

Romeo and Juliet

William Shakespeare

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This classic tale of two star crossed lovers has captivated audiences for centuries. When young Juliet, just shy of fourteen years, meets the charming Romeo at a party, the two instantly connect, whether it is a matter of infatuation or love at first sight. They are oblivious of the fact that they both belong to rival houses, but soon are delivered the devastating news: he is a Montague, while she is a Capulet. While constant quarrels between their two families disrupt the streets of the city of Verona, there seemed to be no way the two can be together. Thus, they feel forced to hide their love from their parents, only revealing their secrets with Juliet's nurse and Friar Lawrence, a friend of them both. In a matter of hours after meeting one another, they are privately married. However, their worlds' begin to crumble suddenly as blood is spilled by Romeo's hand. He is exiled, and Juliet is arranged to marry a suitor. In the midst of all this chaos, the two lovers devise a plan to run away together. Unfortunately, it goes horribly awry, and the tale ends a heart-wrenching tragedy.

Although this story is well known by much of the English speaking world, it is still a necessary read, especially for adolescents. Girls and boys alike may find this story interesting, but young children should be advised against reading it, given there are some inappropriate topics addressed. It is different from the usual books teenagers read nowadays, given the writing style, though teens will quickly adapt to the olden day language used throughout the novel. All in all, it is a very famous classic, one that a person should read at least once in their lifetime. It portrays beautifully the dangers of ongoing grudges and rivalries, shows the captivating powers of young love, and displays countless morals within its pages.

On the other hand, the entire story took place over the course of a few days, and therefore feels rather rushed. The relationship between Romeo and Juliet also feels like it progressed too quickly to be natural. If you are looking for an uplifting book with a picture perfect ending, this is probably not the book for you. Additionally, it is written as a script for a play, so in certain moments the actions taken by the characters can be a bit unclear, since it was originally meant to be acted out, not just read. Some teenagers may find this frustrating and confusing to read, but it is a highly important part of society today, and taking the time to read this book is very worthwhile. This is a timeless story that every family should have on their bookshelf, and it would serve as a charming gift to anyone who enjoys classic literature.