



# **IGCSE Edexcel (9-1) English Literature**

## Romeo and Juliet: Character Profile The Friar

## FRIAR LAWRENCE

### INTRODUCTION

The Friar **enables** and **facilitates** most of the action within the play; he marries Romeo and Juliet, and also helps Juliet devise the plan to 'reunite' with Romeo after she is instructed to marry Paris.



### CHARACTER IN CONTEXT

- **Religion** - Although many of the characters use religious imagery, the Friar is the only character who **presents religion** in the play. Thus religion is portrayed as a rational and peaceful presence. Arguably though, Friar causes the death of the young lovers by helping Juliet stage her suicide - which could be an interpretation on the **dangers of religion** if not kept in check. Alternatively, it could suggest the polluting of religion which occurs when conflict (such as from the two families) arises.

### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- **POLITICAL / SCHEMING** - He intentionally marries Romeo and Juliet with the intention of ending the **civil tension** which was occurring between the Montagues and Capulets. This demonstrates that whilst he is neutral in stance within the conflict between the two families, he has an **agenda** of his own. This means when he helps Romeo and Juliet it isn't solely with the intention of helping two young lovers be united, instead he also wants to bring the two families back together.
- **TRUSTED** - Both the characters Romeo and Juliet frequently **seek guidance** throughout the play. This suggests that the Friar is a **neutral figure** between the two families and therefore can offer **rational** and **unbiased** help. However, the Friar does have an agenda - ending the civil strife in Verona. This means that though unintentional, his wish to end the conflict leads to the young lovers death. In this respect, he is to be trusted but is not wholly neutral.
- **WISE** - When Romeo reveals to the Friar that he wants to pursue Juliet instead of Rosaline, the Friar questions this sudden change. He is also shown to be a figure the two principal characters always turn to for **wisdom**. This may demonstrate his age or prowess in the realm of religion and the Church.

## RELATIONSHIPS



**Romeo** | The Friar acts as a **father figure** for Romeo. The Friar uses Romeo's relationship with Juliet to try and end the conflict occurring between the two families.

**Juliet** | The Friar helps Juliet come up with the plan to reunite with Romeo by pretending to commit suicide - however that backfires, and because of this, he unintentionally kills Juliet.

## THE FRIAR QUOTE BANK

QUOTE	EXTENDED ANALYSIS
<p><b><i>“Within the infant rind of this small flower/ Poison hath residence, and medicine power”</i></b> (A2S3)</p>	<p>By referencing <b>nature</b>, the Friar is revealing to the audience that there are positive and negative sides to everything, because plants can be used for both healing and poisonous purposes. This can be likened to the situation between the Capulets and Montagues; within opposition, Romeo and Juliet are still able to fall in love. It foreshadows the ending of the play</p>
<p><b><i>“For this alliance may so happy prove, // To turn your households’ rancor to pure love.”</i></b> (A2S4)</p>	<p>This quote displays the Friar’s good intentions, however in the end of the play he is proved wrong, as it is in fact the death of the two lovers which unites the Montagues and Capulets, instead of their marriage.</p>
<p><b><i>“For by your leaves, you shall not stay alone, Til Holy Church incorporate two in one.”</i></b> (A2S4)</p>	<p>A major theme of the novels is the imagery and reference to <b>pairings</b>, and naturally Romeo and Juliet’s relationship is the central pairing of the play. The phrase <b><i>“incorporate two in one”</i></b> reflects this <b>semantic field</b> of pairings, and suggests that the Friar is a <b>key motivator</b> in their relationship.</p>