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Romeo and Juliet Fate Example

Romeo and Juliet: Choice or chance

“God gave us free will, and we may choose to exercise it in ways that end up hurting other people”-Francis Collins. Romeo and Juliet is a tragic play written by Shakespeare, that follows the lives of two star-crossed lovers. Romeo and Juliet is set in Verona, Italy, where there is an ongoing feud between the Capulets and Montagues. Romeo is the son of Lord Montague, and he happens to fall deeply in love with Juliet, the daughter of Lord Capulet. Even though their love is pure, their families were never going to accept them. Along with this, Romeo kills a Capulet and is banished for life, causing Juliet to pursue a dangerous plan to be with Romeo. However, miscommunication causes both, Romeo and Juliet to take their own lives. It is not fate, but rather the imprudent and fraught actions that bring about the demise of Romeo and Juliet.

In the play, Juliet suffers through many tragic and unfortunate events, and they are caused by her own choices. Juliet wakes from the potion induced sleep and sees Romeo dead next to her. Not wanting to live without him, Juliet says, “Yea, noise? Then I’ll be brief. O happy dagger! [Snatches Romeo’s dagger.] This is thy sheath; there rust,

and let me die. [She stabs herself and falls.]”(5.3.169-170). This, however, could have been prevented, for it was Juliet’s choice to end her life. Fate is something that happens beyond one’s control, by a supernatural power. Juliet’s death is caused by her own free will, not by a supernatural cause. Furthermore, Romeo’s choices too, initiate the tragic events in the play. For example, Romeo is in the city of Mantua, when Balthasar brings the news of Juliet’s death. Romeo, who is devastated, goes to Juliet’s tomb and says, “Here’s to my love! [drinks the poison] o true apothecary, Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die”(5.3.119-120). Thinking Juliet is dead, Romeo drinks the poison. It was Romeo’s own choice to drink the poison to be with Juliet in the afterlife. Nobody told Romeo to take his own life. He made the decision to end his life. This proves that the events of Shakespeare’s play are based upon free will because both Romeo and Juliet allowed themselves to take drastic measures to be with each other.

Moreover, Juliet acts according to her own mind, despite her belief in fate. Juliet knows that a relationship with Romeo is not the wisest choice even though she loves him. Once Romeo possesses his love for Juliet, she replies “Although I joy in thee, I have no joy of this contract tonight. It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden. Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be Ere can say “it Lightens”(2.2.116-120). Juliet realizes that she is rushing into the relationship. Not only is the relationship with Romeo a bad choice because they have just met, but it is complicated more by the family feud. Knowing this, Juliet continues to see Romeo and ends up marrying him, willingly. A further example of personal choice would be when Romeo kills Tybalt for revenge. “Now, Tybalt, take the “villain” back again. That late thou gavest me, for Mercutio’s soul. Is but a little way above our heads, staying for thine to keep him company”(3.1.121-124). Romeo makes the impulsive decision to stab and kill Tybalt. Not once thinking about how this might affect him, his family, or even Juliet. Ultimately this results in Romeo getting banished from Verona. Due to this, Juliet follows a plan that eventually causes both of their deaths. This supports the claim that no greater force, such as fate, caused the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, but rather the rash decisions made by the characters.

Another possible interpretation of the events is fate. For instance, when Juliet awakens from the tomb, Friar Lawrence says, “ Lady, come from that nest of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep. A greater power than we can contradict Hath thwarted our intents” (5.3.151-154). Here Friar tells Juliet that a “greater power” or fate has

ruined the course of their plan because Romeo's death was already destined. However, the majority of the textual evidence points to the personal choices of characters. When Friar Lawrence walks in to see both Paris and Romeo lying soullessly on the ground, he says it is "Lamentable Chance" (5.3.151). He is stating that it was out of his control that the couple had passed away, yet Friar Lawrence was the one that caused this miscommunication, that leads to their deaths. He says that fate ruined their plan. When a matter of fact, Friar was the one that didn't try harder to get the message to Romeo. Friar simply doesn't take any liability whatsoever for his actions and rather chooses to blame fate.

In conclusion, the character's unwise and tense actions cause the downfall of Romeo and Juliet, making it a tragedy. Juliet chooses to continue a relationship with Romeo, Romeo kills Tybalt in revenge, and both lovers commit suicide. Some of the outcomes seem to be caused by fate, however ultimately someone's decision lead to that outcome. Through Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare is trying to convey that people should not blame fate for the actions they take and one should endure the consequences of their actions.