

Stripped Down
Romeo and Juliet

A Shakespeare In The Ruins
Study Guide



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Dear Teachers,

Thank you for including us as part of your teaching resource! The goal of this preparation guide is to enhance your own lesson plan. Our overall goal with the “Stripped Down” series of touring productions is to show your students that Shakespeare can be entertaining and easy to understand, and we feel the best way to do that is by performing his plays live, as they were meant to be experienced. By “stripping down” the plays to their most crucial and recognizable elements, we hope to make Shakespeare’s language and his stories come alive in a way that is clear and accessible.

The most common and significant feedback that we have received from schools in the past, is that their students were better able to engage in the performance (and subsequent class discussions) if they were made familiar with the plots and characters in advance. Of course this makes perfect sense. Knowing that many students will not be studying Shakespeare until later in the curriculum, we ask you to make sure that all of your participating teachers are made aware of the availability of this study guide.

One huge advantage of performing “Romeo & Juliet” is that most students will already be somewhat familiar with the basic plot, whether through contact with the many filmed versions of the play itself or simply because the story is so pervasive, in various forms, in our culture. Should you be so inclined, an attempt to compare the circumstances and relationships within the play with your students’ own lives will likely result in a lively discussion. Students should certainly be able to relate to issues with boyfriends, girlfriends, parents, group rivalries and so on. Preparing your students could take place in as little as ten minutes or over the course of a week, according to your (and your students’) particular needs.

At SIR, we rely on your feedback to tell us how we might better serve your needs, and the needs of your students. We therefore ask you to fill out the evaluation guide included on this website, and encourage your students to submit any comments or reviews in order for us to learn how they’ve responded to the experience.

Thank you for joining us, and enjoy!

BEFORE THE CURTAIN OPENS...

Prior to attending the show, students should be informed that, in the theatrical tradition of Shakespeare's time, all of the characters (including the women) will be played by *five male actors*.

In Elizabethan England, women were forbidden from acting on the stage! The theatre was considered by many to be morally corrupt and populated by villains and reprobates. Women could attend shows, but were not allowed to participate. As a result, all of Shakespeare's greatest female roles were played by teenaged boys, whose voices had not yet deepened. Of course, audiences knew this was so and accepted it without a second thought.

Shakespeare's theatre was a place where audiences were asked to imagine castles, forests, vast armies, ships at sea in violent storms; all on a bare stage lit only by the sun. The audience relied upon Shakespeare's words to create the world of the play, and the actors counted on the audience to play along. As a matter of course, actors were also regularly called upon to play many different roles, with minimal adjustments to wardrobe.

So: it is in keeping with the traditions from which Shakespeare's plays were created, that we present to you our ***Stripped Down Romeo & Juliet!***

The Globe Stage



The touring set of *Stripped Down Romeo & Juliet* is modeled after the layout of the actual Globe Theatre in London (though obviously in a "stripped down" version!).

WHO'S WHO IN VERONA?

Juliet	... a Capulet	Romeo	... a Montague
Capulet	... her father	Benvolio	...his cousin
Lady Capulet	... her father	Mercutio	...their friend & kinsman to the Prince
Nurse	... her nurse		
Tybalt	... her cousin		
		Prince of Verona	
		Paris	...kinsman to the Prince
		Friar Laurence	...a Franciscan monk
		Friar John	...also a Franciscan monk
		Apothecary	...a dealer in Mantua

THE STRIPPED DOWN PLOT

The **Capulets** and the **Montagues** are two powerful families in the city of Verona. As the play begins, a long-standing feud between these two families continues to disrupt the peace of Verona. A brawl between the feuding households prompts the *Prince* to threaten both sides with death unless they keep the peace.

After the brawl, *Benvolio* advises *Romeo* to abandon his unrequited love for Rosaline and seek another. They overhear a conversation between *Capulet* and *Paris*, wherein *Capulet* invites *Paris* to a masked ball, and encourages *Paris* to court his daughter, *Juliet*. *Lady Capulet* and the *Nurse* try to convince *Juliet* that *Paris* is a fine catch. *Romeo*, *Benvolio* and *Mercutio* (concealing their identities) decide to crash the ball, where *Romeo* and *Juliet* meet and fall in love, only to discover that they are supposed to be enemies. *Tybalt* recognizes *Romeo*, but his attempt to challenge *Romeo* is thwarted by *Capulet*, who doesn't wish to see the peace disturbed. On his way home from the soiree, *Romeo* can't stop thinking about *Juliet*, and climbs into *Capulet's* orchard to try to catch a glimpse of her. *Juliet* appears at her balcony, and the couple exchange vows of love, agreeing to marry the next day.

