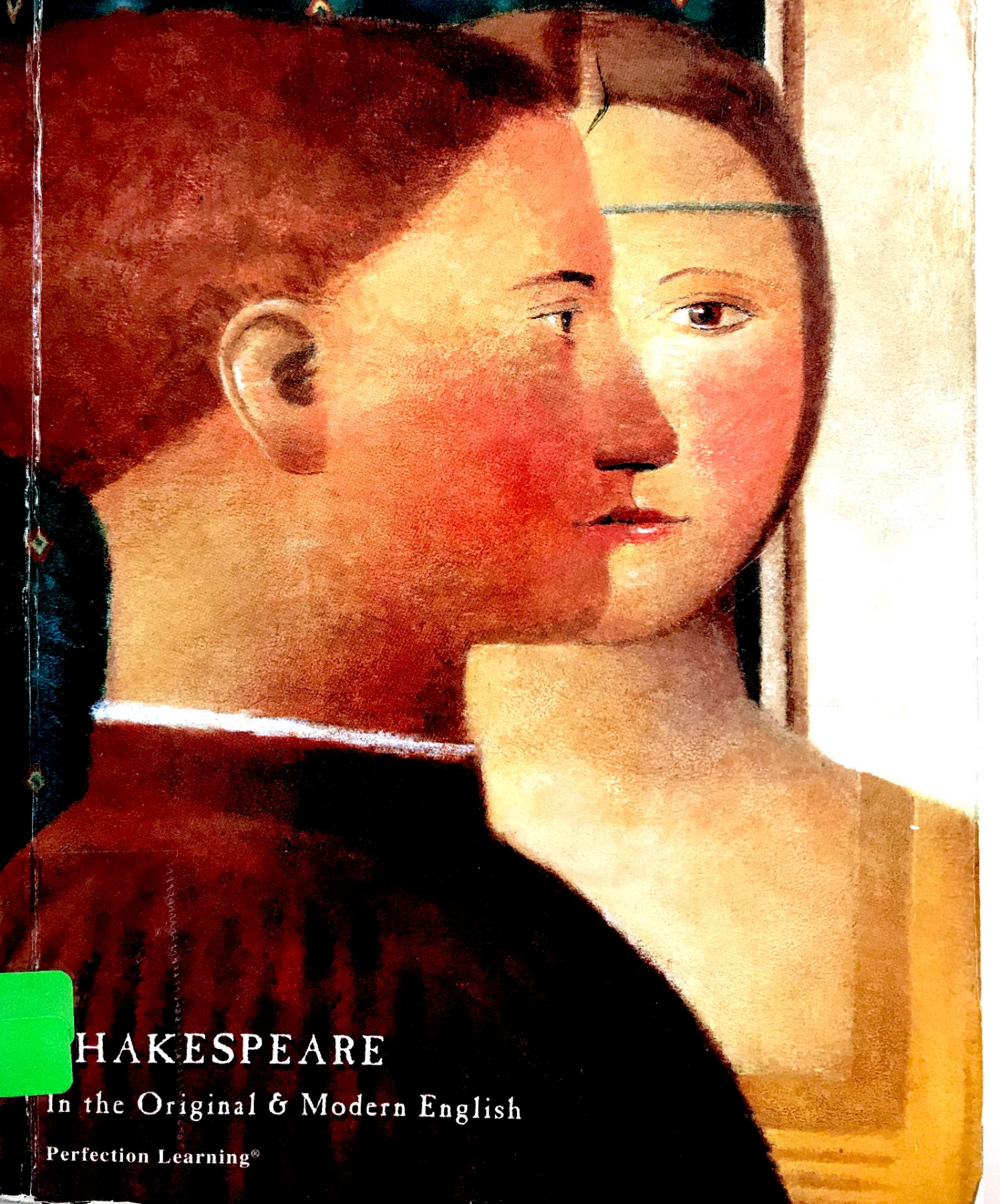


A PARALLEL TEXT

Romeo and Juliet



SHAKESPEARE

In the Original & Modern English

Perfection Learning®



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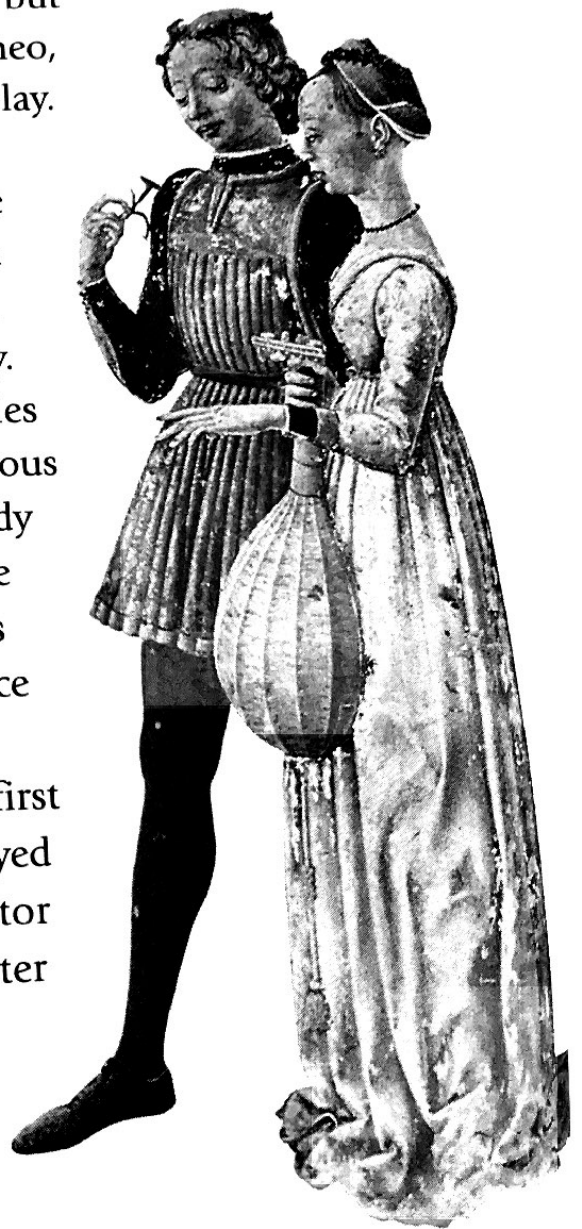
Juliet and Her Romeo

Romeo's name comes first in the play's title, but Juliet is the stronger character. She, not Romeo, makes all the important decisions in the play. She is even the first to propose marriage.

Two facts about Juliet tend to surprise today's audiences and readers. One is that she is only 13. The other is that her part was probably first played by a teenaged boy.

On Shakespeare's stage, female roles were acted by boys. One of the most famous was John Rice, who created the roles of Lady Macbeth and Cleopatra. These parts made him something of a celebrity. Rice was even invited to make a special appearance before King James I.

The part of Juliet was probably first played by Robert Goffe. He probably played Juliet opposite the famous tragic actor Richard Burbage. The older actor later created the roles of Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, and King Lear. But in *Romeo and Juliet*, Goffe got the meatier role.



Juliet was first played by a woman in 1662. Since that time, the role has almost always been performed by a woman. During the 19th century, women sometimes even played the part of Romeo. The most famous female Romeo was the American actress Charlotte Cushman, who was also known for her Hamlet.

In Shakespeare's time, women were not allowed to play dramatic roles. However, they could marry at a much earlier age than is acceptable today.

In Elizabethan England, a girl could legally marry at the age of 12. For boys, the legal age was 14. Wealthy families sometimes arranged marriages to protect their fortunes, but, in fact, early marriages were not common. The average wealthy woman in Elizabethan England married

at 20, the average wealthy man at 22. Still, nobles carefully guarded the legality of early marriage and sometimes arranged for their children to marry at ages even younger than the law allowed.

Early marriage was a common enough practice to be quite controversial. Certain scholarly and medical authorities decried the practice in words similar to those of Juliet's father: "And too soon marr'd are those so early made."

The danger of childbirth at such an age was widely recognized. And early marriage often led to many children, something Elizabethan society discouraged for practical, economic reasons.



