

EXAMPLE SHORT CAUSES ESSAY

Prompt: Several individuals' actions contributed to the tragic deaths of Romeo and Juliet. Write a Short Informative Theme specifying who caused Romeo and Juliet's deaths, besides Romeo and Juliet themselves. Include at least five paragraphs as well as three quotations from the play. Also include a reference list and in-text citations; use the MLA style.

TITLE OF PAPER: Who's the Culprit?

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Who's the Culprit?

The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare (1992) is a classic play in which the main characters, Romeo and Juliet, fall in love. The play takes place during Elizabethan times in Verona, Italy. Romeo and Juliet are the children of two families, the Montagues and Capulets, who are feuding with each other. The feud is violent; any time a member of one of the families dies in a fight with a member from the other family, his relatives seek revenge. Unfortunately, this scenario leads to the tragic deaths of Romeo and Juliet. Four characters woven throughout this scenario create the circumstances which cause Romeo and Juliet's tragic deaths: Juliet's mother and father, Tybalt, and Friar Lawrence.

At the root of the circumstances leading up to the tragic deaths are Juliet's parents, Lord and Lady Capulet. To begin the plot, Lady Capulet tells Juliet that a suitor named Paris has presented himself as a potential husband for Juliet. In Act 1, she praises Paris's attractiveness by saying, "Read o'er Paris's face and find delight writ there with beauty's pen" (Act 1, Scene 3, Lines 87 & 88). She tries to persuade Juliet to marry Paris, but Juliet has never seen or met him. Juliet agrees to get to know Paris at a party at the Capulet's home. Later, after Juliet meets and falls in love with Romeo (not Paris) at the party and when Romeo visits her in the garden below her balcony, Juliet warns Romeo about her family, "If they do see thee, they will murder thee" (Act 2, Scene 2, Line 75). In other words, she knows that her parents' hatred of the Montagues

will result in harm to Romeo and possibly his death. This causes her to hide her relationship with Romeo from her parents.

Another character who adds to the deadly circumstances surrounding Romeo and Juliet is Tybalt, the nephew of Lady Capulet; his hatred, volatile temper, and murderous actions lead to separation between Romeo and Juliet. As a member of the extended family, Tybalt considers himself a protector of the family. He indicates in Act 1 that he hates peace and he especially hates Romeo's family by stating to Benvolio Montague (Romeo's cousin), "What, drawn and talk of peace? I hate the word as I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee" (Act 1, Scene 1, Line 71). Later, when Tybalt notices the masked Romeo at the Capulet party, he is incensed that Romeo would attend the party disguised and uninvited. He indicates that he wants to kill Romeo by stating, "By my stock and honor of my kin, to strike him dead I hold it not a sin" (Act 1, Scene 5, 66-67). Still later in the play, Tybalt duels with Mercutio, Romeo's close friend. When Tybalt stabs Mercutio, Romeo engages Tybalt in a duel and kills him. As a result, Romeo is banished from Verona, and he can no longer see his beloved Juliet.

The final character whose actions lead to Romeo and Juliet's deaths is Friar Lawrence, the clergyman who serves Verona. Because Romeo wants to marry Juliet as soon as possible, he asks Friar Lawrence to marry them with this plea, "We met, we wooed, and made exchange of vow. I'll tell thee as we pass, but this I pray, that thou consent to marry us today" (Act 2, Scene 3, Lines 66-68). Friar Lawrence agrees because he hopes that the marriage will end the feud. He conducts a secret marriage ceremony for them. He also arranges for Romeo to stay secretly with Juliet during the final night before Romeo's banishment. Later in the play, after Juliet's mother insists that she marry Paris and sets a marriage date, Juliet enlists the friar's assistance. She entreats him, "Be not so long to speak. I long to die if what thou speak'st speak not of remedy"

(Act 4, Scene 1, Lines 67-68). Because of her threat to commit suicide, the friar gives her a potion that will make her appear to be dead. He agrees to take a letter to Romeo explaining that she is not really dead. Unfortunately, the friar is delayed, and he does not deliver the letter to Romeo. Romeo hears the news from a friend that Juliet is dead, and he visits her in the burial vault. After confirming that she is not breathing, he commits suicide by drinking poison. Juliet awakens to find Romeo dead, so she commits suicide with Romeo's dagger. Thus, the friar's bungled attempt to save their marriage resulted in tragedy.

To conclude, the deaths of Romeo and Juliet, although by their own hands, were also caused by the actions of several of the people in their lives. Juliet's parents, by insisting that she marry a man that she did not know or love and rejecting Romeo because he is a Montague, created a situation where Juliet would become secretive and resistant. The situation also pushed Romeo to arrange an immediate and secretive wedding. Tybalt, by threatening bodily harm on the Montagues and by inciting duels, made the situation even more dire, which resulted in Romeo being banished and distant from Juliet. Juliet became even more isolated and emotional and was willing to acquiesce to Friar Lawrence's plan. Friar Lawrence did not analyze the possible wrong turns that his plan might take, and he did not act prudently. As a result of all these people's emotionally based actions, two young people suffered needless pain and death.

Work Cited

Shakespeare, William. *Romeo and Juliet*. Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 1992.