

*Romeo and Juliet*  
Persuasive  
Writing  
Assignment

Mock Trial Debate



The wrongful death lawsuit  
of *Capulet vs Montague*

Two households,  
Capulet and Montague,  
both alike in dignity,  
**contest a lawsuit**  
in fair Verona,  
where we lay our scene.

# Opening Statements:

Good day, your honor and members of the jury. Today, the prosecution is going to present evidence to **prove the guilt of LORD MONTAGUE**. The prosecution will show that the defendant is responsible for bringing about the tragic deaths of Romeo and Juliet—a very serious crime. At the conclusion of the case, we will ask for a verdict of guilty.

# Opening Statements:

We ask that you **enter this guilty verdict** because:

- 1) **MOTIVE:** Due to a long-standing feud, Lord Montague had motive to cause grief and injury to the Capulet family.
- 2) **MEANS:** We argue that Lord Montague employed his son Romeo as an agent, his means to cause emotional injury to the Capulet family.
- 3) **OPPORTUNITY:** Lord Montague's agents attacked the family of Capulet in both public brawls and by unauthorized intrusion in a private Capulet family banquet.

Meanwhile, a little simultaneous Shakespeare-inspired court drama ensues....

*Hear ye, Hear ye*

*The complaint of*

**Lord Capulet vs Lord Montague**

in the matter of the

**Wrongful death**  
of *Juliet Capulet*

*Tried before the right honorable*

**PRINCE OF VERONA**





In Verona, the Prince sits in judgement.

## PRINCE

“Rebellious subjects, enemies to  
peace, Profaners of this  
neighbor-stained steel —  
... You men, you beasts,  
That **quench the fire of your  
pernicious rage**  
With purple fountains issuing  
from your veins...”

1.1.8 p13

The prince was weary of the long-standing bloody feud between the Montague and Capulet families.



# The Judge's statement

Heard you not my royal  
decree?

If ever you disturb our streets again,

Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.

1.1.95 p13

Therefore bring  
forth the case  
that the guilty  
may be punished!.



## The case against Romeo Montague

PROSECUTOR:

Your honor, I will be

PROSECUTING Lord Montague

for the actions of his agent, his  
late son Romeo, for the tragic  
death of Juliet Capulet.





## The case against Romeo Montague



### PROSECUTOR:

Though his family is high, the son is most low. These are the charges against young Romeo:

**He attempted to seduce a nun, Miss Rosaline.**

**He intruded in a private Capulet banquet without permission.**

**He seduced young Juliet, not yet 14 yrs old, without her parent's permission.**

**He bribed a poor apothecary to supply him lethal and illegal drugs.**

**By his sword, Tybalt and Paris were slain.**

We hold Lord Montague accountable for the actions of his son, who conspired to injure the Capulet family because of their long enmity.

# Prosecution Evidence:

**MOTIVE.** A long-standing feud existed between Lord Montague and Lord Capulet.

## PRINCE OF VERONA:

“**Throw your mistempered weapons to the ground**

And hear the words of your moved prince.

Three civil **brawls, bred of an airy word,**

By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,

Have thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets,

...Part your **cankered hate**

If ever you disturb our streets again

Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.”

(1.1.87 - 97 p13)



## The case against Romeo Montague

LADY CAPULET:

“Alas, my child is dead.  
And with my child, my joys  
are buried.” 4.5.64 p 199

“For blood of ours shed  
blood of Montague.”

3.1.148 p125

## Defense of Romeo Montague

DEFENSE:

Your Grace, I will be  
DEFENDING Lord Montague  
and his late son Romeo who  
are innocent of intent in the  
tragic death of Juliet  
Capulet. First, may I call  
Lord Montague to the stand.





My grace, Prince of Verona:  
Alas, my son Romeo and fair  
Juliet, daughter of Lord and  
Lady Capulet are dead. My own  
dear wife has died of grief. My  
son's dark mood was a mystery  
to me. I knew not the actions  
until it was too late. I did not  
send my son as an agent of  
injury against the Capulets. I am  
INNOCENT.



## Defense of Romeo Montague

DEFENSE:

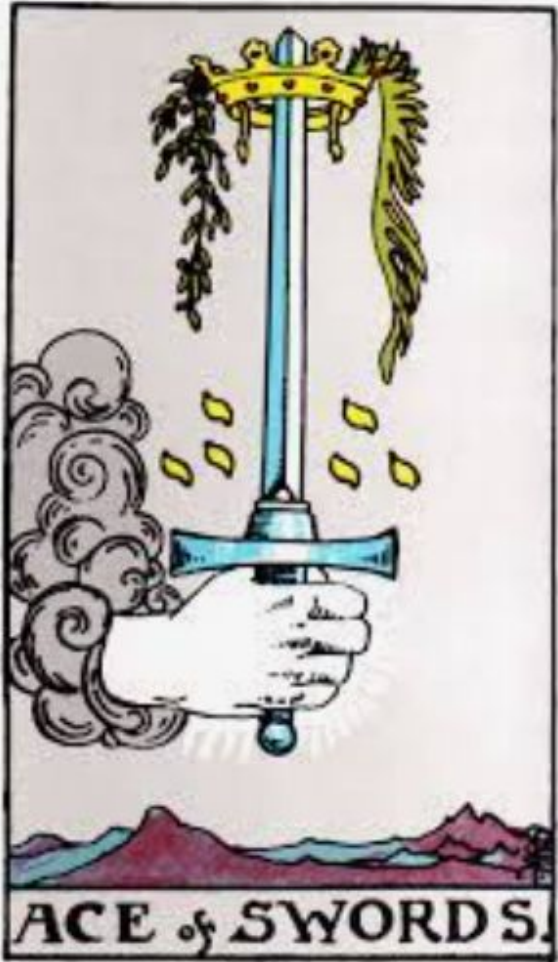
Your Grace, I call  
BENVOLIO, nephew of Lord  
Montague and cousin of  
Romeo to testify under oath.



## Defense of Romeo Montague

BENVOLIO:

I testify under oath that  
Romeo was love-sick and  
bore no grudge and had no  
strength to take up arms  
against the Capulets.



## Defense of Romeo Montague

### MONTAGUE

Many a morning hath (Romeo)  
there been seen,  
With tear augmenting the fresh  
morning's dew  
Adding clouds more clouds with  
his deep sighs

1.1.81 p15

**Romeo was love-sick and depressed.** He had no interest in fighting the Capulets.



✨ Unify Cosmos  
Four of Pentacles G...

Romeo was love-sick and depressed. His father wondered what was troubling his son.

## MONTAGUE

...the all-cheering sun  
Should in the farthest east begin to draw  
The shady curtains from Aurora's bed,  
Away from light steals home my heavy son  
And private in his chamber pens himself  
Shuts his windows, locks fair daylight out,  
**And makes himself an artificial night.**  
**Black and portentious must this humor prove**  
Unless good counsel may the cause remove.

p 17 1.1.140





## Defense of Romeo Montague

BENVOLIO:

It was Tybalt whose “unruly spleen (3.1.156 p125)” led to conflict. I heard him swear, “Peace, I hate the word, as I hate Hell, all Montagues and thee!”

1.1.70 p 11





Prosecution rebuttal: Benvolio is quarrelsome.

BENVOLIO:

“Why, thou wilt quarrel with a man that hath a hair more or a hair less in his beard than thou hast. Thou wilt quarrel with a man for cracking nuts, having no other reason but because thou has hazel eyes.” 3.1.15 p 113

# Defense Evidence:

**MOTIVE.** It was Tybalt, whose hateful motive and temper led to injury and death.

## TYBALT PUBLIC STATEMENTS

“Peace, I hate the word, as I hate Hell, all Montagues and thee!”

