



# ROMEO AND JULIET:

## *The Council of Verona*

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CD: Savannah Brown

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## Crisis Director Letter

Dear Delegates,

My name is Savannah (She/Her) and it is with deep excitement and gratitude that I step into the role as Crisis Director for Romeo and Juliet: The Council of Verona. This committee represents the intersection of some of the things I am most passionate about, and I am eager to facilitate your interaction with the material. Over the last six years of participation in Model United Nations, I have held the roles of treasurer, head delegate, president, crisis staffer, assistant chair, and chair — but I could think of no better committee to make my CD debut with.

I am a sophomore at Emory's Oxford College, hailing from Orlando, Florida, and have been an active participant in Model UN since high school. In truth, I did not expect to continue with Model UN at Emory, seeing as most of the collegiate delegates I was exposed to in high school were majoring in international relations or political science, while I have always been firmly grounded in the humanities and social sciences. My academic goals never changed, but despite majoring in Psychology / Linguistics and Quantitative Sciences, I have continued my involvement in MUN as the President of Oxford International Relations Association, which is Oxford's chapter of EIRA. I highly encourage you all to bring your unique academic and personal interests into committee, rather than adhering to what you believe I might want to hear from you. Above all else, I value creativity and collaboration.

I am what some might call a Shakespeare fanatic; I attended Shakespeare camp for six summers, completed annually in the English Speaking Union's Shakespeare Monologue competition, have countless sonnets and monologues memorized, bite my thumb at bad drivers,

and even made a trip to Verona to visit the real Casa di Giulietta and pose on Juliet's balcony.

Though my favorite plays are *Julius Caesar* and *The Tempest*, I love *Romeo and Juliet*, particularly its adaptation for the 2011 animated feature *Gnomeo and Juliet*.

As you prepare for committee, I encourage you to reflect on what resonates with you most in the plays. Perhaps you aren't the biggest fan of logos, pathos, or ethos, and that is perfectly fine. Maybe you find yourself wondering why Romeo and Juliet found it so necessary to make adult decisions despite being so young. Or, you may be frustrated that the adults in their lives seemed to only misguide them or ignore them entirely. Though you may have had earlier experiences suggesting otherwise, Shakespeare's works are truly timeless: identifying what holds true for you on the individual level will make committee discussions all the more richer. I have laid out the framework, but I am leaving the direction of the committee largely in your hands. Do not be afraid to use committee to right the wrongs you identify in your research.

I look forward to seeing you all soon. Before, during, and after the conference, do not hesitate to contact me with questions. I am a resource for you.

Sincerely,

Savannah Brown

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## Chair Letter

My Dearest Saucey Boys,

My name is Elizabeth (She/Her), and I am a second-year student at Emory's Oxford College from Charlottesville, VA. I am a double major in Political Science and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. I began my Model UN journey back in high school, where I competed as an independent delegate, so I was thrilled to have an actual team to compete with after joining EIRA during my first semester. I now serve as the Head Delegate of the Oxford International Relations Association, which is Oxford's branch of the Model UN team. After serving previously as a Crisis Director and chairing multiple sims for OIRA, I am excited for my official chairing debut.

I will not lie to you - despite being a theatre kid for many years, I tend to avoid Shakespeare like the plague. However, I could not escape the theatre world without being in at least one Shakespeare play (Helena in *Midsummer*), so I am no stranger to iambic pentameter. Despite being nowhere near as well-versed in *Romeo and Juliet* as Savannah, I can recite the entirety of Mercutio's Queen Mab monologue and will be able to pick up on any of your references ;)

As someone who competed on the high school circuit as an independent delegate, I know firsthand how overwhelming Model UN is. Thus, as your chair I am committed to making sure no one feels left behind. If you have a question at any time, please ask or send a note. My newer delegates, I want to hear your voice in committee. As I always tell my delegates, I would rather you stand up and tell me what you had for lunch than to sit silent. My experienced delegates, you

always have something to learn in MUN, especially from one another, take some time to really listen to one another. If at any time you feel like you're not being heard, please let me know so I can make space and better support you.

I cannot wait to welcome you all to Emory's Campus and to make this the best iteration of ENMUNC yet!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Brubaker

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## Respect Policies

By nature, the content of the works guiding *Romeo and Juliet: The Council of Verona* may implore delegates to discuss sensitive topics, such as relationships between minors, the objectification of women, suicide, and more. Delegates are not dissuaded from addressing these difficult issues, but are expected to do so while maintaining respect. Any delegate who displays blatant disrespectful or lewd behavior, or who continues to make other delegates uncomfortable after receiving a warning from the CD, chair, or a staffer, will face appropriate consequences as outlined by the ENMUNC IV Conduct Code. It is true that based on the traditional norms of the era in which this committee is set, it might be in some character's nature to take harmful views on these issues, but you will not be penalized from deviating from your position to maintain respect.

Furthermore, from a general ENMUNC IV standpoint, we expect all delegates to conduct themselves in a professional manner and to be respectful to staff and other delegates. There will be a zero tolerance policy for any discrimination based on race, gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, ability, religion, or political beliefs. Should you encounter any discrimination please contact your chair, CD, or a member of the secretariat to address and handle the situation. Furthermore, pre-writing, unauthorized use of technology, or using AI software is strictly prohibited.

