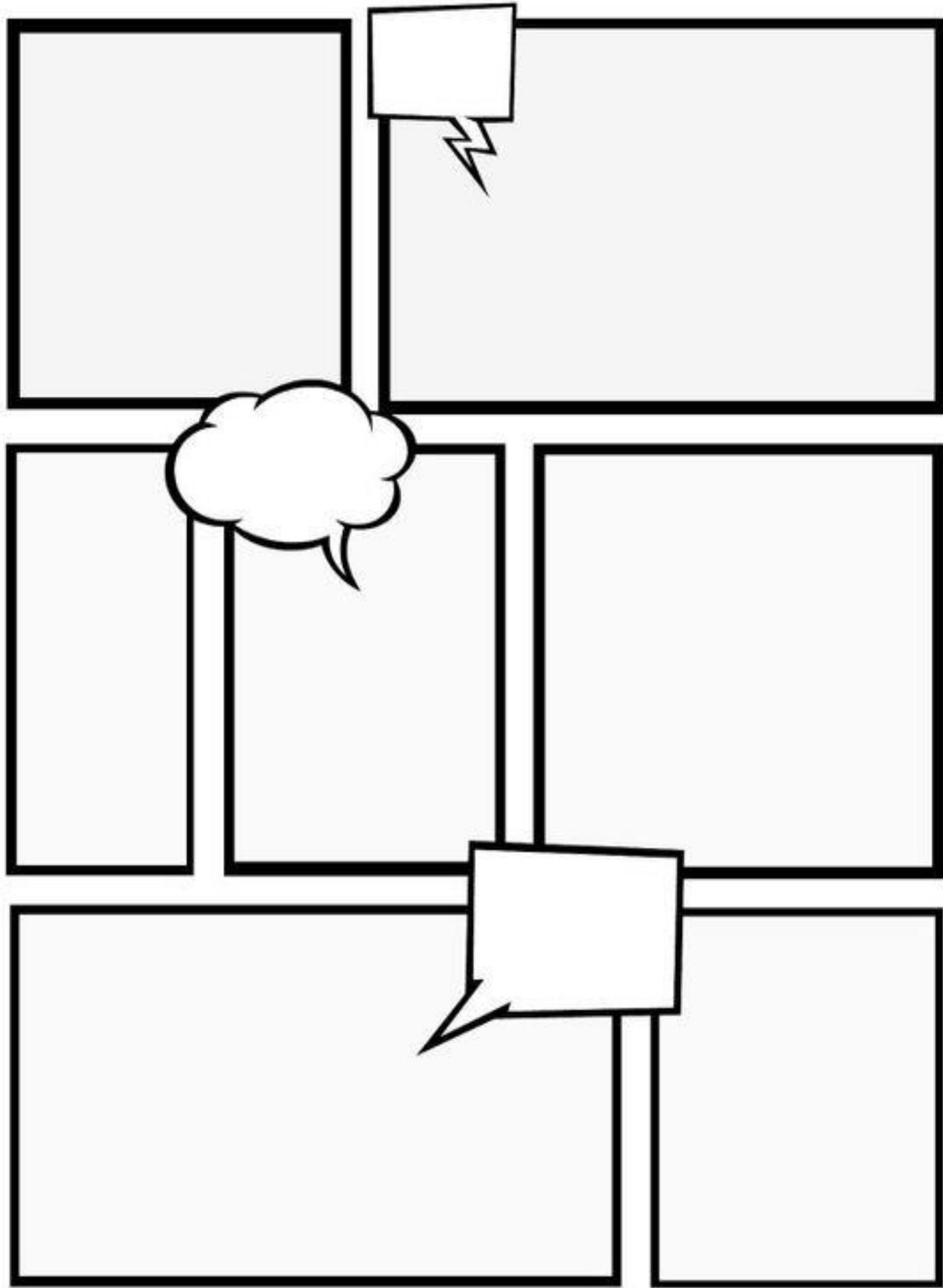
"NEVER WAS A STORY OF MORE WOE THAN THIS OF JULIET AND HER ROMEO"

-end-

# ROMEO & JULIET

Create your own graphic novel page. Focus on an act or a key scene to break down the plot further.





# HOW TO WRITE A REVIEW

## MORE HOW AND LESS WHAT

A theater review is not a book review, you do not need to summarize what happens. Provide the necessary background so the reader knows the name of the play and the basics of what kind of play it is, and then move into your commentary. You do not need to explain WHAT the play is, instead write about HOW successfully it was presented.

## THE ACTOR NOT THE CHARACTER

You can disapprove of the decisions a character makes, but how well did the ACTOR perform the role? Was their behavior appropriate to the part as written? Feel free to share your opinions, comparing or contrasting their work with other actors with whom you are familiar.