1.1.70 p 11

## BENVOLIO

“...fiery Tybalt with his sword prepared,  
Which, as he breathed defiance in my ears,  
He swung about his head and cut the winds  
Who, nothing hurt withal, hissed him in scorn,  
While we were interchanging thrusts and blows,  
Came more and more, and fought on part and part  
Till the Prince came, who parted either part.”

1.1.109 p 15

# Defense Evidence:

Montague defense: Friar Lawrence confessed responsibility

Friar Lawrence transgressed his holy office of trust. He engaged in deception and conspiracy, although with a good motive of peace in Verona by marriage of rival families. He confessed to the crime and submits to punishment.

## FRIAR LAWRENCE CONFESSED TO THE CRIME.

“I am the greatest, able to do least.

Yet most suspected, as the time and place  
Doth make against me, of this direful murder  
And here I stand, both to impeach and purge  
Myself condemned and myself excused.

(5.3.223-227 p 233)

# Defense Evidence:

Montague defense: Friar Lawrence confessed responsibility

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(5.3.223-227 p 233)

If aught in this

Miscarried by my fault, let me old life

Be sacrificed ...unto the rigor of severest law. (5.3.265-267 p235)



# Defense Evidence:

Montague defense: Lord Capulet and his illiterate servant were to blame

## OPPORTUNITY.

Romeo was able to attend the party because Lord Capulet's messenger delivered invitations to the wrong people because he was illiterate.

Lord Capulet allowed Romeo to be in his home, even though he was not invited, and said good things about him.

## Defense of Romeo Montague

DEFENSE:

Your Grace, Romeo was invited to the party by mistake because the Capulet messenger was illiterate! He couldn't read the names on the invitation!”



## Defense of Romeo Montague

### DEFENSE:

He would give the tailor's yard of cloth to the shoemaker, and the shoemaker's form to the tailor! He gave the fisherman a pencil , and fishing nets to the painter! This was the beginning of the confusion!"



## Defense of Romeo Montague

### Capulet messenger:

Find them out whose names are written here! It is written that the shoemaker should meddle with his yard and the tailor with his last, the fisher with his pencil, and the painter with his nets (1.2.38 p27)”



Edelwyn

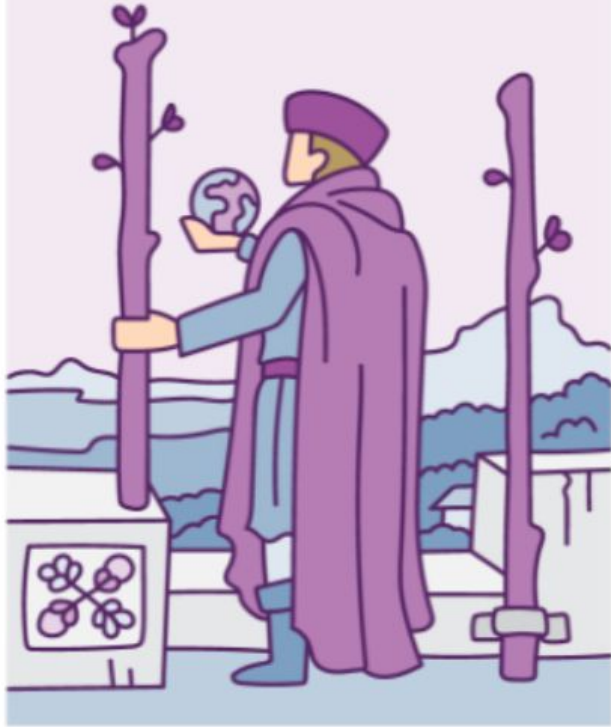
Two of Pentacles : L...

An illiterate servant delivered banquet invitations to the wrong people

## Defense of Romeo Montague

### FRIAR LAWRENCE:

Your Eminence, I have failed both man and God. My art in potions caused Juliet to appear dead. But my motives were to help two loves bring peace, joy, and love to our land through marriage between Montagues and Capulet. Romeo truly loved Juliet.



