

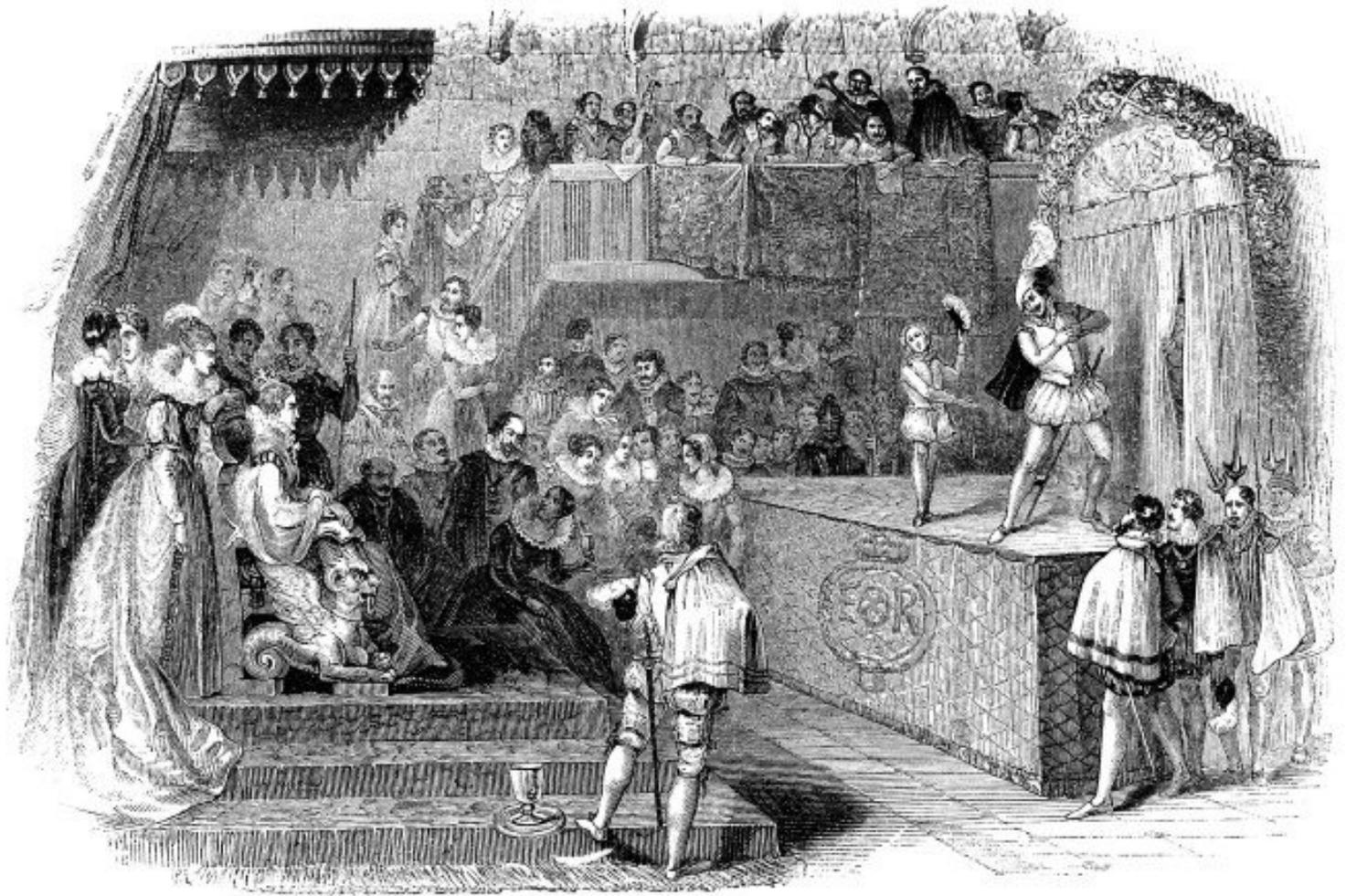


SANTA CRUZ
SHAKESPEARE
EDUCATION PROGRAM

Introduction to *Romeo and Juliet*

Below you will find a stage history of *Romeo and Juliet*; a 20-second monologue to recite while washing your hands; some introductory resources; a dramaturgy packet; a section that explores the story; a timeline of the play's action; and a streaming option for *Romeo and Juliet*.

We encourage you to share these resources with your colleagues, and if you would like to share your work or any of your students' work on this platform, we would love to engage with you! Send questions or comments to education@santacruzshakespeare.org.



Stage History

Ever wonder how *Romeo and Juliet* was first staged by Shakespeare? The Royal Shakespeare Company states, "As the title page of the play's 1597 edition tells us, *Romeo and Juliet* was a popular success in its day: '...it hath been often (with great applause) plaid publicly'. Shakespeare designed it to be played in daylight on the simple thrust stage of an Elizabethan playhouse..." Shakespeare was the dramatist for [The Lord Chamberlain's Men](#), the acting troupe that performed *Romeo and Juliet* in its time. To read more about the history of *Romeo and Juliet* on stage, click [HERE](#).

20 Seconds Of Shakespeare To Recite While Washing Your Hands

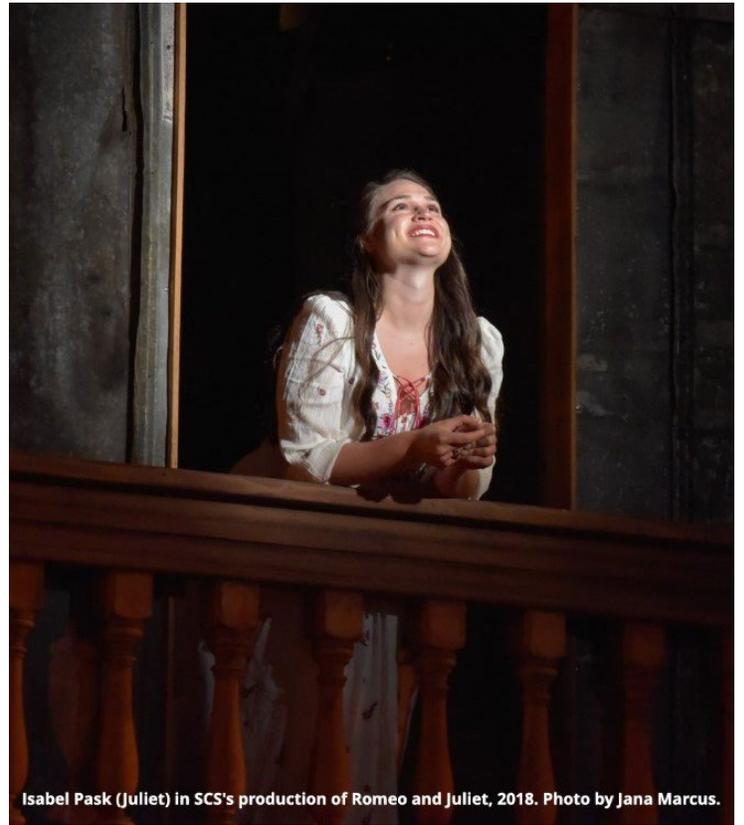
O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!

Juliet

ACT II SCENE II

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare



Isabel Pask (Juliet) in SCS's production of *Romeo and Juliet*, 2018. Photo by Jana Marcus.

Intro To *Romeo and Juliet*

We recommend The Folger Shakespeare Library edition of *Romeo and Juliet* for your students to read. You can also listen to a free audio recording of *Romeo and Juliet* at shakespeare.folger.edu. If you'd like to watch the play performed, see the streaming option listed below in the section "Stream *Romeo and Juliet* at Home".

Before the Play Begins...

The Montague and Capulet families have been in conflict for years.
Their feud has divided the city of Verona; violence erupts
in the streets, with no resolution in sight.

[Prologue Video Link](#)

Dramaturg's Notes

Dr. Ariane Helou wrote our dramaturgical notes when Santa Cruz Shakespeare produced *Romeo and Juliet* in 2018. After reading her dramaturgical introduction below, take a deep dive into her resource packet for more background information on Shakespeare's influences, and the play's timeline, locations, and characters. Resource Link: [Romeo and Juliet Dramaturgy from Dr. Ariane Helou](#)

DRAMATURG'S NOTES >> ARIANE HELOU

A young nobleman of Verona falls in love and secretly promises to marry his beloved against the objections of their parents. We saw this intrigue last season in the comedy *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*; in *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare reimagines the premise as a tragedy.

