

Romeo and Juliet

William Shakespeare

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One of the most well-known works of literature, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* establishes the Montague and the Capulet families, who are sworn enemies and frequently have violent encounters. Romeo is the son and heir of Montague and Lady Montague, and Juliet is the daughter of Capulet and Lady Capulet, which should also make them enemies. However, the two meet at a party and fall in love almost immediately, which disrupts everyone's lives and angers both families. Romeo and Juliet, completely in love, agree to get married in the near future and hope that their marriage will stop the feud between the families. However, before the wedding can happen, a Capulet named Tybalt challenges Romeo to a duel, which Romeo denies. Montague knight and companion to Romeo Mercutio accepts the duel himself, and when he is shot and killed, Romeo kills Tybalt. Romeo is then exiled, which he tells Juliet. Juliet, knowing that her family would never want them to marry, takes a potion which will put her to sleep for 24 hours in order to convince her family she is dead, so she can then marry. However, Romeo is not told that she will wake up, and poisons himself in his grief. Once Juliet wakes up to see Romeo dead, she stabs herself. When the two families see both Romeo and Juliet dead, they agree to end their feud, so their peace comes not without sacrifice.

While this story and its ideas are old, the story of love lives on to this day, appearing in multiple modern adaptations. I would recommend reading the original text, if possible, or a modern English translation of Shakespeare's work. I have a preference for Shakespeare and I enjoy his plays, as well as his poetry, so while I may have enjoyed reading *Romeo and Juliet*, I understand that the language and the ideas from the time period may not be for everyone. I would recommend this for teenagers and older for specific language and violence.

Recommended Titles

Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare

1984 by George Orwell

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte