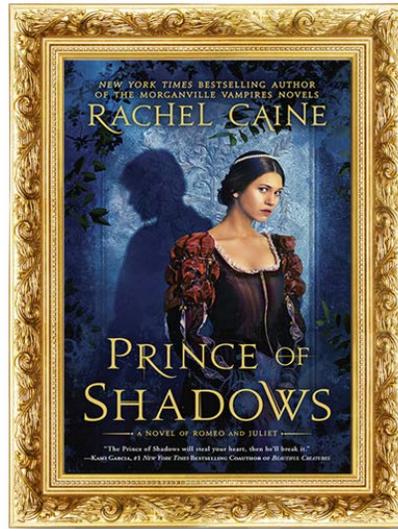


A Teacher's Guide for



PRINCE OF SHADOWS



A novel of Romeo and Juliet

by

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About the Book



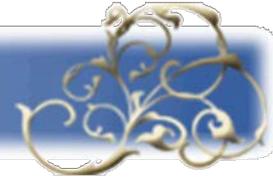
Prince of Shadows is a retelling of the classic Shakespeare play, but with a twist: Benvolio, Romeo's cousin, is the point of view character, and events are filtered through his unique perspective. *Prince of Shadows* also includes a key character only mentioned in the original play – Rosaline, Romeo's first passionate love he later forgets in favor of Juliet.

Rachel Caine chose to integrate historical attitudes and class structure into this richly detailed story, which helps bring the setting, characters and situations vividly to life.

A key resource for her research was *Murder of a Medici Princess* by Catherine P. Murphy, which is a great source of information about daily life in Renaissance Italy, and very informative about the roles and restrictions of both men and women of the time.



Play to Novel



PLAY	NOVEL
<p align="center">ACT I: Prologue</p>	<p align="center">Prologue</p> <p>The prologue of the novel helps illustrate the text of the play's description of "two households, both alike in dignity," as well as "ancient grudge to new mutiny" in the form of Benvolio's hatred for the sleeping Tybalt as he steals from the Capulet's treasures.</p>
<p align="center">ACT I: Scene 1</p> <p>A conversation between Samson and Gregory of House Capulet, in which they spar in dialogue about their own roles in the conflict, and discuss how they would hurt both their enemy's soldiers as well as any woman in an enemy's household ("I will take the wall of any man or maid of Montague"). A suggestion is made about treating Montague's women brutally ("I will show myself a tyrant: when I have fought with the men, I will be cruel with the maids, and cut off their heads."). In this, Samson is referring not to actual beheading but sexual assault.</p>	<p>Benvolio has witnessed an actual instance of this at Tybalt's hands before the Prologue begins, when he sees the aftermath of an attack on a Montague servant girl. Later, in Quarto 1, there is this exchange:</p> <p>"I've heard bravos boasting in the streets of making free with Capulet women. Have you come to prove yourself as bold?" (Rosaline)</p> <p>"It is not how I fight my battles, threatening women. Though I have heard your own house's hired killers say they would take the wall of any man or maid of Montague's. What wall do you think they meant, for the maids?" (Benvolio)</p>
<p align="center">ACT I: Scene 1</p> <p>Abraham and Sampson's exchange: "Do you bite your thumb at us sir?" escalates to a full confrontation between House Montague and House Capulet, drawing in Romeo, Benvolio, Tybalt, Prince Escalus, and the two heads of both houses. It also serves to establish Romeo's obsession with a girl, Rosaline, to whom he writes poetry.</p>	<p align="center">QUARTO 1</p> <p>Because the novel explores the relationship between the two houses in much more detail, as well as the dynamics of each family, Quarto 1 is devoted to establishing much of that content. This stretches the timeline of the play, allowing Romeo's love for Rosaline to continue for some time before this confrontation occurs.</p> <p>Actual confrontation with the Capulets occurs in Quarto 2.</p>