Your crisis director and chair want to first and foremost prioritize your well-being. If at any point the contents of the committee or the actions of another delegate make you uncomfortable, you are encouraged to send a note to the dais and step out of the room as needed. This extends to any needs you might have over the course of the committee; we will never

penalize you for eating a snack, drinking water, or taking a quick restroom break. We are here to support you, and we hope that you will grant us the same respect we grant you.



## Introduction

This crisis committee will immerse delegates in the works of William Shakespeare, particularly *Romeo and Juliet*. While everyone knows the framework for the story about star-crossed lovers, few are attentive to the political underscoring present in the play. The feud between the Montagues and the Capulets is all-consuming, leading to public brawls, violence, social division, banishment, and multiple deaths. Compounded with the monumental historical events that occurred in real-life fourteenth century Verona as well as the events of the Bard's other plays set in the city, *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, this committee will provide delegates an excellent opportunity to be creative while synthesizing literature and political knowledge.

In this committee, delegates will serve as a member of Verona's City Council, representing characters from one of the three plays mentioned above. Delegates will discuss the issues impacting Verona's daily affairs with a special emphasis on the hijinks of a certain pair of lovers. While some topics of discussion will emerge organically from the delegates and in response to crisis updates, a list of key issues to think about is provided later in this background guide. Furthermore, the committee may incorporate far-reaching impacts of other Shakespeare plays, such as the invasions of Fortinbras's army (*Hamlet*) or global concerns about justice for women's bodily autonomy (*Measure for Measure*).

We will follow a traditional crisis format, empowering delegates to have a say in Verona's affairs through crisis notes, JPDs, and directives, which will impact crisis updates. Though you may have studied these plays in English class, this is NOT your English teacher's *Romeo and Juliet*. Delegates are encouraged to add a bit of absurdity to this (already absurd) play, participate

in skits and sword-fights, and make LOTS of gnome-related puns. It will be fun, I promise!

Whether you are a brand-new delegate or a seasoned veteran, you are encouraged to make bold choices and have a voice in committee.





## Timeline

Since *Romeo and Juliet: The Council of Verona* combines elements from history and multiple plays, it is important to clarify when in time, exactly, the committee will begin.

In relation to the real-world time period, the first committee session will take place in 1329, situating historical Verona shortly after Cangrande's death and under Mastino II's reign. It can be assumed that the real-life Veronese authorities still maintained their power, and the council formed by the characters in the committee is an additional aristocratic council which may bring recommendations to the chief magistrate.

In relation to *Romeo and Juliet*, the committee will pick up at the beginning of the play. This means that there has already been a long history of tensions between the Montagues and Capulets, but everyone is still very much alive, and Romeo and Juliet have not yet met. The exact point in the play where we begin will be evident in the first crisis update. However, delegates are allowed and encouraged to deviate from the events of the play as written.

In relation to the other contributing plays, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, it can be assumed that the events of these plays have already happened in their entirety, and that the characters represented have all returned to Verona. The relationships, good and bad, established in these respective plays have been maintained.

Note that this is a loose timeline to help guide you, but I reserve the right to deviate from a logical timeline in order to add to the committee. For example, even though there was not a major plague in Verona in the 14th century, that could be included in the scope of the committee. Furthermore, the relative timeline to Shakespeare's other works is flexible; other stories may be woven in irregardless of the intersections of their canonical timelines.

## About the Source Material

### Romeo and Juliet

*Romeo and Juliet* is perhaps the Bard's most famous work.<sup>8</sup> Though commonly read in high school English classes, the impact of *Romeo and Juliet* extends far beyond the classroom, inspiring other popular works such as *West Side Story*, *The Little Mermaid*, and countless adaptations, featuring everyone from Leonardo DiCaprio to garden gnomes. While most delegates will already be familiar with the story, provided below is a summary of the major events of the play. Delegates are highly encouraged to read the play or watch a film adaptation to gain additional familiarity.

The Capulets and the Montagues, two noble families of Verona, are engaged in a long-standing and bitter feud. Besides governing the relations of the two families, the feud has far-reaching consequences for Verona, inciting continued violence; in the first scene of *Romeo and Juliet*, the servants of Capulet provoke a brawl in the streets against the house of Montague. This brawl, having nearly killed numerous citizens, provokes Prince Escalus to declare that anyone who disturbs the civil peace will be sentenced to death.



Meanwhile, Romeo, the son of Lord and Lady Montague, is in love with Rosaline...or so he thought. Though he desperately wanted to be with her, he was relegated to the friend zone, triggering a spell of melancholy. Similarly, Paris, a noble youth, hopes to marry Juliet, the Capulet's daughter. Juliet, however, is indifferent about the arrangement. Both men end up at the Capulet's party in hopes of impressing their love.