## WHAT IS DIRECTION?

Maybe you have heard of a “director” in theater or film, but do you know what they do? It is not a director’s job to tell the actors how to say every line, but they are the person responsible for creating the general mood and concept for the production. What was your impression of the production as a whole? Was it too funny for a serious play? Or not amusing enough for a comic play? Use words to reflect back to the director how successful the production is as a whole.

## DON'T FORGET THE DESIGN

The set you see and the sounds you hear are also unique to this one production of this play. Describe what you see and hear, but also be sure to make clear how successful these designs are in telling the story of the play.

## IN CONCLUSION ...

While it is not necessary to give a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” your concluding sentence should summarize your impression of the production as a whole.

## THEATER REVIEWS IN THE NEW MEDIA

Reviews in news websites may be 1000 words, they may be as brief as 300 words. Can you write a one-page review? Can you write a 100 word review, to post on Facebook? Do you think you could create a 140-character review that sums up the production for posting on Twitter?

A sample review written by a student follows this page.

# A SAMPLE REVIEW WRITTEN BY A STUDENT

## **"Gambit": More Poetry Than History** — Mark Wood

If Aristotle was correct when he said that poetry "is a higher thing than history," then "Royal Gambit," which opened Friday night at Pentacle Theater, is, I suppose, on the right track.

For those who were expecting a representational treatment of the life of England's Henry VIII, "Royal Gambit" was a shock, if not a disappointment. Those who sought poetry got it, although of a very dogmatic and simplistic sort.

This unusual, highly presentational play by Hermann Gressieker, directed by Ed Classen, is an indictment of modern man as a ruthless opportunist. The Tudor king is a representative of a rationalizing, shifty society which has become "superior to the highest" while "wallowing in the depths."

As Henry uses the banners of "reason" and "humanism" to obtain then dispose of his six wives, so modern man uses them for his own pleasure and glorification, uses them to wage war in the name of peace, to hate in the name of love.

Such is the grim theme pleasingly presented by a company of seven actors, who performed their roles energetically, if unevenly. The presentational acting style employed here is difficult to perfect. It should be theatrical, yet believable; aimed at the head, yet acceptable to the heart.

Louise Larsen was a standout as Catherine of Aragon, Largely because she utilized this presentational approach and was not afraid of open theatricality. Her flamboyant stage presence, which needed to be toned down in her recent role in "Last of the Red Hot Lovers," found full vent here.

Henry's fourth wife, Anne of Cleves, was portrayed by Gale Rieder, who quickly became an audience favorite. Her thick accent was letter-perfect and her direct humor was a welcome contrast to the bitter satire of the rest of the play.

The other four actresses—Kathy Stratton, Marcia Engblom, Polly Bond and Patricia Sloan—each had their exceptional moments. However, they generally seemed tied to more conventional, representational acting styles.

Ron Fox was superb in the role of Henry. Tuxedoed, leering with the look of a demonic marionette, the vacant stare of a deranged orator, Fox dominated the stage fully, commanding both in voice and stage presence.

The technical elements of the play were more than adequate. Musical accompaniment was appropriately sparse and simple.

At one point the play, King Henry roared, "In my realm I decide what constitutes tragedy!" Ironically, Gressieker strips modern man not only of his possibilities as a tragic figure worthy of any sympathies at all. In the final moments of the play, Catherine of Aragon announces the death of modern man and the birth of a new era. It is a scene of great hope, but it is not as profound as her earlier pronouncement to her husband that "the ways of the world are not so cut and dried!"

For my own part, I wish that "Royal Gambit's" statement were not so cut and dried. By making man out to be such a simple monster the play defeats its own purposes and turns poetry into scathing dogma, which is probably even less interesting than, say, history.

<http://faculty.chemeketa.edu/jrupert3/eng105/Annrev.html>

# VOCABULARY

## ACT I

bite my thumb – make a gesture of contempt

tool – weapon (with bawdy innuendo)

mistempered – 1) ill made 2) used with ill will

Aurora – goddess of the dawn

humor – mood

happy - lucky

Dian's wit – the cunning of Diana, huntress and goddess of chastity

God-den – good evening (afternoon)

unattainted – impartial

Lammastide – August 1<sup>st</sup>

tetchy – irritable

trow – believe

marry – indeed

man of wax – man of perfect figure, good looking

hoodwinked – blind folded

candleholder - attendant

Queen Mab – Fairy Queen (Celtic)

spinnners - spiders

atomies – tiny creatures

benefice – income, “living”

hall – clear the floor

choler - anger

profane – insult

holy shrine – metaphor Romeo uses to describe Juliet's hand

Pilgrim - a seeker, one who travels (mostly to religious artifacts and holy places) to gain spiritual enlightenment

