



## Romeo and Juliet

*William Shakespeare (1564 - 1616)*

Read by:	Multiple readers	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
Length:	3 hours 8 minutes	Catalog:	DB-1125
Language:	English	UPC:	0683422134463
Style:	Dramatic	MSLP:	\$9.99
Genre:	Plays, Tragedy		

*Romeo and Juliet* is the quintessential tragic romance and its title characters are the model for star-crossed lovers everywhere. Written early in his career, it is one of the earliest tragedies, one of his most popular during his lifetime, and one of the most frequently performed to this day. The play showcases Shakespeare's skill in using dramatic techniques: switching between comedy and tragedy, use of different poetic forms for different characters, expanding the role of minor characters and using sub-plots to embellish the story.

The tragic disconnect between the lovers stems from the feud between their families, the Capulets and Montagues. Romeo and Juliet meet by chance at a Capulet ball that Romeo has crashed and fall in love at first sight and pledge themselves to one another. Juliet's cousin Tybalt challenges Romeo to a duel for the offense of attending the ball. Romeo refuses, but his friend Mercutio accepts in his stead and is killed in a mishap. Romeo slays Tybalt in response and is exiled from Verona by the Prince. Juliet's father betroths her to Count Paris but she resists and seeks help from Friar Laurence, who gives her a sleeping potion so she can feign death and sends a message to Romeo about the plan. The message never arrives, Romeo is grief-struck, kills Paris in a case of mistaken identity, drinks poison and dies. Juliet awakes, finds Romeo dead, and stabs herself to death. The families arrive to find all three dead and reconcile. The elegy by the Prince says it all: "For never was a story of more woe / Than this of Juliet and her Romeo."

**William Shakespeare** (April 26, 1564 – April 23, 1616) was an English playwright and poet widely considered as the world's greatest dramatist and the greatest writer in the English language. He produced 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two narrative poems and other verse, most between the years 1589 and 1613. His earlier works consist mostly of comedies and histories, considered as some of the best work ever done in these genres. He turned to tragedies from about 1600 until about 1608, producing *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth* in this phase, considered the finest works in English. His last phase brought us the tragicomedies and romances such as *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. All but two of his plays were collected in the First Folio in 1623.

Little is known of his personal life apart from his marriage to Anne Hathaway at age 18, his three children, and his work as an actor and part owner of the King's Men theatre company in addition to his writing. The paucity of information has led to speculation about his appearance, beliefs, sexuality, and even the authenticity of his works. He retired to Stratford in 1613 and died three years later.