TWO OF WANDS



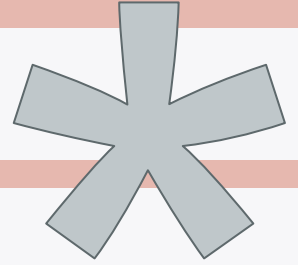
## Defense of Romeo Montague



FRIAR LAWRENCE:

“If aught in this  
Miscarried by my fault,  
Let my old life be  
sacrificed...  
Unto the rigor of severest  
law.”

# Friar Lawrence confesses



It is my error. I have sinned.

When I should be a minister of Truth, I was an agent of intrigue.

The Holy Book commands: Do not lie or engage in deception.

I sinned and broke my sacred oath.

I should not have been an accessory of “disobedience to parents.”

I have faith that Romeo & Juliet are in better place now.

It was my hope to bring peace and joy to Verona

through the love of Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet.



Defense of Romeo. Did not dishonor nun.

HEAD NUN

Rosalind was in my nunnery.

Romeo did no dishonorable thing  
against her. She was faithful to God and  
not even aware of Romeo's affections  
for her.

# Defense Counter Argument:

The prosecution would like you to believe that **LORD MONTAGUE** is culpable for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet because:

- a) A circumstantial history of dispute between the families.
- b) An unsubstantiated allegation that Romeo had an intention to harm the Capulet family.
- c) The unauthorized presence of Romeo at a private Capulet party.

# Defense Counter Argument:

We ask that you **enter the INNOCENT VERDICT** because:

- 1) **MOTIVE:** It was Tybalt that had hateful motive. Lord Montague was unaware of Romeo's relationship with Juliet. Lord Montague had no involvement.
- 2) **MEANS:** Friar Lawrence confessed to being blameworthy and had the medical means and access to the couple.
- 3) **OPPORTUNITY:** Romeo was able to attend the Capulet banquet because their illiterate messenger delivered invitations to the wrong people.



# Commentary:

Arguments in the case against Lord Montague analyzed his motive, means, and opportunity to conspire to harm the Capulet family.

- 1) **MOTIVE:** The prosecution had only circumstantial evidence of Lord Montague's motive. There was no direct evidence linking him to the deaths of his own son and Juliet. It was Tybalt that had an "unruly spleen" and hateful motive which was a matter of contemporary public record. Mercutio of the Montagues also had a head "full of quarrels." Lord Montague, however, was above the fray, and was unaware of Romeo's relationship with Juliet.
- 2) **MEANS:** Friar Lawrence confessed to being blameworthy and had the medical means and access to the couple. The confusion that he caused by faking Juliet's death led directly to the tragic death of the two young lovers.

# Commentary:

3) **OPPORTUNITY:** Romeo was able to attend the Capulet banquet because their illiterate messenger delivered invitations to the wrong people. Tybalt objected to Romeo's presence, but Lord Capulet knowingly allowed it.





# Prosecution Closing Argument:

Your honor and respected members of the jury. Today we have pleaded our case on behalf of honorable **LORD MONTAGUE** and asked you to return a verdict of **GUILTY**. We asked for this verdict because:

**MOTIVE:** By the honorable Prince's own words, the "cankered hate" of Lord Montague for Lord Capulet was well known.

**MEANS:** Romeo, scoundrel, playboy, brawler, drug-user, murderer and conspirer was the instrument the Lord Montague used to injure the family of Lord Capulet.

**OPPORTUNITY:** Romeo advanced his ill deeds with secret rendez-vous with Ms. Capulet, but was fatally caught in his own web of intrigue. His father, his guardian is ultimately responsible for the tragic outcome.

## ACCUSATIONS

Romeo is a scoundrel.

He attempted to seduce a nun  
and secretly married innocent young girl  
under 14 years of age (4.1.16).

He acted as the agent of his father's enmity.







## DEFENSE: Romeo's good reputation

CAPULET: (allowing Romeo to intrude in his house and repeating good things he had heard about Romeo's reputation)

“...to say truth, Verona brags of him (Romeo)  
To be a virtuous and well governed youth.

I would not for the wealth of all this town  
Here in my house do him disparagement.”

TYBALT

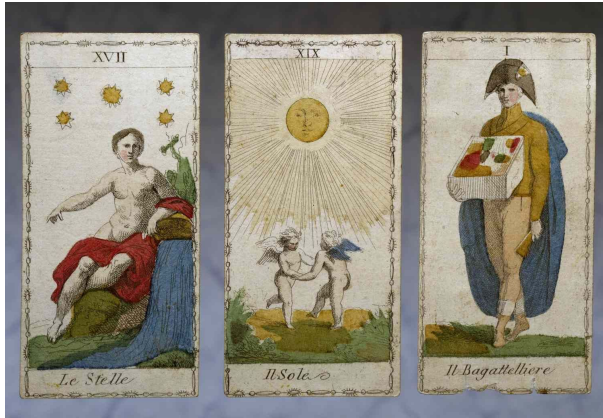
....such a villain is a guest.

I'll not endure him. (1.5.68 p 55)

# Cups & daggers

Capulets & Montagues?

*Tarot cards are peculiarly reflective of some Shakespeare plots.*



The earliest references to tarot all date to the 1440s and 1450s and fall within the quadrilateral defined by the northern cities of Venice, Milan, Florence, and Urbino. Because of the complicated nature of the game by that point, it is likely that it had begun evolving earlier in the century. Apr 8, 2016



The Metropolitan Museum of Art

<https://www.metmuseum.org> › blogs › in-season › tarot





The Shakespeare Oracle: using Tarot cards to teach Shakespeare. Indian Express Journal



# Defense Closing Argument:

We ask that you **enter the INNOCENT VERDICT** because:

- 1) **MOTIVE:** It was Tybalt that had hateful motive. Lord Montague was unaware of Romeo's relationship with Juliet, and was trying to discover why his son was depressed.
- 2) **MEANS:** Friar Lawrence, believed to be a holy man, confessed to being blameworthy and had the medical means and access to the couple.
- 3) **OPPORTUNITY:** Romeo was able to attend the Capulet banquet because their illiterate messenger delivered invitations to the wrong people.

# Defense Closing Argument:

Your honor and respected members of the jury. Today we have pleaded our case on behalf of honorable **LORD MONTAGUE** and asked you to return a verdict of **INNOCENT**. We asked for this verdict because:

**MOTIVE:** Lord Montague was innocent of any harmful action against Lord Capulet and his family. Tybalt had the strongest and publicly stated motive to fight.

**MEANS:** Lord Montague had no hand in the tragedy. Friar Lawrence confessed to the crime.

**OPPORTUNITY:** The fault for Romeo's presence at the Capulet ball, where Fate brought Romeo and Juliet together is Lord Capulet. Lord Montague was not involved.

Thank you for your time. We look forward to seeing justice served.



## INTERMISSION



All take a recess while the Prince, judge, and jury make their deliberations.

## William Shakespeare



Two households, both alike in dignity  
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene  
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny  
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.  
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes  
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life  
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows  
Do with their death bury their parents' strife.