To no surprise, Romeo lays eyes on Juliet, and is immediately transfixed. The pair meet, and Juliet too falls in love. However, the moment complicates when both realize the other is an enemy of their kin. After the party, a discouraged but determined Romeo attempts to find Juliet. He discovers her, on the famous balcony, and hears Juliet admit that she would long for him if he was not a Montague. Romeo responds, urging Juliet that their love was stronger than any feud.

The next morning, Romeo seeks Friar Lawrence, who he asks for consent to wed Juliet at once. The Friar agrees, optimistic that the marriage might end the feud between the Montagues and the Capulets. Juliet's nurse, though protective, also supports the marriage. Soon after, they are wed by the Friar.

Romeo's absence sparked speculation among Benvolio and Mercutio, who guessed it may have something to do with the conflict between Romeo and Tybalt, who challenged the former to a duel. Their existing hatred for the Capulets, particularly Tybalt, grew stronger. The next time they encounter each other on the streets, there is a violent brawl, and in the end, Tybalt kills Mercutio, and Romeo retaliates and kills Tybalt. In accordance with his ordinance, Prince Escalus exiles Romeo from Verona.

Juliet is devastated, first of the death of her kinsmen, then of the banishment of her husband. Along with Friar Lawrence and Juliet's Nurse, Romeo hatches a plan to see through to his marriage with Juliet and spread news of their marriage in hopes of redemption. Lord and Lady Capulet, unaware of their daughter's betrothal to Romeo, finally follow up with Paris, whom they expected Juliet to marry within the week. They convey this news to Juliet, simultaneously doubling down on their hatred for Romeo. Despite advice to abandon Romeo, Juliet refuses to consider it, vowing that she would rather die.

Juliet again goes to Friar Lawrence for help. They plan that she, rather than marrying Paris, will fake her own death on the night of their wedding. At her tomb, the banished Romeo will meet her, and when she awakes they will escape to live their lives together in Mantua. The next evening, Juliet drinks the potion Friar Lawrence had given her to falsify her passing. Instead of moving forward with the wedding, her family pivots to preparing for a funeral. Unfortunately, Friar John, who Friar Lawrence sent to inform Romeo of the plan, got quarantined on his way to Mantua. Instead, Balthasar tells Romeo about Juliet's death, unaware that it was a ruse. Romeo is devastated, and quickly plans to kill himself so he can join her, acquiring poison from a local Apothecary.



When Romeo arrives at the tomb Paris is also there, paying respects to Juliet. When the latter sees Romeo he is outraged, unaware of his romantic pursuits and instead identifies him as Juliet's killer, seeing as she died from her grief for her cousin Tybalt. Though Romeo tries to correct him, ultimately he and Paris draw swords. In this fight, Romeo kills Paris, then brings him inside Juliet's tomb, where he drinks the poison. At this point, Friar Lawrence, who had no idea Romeo found out about Juliet's "death," arrived, planning to wait with Juliet until Romeo was informed about the plan. Shortly, Juliet woke up, and the Friar explained what had happened, including the deaths of Paris and Romeo. Struck by grief, Juliet stabbed herself, joining them in death. When they are discovered by their families and Prince Escalus, they vow to put the feud behind them, given the toll it had over the play.



## Two Gentlemen of Verona

Though *Romeo and Juliet* is most central to this committee, it is not the only Shakespeare play that takes place in or features characters from Verona. Another is *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.<sup>7</sup> The general summary, provided below, should be sufficient for most delegates, though those representing characters from *Two Gentlemen of Verona* may wish to explore the work in more detail. As these events have already occurred in the timeline of the committee, delegates should be mindful of what lasting effects they may have on Verona, or what societal issues they revealed.

The play begins as two good friends, Valentine and Proteus, must part: Valentine embarks on a journey of self-discovery, while Proteus remains tethered by his love for Julia. Proteus pines for Julia, and sends her a letter declaring his intentions. While Julia's maid is favorable on her pursuing Proteus, Julia is unexcited about the letter, tearing it up. However, she soon regrets her actions. Proteus and Julia indeed declare their love for each other.





Antonio, Proteus' father, decides to send him to the Duke's court in Milan, a decision met with discontent from both Proteus and Julia. They vow to continue loving each other and exchange rings. In Milan, Valentine falls for Silvia, the Duke's daughter. However, Proteus, upon his arrival, also falls for Silvia and plots to win her affections, even at the cost of betraying Valentine. When Valentine discloses plans to elope with Silvia, Proteus exposes him to the Duke, securing favor for himself and resulting in Valentine's banishment.

Back in Verona, Julia disguises herself as a man to journey to Milan and reunite with Proteus. Upon arrival, disguised as Sebastian, she witnesses Proteus and Thurio, another suitor, vying for Silvia's love. The Duke wants Silvia to marry Thurio, but she has no desire to. Her love life is further complicated when Julia delivers Proteus' ring to Silvia on her behalf. Silvia escapes with a friend, Sir Eglamor, to avoid this marriage. Meanwhile, the banished Valentine is captured by outlaws, who force him to be their king under the threat of death. Silvia and Eglamor come upon the same outlaws, who overtake them. The Duke organizes a search party, and when they find Silvia, Proteus wrestles her away from the outlaws. Proteus demands Silvia's favor for saving her, but she resists. In a disturbing turn, Proteus attempts to force himself on Silvia, only to be stopped by Valentine. Proteus apologizes, and instead declares his true love for Julia. The Duke allows Valentine to marry Silvia, and Valentine proposes a joint celebration of his marriage to Silvia and Proteus' marriage to Julia.

