***Romeo and Juliet* Literary Essay**

**Thesis: The Nurse plays the role of Juliet’s mother and Friar acts like Romeo’s father:**

**Intro:**

"Simply having children does not make mothers" (Shedd). Both sets of parents in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* do not measure up as good parental figures. They may have brought their children into the world, but they do not provide the moral and emotional guidance necessary to deem them worthy of the title of parents. Because of this, Friar and Nurse assume the role of father and mother to Romeo and Juliet. Romeo and Juliet's parents are hands off parents, which allow Nurse and Friar to take on their duties. Romeo and Juliet reciprocate this love and affection.

**Topics:**

**I**. **Romeo and Juliet’s parents are hands off parents: not close emotionally to children**

i) Romeo's father does not know much about his son and why he feels the way he does. Needs Benvolio to be the middle man/liaison: Benvolio asks what is wrong with Romeo. Montague: "I neither know of it, nor can learn of him" (1.1.138).

ii) Lady Capulet is very uncomfortable talking to her own daughter about important issues: "This is the matter. Nurse give leave a while./We must talk in secret. Nurse come back again" (1.3.8-9).

iii) Lord Capulet will not accept that Juliet does not want to marry Paris. Calls her terrible names and wants to disown her for one thing done wrong in his eyes:

Hang thee, young baggage, disobedient wretch!

I tell thee what: get thee to church a'Thursday,

or after look me in the face.

Speak not, reply not, do not answer me! (3.5.160-4)

**II.** **Nurse does the motherly things for Juliet**

i) Nurses her from birth after losing own child (replacement baby): “Thou wast the

prettiest babe e’er I nursed” (1.3.61).

ii.) Warns Romeo not to hurt Juliet

iii) Motherly, protective instincts kick in when Capulet is being cruel and mean to

Juliet: “”God in heaven bless her!/ You are to blame, my lord, to rate her so”

(3.5.168-9).

**III.** **Friar Laurence treats Romeo with both tenderness and tough love (like a parent)**

i). Friar knows that Romeo fancies Rosaline when his own parents do not. He asks where Romeo spent the late hours: "God pardon sin! Wast thou with Rosaline?" (2.3.44).

ii) Friar does not hold back and spare Romeo's feelings when telling him to toughen up:

Hold they desperate hand!

Art thou a man? thy form cries out thou art:

Thy tears are womanish, thy wild acts denote

The unreasonable fury of a beast. (3.3.108-11)

iii) Friar will do whatever it takes to protect Romeo after the banishment, even hiding him: "Run to my study.-By and By!-God's will" (3.3.76).

**IV. Both Romeo and Juliet go to the Friar and Nurse for parental advice.**

i) Both Romeo and Juliet tell Friar and Nurse about the most important day in their lives (wedding day)

ii). Romeo flees to Friar's church when he is faced with the worst possible thing that has ever happened to him.

iii) Romeo and Juliet trust Friar to get them out of their predicament.

Conclusion:

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