

Fateful Lovers in William Shakespeare's Drama with Special Reference to 'The Merchant of Venice'

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Abstract

Proscribed love relationships destroy and thwart many characters from the works of the Bard, but no two ill-fated Shakespearean romances quite emulate one another like Romeo and Juliet from Romeo and Juliet and Lorenzo and Jessica from The Merchant of Venice. As confidential romance comes up from feuding families, both duos go through many obstructions with the purpose of pursuing their barred adoration. Yet the two associations start in similar conditions, their endings are extreme. At the same time as Romeo and Juliet dreadfully kill themselves, Lorenzo and Jessica live gleefully in the picturesque town of Belmont. In their endeavours to be as one, a difference comes up between the pairs - Romeo and Juliet symbolize the striking and excruciating principles of infatuation, whereas Lorenzo and Jessica recurrently emasculate the notion of perfect love. The researcher will concentrate on two persistent points - the balcony scene and the theme of physical exchange - to exhibit how Lorenzo and Jessica skilfully subvert and avoid the lovers' pitfalls that in due course incinerate Romeo and Juliet. Lorenzo and Jessica evade the beliefs of the perfect romance, as unfortunately exhibited by Romeo and Juliet, as a mode of endurance in their forbidden association.

Keywords: fateful, proscribed love relationships, ill-fated

Introduction

The overindulgence of a crush between ill-starred Romeo and Juliet is contrasted with Lorenzo and Jessica's warm mockery all through the plays' corresponding balcony scenes. While Romeo and Juliet exchange heavenly exclamations of love, Lorenzo and Jessica's adoring swap as they rob Shylock's home is a commotion of the conventional lover's conversation. Both the scenes take place on the nights of masquerades - in Romeo and Juliet, the episode takes place after a costume party, when the masks apparently come off, but in The Merchant of Venice, the episode takes place in the midst of the celebrations, turning the incident into an impersonation of a grand romance. When Romeo and Lorenzo beckon to the women on the balcony, Juliet and Jessica retort to the sound of their lovers' voices in a different style. Jessica enquires,

"Who are you? Tell me, for more certainty,
Albeit I'll swear that I do know your tongue"

(Merchant of Venice 2.6.27-28),

while Juliet pronounces,

"My ears have yet not drunk a hundred words
Of thy tongue's utterings, yet I know the sound.

Art thou not Romeo?"

(Romeo and Juliet 2.2.58-60).

Juliet instantaneously identifies the sound of her sweetheart, however, she has hardly spoken with him; Jessica has only an abstract idea of who she is communicating. Light makes one more contrast between the duos. Juliet's gleam and fairness is illustriously pointed up by Romeo, who associates Juliet to the "fair sun," and poetizes,

The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,

As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven

Would through the airy region stream so bright

That birds would sing and think it were not night” (Romeo and Juliet 2.2.19-22).

In comparison to Juliet’s illumined, female silhouette, Jessica, who has pretended herself as a man for the duos’ flee, desires that her lover does not notice her –

“I am glad ‘tis night, you do not look on me” (Merchant of Venice 2.6.35).

When Lorenzo solicits Jessica to be the torchbearer and light up his way, she reacts,

“I should be obscured” (Merchant of Venice 2.6.45).

When talking about their ancestral feud, Romeo and Juliet’s dreamy conversation is quite away from the grand theft executed by Lorenzo and Jessica. While the adoring Romeo takes an oath to disown his family name for Juliet –

“Call me but love and I’ll be new baptised,” Jessica banishes herself from her father by robbing part of his wealth (Romeo and Juliet 2.2.50).

As Juliet showers words of warmth and fondness on Romeo below, Jessica throws Lorenzo a basket of theft items. The actions of Lorenzo and Jessica may seem like sheer idiocy compared to the genuineness of Romeo and Juliet, but the end of the scenes exposes the efficacy of the couple’s subversion. Lorenzo and Jessica laugh as they leave together into the night and flee Venice. Romeo and Juliet eventually spend the night apart, with Juliet wishing Romeo a gloomy farewell –

“I should kill thee with much cherishing” (Romeo and Juliet 2.2.183).

By undermining the passionate precedent established by Romeo and Juliet, Lorenzo and Jessica accomplish while Romeo and Juliet fail.

The impracticable love that ushers Romeo and Juliet to do everything for one another in due course entices them into a hazardous system of bodily exchange, where the couple partakes in a deformed series of trades that end in their own lives being given up in order to be solemnized. Romeo and Juliet set up with the Prince of Verona announcing that if any Montague or Capulet disrupt the streets,

“Your lives shall pay for the forfeit of the peace” (Romeo and Juliet 1.1.93). The announcement fixes the ill-omened precedent of bodies befalling a means of compensation. Comments like,

“Any man

Should buy the fee-simple of my life” (Romeo and Juliet 3.1.29-30),

And

“Who now the price of his dear blood doth owe?” (Romeo and Juliet 3.1.179)

allows life in Verona set morals and integrity. The ill-fated duo instantly takes up the language of bodily transaction. Romeo initially associates Juliet with prized goods, addressing her as “a rich jewel” (Romeo and Juliet 1.5.45), and affirms his fondness by announcing,

“I am no pilot, yet wert thou as far

As that vast shore washed with the farthest sea,

I should adventure for such merchandise” (Romeo and Juliet 2.2.82-84).

