

Edexcel English Literature GCSE

Romeo and Juliet: Character Profile Minor Characters

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Paris

Juliet's family expect her to marry Paris in order to gain status and wealth.

In the first act, Paris asks Lord Capulet if he can be her husband and the father of her children, but Lord Capulet tells him to wait until Juliet is older.

However, later in the play, when Lord Capulet wants Juliet to marry Paris, she refuses and ends up getting beaten by her father. Paris sees her body as she is 'laid to rest' - he claims he still loves her. In the end, he dies in a duel with Romeo, and Paris is dragged to lay to rest beside Juliet's body.

Paris is a figure who demonstrates the power a woman's father and partner has over her in the Elizabethan era. If a member of the aristocracy, the father's role is to find a wealthy suitor for his daughter, and Paris is this suitor. He is also a powerful complication in the pair's relationship.



Lord & Lady Montague

Whilst they are minor characters in the play, these two do a lot to produce conflict between the Capulets, their rival family in Verona. It is revealed at the end of the play that Lady Montague dies out of grief for her dead son: **"grief of my own son's exile hath stop'd her breath"**. Lord Montague is also shown to be a very caring father - **"Could we but learn from whence his sorrows grow"**. This juxtaposes the Capulets' attitude towards their daughter, who are more distanced and neglectful.

Benvolio

He is Lord and Lady Montague's cousin, and therefore Romeo's cousin. He and Romeo are incredibly close, and he serves as a very loyal character; throughout the play he is trying to diffuse conflict. For example, in the first scene of the play, he says: **"I do but keep the peace: put up thy sword // or manage it to part these men with me"**. This shows that he doesn't like to participate in the tension between the two families. He is also critical of fighting later in the play, when in act three he says: **"An I were so apt to quarrel as thou art, any man // should**



buy the fee-simple of my life for an hour and a quarter", comparing his lack of participation in conflict to Romeo. He speaks with possession regarding Romeo - "Romeo! My cousin Romeo!" - which shows he's proud of his cousin.

Tybalt

He is Juliet's cousin, who engages in the physical conflict between the two families. He seems to enjoy fighting, and this comes to destroy him in the end as he dies during a physical altercation with Mercutio, a Montague. He kills Mercutio, and Romeo kills him in revenge. At this point, it is revealed that Tybalt is Juliet's first cousin - Lady Capulet cries "***Tybalt, my cousin, O my brother's child!***".

Tybalt hates the Montagues intensely - he exclaims in the first scene "***What, drawn, and talk of peace! I hate the word, // As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee***". This is his main role in the play - to provoke conflict which moves the narrative of the play onwards. He specifically hates Romeo - stating in the third act: "***Romeo, the hate I bear thee can afford // No better term than this,—thou art a villain.***"