## Taming of the Shrew

*The Taming of the Shrew* technically takes place in Padua, another city in northern Italy not far from Verona.<sup>9</sup> Padua is one of the oldest and most important cities in northern Italy, with a rich history dating back to ancient times. For the purposes of this committee, this setting will serve as an extension of Verona. As with *Two Gentleman of Verona*, this play is not the main framework for this committee, but an understanding of the major events and issues perpetuated will be helpful. The general summary, provided below, should be sufficient for most delegates, though those representing characters from *The Taming of the Shrew* may wish to explore the work in more detail. As these events have already occurred in the timeline of the committee, delegates should be mindful of what lasting effects they may have on Verona, or what societal issues they revealed.

In Padua, a wealthy young man named Lucentio arrives with his servants, Tranio and Biondello, to study at the local university. However, his focus shifts when he encounters the beautiful Bianca, instantly falling in love. Complications arise as Bianca already has suitors, and her father, Baptista Minola, stipulates that she cannot be courted until her ill-tempered older sister, Katherine, is married. Lucentio devises a plan to win Bianca's heart by disguising himself as her Latin tutor.

The solution to Bianca's suitor predicament arrives in the form of Petruchio, a bold young man from Verona seeking a wealthy wife. Petruchio agrees to marry Katherine, the challenging older sister, sight unseen. Despite a fiery verbal duel between them, Petruchio claims falsely that Katherine has consented to marriage. The unconventional wedding unfolds, marking the

beginning of his attempts to "tame" Katherine. Petruchio's methods include denying Katherine food and sleep, asserting his dominance as her husband.



Meanwhile in Padua, Lucentio successfully woos Bianca through his Latin translation, and Tranio, disguised as Lucentio, secures Baptista's approval for the marriage.

Soon, Katherine and Petruchio return to Padua. Petruchio, through continued domination, compels Katherine to obey him, symbolizing her supposed taming. The other characters are surprised by Katherine's apparent transformation—she even delivers a speech advocating wives' subservience to their husbands. This is in contrast to Bianca, who herself is hesitant to obey Lucentio. Katherine seems to view her marriage as a chance to find harmony within a prescribed social role, rather than merely an opportunity to be subjugated.

## Historical Context

While the exact year when *Romeo and Juliet* took place is unclear, it is typically placed in the 13th or 14th century, around the time of the Italian Renaissance and late medieval period.<sup>6</sup>

The city of Verona was founded in the first century BCE and shifted power numerous times before it became an independent commune in the 12th century CE.<sup>1</sup> Shortly after gaining independence, Verona joined forces with Vicenza, Padua and Treviso to create the Veronese League, which shortly became part of the Lombard League.<sup>5</sup> The Lombard League was a larger alliance of Italian cities who were against the influence of the Holy Roman Empire in Italy. While many of these cities had long standing rivalries, they joined with the common goal to oppose Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa's attempts to force imperial control, which was also supported by Pope Alexander III. Barbarossa was hardly interested in building up the cities he occupied, often facilitating their downfall. The troops of the Lombard League defeated Barbarossa and the Holy Roman Empire at the Battle of Legnano in 1176, facilitating a series of diplomatic treaties. The Treaty of Venice, which took place in 1177, established a six-year truce, whereas the Peace of Constance ensured that the cities retained local jurisdiction so long as they remained loyal to the Holy Roman Empire.

At various other times, the Lombard League joined together again. Though Frederick I's son Henry VI was amenable to the terms of the Peace of Constance, his son Frederick II sought greater power in Italy. After Frederick II's victory in the Battle of Cortenuova, he refused all offers of peaceful compromise, insisting on an unconditional surrender. However, Verona and the other cities in the League withstood his continued attacks, preventing imperial control. Once

Frederick II died in 1250, there was no need for the Lombard League to continue: the Holy Roman Empire was no longer very interested in exerting influence on Italian politics.

In the years after Verona's conflict with the Holy Roman Empire, the della Scala family emerged at the political head of Verona, and the city prospered under their rule through the 13th and 14th centuries — encapsulating the time when *Romeo and Juliet* would have taken place. Although the family had a prominent presence in Verona since the 11th century, their ruling dynasty officially began with Mastino I, who became chief magistrate in 1259.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the most influential figure in the family was Cangrande I, who received the title of imperial vicar from Holy Roman Emperor Henry VII in 1311. Though power had been previously shared, Cangrande became the sole ruler and initiated successful campaigns against Vicenza and Padua. His influence expanded further when he became captain general of the Ghibelline League in 1318 and gained control over Fetre and Belluno.