Betrothal

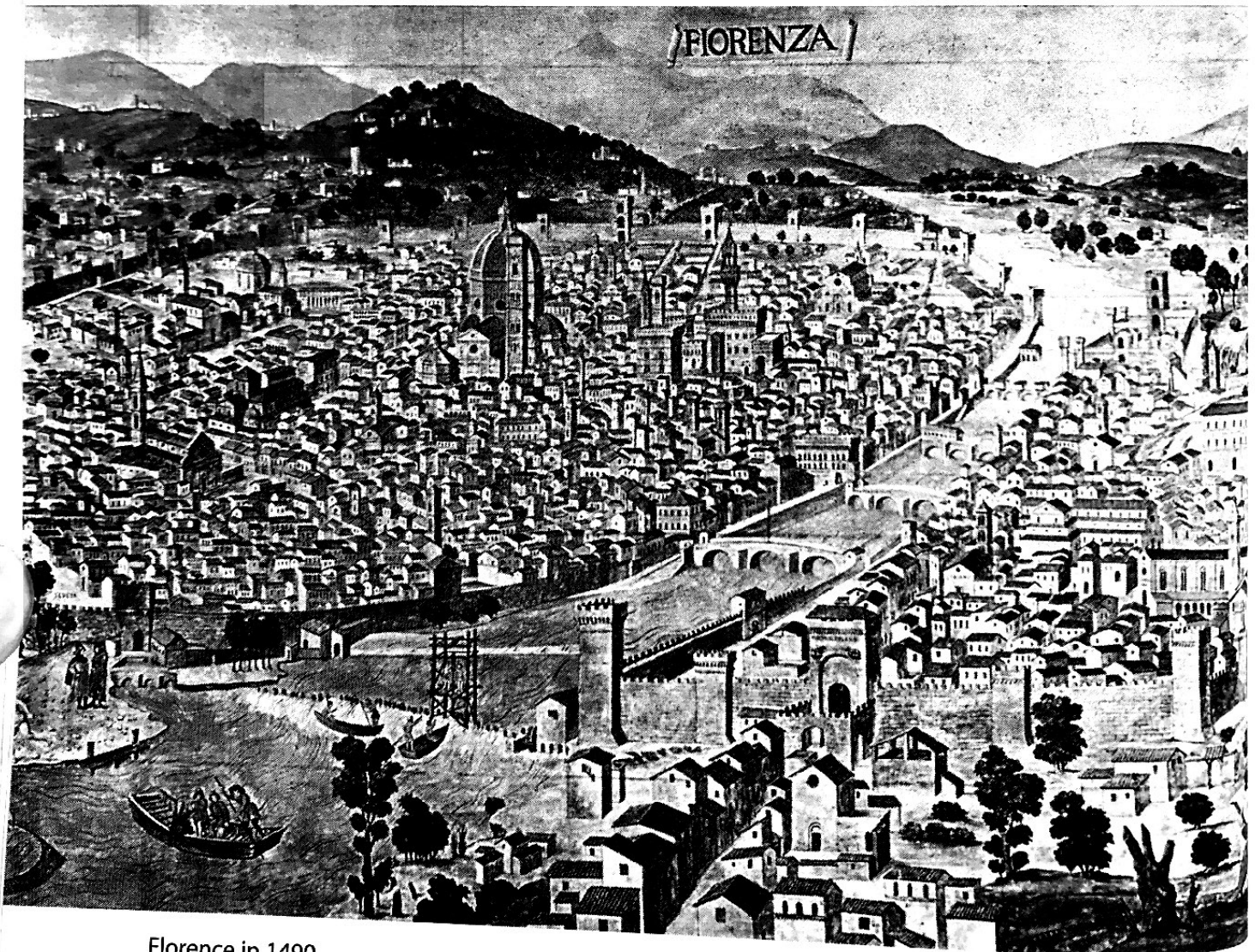


Charlotte Cushman as Romeo
and her sister Susan as Juliet

A Political Romance

Audiences often think of *Romeo and Juliet* as a love story and nothing more. In fact, the play has a political dimension that is too frequently overlooked. The politics of *Romeo and Juliet* have their roots deep in the story's earliest Italian sources.

The play's plot goes back to several Italian novels. All of these novels feature two lovers named Romeo and Giulietta, whose happiness is thwarted by their feuding families, the Montecchi and Cappelletti. The first of these was written by Masuccio of Salerno during the 15th century. During the 16th century, Luigi da Porto based another novel on Masuccio's, and Matteo Bandello based yet another on Luigi's.



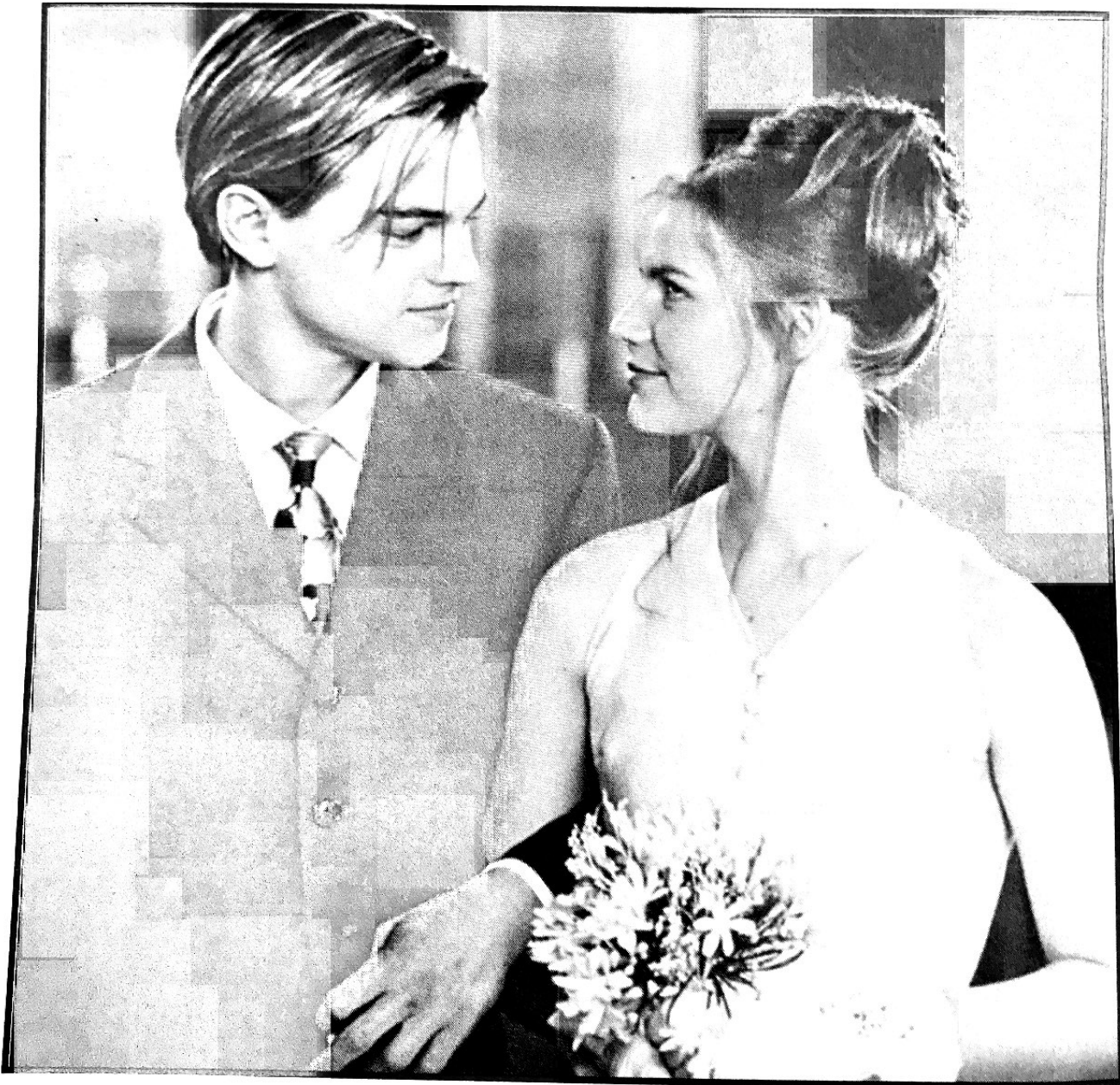
Florence in 1490



During the Italian Renaissance, powerful families often quarreled violently. One feud was between the Cerchi and Donati families in Florence. They began fighting around 1300 and barely stopped for another 50 years. The Cerchi and Donati families represented two opposing political factions—the Ghibellines and Guelphs, respectively. The Ghibellines (or the White faction) believed in a large Italian empire. The Guelphs (or the Black faction) favored independent city-states under the direction of the pope. Italian fans of Romeo and Julietta may have seen the lovers as tragic pawns in the struggle over the destiny of Italy itself.

