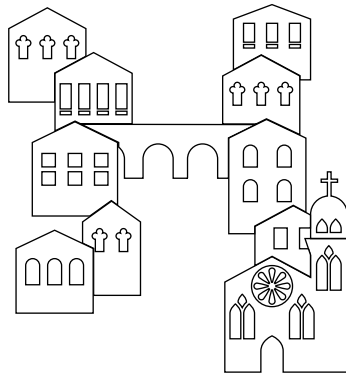
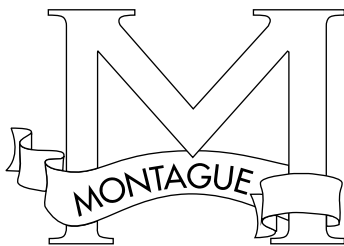


ROMEO AND JULIET CHARACTER CHART

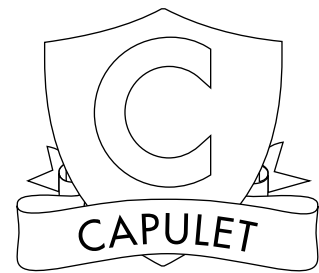


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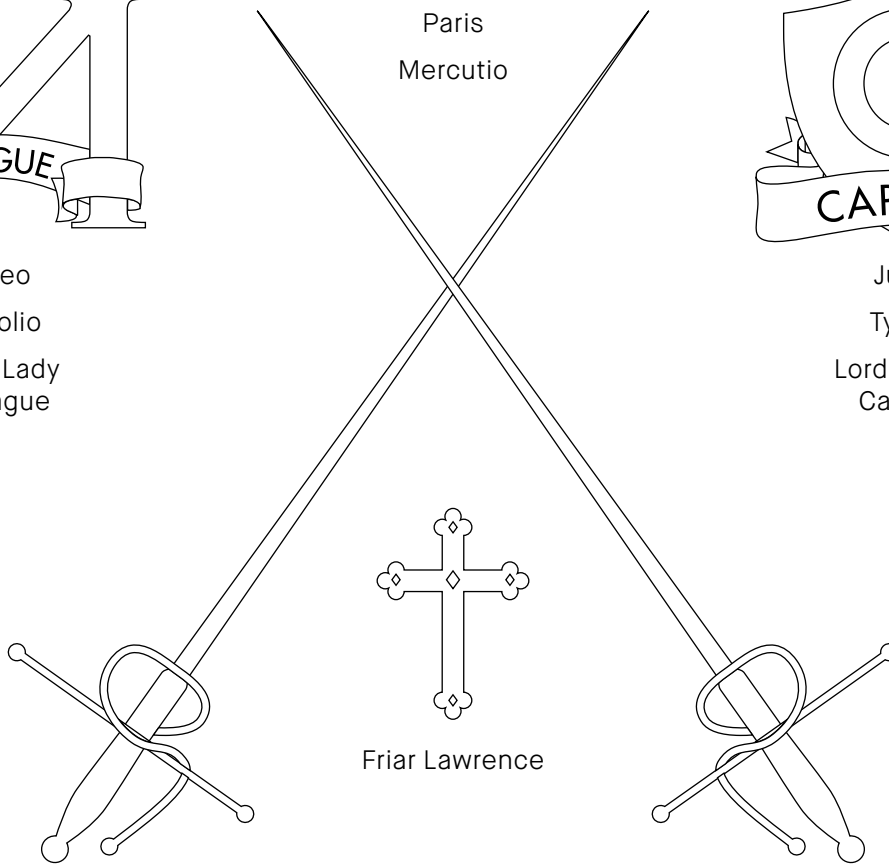
Prince
Paris
Mercutio



Romeo
Benvolio
Lord & Lady
Montague



Juliet
Tybalt
Lord & Lady
Capulet



Friar Lawrence

SERVANTS

Balthasar
Abraham

Nurse
Peter
Sampson
Gregory

ROMEO *"Teach me how I should forget to think"* Act 1 Scene 1

Romeo is the only son of Lord and Lady Montague. Today, the name 'Romeo' is synonymous with love and lovers. In the play, Romeo's passion drives him to kill himself when he believes that his love, Juliet, is dead. It is the overwhelming power of Romeo's love that clouds his character, making him far more complex than his peers. His intensity of emotion is reflected in his extreme actions throughout the play. Love compels him to creep into the Capulet garden to see Juliet, anger compels him to fight and to kill, and despair compels him to suicide.

