

Time and Fate in Romeo and Juliet

Romeo and Juliet, said to be one of the most famous love stories of all times, is a play anchored on time and fate. Some actions are believed to occur by chance or by destiny. The timing of each action influences the outcome of the play. While some events are of less significance, some are crucial to the development of this tragedy. The substantial events that inspire the conclusion of Romeo and Juliet are; the Capulet ball, the quarrel experienced by Tybalt and Romeo, and Friar John's plague.

A servant to Capulet, who is incapable of reading the list of guests, asks for Romeo's assistance. Romeo notices that Rosaline, his lover, is among these names. Benvolio challenges Romeo to compare her with other "beauties." Benvolio predicts, "Compare her face with some that I shall show,/ And I will make thee think thy swan a crow." (I, ii, l 86-87) To show his appreciation, the servant asks for Romeo's presence at the ball. Romeo should have considered the servant's warning; if Romeo occupies the name of Montague, he shall not be permitted. Once at the ball, Romeo is searching for a maiden to substitute the unrequited love of Rosaline. Romeo happens to gaze upon Juliet, who charms Romeo. Romeo proclaims, "Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight!/ For ne'er saw true beauty till this night." (I, v, l 52-53) Since Romeo declares his love for Juliet, she feels the attraction also. They believe that they are in love and must marry. However, it is a genuine coincidence that Romeo and Juliet were at the same place, at the same time.

Some days after the ball, Benvolio and Mercutio are conversing, in regard to the quarrelsome weather. Benvolio declares, "The day is hot, the Capulets abroad,/ And if we meet we shall not 'scape a brawl,/ For now these hot days is the mad blood stirring." (III, i, l 2-4) At this point, Tybalt, who has challenged Romeo because of his appearance at the masquerade, enters, seeking Romeo. On Romeo's behalf, Mercutio struggles with Tybalt, while Romeo, who is filled with love for his new cousin, tries to end their boldness. Before escaping, Tybalt plunges his sword into Mercutio, causing death to fall upon him. Mercutio blames Romeo and the feud for his fate. Romeo kills Tybalt, who taunts Romeo, upon his return. Romeo fears he will be condemned to death if he does not flee before the arrival of the Prince. Benvolio recalls the events that have happened, with some embellishment. The Prince declares: And for that offence/ Immediately we do exile him hence./ I have an in your hate's proceeding,/ My blood for your rude brawls doth lie a-bleeding;/ But I'll amerce you with so strong a fine/ That you shall repent the loss of mine./ I will be deaf to pleading and excuses;/ Nor tears nor prayers shall purchase out abuses;/ Therefore use none. Let Romeo hence in haste,/ Else, when he's found, that hour is his last./ Bear hence this body and attend our will./ Mercy but murders, pardoning those that kill. (III, i, l 185-195)

Due to the disturbance of Verona's street and the losses of Tybalt and Mercutio, the Prince must penalize Romeo. However, the Prince agrees that Romeo was acting in self defense.

Juliet, who desires not to wed Paris, asks for Friar Laurence's assistance. The day before the wedding, Juliet is to drink the poison, which will make her appear to be dead. In forty two hours she shall awake, with Romeo by her side. Romeo will then bring her to Mantua with him. In the meantime Friar Laurence will convey a message to Romeo in Mantua, telling him the plot. When she gains consciousness, Romeo and Friar Laurence will be there. Friar Laurence says, "Shall Romeo by my

letters know our drift,/ And hither shall he come; and he and I/ Will watch thy waking" (IV, i, l 114-116) Following Juliet's intake of the poison, Romeo is anticipating news from Verona. Balthasar, a servant to Romeo, tells Romeo that Juliet has passed on. Romeo, who is told there are no letters from the friar, seeks a way to accomplish his suicide. Meanwhile, Friar Laurence, confronts Friar John, who was to deliver the letter to Romeo. Friar John informs Friar Laurence that he was seeking another Franciscan, who was visiting the sick, to accompany him to Mantua. He says, "Suspecting that we both were in a house/ Where the infectious pestilence did reingn,/ Seal'd up the doors, and would not let us forth;/" (V, ii, l 9-11) Friar John tells that he could find no one to deliver the letter, for fear they may catch the infection.

The substantial events that inspire the conclusion of Romeo and Juliet are; the Capulet ball, the quarrel experienced by Tybalt and Romeo, and Friar John's plague. The Capulet ball influences the ending of the play by Romeo's invitation at the ball, which creates the meeting of Romeo and Juliet. The ball also gives birth to Tybalt's anger and causes his challenge. The challenge causes the banishment of Romeo, which produces much grieving by Juliet and Romeo. Also, the quarrelsome weather is partly to blame for the feuding between Tybalt and Mercutio. Since Friar John did not deliver the letter, Romeo thinks that Juliet is dead, sacrifices himself. Juliet seeing that Romeo is dead, slays herself also.