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English 1 Honors

May 17, 2021

### Romeo and Juliet Blame Essay

*Romeo and Juliet*, a famous classic play written by William Shakespeare, is about two star-crossed lovers and their tragic deaths, most arguably caused by the vendetta between the two families and miscommunication. However, who is to blame for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet? Who can take responsibility for their deaths? Romeo and Juliet's death results from a series of events caused by every character in the play; however, the majority of the blame rests on fate and Friar Lawrence.

Fate plays a significant role when it comes to the death of Romeo and Juliet. In the prologue, Shakespeare states that "A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life, / Whose misadventured piteous overthrows / Doth with their death bury their parents' strife." (Prologue.6-8). Shakespeare emphasizes that their relationship will end tragically and will not work out because of the family feud. Coincidentally, the letter to Romeo explaining the situation got delayed, the reasoning being: "Nor get a messenger to bring it thee / So fearful were they of infection." (5.2.16-17). Before Romeo's death, Romeo utters, "They drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die. [Dies]" (5.3.120), and moments later, Friar Lawrence appears and says "Saint France, by my speed! How of tonight." (5.3.121). Their deaths would have never happened if Friar Lawrence arrived a moment earlier. The series of events is too coincidental to be random; it had

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been decided by fate. Therefore, fate has played a significant role in Romeo and Juliet's death and should be blamed.

Friar Lawrence is also to blame for Romeo and Juliet's deaths. Friar Lawrence was the one that created this solution: "Thou hast the strength of will to slay thyself / Then it is likely thou wilt undertake / A thing like death to chide away this shame / That copes with death himself to' scape from it / An if thou darest, I'll give thee remedy." (4.1.72-76). Friar Lawrence makes this decision very rashly and implies that he has a solution to the problem when in reality, it can end tragically. Friar Lawrence needs to be responsible for suggesting this solution to Juliet, as she was influenced during this unstable stage of their life. After Juliet agrees to the plan, Friar Lawrence says, "Let not the Nurse lie with thee in thee chamber / Take thou this vial, being then in bed / And this distillèd liquor drink thou off." (4.1.94-97). Friar Lawrence explicitly tells Juliet; if the Nurse knew about the plan, she could have alerted Romeo and prevented events leading to the tragedy from happening. Finally, Friar Lawrence is responsible for ensuring that the letter arrives, "In this resolve, I'll send a friar with speed \ To Mantua with my letters to the lord." (4.1.123-124). Friar Lawrence is responsible for ensuring that this vital letter goes to Romeo, so when it does not arrive on time, Romeo killed himself. Friar Lawrence could have implemented other methods to guarantee that Romeo would receive the message.

Admittedly, some would argue that Romeo is to blame. Romeo slays Tybalt to avenge Mercutio, "The citizens are up, and Tybalt is slain / Stand not amazed. The Prince will doom thee death. If thou art take. Hence, be gone, away!" (3.1.131-133). Tybalt's death is primarily because of fate, as the two families constantly quarreled, which led to the beginning of the vendetta.

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Romeo is still responsible for Tybalt's death, but most of the responsibility still lies in fate.

Another situation where Romeo is to blame is when he poisons himself after seeing Juliet on the tomb, "They drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die. [Dies]" (5.3.120). However, Romeo's death was caused by Friar Lawrence as he did properly communicate the plan to Romeo; therefore, the majority of the blame still rests on Friar Lawrence and fate.

In conclusion, fate and Friar Lawrence can be blamed for Romeo and Juliet's death. Fate has a significant role in the tragedy; from the prologue, Shakespeare emphasizes that the relationship would not work out because of the family feud. Fate is shown again when Romeo's letter is delayed because of a plague outbreak at one of the towns. Finally, Friar Lawrence arrives right after Romeo commits suicide. The series of events is too coincidental for the blame not to rest on fate. Friar Lawrence is also responsible for the lover's deaths. He introduces this plan of his very rashly and implies that it is a solution to their problem. Then, Friar Lawrence makes the mistake of telling Juliet not to tell the Nurse. Finally, his message was delayed, and he could have put effort into guaranteeing that the message would be delivered. Therefore, the majority of the blame rests on fate and Friar Lawrence.