Romeo is a lover of women and a lover of poetry. His love is by no means a simple or straightforward matter. At the beginning of the play, Romeo pines for Rosaline, *'Out of her favour where I am in love'* (Act 1 Scene 1). He proclaims her beauty, *'O, she is rich in beauty ...'* (Act 1 Scene 1). He explains her lack of interest in him *'She is too fair, too wise, wisely too fair/ To merit bliss by making me despair'* (Act 1 Scene 2). He then continues, in his outburst on love, to proclaim the extremities of his emotion. Here, on his first appearance, pre-empting the later events of the play, *'Do I live dead, that I live to tell it now.'* (Act 1 Scene 1)

Romeo's love for Rosaline disappears in the instant he sees Juliet. Romeo's passion for poetry is reflected in his language in Act 1 Scene 1. Yet his manner of speech here could suggest his emotion is somewhat put on or artificial. Considering Shakespeare's use of metaphor and imagery, this language denotes Romeo's all-encompassing emotion. Perhaps initially he is a self-indulgent and inexperienced teenager but after first kissing Juliet, she tells him *'you kiss by th' book'*, (Act 1 Scene 5). His love for Juliet develops beyond the crush felt for Rosaline. Juliet's clarity of observation challenges Romeo beyond his superficial love to result in an intense passion. This is revealed through the development of his language later in the play.

JULIET *"A rose by any other name would smell as sweet"* Act 2 Scene 2

Juliet is the only daughter of Lord and Lady Capulet. She is nearly fourteen when she is told by her mother that girls of her age must marry, as Lady Capulet did. Capulet has agreed that Paris should woo Juliet, and Juliet tells her mother that she will try to love Paris.

Unlike Romeo, Juliet has no friends of her own age. She is isolated and entrapped in the world of the Capulets. In the few days between meeting Romeo and her death, Juliet is transformed from child to woman. Juliet is able to criticise Romeo's actions and decisions, while being profoundly in love with him. She keeps her wits about her and does not blindly follow Romeo after he kills Tybalt. She demonstrates immense courage, strength and willpower in her choices and actions. Juliet releases herself from her Capulet entrapment by following the Friar's plan, which will reunite her with Romeo in the tomb. Waking to find Romeo's dead body, Juliet chooses the path of suicide, not out of loss and weakness but out of intense love for Romeo.

FRIAR LAWRENCE *"Wisely and slow; they stumble that run fast."* Act 2 Scene 4

Friar Lawrence is the main religious figure in the play and a friend and mentor to Romeo. He shows compassion in his willingness to assist the young lovers, in marrying them and assisting with their escape. This act may seem careless but it is the most political maneuver in the play and born from seemingly honourable intentions. The Friar's mystical knowledge in the sleeping potion plan is unusual for a religious figure and the reason for this diversity in his character is unclear. In the final scene, Friar Lawrence explains everything to the bereft parents, admitting his own part in the tragic story.

MERCUTIO *"Prick love for pricking and you beat love down"* Act 1 Scene 4

Mercutio is Romeo's quick-witted friend and a relation of Prince Escalus. He first appears in the play with Romeo in Act 1, Scene 4 where he mocks his lovelorn friend. Mercutio jokes frequently but is by no means a light character, as the complexity of his language, however crude, is socially perceptive and functions on many levels. He cares deeply for Romeo and constantly tries to free him from the bounds of romantic love. Mercutio's death at the hands of Tybalt enrages a formerly peaceful Romeo. Mercutio dies cursing the feuding families.