Shakespeare learned their story through Arthur Brookes' narrative poem *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*, published in 1562. He may have used the story of the two Italian lovers to explore a controversy in his own time—the nature of marriage. Should marriages be arranged, or should young people choose their spouses? Is marriage simply a practical way to raise children, or should personal happiness be considered?

The controversy about marriage was influenced by religious differences. Catholics tended to see happiness in this world as less important than eternal bliss. Protestants, more concerned with worldly success, generally rated marital happiness highly—sometimes even as essential to salvation. But these divisions were by no means simple and clear-cut. The purpose of marriages and the role of parents in arranging them remained quite controversial in Shakespeare's Protestant England. Which viewpoint did Shakespeare himself hold?



Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes get married in *Romeo and Juliet*. (Luhrmann, 1996)

Generations of English teachers have advised their students that Shakespeare and his audience were not as sympathetic to the actions of Romeo and Juliet as we are today. The play, they have said, is partly a cautionary tale about the importance of obeying one's parents. But as Shakespearean scholar Cedric Watts points out, the text itself does not support this interpretation.

The love between Romeo and Juliet is necessary to bring about peace between their families. And in the speech that closes the play, Prince Escalus does not place any blame upon the young lovers. Instead, he blames their families and even assumes some responsibility for failing to enforce the peace. If Shakespeare had felt that Romeo and Juliet were seriously at fault, surely he would have found a character to voice this viewpoint. Since he did not, we can only assume that, like Escalus, he blamed their families—and more sweepingly, a concept of marriage that did not properly value happiness. To a greater degree than is usually admitted, *Romeo and Juliet* is a play about gender politics.

There is even an interesting trace of feminism in Shakespeare's play. In most romantic stories of his time, a dashing hero actively woos a beautiful but passive heroine. The hero gets to behave heroically and also to speak splendid lines as he lavishes poetry on his rather witless love object. But Juliet is at least Romeo's equal as an initiator of action, and her poetry often surpasses his in beauty. Consider her breathtaking pronouncement in the balcony scene: "My bounty is as boundless as the sea, / My love as deep; the more I give to thee, / The more I have, for both are infinite."

Juliet's strength and assertiveness seem all the more remarkable because her life is so limited. Like a typical well-born Renaissance girl, she can't even come and go as she pleases, much less roam the streets at night as Romeo does with his pals Mercutio and Benvolio. Again and again, we are dazzled by her determination and resourcefulness.



Timeline

- 1562** Arthur Brookes publishes *The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet*.
- 1564** Shakespeare is baptized.
- 1568** Elizabeth I becomes Queen of England.
- 1572** Shakespeare begins grammar school.
- 1576** Opening of The Theatre, the first permanent playhouse in England.
- 1580** Drake sails around the world.
- 1582** Shakespeare marries Anne Hathaway.
- 1583** Shakespeare's daughter Susanna is baptized.
- 1585** Shakespeare's twins are baptized.
- 1588** Spanish Armada is defeated.
- 1592-94** Plague closes all of London's theaters.
- 1594** *Titus Andronicus* becomes first printed Shakespeare play.
- 1594** Shakespeare joins the Lord Chamberlain's Men.
- 1599** Lord Chamberlain's Men build the Globe Theatre; Shakespeare is part-owner of the building.
- 1609** *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, written in 1598, published for the first time.
- The King's Men acquire the Blackfriars Playhouse.
- 1610** Shakespeare retires to Stratford.
- 1613** Globe Theatre burns to the ground.
- 1616** William Shakespeare dies at the age of 52.
- 1623** Shakespeare's wife Anne dies.
- First Folio published.



Renaissance Italian city

Prose

In addition to verse, Shakespeare wrote speeches in prose, or language without rhythmic structure. Look at the Servant's speech on page 46 (Act I, Scene ii). If you try beating out an iambic rhythm to these lines, you'll discover that it doesn't work because they're in prose. But once Benvolio enters and starts speaking, you'll be able to find the rhythm of iambic pentameter again. Shakespeare often uses prose for comic speeches, to show madness, and for characters of lower social rank such as servants. His upper-class characters generally do not speak in prose. But these weren't hard-and-fast rules as far as Shakespeare was concerned.

Contractions

As you know, contractions are words that have been combined by substituting an apostrophe for a letter or letters that have been removed. Contractions were as common in Shakespeare's time as they are today. For example, we use *it's* as a contraction for the words *it is*. In Shakespeare's writing you will discover that *'tis* means the same thing. Shakespeare often used the apostrophe to shorten words so that they would fit into the rhythmic pattern of a line. This is especially true of verbs ending in *-ed*. Note that in Shakespeare's plays, the *-ed* at the end of a verb is pronounced as a separate syllable. Therefore, *walked* would be pronounced as two syllables, *walk*ed*, while *walk'd* would be only one.



Speak and Listen

Remember that plays are written to be acted, not read silently. Reading out loud—whether in a group or alone—helps you to “hear” the meaning. Listening to another reader will also help. You might also enjoy listening to a recording of the play by professional actors.

Clues and Cues

Shakespeare was sparing in his use of stage directions. In fact, many of those in modern editions were added by later editors. Added stage directions are usually indicated by brackets. For example, [*aside*] tells the actor to give the audience information that the other characters can't hear.

The Play's the Thing

Finally, if you can't figure out every word in the play, don't get discouraged. The people in Shakespeare's audience couldn't either. At that time, language was changing rapidly and standardized spelling, punctuation, grammar, and even dictionaries did not exist. Besides, Shakespeare loved to play with words. He made up new combinations, like *fat-guts* and *mumble-news*. To make matters worse, the actors probably spoke very rapidly. But the audience didn't strain to catch every word. They went to a Shakespeare play for the same reasons we go to a movie—to get caught up in the story and the acting, to have a great laugh, an exciting adventure, or a good cry.



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Cast of Characters

The House of Capulet

JULIET

LORD CAPULET her father

LADY CAPULET her mother

NURSE servant to Juliet

PETER servant to the Nurse

TYBALT first cousin to Juliet and nephew to Lady Capulet

2. CAPULET Capulet's kinsman

SAMPSON servant to Capulet

GREGORY servant to Capulet

POTPAN servant to Capulet

other **SERVANTS**

The House of Montague

ROMEO

LORD MONTAGUE his father

LADY MONTAGUE his mother

BENVOLIO first cousin to Romeo and nephew to Lord Montague

BALTHASAR servant to Romeo

ABRAHAM servant to Montague

Others

CHORUS actor who introduces Acts I and II

ESCALUS Prince of Verona

PARIS young nobleman and kinsman to the Prince

PAGE servant to Paris

MERCUTIO friend to Romeo and kinsman to the Prince

FRIAR LAWRENCE Franciscan priest

FRIAR JOHN Franciscan priest

APOTHECARY pharmacist from Mantua

MUSICIANS, CITIZENS, TORCH-BEARERS, GUARDS,

SERVANTS, ATTENDANTS, WATCHMEN, KINSMEN from both houses

TIME the fourteenth century

PLACE Verona and Mantua, cities in northern Italy

Words to Know

The following vocabulary words appear in Act I in the original text of Shakespeare's play. However, they are words that are still commonly used. Read the definitions here and pay attention to the words as you read the play (they will be in boldfaced type).

adversary	enemy; opponent
augmenting	adding to; enlarging
deformities	irregularities; disfigurements
discreet	showing good judgment; perceptive
disparagement	criticism; censure
nuptial	wedding; marriage
obscured [obscur'd]	hid; darkened
pernicious	harmful; destructive
portentous	ominous; threatening
posterity	future generations
prodigious	terrible; extraordinary
profane	dishonor; make impure
propagate	reproduce; increase
purged [purg'd]	got rid of; expelled

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Act Summary

In the Prologue, a Chorus (or narrator) previews this play about two feuding families and the tragedy that occurs when their children meet and fall in love.