Palmer – religious pilgrim, originally signifying one who carried a palm branch; here it is used as a pun meaning one who holds another's hand

Prodigious – 1) monstrous 2) of evil portent

Anon – at once

## **ACT II**

demesnes – domains

humorous – 1) damp 2) moody

vestal livery - virginity

prorogued - deferred

fain – happily

compliment – formal courtesy

bounty – capacity for giving

nyas – term of endearment

gyves – fetters, leather tethers used by falconers

baleful – 1) evil 2) poisonous

Benedictine – bless you

distempered head – troubled mind

shrift – absolution

fantasticoes - fops

ropery – bawdy talk

fool's paradise – seduction

bespew – curse, "shame on you..."

gossamers – spider webs

## **ACT III**

Zounds – by God's wounds (an exclamation)

Devise – imagine

passado – lunge

bandying – brawling

grave – 1) extremely serious 2) ready for the grave

respective lenity – discriminating mercifulness

fortune's fool – plaything, dope

louring – 1) look angry or sullen 2) (of the sky, weather or landscape) look dark and threatening

poultice – a soft, moist mass of bread

Toward's Phoebus lodging – beneath the horizon

Phaethon – Phoebus' son, who mismanaged the horses and let them run away

fettle – make ready

## **ACT IV**

conceit – thought

green in earth – newly entombed

mandrakes – plant with forked root that resembles the human body (supposed to shriek when uprooted to drive the hearer mad)

cot-quean – man who does “woman’s” work

slugabed – sleepyhead

aqua vitae - spirits

lamentable - regrettable, full of anguish

## **ACT V**

Tush – used to express mild disapproval

apothecary – provider of illegal drugs, medicines and poisons

penury – extreme want or poverty

caitiff – miserable

dateless – eternal

engrossing – all-encompassing

pestilence – 1) pernicious, evil influence or agent 2) fatal epidemic, disease

conjurations – 1) magic spell or incantation 2) magic trick

inauspicious – not favorable

woe – great despair, grief

# QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION: AFTER ATTENDING THE PERFORMANCE

1. What were your favorite aspects of this production? How did the visual elements — the set, costume and lighting design — aid in the telling of this classic work? What actor do you believe had the most fully realized characterization? What was it about his or her performance that drew you in? What moment was the most memorable? Why?
2. Track each character's transformation from the beginning to the end of the play. What discoveries are made by the characters in the short time between Romeo and Juliet's first meeting to their untimely deaths? Which character, if any, do you think grows the most? Why? How is that growth manifested in performance? What moment in Great Lakes' current production affected you the most? Why?
3. In *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare opens the play with the following prologue:

Two households, both alike in dignity,  
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,  
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,  
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.  
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes(5)  
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;  
Whose misadventur'd piteous overthrows  
Doth, with their death, bury their parents' strife.  
The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,  
And the continuance of their parents' rage,(10)  
Which, but their children's end, naught could remove,  
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;  
The which if you with patient ears attend,  
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

This opening not only sets up the feud and bitter hatred between the Montague's and Capulet's but also reveals the play's tragic ending. In Great Lakes' current production, the director chose to place the prologue right after the first fight scene and the Prince's recrimination. This famous opening is recited by Friar Laurence instead of the anonymous figure of "The Chorus". How does this simple change alter the piece? Why do you think the director chose to place the monologue after the street fight? How does knowing the end of a piece alter the experience of watching events unfold? The reason for the ancient grudge between the two families in *Romeo and Juliet* is never revealed. Does hatred need a specific source or is it fueled by instinct and/or legacy? How does hatred grow?

4. As noted, the Great Lakes' production opens with the quarrel between the Capulet and Montague servants which leads into a full blown fight between Benvolio and Tybalt. What about the stage fight seemed realistic? What – if anything – drew you in? Did you find yourself rooting for one side over the

other? Why? What is it about a battle or competition — of any kind — that gets the juices flowing? Benvolio tries to stop the fight but Tybalt eggs him on:

*BENVOLIO:* I do but keep the peace: put up thy sword  
Or manage it to part these men with me.

*TYBALT:* What, drawn and talk of peace! I hate the word,  
As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee.  
Have at thee, coward!

Do you know someone like Tybalt who loves to instigate? What is that about? What is the fight *really* about? What does it take, as Benvolio states, to “*keep the peace*”? Have you ever been drawn into a fight? What was the breaking point? What is the final straw for Benvolio? Why does physical violence escalate so quickly? How is it that even a small gesture or mild insult can grow into full blown battle? What is the underlying cause? What is the best way to handle someone who is itching for a fight? How do you deal with the energy of the crowd that cheers it on?