PLAY	NOVEL
	<p style="text-align: center;">QUARTO 2</p> <p>The first open confrontation between the forces of Montague and Capulet occurs and follows the events of this scene in the play for several pages – the fight between the two houses, the arrival of Prince Escalus, Montague and Capulet and their ladies, and Benvolio’s discussion with Romeo of his cousin’s still-burning love for Rosaline.</p> <p>Mercutio’s family have announced his (unwilling) marriage. Mercutio is desperate to escape it but his lover Tomasso refuses to see him, and he won’t leave Verona without him.</p> <p>It all goes terribly wrong when Mercutio’s father publicly hangs Mercutio’s lover and beats his son almost to death, and Romeo and Benvolio are helpless to rescue him. What’s worse is that Benvolio realizes his sister Veronica is the one who betrayed Mercutio, out of petty revenge.</p> <p>Mercutio’s grief and rage turn him bitter and violent in his quest for his own vengeance. It casts a new light on his famous Queen Mab speech delivered in Act I, Scene 4, which is recast as a diary entry in the novel.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">ACT I: Scene 2</p> <p>Capulet and Paris discuss Paris’s upcoming engagement to Juliet, and dispatch a servant to carry word of the masked party to guests. However, the servant can’t read, and Benvolio and Romeo intercept the invitation and decide to attend.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">QUARTO 3</p> <p>All is not well in Verona. Mercutio heals in body, but is broken in mind and spirit. Nevertheless, he is married (unhappily). Benvolio throws himself into ever more risky thieving. Romeo continues to long for Rosaline, which maddens Mercutio still further.</p> <p>Benvolio meets Rosaline in secret, but she is on her way to a convent, and he believes it will be their last, bittersweet parting. Romeo and Benvolio quarrel over Romeo’s obsession with Rosaline.</p> <p>When they overhear the conversation between Capulet and Paris about Juliet’s engagement party, Mercutio prods them into attending.</p> <p>This fits with Grandmother Montague’s desire for vengeance against Capulet, and she approves of their plan to infiltrate the party. Mercutio plans to take unpleasant actions, and Romeo wants to cast eyes on Rosaline.</p>

PLAY	NOVEL
<p>ACT I: Scene 3 Juliet, her mother and the nurse discuss her upcoming engagement to Count Paris.</p>	<p>This scene was omitted from the novel because it was unlikely Benvolio would either have heard of it, or be present for any part of the conversation.</p>
<p>ACT I: Scene 4 Romeo, Mercutio and Benvolio travel to the Capulet party in disguise. Mercutio gives his famous Mab speech.</p>	<p>This scene is freely adapted, and the speech cut short (though part is quoted in the letter referenced above).</p>
<p>ACT I: Scene 5 The Capulet's party. Romeo almost immediately spots Juliet and they fall instantly and madly in love, triggering the rest of the tragedy. Tybalt recognizes Romeo by his voice and wants to start trouble, but his uncle forces him to stay his hand.</p>	<p>Ironically, though Romeo has adored Rosaline for so long, he does not recognize her at the party. As Friar Lawrence notes in Act II Scene 3, he was in love with an illusion.</p> <p>Benvolio does recognize Rosaline, and is shocked to see her there. Tybalt brought her home, believing the convent she chose was too lenient. She is still to be cloistered, but in a more conservative order. Benvolio's feelings for Rosaline begin to make themselves truly known.</p> <p>Romeo meets Juliet, and the ominous signs of Mercutio's curse begin.</p>
<p>PROLOGUE The Chorus sets the scene for the upcoming events.</p>	<p>QUARTO 4 Veronica's upcoming wedding adds to the sense of impending disaster.</p>
<p>ACT II: Scene 1 Benvolio and Mercutio seek Romeo near Capulet's palace, but Romeo avoids them by climbing the wall into the garden (orchard).</p>	<p>Benvolio sees Romeo on his way to an assignation with Juliet one dark night, but chances on Mercutio, who is also taking deadly risks with his life out of sheer rage and despair. Mercutio's dialogue from the play is shortened but largely correct, and has overtones of anger and self-loathing given the events Benvolio has witnessed.</p>
<p>ACT II: Scene 2 Romeo and Juliet's famous balcony scene.</p>	<p>Benvolio finds Romeo (missing the balcony scene, except for a small glimpse) and takes him safely home. He worries that Romeo's passion is all out of proportion to reality, and begins to fear some kind of evil influence when their argument escalates to real violence.</p> <p>Benvolio writes to Rosaline to discover whether or not Juliet is displaying equally strange behavior.</p>