One day, in the public square in Verona, Italy, two servants from the Capulet household pick a fight with rival servants from the Montague household. The Capulets and Montagues have quarreled for so many years that nobody even knows how their feud began.

When the fight begins, a young Montague, Benvolio, tries to make peace. Instead, a fiery Capulet named Tybalt makes the tensions escalate. Soon, even onlookers and the elderly lords of the two warring sides are trying to join in the brawl.

Prince Escalus, the ruler of Verona, arrives and demands that the fighting stop. In the quarrel's aftermath, Lord Montague asks Benvolio, a friend of his son Romeo, why Romeo seems so depressed. Benvolio tracks Romeo down and learns that he is in love with Rosaline, who doesn't return his affections. Benvolio vows to make Romeo forget her.

Meanwhile, in the Capulet household, Lord Capulet and a nobleman named Paris discuss Paris's proposal of marriage to Lord Capulet's daughter Juliet. They discuss the masked banquet the Capulets will host that night and hope that Juliet will get to know Paris and agree to marry him. Of course, the hated Montagues are not invited to the banquet.

When Benvolio and Romeo catch wind of it, though, they decide to go in disguise. During the party, Tybalt guesses their identity and vows revenge on Romeo, whom he assumes has come only to mock the Capulets and cause trouble.

When Juliet catches Romeo's eye at the banquet, he instantly forgets Rosaline. By the time Romeo and Juliet realize they are from warring families, it is too late: they have fallen in love.

PROLOGUE

Enter CHORUS.

CHORUS

Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
5 From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;
Whose misadventur'd piteous overthrows
Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.
The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,
10 And the continuance of their parents' rage,
Which, but their children's end, naught could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;
The which if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

[*Exit.*]

PROLOGUE

The CHORUS enters.

CHORUS

Two equally respected families,
living in lovely Verona, where our play is set,
break out in renewed violence due to an old grudge.
The townspeople soil their hands with each other's blood.
The son of one enemy and the daughter of the other,
victims of unfavorable fate, commit suicide.
Their unfortunate, pitiful deaths
bury their parents' quarrel.
The sad story of their ill-fated love,
and of their parents' continuing anger,
which nothing except their children's deaths could end,
you will see acted in the next two hours on our stage.
If you will listen patiently,
our play will fill in what is missing from the Prologue.
Exit.

ACT 1, SCENE 1

A public street in Verona. SAMPSON and GREGORY, servants of CAPULET, enter carrying swords and shields.

SAMPSON

Gregory, I swear it, we'll not endure insults.

GREGORY

No, for then we would be insult-sufferers.

SAMPSON

I mean, if we get angry, we'll draw our swords.

GREGORY

Yes, and if you want to live, draw your head out of the hangman's rope.

SAMPSON

I strike quickly when I'm angry.

5

GREGORY

But you're not likely to get angry quickly.

SAMPSON

A dog from Montague's house makes me angry.

GREGORY

To be angry is to move, to be brave is to stand still. Therefore, if you're angry, you'll run away.

SAMPSON

A dog of that house shall move me to be brave. I will walk near the wall if any of Montague's servants pass by.


10

GREGORY

That shows you're a weak slave, for the weakest is pushed to the wall.

SAMPSON

That's true, and therefore, women, being the weaker sex, are



always being pushed against the wall. So I will push
Montague's men away from the wall, and his maidens to
the wall. 15

GREGORY

The quarrel is not only between our masters, but between us
and their servants, as well.

SAMPSON

It's all the same quarrel. I'll prove myself a tyrant. After I've
fought with the men, I'll be cruel to the maidens. I'll cut off
their heads. 20

GREGORY

The heads of the maidens?

SAMPSON

Yes, the heads of the maidens, or their maidenheads. Take it
in any sense you like.

GREGORY

They must take it in the sense they feel it. 25

SAMPSON

They'll feel me as long as I'm able to stand, and everyone
knows I'm a real man.

GREGORY

It's a good thing you're not a fish. If you were, you would
not give much satisfaction.—Draw your weapon! Here
come two of Montague's servants. 30

Two servants, ABRAHAM and BALTHASAR, enter.

SAMPSON

My bare sword is out. Start a quarrel! I'll back you up.

GREGORY

How will you back me up? By turning your back and running?

SAMPSON

Don't be afraid of me.



GREGORY

Afraid, indeed! Don't be ridiculous.

SAMPSON

We'll get the law on our side. Let them begin.

35

GREGORY

I'll make a sour face as I pass by, and let them take it as they choose.

SAMPSON

No—as they dare, I'll thumb my nose at them. That will insult them, if they notice it.

ABRAHAM

Are you thumbing your nose at us, sir?

SAMPSON

I'm thumbing my nose, sir.

40

ABRAHAM

Are you thumbing your nose at us, sir?

SAMPSON (to GREGORY)

Is the law on our side if I say yes?

GREGORY

No.

SAMPSON

No, sir. I'm not thumbing my nose at you, sir. I'm just thumbing my nose, sir.

45

GREGORY

Are you trying to start a fight, sir?

ABRAHAM

A fight, sir? No, sir.

SAMPSON

If you do start a quarrel, I'm ready. My master is as good as your master.

ABRAHAM

But he's no better.

50

SAMPSON

Well—sir—



BENVOLIO *enters.*

GREGORY

You should say "better." Here comes one of my master's relatives.

SAMPSON (to ABRAHAM)

My master is better, sir.

ABRAHAM

You're a liar.

SAMPSON

Draw your swords, if you're real men. Gregory, give him your 55
crushing blow.

They fight.

BENVOLIO

Stop it, you fools!

Put your swords away. You don't know what you're doing.

He strikes down their swords.

TYBALT *enters.*

TYBALT

Are you fighting with these cowards?

Turn around, Benvolio. I'm going to kill you. 60

BENVOLIO

I'm only trying to make peace. Put away your sword,
or use it to get these men away from me.

TYBALT

You have your sword drawn and you talk about peace! I hate
the word peace,

as I hate hell, all Montagues, and you.

Fight, coward! 65

They fight.

OFFICERS *and three or four CITIZENS enter with clubs and
pikes.*

OFFICERS

Clubs, axes, and pikes! Strike! Beat them down!

Down with the Capulets! Down with the Montagues!

CAPULET, *in his robe*, and LADY CAPULET *enter.*

CAPULET

What's all this noise? Give me my sword!

LADY CAPULET

You need a crutch! Why are you asking for a sword?

CAPULET

Give me my sword, I said. Old Montague is coming,
and he is waving his sword in defiance of me.

70

MONTAGUE and LADY MONTAGUE enter.

MONTAGUE

You're a villain, Capulet! (to LADY MONTAGUE) Don't hold me,
let me go!

LADY MONTAGUE

You shall not move a foot toward your enemy.

PRINCE ESCALUS enters with his followers.

PRINCE

Rebellious people, enemies to peace,
Abusers of your swords bloodied with your neighbor's blood— 75
Won't they listen?—Listen to me, you men, you beasts,
you who quench the fire of your destructive rage
with purple blood spurting from your veins.
Unless you want to be tortured, throw those angry
weapons you hold in your bloody hands to the ground 80
and hear this sentence from me, your angry prince.
Three fights arising from meaningless insults—
started by you, old Capulet, and you, old Montague—
have disturbed the quiet of our streets three times,
and caused Verona's old men 85
to throw away their proper, dignified ornaments
and carry old pikes, rusted with peace, in their equally old
hands to part your deadly hatred.
If you ever disturb our streets again,
you will have to die for breaking the peace. 90
For now, all of you go away
except you, Capulet. You'll go with me.
And you, Montague, are to come to me this afternoon
to find out what I am going to do in your case.
Go to my castle, Freetown, the common judgment place. 95
Once more, unless you want to die, all of you must leave now.