As Romeo and Juliet turn into fast-falling lovers, their statements of admiration happen to be plagued with promises to replace one’s life with love. Romeo declares, upon learning Juliet is a Capulet, “My life is my foe’s debt” (Romeo and Juliet 1.5.117).

When the lovers have pulled more apart, Romeo pronounce,

“My life were better ended by their hat,

Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love” (Romeo and Juliet 2.2.77-78), while Juliet states, “Death,

not Romeo, take my maidenhead” (Romeo and Juliet 3.2.137). The pair is prompted to abandon their

bodies for their love. The last scene takes place when Juliet stages her own death in order to run away from her approaching marriage and unite Romeo in banish. What is intended to be a bogus contract of Juliet’s body for her love develops into disastrously genuine when Romeo, unaware of the ruse, kills himself in Juliet’s tomb - upon awakening and noticing her lover’s dead body, Juliet stabs herself. In the closing scene, the Capulet and Montague families erect gold statues of their children. The honour to the pair is an eerie aide memoir of their bodies’ concluding act as compensation. Romeo and Juliet’s unusual love comes at an exceptional price.

In a world that equally employs bodily business, Lorenzo and Jessica dodge the lover’s fortune of Romeo and Juliet by replacing the metaphorical charge of bodies with literal monetary payment.

Venice matches Verona's agreement of corporal commerce, as confirmed through Antonio's conformity to settle his financial debt with Shylock with a pound of his own flesh. Lorenzo and Jessica undermine the prospects of exchange by getting their liberty to love through actual coinage, taking a share of Jessica's father's wealth to support their escape to Belmont. Before leaving Venice with Lorenzo, Jessica covers up herself in her father's ducats: "I will make fast the doors, and gild myself / With some more ducats, and be with you straight" (Merchant of Venice 2.6.50-51). The representation of Jessica enveloped in coins imitates the golden statues of Romeo and Juliet, an impersonation of payment through the flesh. By fleeing to escape while gilded in coins, the duo ridicules the precedent of clandestine lovers replacing their bodies for their passion and devotion. After their nuptials, Lorenzo and Jessica converse a number of well-known literary romances that end in the death of one or both lovers - Troilus and Cressida, Pyramus and Thisbe, Media and Aeron, and the story of Dido - and mischievously put in themselves into the canon:

LORENZO: In such a night

Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.

JESSICA: In such a night

Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,
And ne'er a true one (Merchant of Venice 5.1.14-20).

Through their disturbance of bodily trade, Lorenzo and Jessica are competent to accomplish their outlawed intimate relationship and begin a life together.

Despite the fact that Lorenzo and Jessica's pretence and scorn of grand courtship ends in their victorious matrimony, their negation to contribute to idyllic love eventually hinders them from the apprehension of a real happy ever after. In the concluding scene of the play, as the couple ponder on their recent nuptials, Lorenzo begs Jessica to look at the beautiful night sky, affirming,

There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st

But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still choring to the young-eyed cherubins.

Such harmony is in immortal souls,
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay

Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it (Merchant of Venice 5.1.58-65).

Whereas Lorenzo accepts the exquisiteness of the heavens, he also admits that the duo, in their possible form, cannot actually recognize its amusements. The scrutiny becomes a sour-sweet statement on Lorenzo and Jessica's association in the perspective of an aspiration Juliet makes whilst waiting for Romeo to accompany her on their bridal night:

Give me my Romeo, and when I shall die,

Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine

That all the world will be in love with night (Romeo and Juliet 3.2.21-24)

Even though their obsession averts them from having a life together on Earth, Romeo and Juliet's readiness to offer their "muddy vestures" for each other permits them to undergo an unearthly love. Lorenzo and Jessica eventually decide not to do that sacrifice. By staying alive through imitation of love, the pair is ordained to only obtain an imitation of its ecstasy. Yet while they may be unable to pamper in divine glee, there is yet worth in Lorenzo and Jessica's adoration. Soon after in the closing scene, Portia and Nerissa make a fascinating comment when they notice a light from the hall where Lorenzo and Jessica are dwelling that enlarges the duo's association:

PORTIA: That light we see burning in my hall!

How far that little candle throws his beams!

So shines a good deed in a naughty world

NERISSA: When the moon shone we did not see the candle

PORTIA: So doth the greater glory dim the less:

A substitute shines brightly as a king

Until a king be by (Merchant of Venice 5.1.89-95)

At the same time as the women happen to be demeaning the result of the flame by believing it is a replication of the moon, there is yet an acknowledgement of the appearance of the candle's existence. Lorenzo and Jessica do not symbolize a myth romance - in contrast to unions like Romeo and Juliet, their love only twinkles so brightly. However, the life of Lorenzo and Jessica's earthly love still offers a glow to an otherwise gloomy world.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, we can say that the two ill-fated Shakespearean romances quite emulate one another like Romeo and Juliet from Romeo and Juliet and Lorenzo and Jessica from The Merchant of Venice. Both the couple admires one another but undergo hardship for loving without condition and being honest in love.

References

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