Romeo asks *Friar Laurence* to perform the marriage ceremony. Though reluctant, he agrees, hoping to reconcile the two families. That very afternoon, with *Juliet's Nurse* acting as go-between, *Friar Laurence* secretly performs the wedding ceremony, and *Romeo* and *Juliet* are married.

Meanwhile, *Tybalt* has challenged *Romeo* to a duel, but when *Romeo* refuses to fight, *Mercutio* accepts the challenge instead. When *Romeo* tries to part the two, *Mercutio* is fatally wounded because of *Romeo's* intervention. To avenge *Mercutio's* death, *Romeo* kills *Tybalt*.

The Prince banishes Romeo for Tybalt's murder, and Romeo threatens to kill himself. Instead, Friar Laurence arranges with the Nurse for Romeo and Juliet to consummate their marriage that night, after which Romeo flees to Mantua to wait until the heat dies down. That morning, Capulet tells Juliet that she will marry Paris against her will, and when she too threatens to kill herself, Friar Laurence convinces her to take a potion that will make it appear as though she is dead until she and Romeo can be reunited.

Unfortunately, Friar Laurence's messenger (*Friar John*) is unable to deliver the plan to Romeo, and when Romeo hears of Juliet's death, he buys some poison from the *Apothecary* and returns to Verona in order to die with Juliet in her tomb. Inside the tomb, Romeo is confronted by a distraught Paris, and is forced to kill him. Romeo takes the poison and dies, and Friar Laurence finds him just as Juliet is waking up. Hearing voices coming toward the tomb, the Friar flees, leaving Juliet alone to kill herself with Romeo's dagger.

A "Shakespeare in the Ruins" Study Guide

Prepared by Pamela Lockman with input from Ken Clark, Mark Duncan, Ray Grynol, Esme Keith, Jock Martin & Roberta Mitchell

The SIR production of *Romeo and Juliet* may be an introduction to the play, it may come somewhere in the middle of your study, or it may be the final activity. Wherever it happens, you and your students are sure to enjoy this wonderful promenade production! Let students know that they are in for a unique theatrical experience

This Guide does not include the summaries and activities that can be found in most editions of the play. It does include suggestions on how to prepare students for what they'll see and hear, as well as ideas for discussion after the play. *Enjoy it all!*

READING THE PLAY

Nothing takes the place of actually reading the play, and the best way for students to do this is to get up on their feet! The scenes below are listed chronologically (with Act, scene and line numbers from the Oxford School *Shakespeare*, 2001) and include a brief intro, the number of readers needed (not including a director), and because not all editions match up line for line, the beginning speaker and his or her first few words. Read them all or pick and choose!

I.i.31-66. Sampson & Gregory fight with Abram, then Tybalt. (5)
Sampson: My naked weapon is out.

I.i.154-232 Benvolio & Romeo speak of love. (2)

Benvolio: Good morrow, cousin.

I.ii.45-103 Benvolio & Romeo intercept the invitation Capulet's party. (3)

Benvolio: Tut, man, one fire...

I.iii.60-106. Juliet is not interested in marriage, especially not to Paris. (4)

Nurse: Peace, I have done.

I.iv.11-52. Mercutio & Benvolio try to convince Romeo to attend the party. (3)

Romeo: Give me a torch...

I.v.40-143. For Romeo it's love at first sight. Tybalt discovers the intruders. (6)

Romeo: What lady's that...

II.ii. The balcony scene. (3)

II.iii.31-94 Romeo visits Friar Lawrence the first time. (2)

Romeo: Good morrow, father.

II.iv.1-35 Mercutio & Benvolio discuss Tybalt's challenge. (2)

Mercutio: Where the dev'!

II.iv.46-90 Romeo joins them in their teasing. (3)

Romeo: Good morrow to you both.

II.iv.132-198. Nurse has a message for Romeo from Juliet. (3)

Nurse: I pray you, sir...

II.v.18-78. Nurse returns to Juliet with Romeo's response. (2)

Juliet: O God, she comes!

III.i.33-198. The BIG fight scene. Mercutio & Tybalt die; Romeo is banished. (8)

Benvolio: By my head, here comes the Capulets.

III.ii.36-143. Nurse tells Juliet the news. (2)

Juliet: Ay me, what news?

III.iii.29-70. In agony over what has happened, Romeo goes to the Friar. (2)

Romeo: 'Tis torture, and not mercy.

