



Understanding Romeo and Juliet: A Student Casebook to Issues, Sources, and Historical Documents (The Greenwood Press "Literature in Context" Series)

Alan Hager

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The tragic love story of Romeo and Juliet has touched the hearts of young and old for nearly four hundred years. In this work, Alan Hager has compiled a rich collection of primary materials and contemporary ranging from information about the earliest performances of *Romeo and Juliet* to discussions of suicide in the 1990s. Designed to help students of the play, *Understanding Romeo and Juliet* highlights many different aspects of the play's context. Such aspects include a discussion about religions of love in the East and West, and examination of vendetta and collective violence, and an analysis of the play in the context of classical and medieval thought. Hager relates the work to issues as recent as the so-called Werther Syndrome (copycat suicide based on fictional models) and as remote as the notion of reincarnated love such as that of Rama and Sita in the Sanskrit epic *Ramayana*.

Following a literary analysis of the play, the casebook provides commentary and primary documents on the narrative backgrounds and sources of the play and selections from those sources; a discussion of its performance history on stage, in opera and film; the historical context of the play as an exploration of the nature of love, with selections from poetry of the period; and selections on real-life parallels, such as present-day Bosnia, the recent Leonardo DiCaprio-Claire Danes film of the play, and teen suicide in the 1990s, all of which will help readers to relate to the play. Each section of the work closes with topics for class discussion and papers and suggested works for further reading.

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