PLAY	NOVEL
<p align="center">ACT II: Scene 3</p> <p>Friar Lawrence speaks with Romeo and learns that he has forgotten Rosaline and instead is desperately in love with Juliet.</p>	<p>Grandmother Montague has discovered Romeo's secret as well, and warns Benvolio that he must prevent this ill-advised love affair or be betrayed as the Prince of Shadows. Benvolio has no choice but to try. Romeo eludes him (to meet with Friar Lawrence) though Benvolio doesn't know where he's gone.</p> <p>Benvolio learns of the presence of a witch in the city, recently arrived and proficient with spells and potions.</p> <p>He meets Mercutio, who is in a fey mood, while his servant Balthasar searches for the witch.</p>
<p align="center">ACT II: Scene 4</p> <p>Mercutio and Benvolio spot Romeo, and engage in some typical taunts; Juliet's nurse arrives and Romeo asks her to carry word to Juliet to meet him at Friar Lawrence's cell (room at the monastery) to be wed.</p>	<p>The novel follows this scene fairly closely, though Benvolio doesn't hear Romeo's exchange with the nurse. Romeo gives him the slip.</p> <p>Benvolio reasons out that Romeo has gone to see Friar Lawrence.</p>
<p align="center">ACT II: Scene 5</p> <p>Juliet's nurse tells her of Romeo's request. Juliet goes to meet him.</p>	<p>This scene is omitted for the novel.</p>
<p align="center">ACT II: Scene 6</p> <p>Romeo and Juliet meet Friar Lawrence to be married in secret.</p>	<p>This occurs off-stage for the novel, while Benvolio searches for Friar Lawrence. He finds the monk shortly after the marriage has been performed.</p> <p>Benvolio meets the witch while searching for Romeo, but before he can uncover her secret, he is recognized by a man he stole from – a Capulet loyalist. A dizzying chase through Verona's streets sends him and Mercutio, whom he meets on the way, directly into the Capulets.</p>

PLAY	NOVEL
<p style="text-align: center;">ACT III: Scene 1</p> <p>Mercutio and Benvolio run afoul of Tybalt and his men. Mercutio presses to fight, and when Tybalt obliges, Romeo intervenes and tries to smooth it over. Mercutio is stabbed in the confusion. Benvolio takes him off stage to die, and Romeo and Tybalt fight. Romeo kills Tybalt and is forced to flee into immediate exile. Benvolio defends his actions to Prince Escalus, Capulet and Montague.</p>	<p>This scene runs very closely in parallel to the play, with one exception – we follow Benvolio as he carries Mercutio to a nearby shelter (the witch’s small room). The witch tries to help, but Mercutio dies. His last words – <i>A plague on both your houses</i> – haunt Benvolio, who realizes that they are meant to be taken literally.</p> <p>Mercutio, with the witch’s help, has cast a very real curse on Capulet ... but the wording of the curse, naming “the enemy” rebounds on both houses because of Veronica’s involvement in his betrayal.</p> <p>Benvolio must go back to help Romeo, and finds him fighting Tybalt. He’s too late to stop the inevitable, and Tybalt is killed. Benvolio explains events to the Prince, his uncle, and Capulet and his wife.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">ACT III: Scene 2</p> <p>Juliet’s nurse brings word of the fight and Tybalt’s death, and Romeo’s banishment.</p>	<p>This scene is omitted for the novel.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">ACT III: Scene 3</p> <p>Romeo, in hiding at Friar Lawrence’s cell, learns that Juliet is in despair, and makes a plan to go to her that night before leaving the city.</p>	<p>This scene is omitted for the novel.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">ACT III: Scene 4</p> <p>Paris and Capulet discuss hastening the marriage with Juliet.</p>	<p>This scene is omitted for the novel. In its place, Benvolio speaks with his mother about the day’s events, and realizes that in Romeo’s exile he has become the heir of Montague – a position he never wanted. Worse, he has his sister’s wedding fast approaching, and a blood-hungry Capulet mob just waiting for the chance to strike.</p> <p>He scouts the city in his guise as Prince of Shadows, looking for any sign of his cousin’s departure ... and discovers the worst: Romeo never left. He is in the Capulet palace, with Juliet. Benvolio has no choice but to steal into his enemy’s house and seek Rosaline’s help, but they discover it is too late to prevent the consummation of Romeo and Juliet’s marriage. It’s done. The worst has happened.</p> <p>Benvolio finds himself falling in love with Rosaline, but they resist acting on their feelings, and he escapes. Still, they both suspect there is more to this than true love – some force driving Romeo and Juliet together ... and possibly even them.</p>

