

# Romeo and Juliet

By *Sarah Gudgeon*

## I Read

Romeo and Juliet is one of Shakespeare's most famous plays and certainly one of the world's best loved romantic tragedies. There have been numerous adaptations for the big screen and who could ever forget the lines 'Romeo, Romeo, where for art thou Romeo?' Crowds of tourists keen to experience their own moment of true love gather round Juliet's balcony in the heart of Verona and pose for photos with their **soulmate**, all the while hoping that their love story will have a happier ending; in fact it couldn't be any worse than what happened to poor Romeo and Juliet. But let's start from the beginning. Who were Romeo and Juliet?

Well, they were just two ordinary teenagers who fell in love but their love was **forbidden**. Why? Because Romeo was a Montague and Juliet a Capulet and these two families absolutely hated each other. Juliet's father organised a party to introduce his daughter to Paris, the man he wanted her to marry. Romeo was in love with a girl called Rosalind but when he **sneaked** into the party and saw Juliet there, he fell in love with her. They got married in secret the next day.

Things get complicated when there is a fight between some of the local boys and Romeo kills Juliet's cousin, Tybalt because he killed Mercutio, Romeo's close friend. Juliet's parents decide to **bring forward** her wedding to Paris but she is already married to Romeo. She can't tell her parents so she takes a sleeping potion so that everyone will think she is dead and the marriage will be cancelled. She then plans to run away with Romeo but when he sees her at the chapel he thinks she really is dead and kills himself. Juliet wakes up to find Romeo dead and immediately kills herself.

### **Glossary:**

soulmate = your perfect partner

forbidden = not allowed, against the rules

sneaked = entered unseen and without permission

bring forward = to change the date of an event so that it takes place sooner

## **2 Answer the questions**

- a. Why was the romance between Romeo and Juliet forbidden?
- b. Where did Romeo and Juliet meet?
- c. Who was Juliet supposed to marry?
- d. What happened to Tybalt?
- e. Why did Juliet take the sleeping potion?
- f. Why did Romeo kill himself?

**3 Write some modern day dialogue for Romeo and Juliet. Imagine the moment when they first meet at the party. What do they say to each other?**

**4 Act out the scene with a partner.**

# Teachers Notes

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## 2 Answer the questions

Before asking the students to answer the questions, elicit key information and an overall summary from the class

- a. Because they were from rival families, the Montagues and the Capulets.
- b. At the party that Juliet's father had organised to introduce her to Paris.
- c. Paris
- d. He was killed by Romeo after a fight between the local boys.
- e. So that everyone would think she was dead and she wouldn't have to marry Paris.
- f. Because he thought she really was dead.

## 3 Write some modern day dialogue for Romeo and Juliet

Ask your students what they say when they meet somebody new at a party, especially if it's a boy or girl that they like and then get them to write a dialogue between Romeo and Juliet. It could start something like this:

**Romeo:** Hey! I'm Romeo.

**Juliet:** Hi. Juliet.

**Romeo:** Great party!

**Juliet:** It's ok...

## 4 Act out the scene

The students can act out their dialogues together at their desks and then as you monitor pick some of the pairs who can come to the front to perform. This is a great opportunity for some work on sentence stress and intonation so focus on that.