

Student Essay on The Role of Tybalt in "Romeo and Juliet"

The Role of Tybalt in "Romeo and Juliet" by William Shakespeare

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Essay

Tybalt is the fierce and contentious cousin of Juliet. He is arrogant, and is quick to draw his sword when he feels his pride has been wounded. As a Capulet, there is nothing Tybalt detests more than the Montagues, and he never passes on an opportunity to seek a fight with one of his mortal enemies. Tybalt's fatal flaw is his exceedingly aggressive nature and overly sensitive pride. Although his swordsmanship is greatly feared and admired, it has also led him to start fights without heed or sensibility. Yet, it is that very same brashness and impudence which leads directly to his own death. Tybalt's function in the play is to create a conflict in the plot and to bring the play to life. Without him, the animosity between the Montagues and Capulets would have been neither as vicious nor as fanatical. Tybalt's speech also foreshadows ominous and fatal events that are approaching in the horizon. When Tybalt sees Romeo and Juliet together at the party, he said, "Patience perforce with willful choler meeting / Makes my flesh tremble in their different greeting. I will withdraw, but this intrusion shall, Now seeming sweet, convert to bitt'rest gall." (I, v, 100-104) In this quote, Tybalt swears to himself that while there may be nothing he can do now, he will eventually make Romeo pay for coming to the party. This comes true when in Act III, scene i, Tybalt kills Romeo's close friend Mercutio. Tybalt also contributes indirectly to the ultimate tragedy of the lovers, because had he not killed Mercutio, Romeo would not have been banished from Verona. Therefore, Tybalt plays an extremely vital role in the play despite his early death. His existence brings about a simmering thrill to the play and furthermore, contributes to the fate which has already predestined the doom of Romeo and Juliet.