However, the della Scala family faced challenges when they attempted to continue Cangrande's expansionist policies after his death. His successor, Mastino II's, aggression led to the loss of allies and territories. By the end of his reign, the della Scala family retained control only of Verona and Vicenza. The family's rule of Verona ultimately concluded in 1387 when the



city was annexed by the Duke of Milan. Shortly after, Verona came under the control of the Republic of Venice. Further examination of the della Scala family's rule reveals a number of tensions; though the family made lasting contributions to the state's political stability, culture, and infrastructure, it is clear that they were hardly perfect. Among other things, fratricide was prominent in the della Scala family.

Beyond the general political issues of responding to imperialism, pursuing expansion, and changing power, there were other influential historical factors in Verona. In the early 15th century, Verona again fell into the hands of the Holy Roman Empire, but that was of little concern for most inhabitants. Instead, nearly everyone in Verona feared the threat of the looming plague, which killed 13,000 people in the city alone in 1511-1512. While indicating Shakespeare's timeline was rather loose, it is suspected that the plague Friar John is quarantined from in *Romeo and Juliet* is the same one. Evidently, the city remained susceptible to plagues through the following centuries, as another plague in 1630 killed another 20,000 people.

Additionally, Verona's location has made it highly susceptible to seismic activity.<sup>3</sup> Most notably, the earthquake of 1117 caused damage to many structures, influencing architectural developments in subsequent years. The infrastructural challenges associated with this earthquake were worsened by other natural disasters: Verona is situated along the Adige River, and periodic floods could have substantial impact on the city's affairs.





Despite a tumultuous history, Verona is truly a rich city. During the Roman empire, the Arena di Verona was erected, and in the times since it has been home to processions, tournaments, and theatrical performances<sup>4</sup>. Under the della Scala Family, Dante found refuge in Verona during his exile and wrote some of his most famous works. The visual arts also thrived there: one of the most prominent painters of the Venetian Renaissance, Paolo Veronese, was born in Verona. Furthermore, Verona's position as a trading hub facilitated cultural exchange with other regions throughout its history.

## Key Themes and Questions

In addition to responding directly to crisis updates, delegates should be prepared to discuss critical issues in Verona demonstrated through Shakespeare's works and in historical Verona. While delegates are encouraged to lead the committee in the direction most interesting to them, here are some themes and questions to consider.

1. **Marriage:** At what age is it appropriate for the youth of Verona to get married? What are the merits and concerns surrounding the convention of arranged marriage?
2. **Clemency and Immunity:** Should certain political and religious figures be above the law? Who should be held accountable when someone's counsel has tragic consequences? In what circumstances should those who have broken the law be forgiven?
3. **Violence:** When should violence be used to resolve conflict? What should the consequences be of unnecessary violence?
4. **Patriarchy:** Is the role of patriarchy appropriate in the social and political spheres of Verona? What kind of influence should women have in the government, their home, and in their own livelihoods?
5. **Alliances and Imperialism:** To what extent should Verona align politically with neighboring cities? Should Verona be subject to the Holy Roman Empire? What should the role of social rifts and alliances be within Verona?
6. **Infrastructure:** To what extent should Verona invest in protections against natural and public health disasters? What is the role of the arts in the city's development?

## Characters

- 1. Prince Escalus:** As the ruler of Verona, Prince Escalus has political authority. He uses his power to maintain order in the city, issuing edicts and judgments, such as banishing Romeo. He represents the city's political epicenter, and is largely committed to maintaining the peace. Despite being connected to the other characters in the play – most notably to his kinsmen Paris and Mercutio – he is objective and fair in his punishments. This impartiality reflects his commitment to justice and order. In the aftermath of the tragic events of *Romeo and Juliet*, the Prince seeks to bring about reconciliation between the grieving families, recognizing the devastating consequences of the feud. Prince Escalus harbors a unique ability to maintain equilibrium in the volatile social fabric of Verona, showcasing his skilled leadership and dedication to the well-being of the city. Due to his position, it is implied that Prince Escalus has connections to other political figures in Northern Italy and beyond.
- 2. Lord Montague:** Lord Montague is the patriarch of the Montagues, a noble family within Verona that commands the Veronese social hierarchy. In this position, Lord Montague wields social influence in Verona, heading his family's feud against the Capulets. Lord Montague is most committed to preserving his family's honor, holding the grudges of his ancestors despite having few personal reasons to hate his enemies. However, his feud with the Capulets becomes personal when he must grapple with the complexities of prioritizing honor against his relationship with his impulsive son, Romeo. Ultimately, he exhibits extreme concern for Romeo's well-being, working – though

failing – to establish a balance between allegiances, paternal authority, and familial harmony. This is also exhibited through his relationship with Lady Montague.

