

CHARACTER NOTES

TYBALT

In the first few scenes Tybalt's fiery nature is prevalent. He is hot blooded and full of hate, even to the extent that his family think him a 'saucy boy'. At the brawl between the serving men of the houses, Tybalt is the main **protagonist** – he can be seen as the embodiment of the feud. He is the one who wants to fight... 'what drawn and talk of peace, I hate the word, as I hate hell, all Montagues and thee.'

During the second act, Tybalt again finds reason to fight. This time he believes Romeo has come to the Capulet ball to scorn at their solemnity... 'By his voice should be a Montague, Fetch me my rapier boy.'

It is clear that Tybalt will be the **foil** to Romeo and Juliet's love – his passionate hatred is a complete opposite to their passionate love.

MERCUTIO

Mercutio is witty and sarcastic; always the centre of attention at parties, ready with a put down or a racy joke. In some ways he is similar to the Nurse; he also sees love as primarily sexual. He's Romeo's friend and confidant, as the nurse is Juliet's; he too, underestimates the depths of Romeo's love and passion. In other ways, he's opposite of the Nurse. He's upper class and a relative of the Prince. He is clever, intelligent and well educated. When he meets the nurse and they match wits, he makes her look the fool. Mercutio has an infectious wit, he is fiery and excitable, as is shown in his Queen Mab speech.

Mercutio is quick to condemn others for faults he shares... in his Queen Mab speech he accuses Romeo for being 'beside himself' whereas by the end of the speech he is actually beside himself. He curses the houses of Montague and Capulet... 'A Plague on both your houses.' when it is he who brought the fight upon himself.

BENVOLIO

Romeo's cousin who is a caring and accepting friend. When Romeo wants to be alone he leaves him alone; when he wants to talk, Benvolio is there with a sympathetic ear.

Benvolio is known as a clear thinking, reliable and peace loving young man. During the street brawl, Benvolio tries to stop the fighting before it starts, 'Put up thy sword, or manage it to part these men with me.'

Further, after the Capulet ball, it is Benvolio who realises Romeo's disposition... 'Tis vain to seek him here that means not to be found.'

Shakespeare has given us a character that provides hope. The audience wants him to be the foil to Tybalt.