AZ QUOTES

INTERMISSION

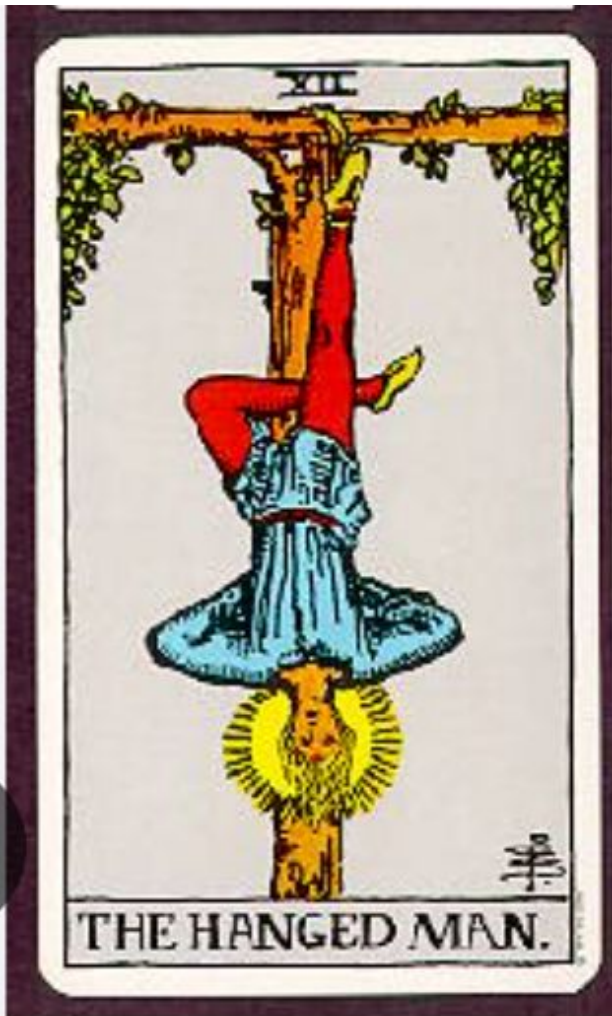




## INTERMISSION

"I am fortune's fool"

- Romeo  
Act III, Scene I



## INTERMISSION

Romeo and Juliet:

Would the lovers spend **Eternity** together in **Heaven** for their beautiful romance and commitment, or be bound together in **Hell** for their alleged sins of disobedience, deceit, murder, and suicide?



## The Immortal Love Poetry of Romeo for Juliet

**Oh speak again, bright angel,** for thou art  
As glorious to this night, being o'er my head  
As a winged messenger of heaven. (2.2.26)

**What light through yonder window breaks?  
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.**

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,  
Who is already sick and pale with grief  
That thou her maid art more fair than she. (2.2.2)

**The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars  
As daylight doth a lamp;** her eyes in heaven  
Would through the airy region stream so bright  
That birds would sing and think it was not night. (2.2.19)