TYBALT *"What, drawn and talk of peace? I hate the word
As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee"* Act 1 Scene 1

Tybalt is Juliet's cousin and the beloved nephew of the Capulet household. He is known as a quick, adept and avid fighter who possesses a hot temper and never lets go of a grudge. Tybalt's skills are acknowledged by Mercutio in Act 2 Scene 4. From Tybalt's own lines we know he is ready and willing to fight: *'Turn thee, Benvolio, look upon thy death'*. (Act 1 Scene 1) He despises the Montagues, and his comments reflect a blind hatred, giving the audience no insight into the origin of the Capulet – Montague feud. He seems to care little for authority and struggles at the Capulet party when he is reprimanded by Juliet's father. He kills Mercutio in a street brawl and is, in turn, killed by Romeo. His death is mourned heavily by Juliet's Nurse.

CAPULET *"Hang! Beg! Starve! Die in the streets!"* Act 3 Scene 5

Capulet is Juliet's father and the head of the household. He has long been feuding with Montague (Romeo's father) but there is no suggestion in Shakespeare's script as to the grounds for the feud. The Prince states it was *'Born of an airy word'* (Act 1 Scene 1). We can see that Capulet commands respect when he reprimands Tybalt: *"I'll make you quiet!"* His temper is on display both with Tybalt and later with Juliet, when she refuses to marry Paris. He appears to truly love his daughter but believes he knows what is best for her. At the end of the play, having realised the extent of his loss, he is remorseful and makes his peace with Montague, *"O brother Montague, give me thy hand"* (Act 5 Scene 3). We see more of the Capulet parents than the Montague parents during the course of the play.

LADY CAPULET

Lady Capulet is Capulet's wife and Juliet's sometimes distant mother. She reveals that she married at an even younger age than Juliet's current age: *'By my count, / I was your mother much upon these years / That you are now a maid'* (Act 1 Scene 3). Lady Capulet leaves the mothering and child-rearing to the Nurse and tends to coax Juliet through social expectation and obligation. We see at many points throughout the play that her relationship with her husband is somewhat strained.

THE NURSE

The Nurse is employed by the Capulet family to be Juliet's caretaker but as she has reared her since birth she is also her friend and confidant. She is the person closest to Juliet and is the only member of the household complicit in her relationship with Romeo

BENVOLIO

Benvolio is Montague's nephew and Romeo's cousin and friend. The name Benvolio derives from the Latin root meaning benevolent, good and charitable. He is a thoughtful character who tries to defuse violent scenes in public places: *'I drew to part them'* (Act 1 Scene 1). However, Mercutio accuses Benvolio of having a nasty temper when in private.

PRINCE ESCALUS

As the Prince of Verona he holds the position of political power and is therefore concerned with maintaining the public peace at all costs. He appears in Act 1 Scene 1 where he proclaims, *'Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,'* (Act 1 Scene 1) speaking against those who have begun the fight in the street. He banishes Romeo for killing Tybalt and then is seen again at the end of the play, delivering the final line: *'For never was a story of more woe / Than this of Juliet and her Romeo'*. (Act 5 Scene 3)

PARIS

He is the man Capulet would like Juliet to marry and is fittingly a kinsman to the Prince. Paris becomes quite presumptuous in his manner after Capulet has promised Juliet will marry him. He refers to Capulet as father: *'My father Capulet will have it so'* (Act 4 Scene 1) and greets Juliet as *'my lady and my wife!'* (Act 4 Scene 1) He is killed by Romeo outside the Capulet family tomb.

ABRAHAM AND GREGORY

They are two servants, Gregory a Capulet and Samson a Montague. They start a fight at the beginning of the play, revealing the rivalry between the two households