3. **Lord Capulet:** Lord Capulet holds social influence as the head of the Capulet family, leading his family's feud against the Montagues. He is influential in and outside the home, and well-connected: at the beginning of *Romeo and Juliet*, he hosts a well-attended feast that serves as the backdrop for the lovers to meet. Ultimately, Lord Capulet is committed to protecting his kinsmen and preserving his family honor and name. His decision to arrange Juliet's marriage to Paris, while reflective of the societal norms of the time, emphasizes the tension between filial duty and diplomatic desires. This decision also becomes a major catalyst of the play's conflict, provoking Juliet to fake her own death to avoid the marriage.
4. **Friar Laurence:** Friar Laurence is a crucial figure in Romeo and Juliet and Veronese society. While primarily a religious figure, Friar Laurence possesses knowledge of herbs and remedies, serving as an authority on science. Friar Laurence's political and social influence lies in his position as a trusted confidant, not just to Romeo and Juliet but also within the broader Veronese community. His role as a mediator is exemplified when he agrees to marry Romeo and Juliet secretly, hoping to bridge the chasm between the feuding families. However, this well-intentioned intervention becomes a catalyst for the tragedy when he provides the potion for Juliet to fake her own death, leading to multiple real deaths. Though the outcomes are questionable, Friar Laurence's counsel and concern for Romeo and Juliet are always well-intentioned.

5. **Tybalt:** Tybalt's influence is primarily social and political within the Capulet family. As a Capulet, Tybalt's loyalty to the family is unwavering, and his fiery nature becomes a catalyst for the ongoing feud with the Montagues. His interactions with Lord Capulet showcase a deep-seated commitment to the patriarch, but his aggressive nature affects the dynamics of familial relationships. Despite this, he has a close relationship with his cousin, Juliet. Tybalt's temper has far-reaching consequences, as his confrontations with the Montagues contribute to the societal unrest and demand political intervention. Tybalt exemplifies excellent combat skills and has considerable influence in the streets. His untimely death becomes a turning point in the play, deepening the rift between the Montagues and Capulets.
6. **Mercutio:** Mercutio is a close friend of Romeo and a kinsman to the Prince, with significant social influence in Verona. Mercutio's character is rather complex, sometimes exhibiting anxiety, sometimes portraying nonsensical behavior, and often portraying humor and wit. He is extremely loyal to the Montagues, often serving as Romeo's wingman and confidante. As such, he despises the Capulets, particularly for their vanity. This is particularly true of Tybalt, who Mercutio escalates repeated conflict with. While he is an excellent swordsman, he fails to match Tybalt in his final brawl, and his death escalates the severity of the conflict, particularly for Romeo. Before his death, Mercutio also displayed particular loyalty to Benvolio, and some scholars believe their relationship may be deeper than is directly shown in *Romeo and Juliet*.

7. **Benvolio:** As Romeo's cousin and close companion, Benvolio is primarily a peacemaker, aiming to prevent conflicts between the Montagues and Capulets. He maintains strong social and moral influence. While Benvolio lacks the flamboyance of Mercutio or the aggression of Tybalt, his strengths lie in diplomacy and level-headedness. He is consistently rational with a calm demeanor, providing sensible advice to Romeo and counteracting the impulsivity of his friends and kinsmen. He is an effective counter to Mercutio, but nevertheless displays a close relationship with him that likely went beyond the confines of what is explicitly shown in *Romeo and Juliet*. Upon Mercutio's death, Benvolio is devastated, but maintains his exposure to relay the tragic events to the Prince.
8. **Paris:** Paris is an aristocrat, a kinsman of Prince Escalus, and a suitor of Juliet, with extensive political and social influence in Verona. His intention to marry Juliet, which is primarily politically motivated, is a source of tension within the Capulet family as Juliet expresses her reluctance. However, in accordance with the social norms, Paris ensured all of his actions were appropriately endorsed by the church and family patriarch. Throughout the play, he seems genuinely interested in winning Juliet over, approaching her Nurse to help win Juliet's favor and plan the wedding. Paris holds a favorable reputation within the city, and his actions serve to solidify that status. Prior to his attempted marriage with Juliet, he did not hold exclusive allegiance to either of the feuding families.
9. **Lady Montague:** Lady Montague is a member of the upper nobility in Verona, the matriarch of the Montagues. She exhibits deep concern for her son, Romeo, and the



well-being of her family. Lady Montague also serves as a peacemaker in Verona, often stepping in to curb the impulsivity of her son and anger of her husband. She has a gentle but firm presence, working to alleviate her family's concerns. The profound stress of the conflict with the Capulets and the banishment of Romeo leads to her untimely death, further illustrating the tragic repercussions of the feud to the Montague family as they are forced to deal with yet another loss.

10. **Lady Capulet:** As a member of the Capulet family, Lady Capulet holds a high social position in Verona and a unique ability to influence her husband, Lord Capulet. In this position, she encourages him to keep a level head and not participate directly in the violence, though she is not overly focused on keeping the peace. She prioritizes social conventions and the preservation of family honor, often guided by the traditional values of the aristocracy, emphasizing the importance of lineage and arranged marriages. As a result of these values, her relationship with Juliet is often formal and distant, with more maternal duties having been outsourced to Juliet's nurse. However, she is quite successful at achieving her political and social goals, ensuring the continuity of the Capulet legacy through strategic alliances.

11. **Nurse:** Juliet's Nurse is a maternal figure in the Capulet household, holding a unique position of trust and influence. While not of noble birth, her role is pivotal in Juliet's life, serving as a surrogate mother and confidant, and as a result she has unique influence in aristocratic spaces despite being of common birth. The Nurse is deeply devoted to Juliet's well-being, offering guidance and support with a mix of humor and practicality.