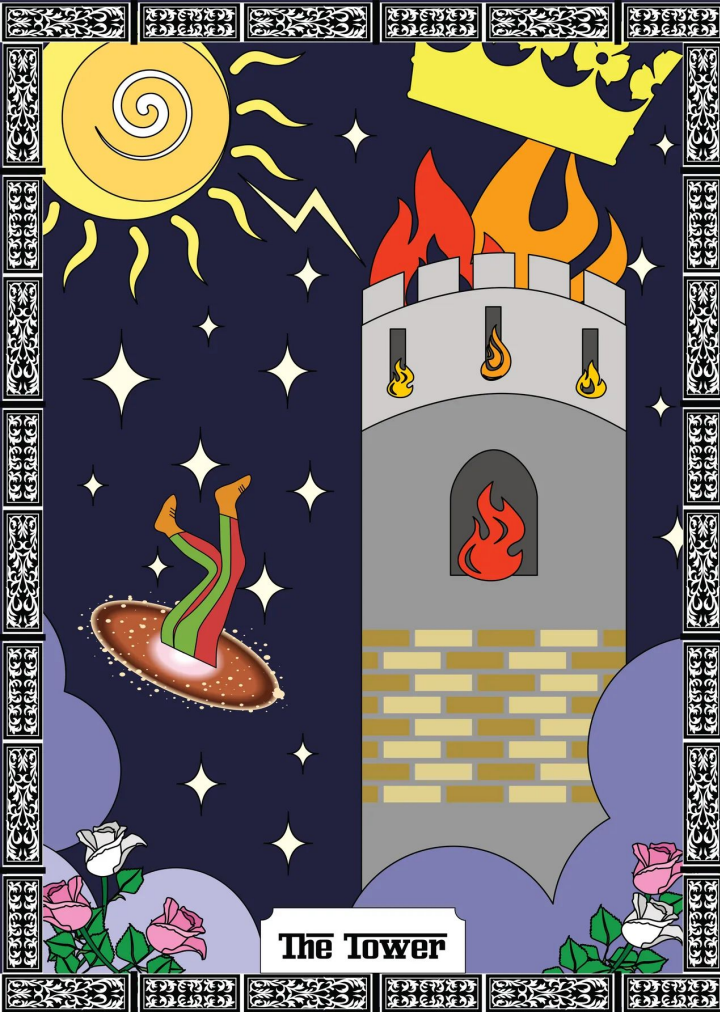


## The Immortal Love Poetry of Juliet for Romeo

Come, gentle night, come loving, black-browed night,  
Give me my Romeo, and when I shall die  
Take him and cut him out in little stars,  
And he will make the face of heaven so fine  
That all the world will be in love with night  
And pay no worship to the garish sun.