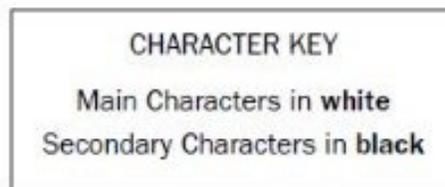
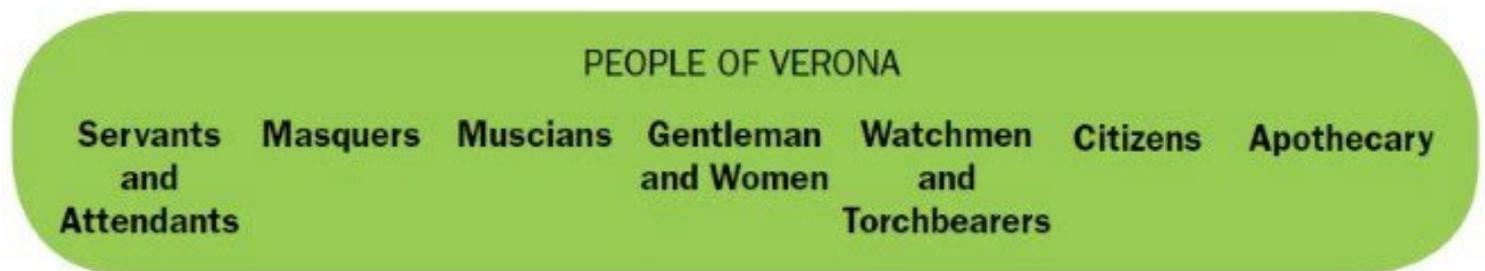
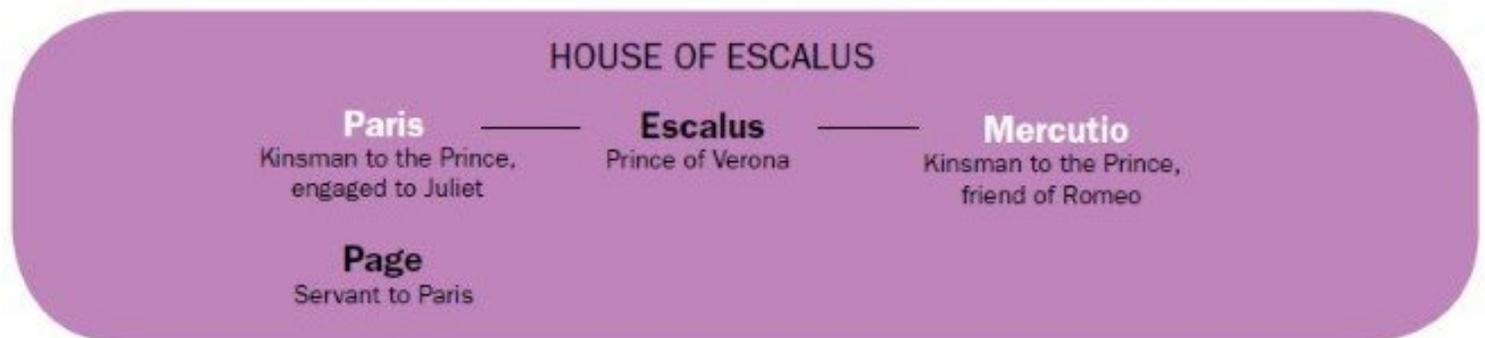
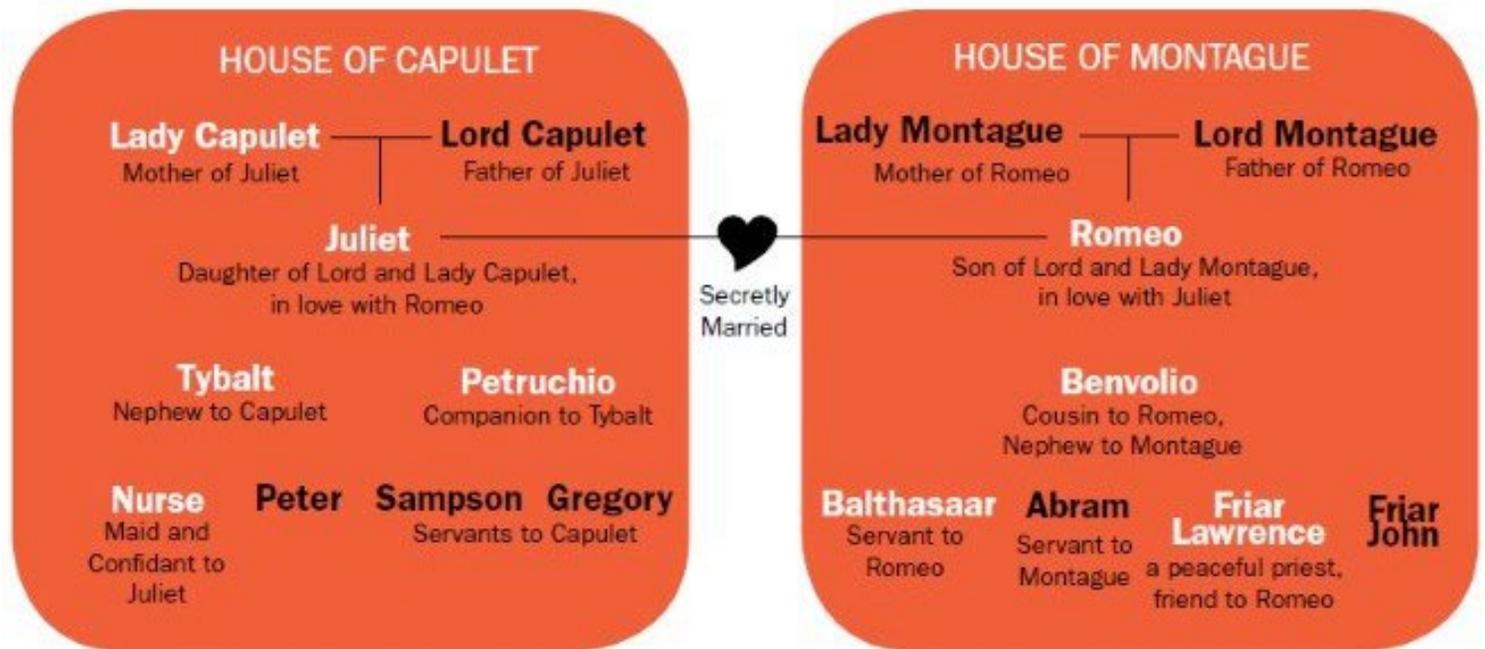
The first printed edition of *Romeo and Juliet* (1597) introduces itself as "An Excellent conceited Tragedie...As it hath been often (with great applause) plaid publicquely." This is hardly false advertising: the play has been a hit with audiences since its debut. A second quarto edition, substantially fuller, followed in 1599 and is the basis for the version most widely read and performed today.