Despite her close relationship with Juliet, the Nurse is bound by the societal norms of the time, aligning with the Capulet family's wishes, including Juliet's arranged marriage to Paris. Her allegiance is to the family, and she strives to balance her loyalty to Lord and Lady Capulet with her affection for Juliet. The Nurse's emotional investment in Juliet's life is evident, particularly in the aftermath of Romeo and Juliet's secret marriage and tragic end.

12. **Valentine:** Valentine is one of the titular characters of "Two Gentlemen of Verona."

Though not hailing from Romeo and Juliet, he has deep ties to Verona, but is driven by his desire for adventure and to experience the world beyond his home city. Valentine is not afraid to challenge the status quo and values the pursuit of discovering one's own identity and purpose. This is a deviation from the traditional societal expectations prevalent in both plays, but still situates him to be influential politically, as he ultimately marries Silvia, the Duke of Milan's daughter. Overall, Valentine values relationships over status, and is a good friend to Proteus, the other titular gentleman. He is an effective leader and diplomat among diverse individuals, as exhibited by his influence within the band of outlaws in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. In the same position, Valentine proved himself as an advocate for the acquittal of non-violent criminals.

13. **Proteus:** Proteus is one of the titular characters of *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. His status is associated with his noble birth, aligning him with the aristocracy in Verona.

Throughout the play, known for shifting allegiances as he grapples with conflicting feelings of love and loyalty. Though at the beginning of the play, he is betrothed to Julia



and a close friend of Valentine, he betrays both of these relationships in pursuit of Silvia, the Duke of Milan's daughter. He is relentless in pursuit of his goals, and in the context of the play, Proteus revealed Valentine's intentions with Silvia to the Duke, resulting in Valentine's banishment. Proteus again demonstrates his stubbornness through repeated attempts to persuade Silvia to favor him despite her preference for Valentine.

14. **Julia:** Julia is a significant character in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, known for her deep love for Proteus and her resourcefulness. Julia is resourceful and regularly confronts challenges head-on, adopting a disguise to secretly follow Proteus to Milan when his loyalty was in doubt. Despite Proteus's betrayal, Julia demonstrates forgiveness. Her commitment to resolution is truly a driving force, and though she is guided by personal interests, her decisions are made practically and intelligently. She is able to flawlessly navigate the complex social dynamics of the aristocracy, interacting with Silvia and the Duke of Milan without hesitation. Though she does not outright reject social norms, Julia is willing to confront them when they oppose her values.

15. **Silvia:** Silvia is a prominent character in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the Duke of Milan's daughter. Her political influence is intertwined with her father's position. Silvia, though a pawn in the power dynamics of the play, possesses a strong will and a discerning intellect. She is initially betrothed to Valentine but also becomes the object of Proteus's pursuit. Silvia's social standing and beauty make her desirable, leading to various power struggles among the male characters. Despite the constraints of her time, Silvia challenges societal norms, rejecting Proteus's advances and advocating for her own

agency. Her decisions and actions reveal a nuanced understanding of the political and social landscape, as she navigates the complexities of love and duty.

16. **Thurio:** Thurio, a character from *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, is an aristocrat in 14th-century Verona. Thurio embodies the traditional values of his social class, granting him political influence. In *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Thurio attempts to win the affection of Silvia, and faces competition from Valentine and Proteus. However, unlike the title characters, his pursuit of Silvia is driven by social expectations and the desire to strengthen his family's standing, rather than personal desires. Instead, he prioritizes the consolidation of power through strategic alliances. Silvia is not willing to wed Thurio as a political move, so he ultimately is beaten out for her affections by Valentine. The Duke of Milan, Silvia's father, picks up on Thurio's insincerity, eventually supporting his daughter's desires.