*All leave except MONTAGUE, LADY MONTAGUE, and
BENVOLIO.*

MONTAGUE

Who started up this old quarrel again?
Speak up, nephew, were you here when it started?

BENVOLIO

Capulet's servants were here,
along with your servants, and they were fighting as I came up. 100
I drew my sword to separate them. At that moment,
the hot-tempered Tybalt arrived, with his sword drawn,
breathing defiance in my ears,
swinging his sword about my head, and slicing the winds.
But the winds, not being hurt, hissed at him in scorn. 105
While we were exchanging blows,
more and more people came to fight on each side
until the prince came and stopped the fighting.

LADY MONTAGUE


Where is Romeo? Have you seen him today?
I am glad he wasn't at this fight. 110

BENVOLIO

Madam, about an hour before the wonderful sun
peered out of the golden east,
a troubled mind drove me to take a walk.
Underneath a grove of sycamore trees,
west of the city, 115
I saw your son walking at that early hour.
I went toward him, but he saw me,
and he slipped into a thicket in the woods.
Sensing that he felt the same way I did—
wanting to get away from everyone 120
and feeling I was one too many by my weary self—
I chose to pursue my own desire rather than to pursue him.
I as gladly shunned him as he fled from me.

MONTAGUE

He has been seen there many mornings,
adding tears to the moisture of the fresh morning dew 125
and adding more clouds to clouds with his deep sighs.
But as soon as the sun, which cheers everything,



begins in the far east to draw
the dark curtains from dawn's bed,
my sad son creeps home, away from this light. 130
He secludes himself alone in his room,
shutting his windows, locking the lovely daylight outside,
and creating an artificial night.
His mood will become dark and ominous
unless good advice can remove the cause of his sadness. 135

BENVOLIO

My noble uncle, do you know the reason for his behavior?

MONTAGUE

I do not know it, and I cannot learn it from him.

BENVOLIO

Have you pleaded with him in any way?

MONTAGUE

I have tried, and so have many friends,
but he is the counselor of 140
his own emotions, though I will not say how well he plays
counselor.

He is so secret and close-mouthed,
so far from being found out and cured,
that he's like a bud bitten by a deadly worm before
the bud can spread its sweet leaves to the air 145
or offer its beauty to the sun.
If we could just learn what causes his sorrow,
we would willingly cure it as know about it.

ROMEO enters.

BENVOLIO

Here he comes. If you will, please step aside
and I'll find out what's wrong with him. If I 150
don't, you can deny any connection with me.

MONTAGUE

Stay. I hope you'll be lucky enough
to hear his true confession. (*to LADY MONTAGUE*)
Come, madam, let's go.

LORD and LADY MONTAGUE exit.



BENVOLIO

Good morning, cousin.

ROMEO

Is it still morning?

BENVOLIO

The clock just struck nine.

155

ROMEO

Alas, the hours seem so long.

Was that my father who left here so quickly?

BENVOLIO

Yes, it was. What sadness lengthens your hours, Romeo?

ROMEO

Not having something that, if I had it, would make the hours seem short.

BENVOLIO

Are you in love?

160

ROMEO

Out—

BENVOLIO

Of love?

ROMEO

The one I love doesn't love me.

BENVOLIO

It's too bad that love, so gentle in appearance, should be so tyrannous and rough when being experienced.

165

ROMEO

It's too bad that love, whose sight is blindfolded, can still see ways to work his will even without his eyes.
(*pause*) Where shall we eat? (*pause*) My, what fight happened here?


On second thought, don't tell me, for I've heard it all.

It has much to do with hate, but more with love.

Why, then, Oh brawling love! Oh loving hate!

Oh anything first created out of nothing!

170



Oh heavy lightness! Serious frivolity!
Deformed chaos of outwardly pretty forms!
Lead feather, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health! 175
Ever-wakeful sleep, that is not what it is!
I take no joy from this love I feel.
Are you laughing at me?

BENVOLIO

No, cousin, I'm crying.

ROMEO

Dear, good-hearted friend, why? 180

BENVOLIO

Because of your good heart's grief.

ROMEO

This is love's sin.
My own griefs make my heart heavy
which will only increase if burdened
with your sorrow, too. The love which you have shown me 185
adds more grief to my own too heavy sorrow.

Love is a smoke rising from the fumes of sighs;
when the air is cleared, love is a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes.
When frustrated, love is a sea fed by lovers' tears.

What else is love? A very wise insanity, 190
a choking bitterness, and a lasting sweet.
Good-bye, cousin.

BENVOLIO

Wait! I'll go with you.
If you leave me, you'll do me wrong.

ROMEO

Nonsense, I've lost myself; I'm not here. 195
This isn't Romeo; he's somewhere else.

BENVOLIO

Tell me in all seriousness, who is it that you love?

ROMEO

Do you want me to groan and tell you?

BENVOLIO

Groan? No,



but tell me, seriously, who you love.

200

ROMEO

You want a sick man, in seriousness, to make his will.
That's not good advice for someone who is so ill!
In all seriousness, cousin, I do love a woman.

BENVOLIO

I assumed that when I learned you were in love.

ROMEO

You're right on the mark! And the one I love is beautiful.

205

BENVOLIO

A bright clean target, cousin, is the easiest to hit.

ROMEO

Well, you missed the target that time. She won't be hit
with love's arrow. She has the same views as Diana, the moon
goddess.

She's well-protected in her armor of virginity.

She's safe from love's weak, childish bow.

210

She will not listen to my loving words,
or let me look at her with love in my eyes,
or allow herself to be seduced.

Oh, she is rich in beauty; only poor

in that when she dies, her treasure will die with her beauty.

215

BENVOLIO

Then has she sworn that she'll live as a virgin for now?

ROMEO

She has, and in being stingy, she is horribly wasteful.
For when beauty is starved by severe attitudes,
it is cut off from all future generations.

She's too beautiful, too wise, too wisely beautiful
to earn her way to heaven by making me suffer.

220

She vows she will not love, and because of that vow,
I'm dead, though I live to tell the fact now.

BENVOLIO

Listen to me: forget her.

ROMEO

Oh, teach me how to forget to think!

225



BENVOLIO

Just set your eyes free
to look at other beautiful women.

ROMEO

That would just be another way
to make me recall her unparalleled beauty.
Those fortunate masks that kiss beautiful ladies' foreheads, 230
being black, make us remember that they hide the beautiful.
The man who is struck blind can't forget
the precious treasure of his lost eyesight.
Show me a woman who's surpassingly beautiful,
and I'll ask what good is her beauty except as a note 235
where I could read who is still more beautiful than that beauty?
Good-bye! You can't teach me to forget her.

BENVOLIO

I'll make you change your mind or die trying.

They exit.



of limping winter, just such joy
among the lovely young maidens will you find tonight
at my house. Listen to everything, look at everything,
and like the lady best who is most worthy. 30

My daughter will be among the ladies,
but she may not be the one you choose when you have seen
them all.

Come with me. (*to the SERVANT*) Go, servant, walk about
beautiful Verona; find the people 35
whose names are on these invitations and say to them
that I will be pleased to welcome them to my house tonight.

CAPULET and PARIS exit.

SERVANT

I'm to find those whose names are written here! I've heard
that the shoemaker should work with his wool, and the tailor
with his leather, the fisherman with his pencil, and the painter 40
with his net. But I have to find the people whose names are
written here, and will never find them because I can't read.
I must find someone who can read. Here's help already!

BENVOLIO and ROMEO enter.