5. Prince Escalus enters and is able to stop the fight with the following proclamation:

*PRINCE:* On pain of torture, from those bloody hands  
Throw your mistemper'd weapons to the ground,  
And hear the sentence of your moved prince.  
Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word,  
By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,  
Have thrice disturb'd the quiet of our streets.  
If ever you disturb our streets again,  
Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.

What was your reaction to the prince's edict? How did the characters respond to the prince laying down the law? How does the threat of more violence distill or squelch ongoing hatred and violence? What is the role of leader when there is a rift in the group or community that they are leading? In your opinion, what is the best way for someone in charge – a teacher, a principal, even your parents – to handle grievances, ongoing disputes and/or physical altercations? Do “no tolerance” rules work? Why? What would it take for both the Montague and Capulet families to buy into the prince's decree and Benvolio's desire to keep the peace?

6. What is your first impression of Romeo? Benvolio asks his friend a great question:

*BENVOLIO:* What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?

How does the angst and turmoil that comes with unrequited love slow down time? What does it feel like to be love-sick? Have you ever been obsessed with a crush? How do you move forward? How can friends help? What advice does Benvolio give to Romeo? Has anyone ever given you the “there are more fish in the sea” speech, how did that work for you? What is it about *love* that is all consuming and stops you from pushing forward? Is Romeo fickle? Is *love* fickle? Explain.

7. In this production of *Romeo and Juliet*, director Sara Bruner chose to combine the roles of Lord and Lady Capulet into one role. What effect does it have on the story that Juliet has a single parent? Does it make any difference that she has a single mother, as opposed to a single father? What differences might you think those are?

8. In discussion with Paris, Lady Capulet responds to the prince's edict by stating:

**CAPULET:** But Montague is bound as well as I,  
In penalty alike, and 'tis not hard, I think,  
For men so old as we to keep the peace.

Does the impulsivity of extreme emotion – such as love and hate – fade with age? What is it about youth that stirs the blood and pushes you to react to whatever you are feeling in the moment? What does it take for you to hold back? Have you ever regretted a moment when your feelings got the best of you? How can you take it back? Does wisdom or age temper emotion? Explain.

9. Lady Capulet wants to introduce Paris to Juliet in hopes of brokering a union. Have you ever been set up or prompted to go on a blind date? What did it feel like? How would the person your parents' choose for you differ from your ideal romantic partner? What counts for the difference? In the beginning, Lord Capulet cautiously accepts Paris' suit:

**PARIS:** But now, my lord, what say you to my suit?

**CAPULET:** By saying o'er what I have said before:  
My child is yet a stranger in the world;  
She hath not seen the change of sixteen years.  
Let two more summers wither in their pride,  
Ere we may think her ripe to be a bride.

**PARIS:** Younger than she are happy mothers made.

**CAPULET:** And too soon marr'd are those so early made  
The earth hath swallowed all my hopes but she,  
She is the hopeful lady of my earth:  
But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart,  
My will to her consent is but a part;

Lady Capulet seems to believe that waiting a while and having Paris court her daughter is the best path toward marriage and suggests that his approval is only part of the equation. What did you make of Lady Capulet in this scene with Paris and, later, as the host of the feast? How do you explain Lady Capulet's drastic shift later in the play, in both temperament and sentiment, when she threatens to disown Juliet if she doesn't marry Paris on his incredibly short time table? How did the actor portraying Juliet's mother make this transition believable? Have your parents ever forced you to do something that went against a personal desire or belief? How did you handle the conflict? What would it feel like if that happened on a larger scale, and like Juliet, you were forced to follow a parental decision that was life changing? What is the best way to disarm your parents' temper, frustration and/or disapproval?

10. What is your first impression of Juliet? What is notable about the relationships between Juliet and her mother, Juliet and the Nurse, as well as Lady Capulet and the Nurse? Both Lady Capulet and the Nurse are pushing Juliet to consider marriage to Paris. Juliet proclaims that marriage "*is an honour that I dream not of.*" Have you ever been presented with a seemingly "adult" decision that you didn't feel you were ready for? What does it feel like to be thrust into adulthood? What are the benefits of childhood? What is the lure of adulthood? What does it feel like to straddle both? Do you believe that kids of your generation are "growing up too fast"? Explain.
11. Throughout the play, both Romeo and Juliet have premonitions and telling dreams which foreshadow their tragic fate. Have you ever had a premonition? What does that sixth sense feel like? How do you respond to those ominous sensations? Do you believe in fate? How much control do you have over life's

circumstances and events? In what way is your destiny prescribed? What part of your fate is written by your own hand? What power – if any – do dreams have? After the Queen Mab speech, Mercutio goes on to say:

True, I talk of dreams,  
Which are the children of an idle brain,  
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy,  
Which is as thin of substance as the air  
And more inconstant than the wind.