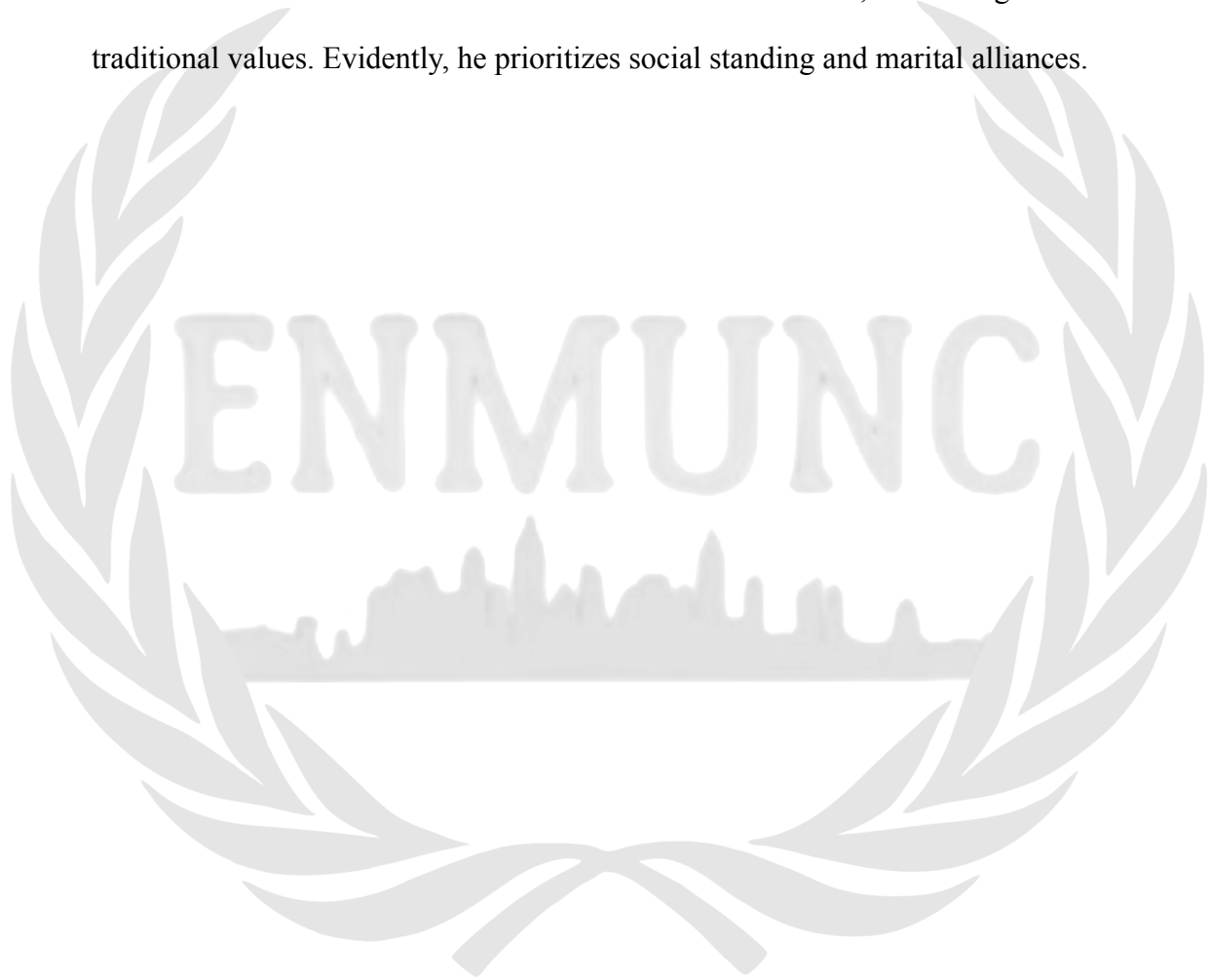
17. **Baptista Minola:** Baptista is a central character in *The Taming of the Shrew*; he is a wealthy gentleman in Padua, a city neighboring Verona, and his social standing and economic influence in Padua afford him a certain degree of political influence. *The Taming of the Shrew* concerns Baptista's daughters, Katherine and Bianca, as Baptista and the various suitors shed light on the prevailing gender norms and power dynamics. While somewhat concerned about the well-being of his daughters, Baptista holds traditional values, maintaining expectations of the subservience of women. Throughout the play, he supports Petruchio's efforts to "break" Katherine, sacrificing her personality and desires for wifely obedience. His decisions ultimately revolve around his status,

considering the social standing and financial stability of his daughters' suitors when making his selections.

18. **Lucentio:** Lucentio, the son of Vincentio and suitor to Bianca from *The Taming of the Shrew*, also maintains aristocratic standing in Verona. In the play, Lucentio departs from his home for an education at the University of Padua. His journey takes an unexpected turn when he becomes enamored with Bianca. Unlike the traditional expectations of his class, Lucentio is characterized by a certain rebelliousness against societal norms. His decision to take risks, such as disguising himself as a tutor to get closer to Bianca, reflects his willingness to challenge conventions for the sake of love and his personal desires. Despite these antics, his character is ultimately driven by genuine feelings for Bianca and a desire for a love unconstrained by societal expectations. His marriage to Bianca in *The Taming of the Shrew* exhibits that Lucentio is well-connected in Verona, earning the endorsement of Baptista and his own father.

19. **Vincentio:** Vincentio is the father of Lucentio, who is one of Bianca's suitors in *The Taming of the Shrew*. The patriarch of his aristocratic family, Vincentio is a wealthy and respected figure in Pisa, from which Lucentio comes to Padua to study. He is recognized as level-headed and capable of solving problems. Despite his high status, Vincentio prioritized morality and truthfulness over social gain, and is angered by his son's deception of Bianca to win her hand. Despite this, Vincentio demonstrates forgiveness towards her son, and actively works to establish a resolution.

20. **Hortensio:** Hortensio is a character in *The Taming of the Shrew*, initially a suitor of Bianca. He is a nobleman with particular wit, charm, and musical talents. His social standing and economic affluence afford him a prominent position within Veronan society. Hortensio had a flair for the unconventional, adopting various disguises to win Bianca's hand, but ultimately put his focus elsewhere, marrying a widow. Hortensio supports Petruchio in his efforts to "tame" Katherine into subservience, illustrating an adherence to traditional values. Evidently, he prioritizes social standing and marital alliances.



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