

Tybalt Capulet

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Love, Moderately

Romeo and Juliet is the most famous love story of all time. The major tragedies that have occurred throughout the play have been due to either extreme feeling of passion and romance or because of strong feelings of realism. Shakespeare's characters display how when one is trying to find the way to be successful in a relationship it cannot be all romance or all realism, or else it will end in pain, suffering, disappointment and regret. In Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare uses Romeo as a clear example to show that his romantic views of the world have caused him so much pain; in order to function properly within a relationship one must have a balance of romance and realism.

Romeo is a very romantic character. One can just tell by the way he speaks of Rosaline and how he attempts to win her heart. He also describes Juliet as a "rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear" which is just a romantic way of describing her beauty in the darkness of his life (I.v.43). Romeo places a lot of emphasis on dreams; while speaking with Mercutio he reveals that he "dreamt a dream [last] night" and even though it foreshadows pain and unfortunate events, he still has complete trust in a higher power "that hath the steerage of [his] course" (I.iv.52, I.iv.114). Romeo's beliefs in fate and romance eventually lead him to an avoidable and unnecessary death. His strong, impulsive reactions cause many problems for himself and others.

Mercutio is the complete opposite of Romeo. He does not believe in anything according to dreams, fate, or romance in any way. Mercutio's attitude towards love is that if "love [is]

rough with [someone, then he or she] be rough with love,” so he never has dealt with any emotional pain (I.iv.28). He refers to dreams as “the children of an idle brain,” meaning that he feels dreams are inaccurate almost to the point of stupidity (I.iv.99). Mercutio despises dreams almost as much as he does fake people, such as Tybalt with his “’pardon me’s” and entitled attitude (I.iv.35). Mercutio’s harsh personality and hatred towards Tybalt ended his life. If Mercutio were a little more compassionate then these events could have been avoided. He also created so much stress in the relationship between himself and Romeo. He does not trust Romeo’s actions and makes fun of him. This causes conflict and, ultimately, Mercutio’s death.

Juliet had the perfect balance of romance and realism until her extreme passion took over her emotions for Romeo. Juliet is extremely cautious when she first meets Romeo; she is worried that their new love is “too rash, too unadvised, [and] too sudden,” and she is not sure of the outcome (II.ii.118). She can be very realistic at times, but in others she is romantic. When Romeo insists on leaving so that he would not get caught in Verona, Juliet tries to make him think that “it was the nightingale, and not the lark” that is singing so that he can still say with her (III.v.2). Juliet starts making rash decisions when she allows her emotions to take over her logical thinking. She cannot think straight and goes to great extents so that she can be faithful to Romeo. She loses track of reality “and with [a] knife” she threatens to kill herself (IV.i.55). Juliet’s death was due to reckless and emotional action that spiraled completely out of her control. Juliet does absolutely everything she can to escape the reality of her and Romeo’s relationship; had she dealt with her marriage in a different way, her husband’s death could have been avoided.

Romance is important, but if someone relies on it to support all of their relationships it will only end in disappointment and painful reality. A realistic point of view is also a good

thing; but, when one becomes obsessed, it can only lead to hurting others and oneself. Even reacting too quickly and on impulse causes damage. Shakespeare wanted those who experienced his play to leave with the understanding that balance is the key to happiness in any relationship.