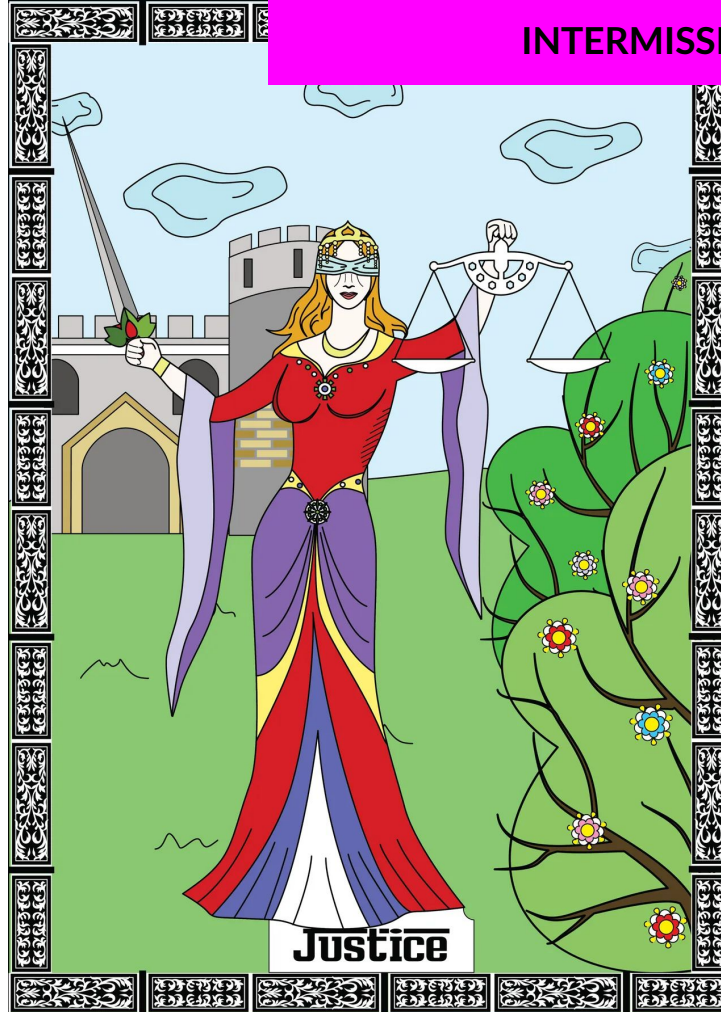
- Juliet  
3.2.20-25 p 129





The Tower

INTERMISSION



Justice

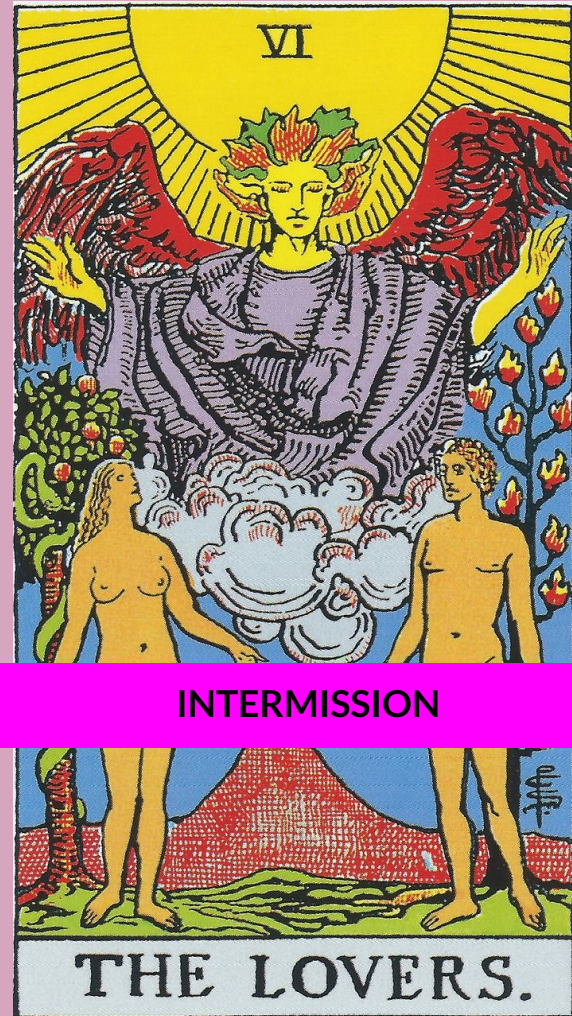
## Love Poetry of Romeo and Juliet

O brawling love, O loving hate  
O anything of nothing first create  
O heavy lightness, serious vanity  
Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms,  
Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire  
Sick health,  
Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!  
This love feel I

(1.1.176)

Love is a smoke made  
with the fume of sighs;

(1.1.190)



INTERMISSION



## Defense of Romeo Montague

DEFENSE:

“I call the great BARD  
Himself, creator of this story  
to the witness stand!”



The BARD takes the stand to defend all.

## None are guilty

It is I, the Bard  
Who has woven this Tale of Love and Strife,  
Of Conspiracy, Confusion, and loss of life.  
Fate, Fortune, and Folly  
Celebration and mourning.  
Each played a role.

By Death  
Two achieve Love Immortal.  
One dies by coin and cup  
Another by the dagger  
A fool wove the net  
and dug The Pit.  
All who strayed too close  
Fell in.





If they had obeyed their parents  
They would live,  
But it would not be Art.

“Bard,” said the Prince,  
Frowning sternly,  
“It is thou who art guilty.

**You are hereby banished from fair Verona.**  
Be gone and trouble us no more  
Until thy pen conceives a happier outcome.”

Bard: “As you like it.”

Exeunt.



## The Judge's decision

### PRINCE

“Then, Oh pernicious bard  
All are innocent.  
This misery is your fault.  
I pronounce you guilty.

I banish you,  
O bard Shakespeare,  
from fair Verona until your pen  
produces happier outcomes.”

The prince is weary of the long-standing bloody feud between the Montague and Capulet families.



## Defense of the BARD

(Lightning and Thunder shake  
the court)

DEFENSE:

“The Three Fates will speak in  
defense of the Bard.”





**We Three Fates have decreed: All are innocent.  
TRUE LOVE TRUMPS DEATH and gains IMMORTALITY!**



The background of the image consists of a dense array of vertical blue curtains. The lighting is dramatic, with some areas appearing brighter and others in deep shadow, creating a textured, three-dimensional effect. The overall color palette is monochromatic, dominated by various shades of blue.

The End





## Romeo & Juliet

In Shakespeare's time, only men could be actors.



The Dueling Montagues and Capulets

DRAMA





# Conclusion:

In the story of Romeo & Juliet, there is a perfect storm of misfortune. As a sequence of human events, it could be analyzed for abundant errors, crimes, and legal liability. As Art, it gives an immortal example of the beauty of love. As an illustration of how the braids of Fate can twist and unfold, it is a fascination. Ultimately, no one needs to be punished; all the dead rise when the curtain falls, and every time the book is read. The characters, the Author, and Fate are without blame because it all gives insight to the mind and serves the great purposes of Art.