PLAY	NOVEL
<p align="center">ACT III: Scene 5</p> <p>The next morning, Romeo departs from Juliet's chambers to go into exile. Juliet learns from her parents that her marriage to Paris is proceeding quickly, and sends to Friar Lawrence for counsel, intending to escape the impending marriage or die.</p>	<p>This scene is omitted for the novel. Instead, the timeline is slightly elongated, and Veronica's wedding procession departs for her triumphant occasion. The Capulets are ready, and attack in force. There are casualties, and Veronica herself is killed in the confusion. A Capulet page is hanged for her murder.</p> <p>Juliet's nurse, who often carries messages in the play, does double duty here and carries Rosaline's message to Benvolio, asking him to meet her in the church.</p>
<p align="center">ACT IV: Scene 1</p> <p>Juliet chances on Paris when coming to see Friar Lawrence, then speaks to the Friar about her desire to die if she cannot have Romeo. He gives her the drug to simulate death by, and promises to send word to Romeo.</p>	<p>This scene is omitted for the novel. Instead, Rosaline and Benvolio meet under the guise of side-by-side prayer, and discuss the idea of a curse between their families. They are both convinced it exists.</p> <p>Benvolio seeks out the witch and finds her with Friar Lawrence; she is the one who provided the drug he gives to Juliet. The witch – cousin to Mercutio's hanged lover -- confesses finally to working a curse for Mercutio, a love curse, built in three parts. One part broke when Mercutio died, but there is a written part (Mercutio's diary) and a rosary belonging to his dead lover that Benvolio must find and destroy to stop the rush of oncoming tragedy.</p> <p>Friar Lawrence tells him of the drug he has given to Juliet for her simulated death.</p>
<p align="center">ACT IV: Scene 2</p> <p>Servants prepare for the wedding, and Juliet pretends to be resigned to her fate.</p>	<p>This scene is omitted for the novel.</p>
<p align="center">ACT IV: Scene 3</p> <p>Juliet, in her chambers, says goodbye to her mother and takes the drug.</p>	<p>This scene is omitted for the novel.</p>
<p align="center">ACT IV: Scene 4</p> <p>The Capulets' servants prepare for the wedding feast, and Capulet tells them to summon Juliet.</p>	<p>This scene is omitted for the novel.</p>

