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Family disobedience in Romeo and Juliet

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Romeo and Juliet is a play exploring many types of theme, including love, sadness, happiness and of course disobedience. Disobedience appeared many times throughout the play, whether it be the Capulets and the Montagues disobeying the prince by fighting or Romeo and Juliet defying their families and being with each other. However, Romeo and Juliet are not the only characters who disobeyed the family, Friar Laurence and the nurse both also disobeyed the two families throughout the play. ✓

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Of course, the reader knows Romeo and Juliet both disobeyed the families, but so did Friar Laurence and the nurse. One might wonder, how did the nurse disobey the Capulet family? The nurse obviously knows the Capulet family well enough to know they do not get along with the Montague clan. This would be enough for one to assume that Lord and Lady Capulet do not want any Capulet having anything to do with a Montague. The nurse disobeyed that rule by letting Romeo marry Juliet even though she had the chance to stop it. The nurse says, "Good heart and I' faith, will tell her as much" (2.4.166) after Romeo had already alerted the nurse of his plans of marrying Juliet and that he protests anything on one that may stop him. For the nurse to have obeyed the family, she could have warned Lord and Lady Capulet after Romeo alerted her, but she didn't. *no contractions* Although the nurse should have stopped this, Friar Laurence had the chance to stop it even before her. Romeo went to the Friar and told him that he was to marry Juliet and himself and the Friar said, "In one regret I'll thy assistant be" (2.3.90) meaning that even though he knows about the feud, he'll assist them in their marriage. Even though the nurse and the Friar disobeyed the families by not

warning them about Romeo and Juliet's plan to get married, Romeo did not alert his family that he was marrying a Capulet. ✓

Throughout the play, Romeo not only disobeyed his family, but also the nurse, his friends, the Capulets, and the Friar. Romeo clearly knew better than to try and marry a Capulet. The Montagues and the Capulets have not gotten along for a very long time. The tension between the Capulets and the Montagues has never been higher. In the past weeks, the Prince has threatened both families that if they were caught fighting again they would be killed. Mercutio from the Montague house had been slain by a Capulet, and Tybalt, who killed Mercutio was killed by Romeo. Romeo said before he fought Tybalt that "either thou or I or both must go with him (Mercutio)" (3.1.128) meaning he disobeyed the Prince, and the Capulets. If disobeying the Capulets and the Prince wasn't enough, he also disobeyed his own family. Romeo said to Friar Laurence, "Then plainly know my heart's dear love is set on the fair daughter of Rich Capulet" (2.3.57-58) this proves that Romeo knew Juliet was a Capulet, but had no intention of changing his plans to marry her because of it. However Romeo could not have been this disobedient if he hadn't met his wife, Juliet. ✓

Juliet is quite possibly the most disobedient character throughout the whole play. Juliet was also very aware of the two families' feuds with each other. Juliet knew Romeo was the one who killed Tybalt and knew that Lord and Lady Capulet hated Romeo. Juliet also knew that things were bad between the families, and that Lady Capulet devised a plan to kill Romeo. Juliet should have realized that her family would never approve of a Montague marrying their daughter. This did not stop Juliet, who to Romeo said, "If thou wilt not, be but sworn my love, and I'll no longer be a Capulet" (2.2.35-36) after asking Romeo to deny his name. Juliet also knew that her mother and father had arranged for her to marry Paris. Juliet however, had other plans. Juliet decided she would kill herself if she could not find a way

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out of the marriage. At this point Juliet went to the Friar for help. The Friar gave Juliet a potion that would make her appear dead for 40 hours, so that she would be placed in a tomb. Before drinking the potion Juliet says, "Shall I be married to-morrow morning? No, no; this shall forbid it. Lie thou there." (4.3.22-23) as she laid a dagger beside her. This means Juliet would indeed kill herself should the potion fail. Because Juliet disobeyed her family more than once, it shows that she had no care and no intention of obeying anyone at all.

The theme of disobedience is portrayed through multiple characters including the nurse, the Friar, Romeo and Juliet. The nurse and Friar had many opportunities to stop the marriage, but chose to disobey the families. Romeo could have done the right thing and not married someone from his family's enemy. Lastly, Juliet could have obeyed her family by marrying Paris, but instead married Romeo. This play shows that people are willing to do almost anything, including disobeying their own family, for love.

Works Cited

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Shakespeare, Harcourt. Ken Roy. Romeo and Juliet. Nelson Education. 1564-1616.