III.iii.80-175. Nurse comes with word from Juliet. (3)

Nurse: I come from Lady Juliet.

III.v.1-64. Romeo and Juliet have spent the night together. (3)

Juliet: Wilt thou be gone?

III.v.137-195. Juliet's dad is not pleased with her. (4)

*Capulet: How now, wife,
Have you deliver'd to her our decree?*

IV.i.1-43. Juliet & Paris accidentally meet at the Friar's. (3)

Friar Lawrence: On Thursday, sir?

IV.i.44-126. The Friar comes up with a plan to help Juliet. (2)

Juliet: O shut the door...

IV.ii.15-37. Juliet pretends to obey her father. (4)

Nurse: See where she comes...

IV.iii. Juliet considers suicide, then takes the potion. (2)

V.i.57-86. Romeo visits the Apothecary. (2)

Romeo: What ho, apothecary!

V.iii.45-87. Romeo & Paris fight at Juliet's tomb. (3)

Romeo: Thou detestable maw...

V.iii.88-120. Romeo's dying speech. (1)

Romeo: How oft when men are at the point of death

V.iii.139-170. Juliet awakes, discovers the awful truth, and kills herself. (2)

Friar Lawrence: Romeo!

Alack, alack...

V.iii.270-310. The prince is convinced that Friar Lawrence has told the truth. (3)

Prince: We still have known thee...

V.iii.305-310. The final words. (1)

Prince: A glooming peace this morning with it brings

For a closer look at Language and Imagery, these speeches work particularly well:

I.i.165-177. *Romeo: Alas that Love, whose view is muffled still...*

II.ii.10-25. *Romeo: It is my lady, O it is my love:*

II.ii.26-32. *Romeo: She speaks,
O speak again, bright angel...*

II.ii.38-49. *Juliet: 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;*

II.ii.176-181. *Juliet: 'Tis almost morning, I would have thee gone:*

III.ii.1-32. *Juliet: Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds...*

III.ii.73-85. *Juliet: O serpent heart, hid with a flow'ring face!*

IV.iii.14-58. *Juliet: Farewell! God knows when we shall meet again.*

V.iii.88-120. *Romeo: How oft when men are at the point of death...*

“Perfect Mate”

Both students and parents fill out separate surveys to discuss in class. Students are asked to try and figure out what traits *their parents* would list if they were choosing the perfect mate for their son or daughter. Parents are asked what traits they would consider most important if *they* were choosing the perfect mate for their son or daughter. You can be sure that interesting discrepancies and discussions ensue. The forms can be found at this website:

<http://www.teachersfirst.com/winners/romeo.pdf>

POST PLAY DISCUSSION

Here are some questions you might wish to discuss with your students after the production.

Did seeing the play live make it easier to understand what was being said?

How did the production differ from your expectations?

How did seeing male actors in the female roles affect your experience?

Which characters did you identify with? Why?

Do you think the types of characters and their situations in the play still exist today?

We want to hear from your students: have them pretend they're theatre critics and invite them to submit their reviews! (All feedback is welcome, even raspberries!)

STRIPPED DOWN ROMEO & JULIET
Evaluation Form for Teachers

Thank you for inviting us to your school. In an effort to continually evaluate our artistic and educational programs, we rely heavily on your feedback. Thank you for taking a moment to write your comments. Feel free to email your responses

SCHOOL NAME: (please print) _____

Teacher : (please print) _____

Email address: _____

Grade level (s) in the audience _____

Date of Performance _____ Morning_____ Afternoon _____

Please mark each item according to the following scale:

E=Excellent **G**=Good **I**=Improvement Desired **U**=Unsatisfactory

Did you feel that:

1. Communication between you and the SIR Office was supportive?

2. Pre-performance information was clear and timely

3. SIR was cordial and helpful when arriving and departing from your school.

3. Resource links on the website were helpful

4. Stripped Down performances are a good resource for your teaching

7. The adaptation of the play told the story

8. The actors' shared their passion for Shakespeare with students

9. SIR should continue building Stripped Down shows for the future?

Suggestions for Improvement Please use another sheet of paper if needed.

Would you be willing to allow SIR to use any of your comments in future brochures?

YES NO

Thank you very much for allowing us the opportunity to share a “slice of Shakespeare” with your students. We hope that you, and your students, will regularly visit our website www.shakespeareintheruins.com to check our educational resources (study guides, lesson plans, resources for students, etc.) and to find out what’s happening at SIR!