Do you agree with his assessment? What stock do you place in dreams? What dreams have you had that have made you stop and think and take notice?

12. The first meeting between Romeo and Juliet is electric. The world fades away and they have eyes only for each other. What is this encounter really about? Do you believe in love at first sight? Explain. How do you differentiate between love at first sight, true love, and lust? What does it feel like to make an instant connection? When do you *know* you are in love? Does the feeling come on suddenly or is it a gradual awakening? Explain. How would you characterize Romeo and Juliet's relationship? What is chemistry? In what ways did the actors portraying Romeo and Juliet demonstrate stage chemistry? In what way did their connection seem believable? Does this type of encounter happen in "real" life or is it just the stuff of fairy tales, romance novels, lifetime movies and Shakespeare?
13. In what way did Shakespeare's famous balcony scene live up to your expectations? What surprised you most about Romeo and Juliet's exchange? What was memorable about the director's staging and the actors' interpretation in Great Lakes' production? What adjustments might you make if you were given the opportunity to direct the scene?
14. Why are Romeo and Juliet able to see beyond their family name and the feud that exists between the people they love best? How does secrecy, danger and the sense of the forbidden fuel desire and, potentially, deepen passion and/or love? Why is it we always want what we are told we can't or shouldn't have? In what ways do Romeo and Juliet transcend prescribed boundaries and the legacy of hate? In what ways are they naive? What obstacles and challenges in Romeo and Juliet's world and in real life are more powerful than love? What — if anything — is threatened when people of different races, different religions, different social circles, different parts of town or the same gender are united by love? In your opinion, what is stronger, love or hate? Explain.
15. Before Romeo leaves, Juliet demands clarity of his intent. She states:

Three words, dear Romeo, and good-night indeed.  
If that thy bent of love be honorable,  
Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow,  
By one that I'll procure to come to thee,  
Where, and what time thou wilt perform the rite:  
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay  
And follow thee my lord throughout the world.

Why does Juliet jump to marriage? In what way is love a game? What confirmation do you seek or need before making any kind of romantic commitment? What does it take for you to disclose your feelings of love? What signals do you look for before deciding to truly share your feelings and commit to an exclusive relationship with another? How long does it take to make such a commitment? How do you

know when you are ready?

16. Early the next morning, Romeo meets with Friar Laurence who, though astounded by his change of heart, grudgingly agrees to marry Romeo to Juliet. In what way is the following statement by the friar true?

FRIAR LAWRENCE:  
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.

Do you think that Romeo is fickle? How is Romeo's love for Juliet different than his love for Rosaline? Romeo claims that it is different because:

...she whom I love now  
Doth grace for grace and love for love allow;  
The other did not so.

Is love only true if it is fully and equally reciprocated? Explain. What does it feel like to have a crush or fall in love with someone who doesn't return the sentiment? Is unrequited love still love? What makes love true, valid, real and lasting? Do you believe that Romeo and Juliet have that kind of love? Why? If you were Friar Laurence, what counsel would you give Romeo? What would make him think that a marriage between Romeo and Juliet would "*turn the households' rancor to pure love*"?

17. Juliet impatiently waits for the Nurse's return desperately seeking Romeo's answer to her hasty proposal. What does it feel like to wait for a call or a message from your crush? Have you ever felt that something or someone was too good to be true? Have you ever second guessed yourself or questioned the validity of a romantic encounter after the fact? What fuels that sense of doubt? How does love expose our fears and vulnerabilities? What is Juliet afraid of?
18. Immediately after Romeo and Juliet's secret wedding, the action returns to the streets and the brewing conflict between the Montagues and Capulets. Describe your feelings witnessing the fight between Mercutio, Tybalt and Romeo. How did the clash of swords and overall fight choreography add to the tension and sense of tragedy? Have you ever been part of a fight, either as a spectator or a participant? What emotions were part of the experience? What are Tybalt and Romeo really fighting for? Is physical violence ever justified? Why? What does it take to stop a fight? What are the consequences? Why was Romeo unsuccessful in diffusing the rage of Tybalt and quieting Mercutio? Is it naive to believe that people of different backgrounds and/or belief systems can get along? Why? Does society need some kind of pecking order? What is the pecking order in your school or neighborhood? Who has the most status and most power? How is that status and power achieved and maintained? In *Romeo and Juliet*, both families seem to carry equal weight so what are they fighting for? What is the difference between strength and power?
19. How does the intensity of the fight change when Mercutio is stabbed? Why does Mercutio curse both houses? Why did Romeo kill Tybalt? What does it feel like to act on impulse? Is violence/rage an instinctive or a learned behavior? Explain. What is the difference between murder and accidental death? Does the intent of an action change your perception or understanding of the end result? How? Are you more forgiving of an action, however wrong, if you love the person committing the act? Why? What, if any, actions are simply unforgivable? What do the deaths of Mercutio and Tybalt set in motion?