PLAY	NOVEL
<p style="text-align: center;">ACT IV: Scene 5</p> <p>The nurse and Lady Capulet discover Juliet's body. Her father is summoned. Friar Lawrence arrives with Paris.</p>	<p>This scene is omitted for the novel. Veronica's wedding goes badly wrong, resulting in her death at Capulet hands. Benvolio accompanies his sister's body to her tomb, and then prevails on Mercutio's father to let him keep a few things from Mercutio's possessions.</p> <p>Mercutio's father and Benvolio clash over Mercutio's memory, and Benvolio finds the hidden diary, which he reads. He burns it to destroy the curse penned inside its pages, and finds that the rest of Mercutio's belongings were given to the church.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">ACT V: Scene 1</p> <p>Romeo, in Mantua, learns (wrongly) that Juliet has died. He purchases poison from a local apothecary and sets out to die by Juliet's side.</p>	<p>This scene is omitted for the novel. Instead, we follow Benvolio, who enters the priest's house to retrieve Mercutio's rosary, only to be discovered and captured as the Prince of Shadows. On his way to unmasking and imprisonment, or worse, he escapes and is hidden by a stranger who protects him ... Rosaline, dressed as a boy. Benvolio is shocked to see her outside of the Capulet walls, and sees her safely home. The attraction between them has reached agonizing levels.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">ACT V: Scene 2</p> <p>Friar Lawrence learns to his horror that his letter informing Romeo that Juliet lives and waits for him was never delivered. He rushes to the site of her tomb.</p>	<p>Benvolio has taken Friar Lawrence's word that Romeo would get word of Juliet's pretend-death, but he is present when the Friar gets word that the letter has gone astray, and accompanies the monk to the tomb.</p>

PLAY	NOVEL
<p style="text-align: center;">ACT V: Scene 3</p> <p>Count Paris comes to Juliet's tomb to pay respects, and encounters Romeo. They fight, and Romeo kills Paris. He enters the tomb and takes poison by Juliet's side. Friar Lawrence arrives too late, and discovers the scene. He is forced to leave because the guards are coming, and Juliet takes Romeo's dagger and kills herself out of grief. The families of both Montague and Capulet gather with Prince Escalus and vow to put their differences aside in the name of their dead children.</p>	<p>Friar Lawrence and Benvolio discover Count Paris dead, and Benvolio lingers long enough to hear Juliet's suicide; there is madness in the air, and he can feel the curse taking true hold of him. All of Verona is in the grip of fear and madness that night, and he races through the streets in desperate need to be with Rosaline. He knows it is not all his own emotion, but he knows some part of it is still true.</p> <p>Rosaline locks her door against him, and they together puzzle out that Mercutio (posing as Romeo) sent the last part of the curse – the rosary – here to her, as the one he blamed most for his betrayal. Rosaline had gifted it to Juliet's nurse, who has been struck dead by it in another room.</p> <p>In a great act of will, Benvolio forces himself to leave Rosaline and faces the curse directly. He is taken prisoner by the Capulets after.</p> <p>Benvolio is taken to trial before Prince Escalus. Rosaline presents an impassioned defense, and wins him his freedom and her hand. Angered, his grandmother betrays him, revealing him as the Prince of Shadows (a death warrant) but she is thwarted by Benvolio's mother and uncle, who have her declared insane.</p> <p>There is still tragedy, but in Rosaline and Benvolio's story there is also a happy ending.</p>

Blending the Language



Rachel Caine faced a daunting task in translating Shakespeare both from a different perspective, but for a modern audience. Most writers elect to solve this by shifting the time period to modern day, which allows for a freer hand with language and behavior, but she wanted to portray the play in its rich historical setting.

To that end, she analyzed the play for speeches and lines that could be worked seamlessly into the dialogue. Here is a partial list of the dialogue that was adapted from the play and integrated into the novel:

