



The First Quarto of Romeo and Juliet (The New Cambridge Shakespeare: The Early Quartos)

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Two different versions of Romeo and Juliet were published during Shakespeare's lifetime: the second quarto of 1599, on which modern editions are usually based, and the first quarto of 1597. The latter version was long denigrated as a 'bad' quarto', but recent scholarship sees in it a crucial witness for the theatrical practices of Shakespeare and his company. The shorter of the two versions by about one quarter, the first quarto has high-paced action, fuller stage directions than the second quarto, and fascinating alternatives to the famous speeches in the longer version. The introduction to this edition provides a full discussion of the origins of the first quarto, before analysing its distinguishing features and presenting a concise history of the 1597 version. The text is provided with a full collation and commentary which alert the reader to crucial differences between the first and the second quartos.

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