20. Why is Romeo “*fortune’s fool*”? What other choice did Romeo have besides defending his family’s honor and revenging the death of his friend? In what way is revenge honorable? Can you recall a moment when an ideal — your belief in something better and good — was destroyed? What does it take to hold onto the good?

21. Upon learning of the death of Tybalt, Lady Capulet begs for justice:

I beg for justice, which thou prince, must give;  
Romeo slew Tybalt, Romeo must not live.

Define justice. When senseless violence turns tragic, where is justice found? How does healing begin and forgiveness happen when the injury on both sides is so great? What needs to take place in order for reconciliation to occur? Can you think of a moment or an event in your own life in which two factions were joined in spite of, or perhaps because of, a tragic event? Why must a tragic event take place before people understand the consequence of their actions? Do the deaths of Mercutio and Tybalt and the banishment of Romeo do anything to rectify the rift between the two families? Why not?

22. Upon learning of Tybalt’s death, Juliet’s immediate reaction is one of betrayal. She questions Romeo’s character:

O serpent heart, hid a flowering face!  
Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?  
Beautiful tyrant! Fiend angelical!  
Dove-feather’d raven! Wolvish –ravens lamb!  
Was ever a book containing such vile matter  
So fairly bound? O that deceit should dwell  
In such a gorgeous palace!

What does it feel like to be fooled by someone’s outward appearance? How do you reconcile contrasting feelings – hating the actions of one you love but still loving the person? How do you reestablish trust once it has been eroded and doubt sets in? How does deep and abiding love set the stage for forgiveness? Where do you draw the line? What, in your view, is unforgivable? How is Juliet able to move past the shock of Tybalt’s death and rediscover her faith in and renew her allegiance to Romeo? Juliet’s grief over Romeo’s banishment is profound. She states:

Tybalt is dead, and Romeo – banished;  
That “banished,” that one word “banished,”  
Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts, ...  
“Romeo is banished.” To speak that word,  
Is father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet,  
All slain, all dead. “Romeo is banished!”  
There is no end, no limit, no measure bound,  
In that word’s death, no words can that woe sound.

In what way does Juliet’s reaction seem extreme, or selfish? In what way is her reaction different than Romeo’s? How does death and loss change their relationship? In what way does love offer salvation? What do you hold onto in the darkest of times?

22. Even in their desperate hour, Romeo and Juliet are able to be together for one blissful night. What were your thoughts regarding this scene? What does it feel like to say goodbye to someone you love? How do you make time stand still? In what way do you think the actors adequately portrayed the myriad of emotions that were stirring in both Romeo and Juliet? Which is harder, to leave or to be left behind? Explain.

23. It has been said that “time heals all wounds”, and yet, in *Romeo and Juliet*, all of the events happen within a short span of time. In what way does the rapid pace of the action contribute to the tragic consequences of the play? Why does Lady Capulet reverse her decision regarding Paris’ suit and push Juliet into an immediate marriage? She is beside herself when Juliet rails against her seemingly impossible proposal and threatens to disown her. Why do you believe her reaction is so intense? Have you ever disobeyed your parents? Why? What were the consequences? How do you remove judgment and disappointment from the parent/child relationship? What is your duty to your parents? What is your duty to your ‘self’?
24. Do you ever feel that your parents are over protective? What do you think is the motivating factor? What do you imagine it feels like for them when your need/desire for independence and experience outgrows their ability to shield and protect you? What happens when you and your parents don’t see eye to eye, or no longer share the same values and beliefs? Don’t parents have the right to impose their rules and make their children adhere to their standards? Explain your answer. In what way is rebelling against authority and pushing against parental rules a rite of passage?
25. Juliet is faced with seemingly impossible choices – defiling her marriage vows and turning her back against Romeo or disobeying her mother and marrying Paris. What does it feel like to be backed into a corner? Who do you turn to when you are not able to see a way out? Why doesn’t Juliet tell the truth about her marriage to Romeo? Do you believe that a confession would have altered the tragic circumstances for the young lovers? How? What makes truth telling so difficult? Have you ever been caught between the weight of a hard truth and the agony of maintaining a cover? What does it feel like to be stuck in the middle? What was your perception of Friar Laurence’s plan? Do you think Juliet was courageous in drinking the potion and faking her death? Why? After a series of misfortunate events, the plans go awry and Romeo finds himself at the tomb of his beloved Juliet. He takes poison and ends his life. Upon discovering Romeo dead, Juliet takes her life. What is your reaction to this double suicide? What dies with Romeo and Juliet? In your darkest moments, how do you find the will to move forward? How can you help others see hope and recognize possibility?
26. As with many Shakespearean tragedies at the end of the play, the carnage of lives lost is overwhelming. In your estimation who are the real victims? What — if anything — has been transformed by the love of Romeo and Juliet? What — if anything — has been gained by the tragic deaths of Mercutio, Tybalt, Paris, Romeo and Juliet? In the current production, the director chose to cut the final scene and delete the families’ reaction to the death of their children. Shakespeare has both Capulet and Montague erecting monuments to honor the lives of the young lovers and the Friar paying the price for his deceit, but the current production ends with the death of Juliet and the assessment of the Prince:

A gloomy peace this morning with it brings:  
 The sun for sorrow, will not show his head;  
 Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things,  
 Some shall be pardon’d, and some punished;  
 For never was there a story of more woe  
 Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

How does this simple change alter the audience’s reaction to the tragedy? What were you left with at the end of the production? What lessons can be learned from the tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*?

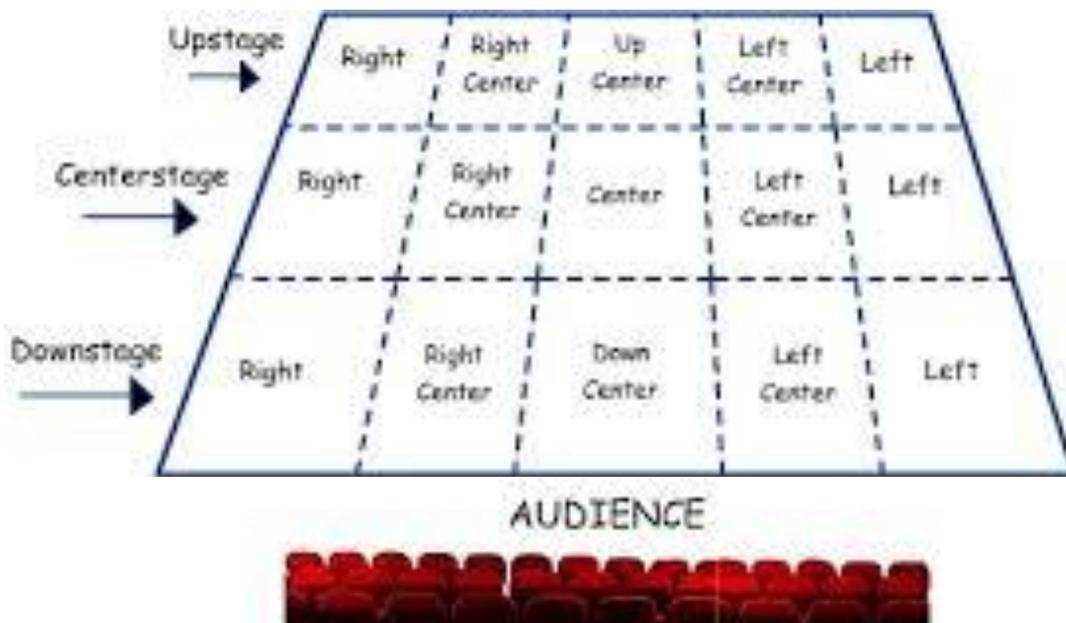
# A BRIEF GLOSSARY OF THEATER TERMS

<b>Apron</b>	The part of the stage in front of the curtain
<b>Auditorium or House</b>	Where the audience sits
<b>Beam Spread</b>	The area a single light covers
<b>Blackout</b>	Turning off all the lights in the theatre at once
<b>Board</b>	The control center for lights, sound, or both
<b>Book (The)</b>	A copy of the script containing all notes and blocking
<b>Box Office</b>	Where the audience buys tickets
<b>Box Set</b>	A set in a proscenium with three walls
<b>Call</b>	The time certain members of the production need to be at the theatre
<b>Cheat</b>	When an actor takes a realistic action and modifies it for the audience to see
<b>Cloth</b>	Scenery painted on fabric
<b>Cue</b>	A line or action that immediately leads to another action by the actor (for them to speak) designer or stage manager (to change the lights or sound)
<b>Curtain Call</b>	The bows at the end of the show
<b>Dimmer</b>	Equipment that controls the brightness of a light
<b>Director</b>	The creative head of a production. They create a vision for the show and work with actors, designers, and crew to bring that vision to life
<b>Flat</b>	A frame covered with canvas, cardboard, or some other light material which is then painted as part of the set
<b>Floodlight</b>	A light that has a wide unfocused beam covering most of the stage
<b>Fly</b>	A system used to raise set backgrounds, set pieces, or potentially actors
<b>Follow-spot</b>	A spotlight that can follow an actor as they move across around the stage
<b>Footlights</b>	Floodlights on the floor at the front of the stage.
<b>Gel</b>	A piece of plastic placed over the light to change its color
<b>Greenroom</b>	A room where the company can relax, eat, or potentially watch the show if a TV and a camera has been rigged
<b>Notes</b>	The director's notes on the performance or rehearsal
<b>Pit</b>	An area between the stage and the audience where an orchestra can sit (typically below audience level)
<b>Producer</b>	The person responsible for all logistical and financial aspects of a production (as opposed to the creative head, the director).
<b>Properties or Props</b>	Items used by actors in a show (such as swords, plates, watches, etc.)
<b>Proscenium</b>	A type of stage defined by a proscenium arch. Proscenium theatres typically distinctly separate the audience and stage by a window (defined by the

proscenium arch). The stage typically will not go far past the proscenium arch (the Ohio Theatre, for example).

- Raked Stage** A stage that is angled (upstage is the top of the hill and downstage the bottom) so that the audience can see the action more clearly
- Set** The scenery used in a scene or throughout the play
- Set Dressing** Parts of the set that don't serve a practical function but make the set look realistic.
- Spotlight** A type of light that is focused so that it can light a very specific area
- Strike** Taking apart and removing a set from the theatre
- Thrust** A stage that goes beyond the proscenium arch so that the audience is sitting on three sides of the set - in front, and on either side (the Hanna Theatre, for example).
- Tracks** The rails on which curtains (tabs) run.
- Trap** A hole in the stage covered by a door where actors or set pieces can exit or enter
- Understudy** An actor who learns all of the lines and blocking of another actor (typically one of the actors in a lead role) who can perform in case the main actor cannot go on
- Upstage** The rear of the stage
- Wings** The sides of the stage typically blocked off by curtains where actors and crew can stand and wait for their cues

