

Student Essay on Friar Lawrence: Guilty of Involuntary Manslaughter?

**Friar Lawrence: Guilty of Involuntary Manslaughter?
by William Shakespeare**

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Essay

Friar: Involuntary Manslaughter?

The Friar is guilty of manslaughter not for the things he did which contributed to the death of Romeo and Juliet, but for the things he failed to do which would have prevented the tragedy. The first mistake that the Friar made was to allow the marriage to exist. The Friar had every power to deny the marriage or to inform the parents of what their children were up to. But instead he replied to Romeo, "But come, young waverer, come, go with me, In one respect I'll thy assistant be, For this alliance may so happy prove/To turn your households' rancor to pure love. (II.iii.89-92)" The Friar, with this speech, established the fact that he was very much responsible for the existence of the marriage, and that it certainly had not been held against his own will. The second mistake proved to be even more lethal. After Romeo was banished from Verona, the Friar encouraged Romeo not to leave forever, but to come back after things had settled down. "Beg pardon of the Prince, and call thee back/With twenty hundred thousand times more joy/Than thou went'st forth in lamentation."(III.iii.152-154)" The Friar was defiantly breaking the law of death which the Prince had set down since Romeo's exile, and to make matters worse, the Friar made no attempt whatsoever to reach out to the Prince before attempting to bring Romeo back to Verona. This made him guilty of both breaking the law, and for being negligent in the marriage of the lovers. The Friar has no rebuke to either indictments, because even though he was put on the spot with the passionate lovers threatening to commit suicide, he could easily have told the parents of the children and prevented the affair. As for Romeo's banishment, there is nothing to be said about the matter. The Friar has broken the law, and there is no excuse for such actions. For those reasons, the Friar is guilty of involuntary manslaughter.