BENVOLIO

Come on, Romeo. One fire burns out another fire; 45
one person's pain is lessened by some else's misery;
become dizzy from spinning, and be helped by reversing
the direction;
one terrible grief can be cured by someone else's pain.
Find a new infection in your eye,
and the poison of the old infection will die. 50

ROMEO

The plantain leaf is a good remedy for that.

BENVOLIO

For what, I ask you?

ROMEO

For your wounded shin when I kick you.

BENVOLIO

Romeo, are you crazy?

ROMEO

No, I'm not crazy, but a madman is freer than I am. 55
I'm shut up in prison, given no food,
whipped, tortured, and—(Sees the SERVANT.)—Good evening,
good fellow.

SERVANT

And a good evening to you. Sir, can you read?

ROMEO

Yes, that's my one happiness in my unhappiness.

SERVANT

Perhaps you memorize. 60
Can you read anything you see?

ROMEO

Yes, if I know the letters and the language.

SERVANT

You're an honest fellow. Have a nice day!

ROMEO

Wait, fellow, I can read. 65
(ROMEO takes the list and reads.) Signior Martino and his wife
and daughters; Count Anselme and his beautiful sisters;
Vitruvio's widow; Signior Placentio and his lovely nieces;
Mercutio and his brother Valentine; my uncle Capulet, with his wife
and daughters; my lovely niece Rosaline; Livia; Signior Valentio and
his cousin Tybalt; Lucio and the lively Helena. 70
(Returns the paper to the SERVANT.) This is a beautiful group of
people. Where are they to go?

SERVANT

Up.

ROMEO

Where?

SERVANT

To dinner, to our house. 75



ROMEO

Whose house?

SERVANT

My master's.

ROMEO

Of course, I should have asked you that before.

SERVANT

Now I'll tell you without your asking. My master is the very rich
Capulet, and if you're not a Montague, I invite you to come and
have a drink of wine. Bless you! 80

The SERVANT exits.

BENVOLIO

At this party of Capulet's,
the beautiful Rosaline that you love so much will dine
with all of the beautiful girls of Verona. 85
Go there, and with an unprejudiced eye,
compare her face to some of the others I'll show you,
I'll make you think your swan is a crow.

ROMEO

When the devout belief of my eyes
asserts such a lie, then my tears will turn to fires; 90
and these eyes, often drowned in tears, could never die.
transparent unbelievers should be burned for lying!
Someone more beautiful than my love? The all-seeing sun
has never seen my love's equal since the world began.

BENVOLIO

Ha! You think she's beautiful because, having no one to
compare her with, 95
you only saw her balanced in each of your eyes.
But in your two eyes, those crystal scales of yours, weigh
your lady's love against another lady
whom I will show you at this party,
and your Rosaline will scarcely look good who now seems 100
the fairest to you.

ROMEO

I'll go with you, not to find a lovelier girl,
but to rejoice in the beauty of my own Rosaline.

They exit.



nd

ACT 1, SCENE 3

A room in Capulet's house. LADY CAPULET and the NURSE enter.

LADY CAPULET

Nurse, where's my daughter? Tell her to come to me.

NURSE

Now by my virginity, when I was twelve years old
I told her to come. (*Calls to JULIET.*) Lamb! Ladybird!
Heavens above, where is that girl? Juliet!

JULIET enters.

JULIET

What is it? Who's calling? 5

NURSE

Your mother.

JULIET

Madam. I am here. What do you want?

LADY CAPULET

I'll tell you.—Nurse, leave us for awhile,
we must talk in secret. (*pause*)—Nurse, come back again. 10
I just remembered that you are to hear our plan.
You know my daughter is at the marrying age.

NURSE

Indeed. Heavens, I can tell her age to the exact hour.

LADY CAPULET

She's not quite fourteen.

NURSE

I would wager fourteen of my teeth— 15
and yet it is my misfortune to admit I have only four—
that she's not fourteen. How many days
until Lammastide?

LADY CAPULET

A bit over two weeks.



NURSE

Even or odd, of all the days of the year, 20
on the evening of July thirty-first she'll be fourteen.
Susan and she—God rest all Christian souls!—
were the same age. Well, Susan is with God.
She was too good for me. But as I said,
on the evening of July thirty-first, Juliet will be fourteen. 25
To think she might get married—I remember her birth well.
It is now eleven years since the earthquake
and since she was weaned—I'll never forget it.
Of all the days of the year, I remember that day.
I'd used a bitter herb on my breast to wean her, 30
and I was sitting in the sun next to the dovehouse wall.
You and my lord were in Mantua at the time—
I do have a good memory—but as I said,
when the baby tasted the herb on the nipple
of my breast and found out it was bitter, the pretty little thing 35
became fretful and didn't want to nurse any more!
Then the dovehouse shook from the earthquake. There was
no need
for anyone to have to tell me to run away.
Since that time it's been eleven years,
for by then she could stand up alone—indeed, I swear by the 40
cross,
she could run and waddle all around.
Just the day before, she'd fallen on her forehead,
and then my husband—God rest his soul,
he was a happy man—picked her up.
He said, "Did you fall on your face? 45
You'll fall backward when you know more,
won't you, Juliet?" And I swear,
the pretty child stopped crying and said, "Yes."
To see now how a joke turns out!
I swear, if I live a thousand years, 50
I'll never forget it. "Won't you, Juliet?" he asked.
And the pretty child stopped crying and said, "Yes."

LADY CAPULET

That's enough, Nurse. Please be quiet.



NURSE

Yes, madam. (*laughing*) But I can't help laughing
to think that she would stop crying and say "Yes." 55
And yet, I swear, she had a bump on her forehead
as big as a rooster's comb.
She took a bad fall, and she cried bitterly.
"So you fell on your face?" said my husband.
"You'll fall backward when you are older,
won't you, Juliet?" And she stopped crying and said, "Yes." 60

JULIET

And you must stop, too. I beg you nurse.

NURSE

Enough, I'm finished. God bless you.
You were the prettiest baby I've ever nursed.
If I can live to see you married, 65
I'll have my wish.

LADY CAPULET

Indeed, marriage is the very subject I came to talk about.
Tell me, Juliet,
how do you feel about getting married?

JULIET

It's an honor I've never dreamed of. 70

NURSE

An honor? If I weren't your only nurse,
I'd say that you sucked wisdom from your nurse's breast.

LADY CAPULET

Well, think about marriage now. There are younger women
than you,
ladies of esteem living here in Verona,
who are mothers already. If I count correctly, 75
I became your mother at the same age
you are now. So, in short,
the brave Paris wants you to be his love.

NURSE

A man, young lady! Lady, he's such a man
as the entire world—why, he's the handsomest model of a man! 80

LADY CAPULET

There's not a summer flower in Verona that can match him.

NURSE

He is a flower, truly—a real flower.

LADY CAPULET

What do you say, Juliet? Do you think you can love the gentleman?

Tonight you'll see him at our banquet.

Read young Paris's face carefully, 85

and you'll find delight written there with beauty's pen.

Examine each different feature

and see how one feature complements the others.

Read the concealed inner qualities of character
written in the margin of his shining eyes. 90

This precious book of love, this unbound lover,
only needs a wife to make him more handsome.

The fish lives in the sea, and it's wonderful that
something beautiful is hidden in something beautiful.

In many people's eyes, a book is also glorious 95
when golden clasps on the cover bind a good story.

You too will share everything Paris has.

By marrying him, you'll not lower your position.

NURSE

No less! No, you'll be even bigger! Women get pregnant.

LADY CAPULET (to JULIET)

Tell me, briefly, can you accept Paris as a lover? 100

JULIET

I will look at him with the intention of liking

him, if looking can make me like him,

but I won't look any further

than you wish me to look.

A SERVANT enters.


SERVANT (to LADY CAPULET)

Madam, the guests have come, supper is served, you have been
called, 105

my young lady's presence has been requested, the nurse is

being cursed in the kitchen (because she isn't helping),

and everything is happening at once. I must go immediately to



serve. I beg you
to follow me immediately.

LADY CAPULET

We'll follow you. (SERVANT *exits.*)
Juliet, the Count is waiting.

NURSE

Go, girl, find happy nights to go with your happy days.
They leave.