## STAGE DIRECTIONS



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# LEARNING STANDARDS

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## CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.A

Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

## CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

## CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.7

Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)

## CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

## CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

## CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

## CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5.A

Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

## CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

## CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

## CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.1.A

Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested.

## CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

## CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5.A

Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.

## CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5.B

Analyze nuances in the meaning of words

## CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

## CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

## CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

## CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6

Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).



**GREAT  
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2022-2023 Season

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# ABOUT GREAT LAKES THEATER



**Charles Fee, Producing Artistic Director**

The mission of Great Lakes Theater, through its main stage productions and its education programs, is to bring the pleasure, power and relevance of classic theater to the widest possible audience.

Since the company's inception in 1962, programming has been rooted in Shakespeare, but the company's commitment to great plays spans the breadth of all cultures, forms of theater and time periods including the 20th century, and provides for the occasional mounting of new works that complement the classical repertoire.

Classic theater holds the capacity to illuminate truth and enduring values, celebrate and challenge human nature and actions, revel in eloquent language, preserve the traditions of diverse cultures and generate communal spirit. On its mainstage and through its education program, the company seeks to create visceral, immediate experiences for participants, asserting theater's historic role as a vehicle for advancing the common good, and helping people make the most joyful and meaningful connections between classic plays and their own lives. This Cleveland theater company wishes to share such vibrant experiences with people across all age groups, creeds, racial and ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds.

The company's commitment to classic theater is magnified in the educational programs (for both adults and students) that surround its productions. Great Lakes Theater has a strong presence in area schools, bringing students to the theater for matinee performances and sending specially trained actor-teachers to the schools for weeklong residencies developed to explore classic drama from a theatrical point of view. GLT is equally dedicated to enhancing the theater experience for adult audiences. To this end, GLT regularly serves as the catalyst for community events and programs in the arts and humanities that illuminate the plays on its stage.

Great Lakes Theater is one of only a handful of American theaters that have stayed the course as a classic theater. As GLT celebrates over a decade in its permanent home at the Hanna Theatre, the company reaffirms its belief in the power of partnership, its determination to make this community a better place in which to live, and its commitment to ensure the legacy of classic theater in Cleveland.

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[greatlakes theater.org](http://greatlakes theater.org)