**Overly dramatic teenegers with their hormones raging - How romantic**

Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* intertwines beginnings and endings.  Each beginning defines the end of something else, and out of each ending a new beginning emerges.

From the play’s very first words, Shakespeare tells us that an old grudge between, “Two households, both alike in dignity,” will “break to new mutiny,” ending a period of uneasy peace and beginning a new conflict, “Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.”  By making the first foot of line 1 a spondee rather than an iamb Shakespeare purposely emphasizes the word "two" in this opening of his story about two lovers.

 By making a trochee of “break to” he emphasizes the break in time and the break in rhythm. Change is afoot.

He writes of the ancient enmity of two families, and immediately tells us of impending conflict, but this is the story of two young lovers, one from each of the families, and their love does not encompass their entire families.  Their new love fails to unite the clans.

Through most of the first act we see Romeo, a member of the Montague family, infatuated with Rosaline, a niece of the head of the Capulet clan, whose family is in an unexplained and ancient feud with his own.  We never see Rosaline giving him a second thought, perhaps even a first, and has chosen the convent over any man.  Romeo is heart-broken, exclaiming, “She hath forsworn to love, and in that vow / Do I live dead that live to tell it now,” (Romeo and Juliet, 25) to which Romeo’s friend Mercutio comments: "That same pale, hard-hearted wench, that Rosaline, torments him so that he will sure run mad." (Romeo and Juliet, 25)

Romeo’s cousin Benvolio convinces him to sneak into a Capulet masquerade party, although Romeo agrees to come along so he can watch Rosaline, if only from a distance.  He moping about the party, until the instant he sees Juliet and is so struck by her beauty that he asks a miscellaneous serving man, “Did my heart love 'till now?  Forswear it, sight / For I ne'er saw true beauty 'til this night.” (Romeo and Juliet, 53) So ends Romeo’s hopeless infatuation with and Rosaline, he quickly puts her out of his mind, and so begins his new-found affection for Juliet, which seems to reveal a boy more in love with the idea of love than one in love with either Rosaline or Juliet.  Indeed, the fact that both women are Capulets, a family with which his family has an ongoing feud, might suggest that Romeo starts out loving the idea of doomed romance, and the prospect of overcoming impossible odds, more than either girl.  And yet, Juliet, unlike Rosaline, reciprocates his flash of affection, and she gives her heart to Romeo, a new beginning that ends her affection for her betrothed, Paris.

When they first speak, they speak in poetry, a sonnet, an indication of their love for one another, of how the words spoken by each perfectly complements the word spoken by the other, as never could happen with Rosaline or Paris.

Throughout the sonnet, Romeo constantly compares his love for Juliet to a religious experience and uses religious imagery.  When they first meet, he calls her a “saint,” saying “O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do.  They pray; grant thou, lest faith turn to despair” (Romeo and Juliet, 57)and himself a pilgrim coming to worship at her shine and implying that he would really enjoy “worshiping” her body.  Racy stuff, scandalous even.  Romeo even says his hand would be “blessed” if only it touched the divine Juliet's own.

Romeo and Juliet, begin the story both bound by commitments to their own families.  Romeo is infatuated with Rosaline, but we never see him speak with her.  He stays within the bounds of Verona’s conventions, and those of the Montague family.  When we meet Juliet, she is committed to following the dictates of the Capulet clan, promised to Paris in marriage.

All the ends when Romeo and Juliet meet, and their meeting ends Juliet’s dutiful obedience to the wishes of her mother and father and the beginning of her determination to make independent decisions, and control - or try to control - her own destiny.

She falls for the one boy her family would forbid her to marry after being promised to the relatively older Paris and telling her mother that marriage is  an honor that she“dream not of,”(Romeo and Juliet, 39) but that she will “look to like, if looking liking move. /But no deep will I endart mine eye / than your consent gives strength to make it fly.”(Romeo and Juliet, 40)

Once Juliet meets Romeo her lines double and she becomes more of her own person, sharing her ideas, and being more than the one-dimensional child who does whatever her mother desires.  Her speech becomes much more intelligent and witty rather than her previous “madam, I am here.  What is your will?” (Romeo and Juliet, 38)

The pair, who began tied to their clans but apart from each other have, but by chance they become attached to each other and apart from their clans. They start tied to others - they end bound to one another, if only by infatuation. They start in a society in uneasy but cold peace between the Montagues and the Capulets but at peace - that ends as they begin their romance. As a result Romeo and Juliet start tied to their clans and end separated from their clans. Each beginning defines the end of something else, and out of each ending a new beginning emerges.