ACT 1, SCENE 4

A street. ROMEO, MERCUTIO, and BENVOLIO enter with five or six other masqueraders and torch-bearers.

ROMEO

Shall I give a formal speech to introduce us?
Or shall we just enter without any introduction?

BENVOLIO

Those speeches are out of fashion.
We don't want a blindfolded Cupid,
Carrying his painted bow, 5
scaring ladies like a scarecrow.
And we don't want an impromptu prologue softly spoken
behind a prompter for our entrance.
Let the people measure us as they want to;
we'll dance one dance and be gone. 10

ROMEO

Give me a torch. I'm not for this leisurely dancing.
Since I'm so weighted down with sadness, I'll carry the torch.

MERCUTIO

No, gentle Romeo, we want you to dance.

ROMEO

Not me, believe me. You have dancing shoes
with light soles; I have a soul of lead 15
which holds me to the ground so I can't move.

MERCUTIO

You are a lover. Borrow Cupid's wings
and fly with them above an ordinary dance leap.

ROMEO

I'm too painfully pierced with Cupid's arrow
to fly with his light feathers, and so bound to the ground, 20
I cannot leap even an inch above dull sorrow.
I'm sinking under love's heavy burden.



ring
to thorn

MERCUTIO

And to sink in it would burden love.
That's too heavy a burden for so tender a thing as love.

ROMEO

Is love a tender thing? It's too rough, 25
too rude, too rowdy, and it pricks like a thorn.

MERCUTIO

If love is rough with you, be rough with love.
If love pricks you, prick it back, and you'll beat love down.
Give me a mask to cover my face. (*Puts on a mask.*)
A mask for an ugly face! What do I care 30
if a curious eye notices my ugliness?
The beetlelike eyebrows on this mask shall cover my
embarrassment.

BENVOLIO

Come, knock, and let's go in. And when we get in,
every man is to dance.

ROMEO

Give me a torch. Let mischievous, light-hearted men 35
dance over the floor coverings.
I take the advice of the old proverb which says,
"I'll be an onlooker and watch."
It's better to quit the game while it's still fun!"

MERCUTIO

Nonsense, like the sheriff says, be still as a mouse. 40
If you're a horse, we'll get you out of the mud,
or if you'll excuse me, out of love where you're sticking
up to your ears. Come on, we're burning daylight.

ROMEO

No, that's not true.

MERCUTIO

I mean, sir, that by delaying, 45
we waste our time in vain, like using torches by day.
Take it as I mean it, for judgment is found
in correct interpretation five times before it's found once in
our five wits.



ROMEO

We have good intentions in going to this masquerade dance,
but it isn't intelligent to go.

50

MERCUTIO

Why, may I ask?

ROMEO

I dreamed a dream tonight.

MERCUTIO

And so did I.

ROMEO

Well, what was your dream?

MERCUTIO

That dreamers often lie.

55

ROMEO

In bed asleep, while they dream true dreams.

MERCUTIO

Oh, I see that the fairy, Queen Mab, has been with you.

She delivers babies for the fairies, and she is

no bigger than an agate for a ring

on the forefinger of a magistrate.

60

She's drawn by a team of tiny creatures

over men's noses as they lie asleep.

Her wagon spokes are made of long spiders' legs;

the cover is made of the wings of grasshoppers;

the harness is made of the smallest spider web;

65

her steeds' collars are made of the rays of watery moonbeams;

her whip is made of cricket's bone; the lash a spider's web;

her coachman is a small, grey-coated gnat,

not half as big as a little round worm

removed from the finger of a lazy maid.

70

Her chariot is an empty hazelnut shell

made by a squirrel, or an old worm,

who, ever since anyone could remember, have been the fairies'

coachmakers.

In this manner she gallops night after night



through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love. 75

She travels over courtiers' knees, and they dream of bowing;
over lawyers' fingers, and they dream of fees;
over ladies' lips, and they dream of kisses.

Often the testy Mab puts blisters on the ladies' lips
because their breaths smell of too many sweets. 80

Sometimes she gallops over a courtier's nose,
and then he dreams of finding someone whose cause he can
support for a fee;

and sometimes she comes with the tail of a pig owed to the
church

and tickles a minister's nose as he sleeps,
so that he dreams of being given another well-paying post. 85

Sometimes she drives over a soldier's neck,
and he dreams of cutting foreigners' throats,
and of invasions, ambushes, Spanish knives,
and drinking toasts from glasses thirty feet deep.

Then soon he hears
drums and he awakens 90

and being frightened by the noise, he says a prayer or two
and goes back to sleep. This is that same Mab
who braids the manes of horses in the night,
and tangles dirty, unkempt hair

which, when untangled, means terrible misfortune. 95


This is the hag which presses maidens down
as they lie on their backs and teaches them to bear up
so they will have good posture. This is the
fairy woman—

ROMEO

Stop, stop, Mercutio!
You're talking nonsense. 100

MERCUTIO

True, I'm talking about dreams,
which are the children of an idle brain,
born from nothing but an empty fantasy.
Dreams are as thin as the air 105
and more likely to change than the wind, who is wooing



the frozen heart of the north right now,
and, becoming angry, he puffs away from the north,
turning his face to the rainy south.

BENVOLIO

This wind you are talking about blows us away from our
purpose. 110

The banquet is about over, and we'll get there too late.

ROMEO

I am afraid we're too early, for I'm afraid
that some unpleasant events, still only destined to happen,
will bitterly begin
at this party tonight and bring to an end 115
this hateful life of mine
by some terrible, untimely death.

But God, who steers my life's course,
will give my sail direction. Let's go, merry gentlemen!

BENVOLIO

Beat your drums. 120

They march about the stage and then leave.



ACT 1, SCENE 5

A hall in Capulet's house. MUSICIANS waiting. The SERVANTS enter with napkins.

FIRST SERVANT

Where's Potpan? He's not helping us take the plates away. He carries a wooden platter! He scrapes a wooden plate!

SECOND SERVANT

When household manners rest in the hands of only one or two people—and their hands dirty at that—it's disgusting.

FIRST SERVANT

Take these folding stools away, remove the sideboard, watch the silverware. Save me a piece of marzipan, and if you're really a friend, tell the doorman to let in Susan Grindstone and Nell (for our own party). Antony and Potpan! 5

SECOND SERVANT

Yes, boy, get ready.

The THIRD SERVANT enters.

FIRST SERVANT (to THIRD SERVANT)

We've looked for you, called for you, and searched for you in the dance hall. 10

THIRD SERVANT

We can't be here and there, too. Be cheerful, boys, and be quick. To the one who lives longest go the spoils!

They exit.


CAPULET enters with JULIET, TYBALT, and others of his house to greet the guests, ROMEO, and others in disguise.

CAPULET

Welcome, gentlemen! Those ladies who don't have corns on their toes will dance with you. 15

Ah, dear ladies, which of you will now refuse to dance? If you hesitate, I'll swear you have corns. Did any of you think that joke hit home?

Welcome, gentlemen! I remember the time when I too wore a mask and 20



whispered sweet nothings in a beautiful lady's ear
to please her. That's all in the past now, long gone!
You are welcome, gentlemen! Come, musicians, play.

Music plays and they dance.

Clear the hall! Make room! Dance, girls!
Give us more light, you rascals, and get the tables out of 25
the way.

Put out the fire—the room has grown too hot.
Ah, sir, these party-crashers are welcome.
No, sit down, my good relative Capulet,
for you and I are past our dancing days.
How long has it been since you and I 30
wore a mask?

SECOND CAPULET

I swear, it's been thirty years.

CAPULET

What, it can't be that long, not that long!
It was last at the wedding of Lucentio,
around Pentecost, whenever that comes, 35
some twenty-five years ago that we wore masks.

SECOND CAPULET

No, longer, it was longer ago than that! Lucentio's son is older, sir.
His son is thirty.

CAPULET

How can you say that?
His son was still a minor just two years ago. 40

ROMEO (to SERVANT)

Who is the lady who graces the hand
of that gentleman over there?

SERVANT

I don't know, sir.