- They say women may fall when there's no strength in men, you know! (Veronica) – **Found in Act 2 Scene 3 (Friar Lawrence)**
- Ah, coz, I was in contemplation of peerless beauty, but it is a beauty that saddens. She is too fair, too wise, wisely too fair, since she refuses to hear my suit. (Romeo) – **Found in Act 1 Scene 1 (Romeo)**
- I shall not cheapen her name in such company, but in sadness, cousin, I do love a woman. (Romeo) – **Found in Act 1 Scene 1 (Romeo)**
- Mercutio had once refused to race off with my cousin, calling it a wild-goose chase, and Romeo had -- rightly -- declared that Mercutio was never there for us without also being there for the goose. (Benvolio) – **Found in Act 2 Scene 4 (Romeo)**
- “Your cousin reads by rote and cannot spell.” (Rosaline) – **Found in Act 2 Scene 4 (Friar Lawrence)**
- “He jests at scars who never felt a wound, fool.” (Benvolio) – **Found in Act 2 Scene 2 (Romeo)**
- “Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?” (Abraham) - **Found in Act 1 Scene 1 (Abraham)**

There are many more instances of this within the novel. For the purposes of story flow, Caine often elected to shift dialogue to different characters, or have it spoken in different scenes or settings. Wherever possible, she attempted to replicate the general mood of Shakespeare without using exact speech patterns, giving it a more accessible and modern flavor.

In addition, she occasionally (as treats for Shakespeare lovers) sprinkled in quotes from other plays when appropriate, such as:

- “Good night, sweet prince, thou poxy son of a dog.” (Adapted from Hamlet)
- “Never kind, and no kin of yours.” (Adapted from Hamlet)
- “A hit! A palpable hit!” (Adapted from Hamlet)



Sample class question

What are some elements Rachel Caine took from other Shakespeare plays to blend into the story of Benvolio?

Sample answers:

Curses and witches – Macbeth

Ghosts – Macbeth, Hamlet, Julius Caesar, Richard III

Girls dressed as boys – Antony and Cleopatra, The Merchant of Venice, As You Like It, Twelfth Night, Much Ado About Nothing

Points of View



The key to writing interesting and engaging characters, whether they are to be seen as heroes or villains, is to believe that each of them, in their mind, is the hero of his or her own story. Their actions are driven by what they think is good – either for themselves, or for others.

- **Benvolio** is driven by the need to be loyal to his family and friends, but control some part of his own life. He fulfills this need by becoming the Prince of Shadows, and using that persona both to direct his own destiny and act to right perceived injustices against those he loves. In the beginning it's a game to him, but one that quickly becomes deadly serious as the stakes continue to rise.
- **Veronica** accepts the reality of the world around her, and believes that ruthless manipulation is the only way to ensure her own survival and freedom. She's not afraid to hurt others, but sees it as inner strength in a dog-eat-dog world.
- **Rosaline** is at the mercy of her angry, abusive brother, she is reconciled to being sent away to a convent, but wants to control *where* she's sent in order to have the relative freedom to study and learn. She's practical, and understands the consequences of outright rebellion – yet she's drawn to Benvolio and wants more.
- **Mercutio** is, in many ways, more of a romantic than Romeo. He is deeply in love and can't face the immovable truth that he and his lover Tomasso will never be accepted or allowed to be together. When that hope is destroyed by his lover's violent murder, Mercutio's quest for revenge is his only way to express his grief and loss.

These four are the prime movers of the story, and each has a unique perspective that *could* be written as the main character ... yet it would be a very different book from each perspective.

Prince of Shadows can be a way to illustrate to students how every character in a Shakespeare play, no matter how incidental, can take on depth and life if allowed their own stage and perspective.

Sample class exercise



Choose a minor character from *Prince of Shadows* and write a short scene from his or her point of view about things going on around them. Examples include a servant in the Capulet household, Benvolio's servant, one of Montague's soldiers, one of Grandmother Montague's attendants, etc.

About Rachel Caine



Rachel is the *New York Times*, *USA Today* and #1 internationally bestselling author of more than forty novels, including the popular Morganville Vampire young adult series. *Prince of Shadows* is her first stand-alone young adult novel.

To request her for an event, signing, school or library visit, please email her directly at rachelcainewriter@gmail.com.

She does not charge speaking fees for schools or libraries as a matter of policy.



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