



# ENDER



# DIFFERENCES IN THE 1200-1400s

*Although Romeo and Juliet are fictional characters, their lives reflect the customs and norms of Italy in the 1200-1400s. The following is a comparison of how a female, we'll call her Juliet, and a male, we'll call him Romeo, differ in equality and treatment.*

## Juliet

A typical woman in Juliet's time would likely be married at age 15.

Juliet would be escorted and watched at social events.

It was expected that Juliet's family would provide a dowry (money and material items) to her groom.

Juliet was expected to be chaste until her wedding night, and from then on to be completely faithful to her husband.

It was not acceptable for Juliet to handle weapons, play tennis, wrestle, or do other things that involved physical exercise.

Juliet may have had a tutor come to her home, but she would never be allowed into a university. Instead, she would spend her day spinning, weaving, embroidering, and learning social graces, such as dancing.

A servant would spend hours each day helping Juliet fix her hair, get dressed, and put on makeup.

The only option to marriage would have been the convent. Juliet was expected to marry and bear children, to run a household, and to graciously entertain guests.

It would not be typical for a woman like Juliet to participate in city or political affairs.

Juliet would be advised to obey and honor her husband.

Juliet would have had very little say in decisions concerning her children.

## Romeo

A typical man in Romeo's time would marry no sooner than age 21.

Romeo would be allowed freedom to drink and carouse as he pleased.

Romeo would control all his wife's possessions, money, and property.

Romeo would have been allowed to visit prostitutes, even after he was married.

Romeo was expected to learn how to fence, fight, play athletic games, and do other physical activities.

Romeo would have attended school with other young men in a student's home. He could have gone to a university.

Romeo dressed and groomed himself. Servants would do the laundry, put clothes away, and make the bed.

Romeo could have been a politician, merchant, soldier, sea captain, artist, doctor, banker, scholar, or religious man.

It would have been advantageous for Romeo to hold public office.

It was acceptable, and almost recommended, for Romeo to beat his wife if she were not submissive.

Romeo would have had complete control over his children.