

Romeo and Juliet Essay

By : jellaroo

Topic: The tragic end to Romeo and Juliet was the result of fate rather than their own actions.



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Topic: *The tragic end to Romeo and Juliet was the result of fate rather than their own actions.*

Many people would say the play is about two star-crossed lovers that, because of fate, will never be together. Others would disagree. There were many tiny actions that could have prevented their double suicide in the end – the letter being delivered, Juliet waking up slightly earlier, Romeo arriving thirty seconds later etc. – that make this story quite taunting to the reader, especially if read numerous times. If it were fate that controlled the outcome, then there would not have been so many opportunities to prevent the double suicide.

One such opportunity was the drinking of the potion by Juliet. If she had drunk the potion perhaps thirty seconds earlier, she would have woken up thirty seconds earlier and Romeo would have arrived after her awakening. However, this did not happen, and Juliet awoke too late for her love to see that she was actually alive, and not dead, as he had thought (act 5, scene 3).

If everything that happened in the play was due to fate, then everything that happened would have a reason, would it not? Well then, what is the reason for Mercutio's death? The feud was between the Capulets and the Montagues, and Mercutio was part of neither family. Mercutio had nothing to do with the feud, and yet he was murdered. His final words are particularly moving – "A plague o' both your houses" (act 3, scene 1) – as they are condemning both families (Capulet and Montague) because of the feud that ended his life. It was the actions of Tybalt that killed Mercutio, not fate.

There is no doubt that fate plays a huge role in the story of Romeo and Juliet; however, their death could have been avoided if certain people took control of their lives and chose their own actions, rather than believing that fate had set everything out and there was nothing they could do about it – an example of which is shown in act 3, scene 1, line 41 – "Can heaven be so envious?". Here, Juliet is wondering aloud whether fate really is so cruel as to kill her cousin, Tybalt. This is a perfect example of the characters believing that everything was down to fate.

At the beginning of the play, the prologue acts as the story teller, essentially telling the story not of Romeo and Juliet, but of their fate. With the words "From forth the fatal loins of these two foes/A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life", the prologue is saying that the ultimate fate of these two lovers from opposing families (Romeo and Juliet) will end with their death – as if this had already been laid out by fate. However, as was earlier stated, their eventual suicide could have been avoided by a few simple actions, many of which had opportunity to do so – Juliet could have taken the potion earlier, Romeo could have received the letter on time, Mercutio and Benvolio could have left the street (thus preventing their meeting with Tybalt, and then Mercutio's death, thereby removing Romeo of his motive to murder Tybalt (and he

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would not have been exiled to Mantua)). Many different things could have prevented their death, and there were many opportunities to do so. If the characters of the play had not believed that everything was due to fate, then their actions may have been different, and could possibly have prevented Romeo and Juliet's deaths. Therefore, fate *does* play a large role in the eventual double suicide, but a few simple actions could have prevented it, proving that one's actions play an even larger part.

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