There are many reasons for *Romeo and Juliet's* immense and lasting popularity. The plot centers on a rapid romance between young people rebelling against parental authority; the action is propelled by dance, music, and several fight sequences. These are woven together by Shakespeare's rich poetry and inventive prose, which takes flight in sonnets, in Juliet's soaring imagination, and in the comedic arias of Mercutio and the Nurse.

Romeo and Juliet has a reputation as a great love story. But what does "love" mean in this play? Familial love resonates in the relationships between children and their parents or surrogate parents (Friar Lawrence, the Nurse), and between cousins (Juliet and Tybalt, Romeo and Benvolio). Love manifests itself in the loyal, potent friendship of Romeo and Mercutio. Love moves swiftly as Romeo avows his passion for Juliet moments after he has been sighing for the unseen Rosaline. Juliet pursues Romeo to satisfy her own desires, but also to resist surrendering to her parents' designs. (It is perhaps no accident that Juliet's name derives etymologically from Julius, as in Caesar; she is ambitious to shape her own destiny.) Romeo and Juliet are in love with each other, but they are also in love with love, heady and headlong.

Love's twin—hate—also propels the drama. The mutual passion of Romeo and Juliet explodes against the background of a violent feud that disrupts the peace of an entire city. *Romeo and Juliet* is also a story of a civic body in distress on the verge of self-destruction. If the deaths of the young lovers do "bury their parents' strife," they entomb along with it the lives and hopes of a generation of Veronese youth.

Romeo and Juliet Character Map





Exploring The Story

"They meet on Sunday night and they're dead by Wednesday evening/Thursday morning..."

Shakespeare's Globe director, Michael Oakley, couldn't believe the time frame of *Romeo and Juliet* as he was directing the play for the Globe's 2019 season. Studying the timeline of this play is critical to the understanding of characters' actions and behaviors as time seems to constantly be running out causing the characters to make rushed decisions. Take a look at the links below as resources for your students to explore *Romeo and Juliet* through its timeline of events and character actions.

Interactive Timeline: [Romeo and Juliet Timeline](#)

Lesson Link: [Exploring The Story](#)

Video Link: [How does time affect the story?](#)

Stream *Romeo and Juliet* At Home

Though it is always important to read Shakespeare's text, his plays were really meant to be performed on stage. Below you'll find a link to stream for free: *Romeo and Juliet* performed at the Stratford Festival in Canada.

Stratford Festival On Film *Romeo and Juliet*: [VIDEO LINK](#)



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