

What is your opinion of the role and character of Friar Lawrence in this play? You should look closely at language, actions and other characters' opinions in your answer.

Clear and fairly comprehensive initial statement which keeps the question in focus.

Friar Lawrence is portrayed to be a somewhat dynamic character whose main role in the play is to help the plot along by providing a means for Romeo and Juliet to address their concerns, get married and also to reconcile, following Romeo's banishment. The Friar is introduced in Act 2 Scene 3 picking flowers and herbs outside his cell. The Friar muses to himself that, like people even flowers can be categorised into both 'good and evil' as can be seen from the line 'poison has residence and medicine power' in reference to the 'infant rind' of a 'weak flower.' Furthermore the Friar also extends his thoughts on life to all aspects of nature; 'the grey eyed morn smiles on the frowning night/Checking the Eastern clouds with streaks of light.'

Introduces the character well using a quotation that is then analysed.

An engaging observation

Above it can be seen that the first impression of Friar Lawrence is that of an aged man who has seen the world for what it is. His experience and advice is much admired, which is why (in this scene) Romeo visits him. This idea of the Friar being an agony aunt who offers advice to everyone's problems is an ongoing theme (time and time again he is visited for confessions, as his role as a Friar would presume).

When hearing of Romeo's desire to marry Juliet the friar is understandably irritated since it has only been a few days since Romeo's last visit where it can be understood that they have talked about Rosaline. His frustration is reflected in the line, "is Rosaline that thou did lovest so dear/ so soon forsaken?"

Well chosen quotation to support summary

Interesting point aligning the Friar with the audience in terms of perspective.

He also seems to have picked up, as the audience also have, on the superficiality of Romeo's love for Rosaline as can be seen by the line, "for doting, not loving, pupil mine." Despite his obvious concerns the friar eventually agrees to marry the two, saying that a marriage would hopefully end the households feud: "for this alliance may so happy prove/ to turn your households ranker to pure love."

Good point—briefly refers to the imagery associated with the Friar and the play in general and contextualises it to the character

From this first meeting the audience are given a small insight as to the role and character of the friar. He has his own unique interpretations of the world as being one of opposites- poison and medicine, light and dark; perhaps routing from his Christian faith- heaven and hell. Nevertheless his thoughts are clearly appreciated by the younger characters in the play, such as Romeo who it can be seen, visits him regularly. Having said this his image of an aged experienced friar his somewhat tarnished by his naivety in readily agreeing to marry the two- having heard the prologue, the audience will already know that it will take far more than a marriage to end the feud; this ultimately indicates that the friar is just as a human as the rest of us.

Shows appreciation of the complexity of the character—offers a different way of looking at him which is important to gaining credit

Sophisticated and appropriately used technical vocabulary and perceptive observation supported by quotation

The next crucial scene is the actual marriage itself. Whilst this in reality is a very short scene he has a couple of key lines in reference to the plot of the play- his predictions are startling proleptic markers as we know this is the case. We can see this in the lines; "these violent delights have violent ends/ and in their triumph we like fire and powder/ which as they kiss consume. The sweetest honey/ is loathsome in his own deliciousness.

Above it can be seen the observations made by the friar are of an extremely mature nature, as he says that their love is like the reaction between fire and gunpowder- quick, instant, and easily extinguished. He warns that their violent love will have a similar end; like honey, too much of it will begin to taste sickly, which can be seen to indicate that their devotion to each other is unhealthy- particularly as it will bring about the death.

Interesting and relevant analysis of the Friar and his perception of the lovers, but it seems unnecessary to paraphrase quotations when giving them and explaining them would be more beneficial

Some quotation or analysis of the Friar's attitude to Romeo at this point would be helpful—this point seems a little narrative.

Next the friar is seen comforting Romeo following the deaths of Tybalt and Mercutio. The view of the friar is now reinforced as he offers the advice that Romeo should be grateful that he is only banished and that he can return from Mantua- following the beginnings of a plan.

The friar's next visitor is Juliet. As the plot has now advanced she is seeking the way out a marriage to Paris, since both the friar and Juliet know that she cannot carry this out, due to her love (and marriage) to Romeo. Here the two agree on a plan to fake Juliet's death and have her lie in the ancient Capulet vault, until Romeo arrives; "take thou this vile, being then in bed/ and this distilling liquor drink them off." Attitudes to the friar within the audience are divided here. On one hand his help is accepted as Juliet is clearly unable to help herself, yet it could also be said that he is wrong to do this since it is somewhat immoral.

Important to refer to audience rather than reader which is good—shows appreciation of how they might interpret his character and actions.

A fair point with a supporting quotation, however more could be made of his changes in personality and action.

Again the friar cuts a controversial figure following the 'death' of Juliet. His understandable hastiness in attempting to send Juliet to the vault is seen by many to be particularly insensitive since her family are coming to terms with their daughter's death and should be allowed to grieve in what is a terribly poignant scene. However, the Friar's plan takes an unexpected turn once it is discovered that Friar John has failed to deliver the letter to Romeo. Here the audience begin to feel angry towards the friar, since we feel it is his fault and he should make amends for his mistakes. Once Juliet wakes however this is not the case. The friar urges her to leave which perhaps seems insensitive; "come go, good Juliet, I dare no long stay."

He then leaves Juliet to kill herself and is discovered by Prince, at which point he confesses and seems to escape blame. In conclusion it can be said that the friar's seen as a respectable figure of age and wisdom, which is much admired by the other characters in the play, however he is also largely at fault as his mistakes also lead to the untimely deaths of Romeo and Juliet, yet he is not punished for this. The audience respond to this largely as I do, in a negative light, and reject this image of an austere trustworthy man.

The conclusion fits with the findings of the essay, but the final point regarding audience reaction, whilst understandable, is unfounded