

English 9  
Romeo and Juliet

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### **Essay on Revenge**

The quest for power often results in actions which are ruthless and sometimes murderous. These actions, in turn, can lead to a very dramatic reaction: revenge. Shakespeare's interest in these dramatic ideas of revenge probably came from his own Elizabethan world, a world full of violence, disease, uncertainty from day to day. His plays show lives at a time when personal revenge was more the rule than social justice and when the laws of the church and state would give way to street fights and vengeful killing.

Shakespeare's ROMEO AND JULIET opens with a bloody fight between the Capulets and the Montagues, each side defending the family honor and defying the laws of the state. Fighting like this could be in Shakespeare's London or, in modern day, on the streets of almost anywhere in the world. Look at Northern Ireland, Palestine, Afghanistan or even the "mean streets" in some of our cities in the United States.

WEST SIDE STORY, a relatively modern take-off of ROMEO AND JULIET, shows the mean streets of New York City. Even the film TITANIC has a touch of the ROMEO AND JULIET theme with **R**ose loving **J**ack and the hatred shown between two groups: the very rich and the very poor.

As long as humans continue in their quest for power, continue in their prejudices and hatred against those who are different, revenge will continue to be a prime motive in people's actions. Shakespeare's plays dealing with revenge will continue to fascinate audiences of today as they did in his Elizabethan times, mostly because the raw emotions of revenge and the actions these emotions bring remain universal to all.

Edgar Allan Poe's "Cask of Amontillado" is one of the best examples of revenge anyone could ever read. Montresor is obsessed with getting revenge on Fortunato, and he does this quite well. While ROMEO AND JULIET doesn't have quite that strong a dose of this "poison," it does include revenge throughout the play. In fact, revenge forms the basis of the plot. In an essay, discuss the idea of revenge in ROMEO AND JULIET and give two - three examples of how it helps to take the plot

to its end - to the deaths of Romeo and Juliet. Make sure you support these examples with examples from the play, along with the Act, scene, and specific lines. (I, ii, 3-10).