ROMEO

Oh, she teaches the torches to burn brightly!
She hangs upon the face of night
like a rich jewel in an Ethiopian's ear— 45
her beauty is too rich to be touched, too heavenly for this earth!
She looks like a snow-white dove dancing among crows,
she is so much more beautiful than the other ladies.
When this dance is over, I'll see where she stands, 50
and I'll make my coarse hand blessed by touching her hand.
Did I ever love anyone before now? My eyes will swear
that I never saw real beauty until tonight.

TYBALT (*overhearing* ROMEO)

That man has the voice of a Montague.
Get me my sword, boy. How dare this lowlife 55
come here, disguised by a comic mask,
to mock and scorn our banquet?
Now by my family's good name and reputation,
I wouldn't hold it a sin to kill him.

CAPULET

What's wrong, nephew? Why are you so angry? 60

TYBALT

Uncle, that man is a Montague, our enemy.
He's a villain who has come in hatred
to mock our banquet tonight.

CAPULET


That is young Romeo, isn't it?

TYBALT

Yes, it is the villain Romeo. 65

CAPULET

Calm down, gentle nephew, leave him alone.
He carries himself like a dignified gentleman,
and to tell the truth, Verona's citizens say
that he is a good, well-mannered youth. 70
I would not for all the riches in this town
harm him here in my house.
Be patient and pay no attention to him.
Those are my wishes, which if you'll respect,



you'll put on a cheery face and stop frowning.
Your frowns aren't proper at a feast.

75

TYBALT

My frowns are fitting when you have a villain for a guest.
I will not tolerate his presence.

CAPULET

You will tolerate him!
What do you mean, boy? I say he shall stay! Be off!
Am I the master here, or are you? Be off!
You'll not stand him? By heaven!
You'll disturb the guests!
You'll bring about a riot! You'll play the big hero!

80

TYBALT

Uncle, this is a disgrace to us.

CAPULET

Enough, enough!
You're a rude boy, aren't you? So this is the way it is?
This suggestion of yours may just hurt you. I know what's behind
this.
You are compelled to contradict me. I swear it's time—
(*to the DANCERS*) Well done, friends.—(*to*
TYBALT) You are impertinent—Go away!
Be quiet, or—(*to SERVANTS*) More light, give us
more light! (*to TYBALT*) Shame on you!
I'll shut you up.—(*to DANCERS*) Have fun, friends.

85

90

TYBALT

The clash of forced self-control when it meets with anger
makes me shake from the different emotions.
I'll leave, but Romeo's intrusion,
which now seems sweet, will be bitterly regretted.

95

ROMEO (*to JULIET*)

If I abuse with my unworthy hand
your holy shrine, here's the fine I'll pay:

that my lips, like two blushing pilgrims, stand ready
to smooth away my rough touch with a tender kiss.

JULIET

Good pilgrim, your hands are not rough as you say. 100
The touch of your hand is sufficient devotion.
Even saints greet pilgrims by touching hands,
and holding hands is the pilgrim's greeting.

ROMEO

Don't saints have lips, and religious pilgrims, too?

JULIET

Yes, pilgrim. They have lips which they use to pray. 105

ROMEO

Oh, then, dear saint, let lips touch as hands do.
Lips pray, you know, so faith won't turn to despair.

JULIET

Saints do not usually take action, though they may grant favors
prayed for.

ROMEO

Then don't move while I receive what I prayed for.
My lips, by yours, will be cleansed of sin. 110

He kisses her.

JULIET

Now my lips have taken on your sin.

ROMEO

Sin from my lips? That is a sin that is sweetly suggested.
Give me my sin again.

He kisses her again.

JULIET

You kiss as though you researched the subject.

NURSE

Madam, your mother wants to speak with you. 115

ROMEO

Who is her mother?



NURSE

Why, bachelor,
her mother is the lady of this house.
And she is a good lady, as well as being wise and virtuous.
I nursed her daughter with whom you spoke. 120
I tell you, the man who can marry her
will have a lot of money.

ROMEO

Is she a Capulet?
What a costly account! My life is at the mercy of my enemy.

BENVOLIO

Let's go. The party is over. 125

ROMEO

Yes, I'm afraid so; I am worried.

CAPULET

No, gentlemen, don't go.
There's still a modest feast to come.
(They whisper in his ear.) Is that so? Well then, thank you.
Thanks to all of you honest gentlemen. Good night. 130
Bring more torches here! (Maskers leave.) Come on then,
let's go to bed.
Ah, sir, by my faith, it's late.
I'll go to bed.

All but JULIET and the NURSE leave.

JULIET

Come here, nurse. Who is that gentleman?

NURSE

The son and heir of old Tiberio. 135

JULIET

Who is that going out the door now?

NURSE

Indeed, I think that's young Petruchio.

JULIET

Who is the one who is following behind—the one who
would not dance?



NURSE

I don't know.

JULIET

Go and ask what his name is. (*to herself*) If he is married, 140
my grave will probably be my wedding bed.

NURSE (*leaves and then returns*)

His name is Romeo, Romeo Montague.
He's the only son of your great enemy.

JULIET

My only love springs from my only hate!
I saw him too early when I didn't know him, and now I 145
realize who he is too late!
This is a horrible beginning to love
that I must love a hated enemy.

NURSE

What is this? What are you saying?

JULIET

A rhyme I just learned from someone
I just danced with. 150

Someone calls Juliet's name from offstage.

NURSE

We're coming!
Come, let's go; the strangers are all gone.

They exit.


Act I Review

Discussion Questions

1. What does the first scene of the play reveal about Romeo's behavior? Explain how he changes by the end of Act I.
2. What is your impression of Juliet's father? Describe the relationship between Capulet and his daughter as it is shown during Scene ii.
3. What concepts of love are presented by the female characters in Scene iii?
4. Characterize Mercutio as he appears in Scene iv. What kind of friend is he to Romeo?
5. What do you learn about Tybalt in Scene v?
6. Analyze the behavior of Tybalt, Mercutio, and Benvolio in Act I. Based on your analysis, predict what their roles might be in the rest of the play.
7. Compare Romeo's reaction to Juliet's when each discovers the true identity of the other.
8. Do Romeo's feelings for Juliet seem to be different from his feelings for Rosaline? Explain your answer.

Literary Elements

1. A **foil** is a character who has qualities that are in sharp contrast to another character, thus emphasizing the traits of each. How is Mercutio a foil to Romeo?
2. **Foreshadowing** refers to hints in the text about what will occur later. What examples of foreshadowing do you find in the Prologue and in Scene iv of Act I?

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3. **Hyperbole** means obvious exaggeration. Look at Romeo's declaration of love for Rosaline in Act I, Scene i. What examples can you find of hyperbole? Discuss why you think he overstates his feelings.
 4. A **pun** is a play on words that have similar sounds but more than one possible spelling or meaning. Scene iv, in which Romeo and his friends banter on the way to the Capulets' masquerade party, is filled with puns. Find a pun in this scene and explain its different meanings and effect.
 5. Good drama has **conflict**: struggle between opposing forces. What conflicts are set in motion by events in Scene v?

Writing Prompts

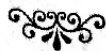
1. Look up the rules for the 14-line form of verse known as a sonnet. Using the rhyme scheme of your choice, write a sonnet of romantic love. Or you may want to write a sonnet that parodies or satirizes the form.
2. Write a description of Romeo based on what you have learned about him so far. Use specific quotes from the play to support your writing.
3. Assume that you write an advice column for a newspaper or magazine. A modern-day Romeo or Juliet writes to you asking for your advice. He or she explains what happened at the party and also mentions the family feud. First write his or her letter, and then write your response.
4. Choose a scene and write a brief summary of its events in one sentence. You may choose to write it in standard English, contemporary slang or street talk, or the language of Shakespeare, Elizabethan English. Or write three summaries; use a separate style in each.
5. Choose a quotation from one of the scenes in Act I that you feel best characterizes that scene. In a paragraph, discuss why you think this quotation is significant and effective at conveying the events or emotions of this scene.

Romeo and Juliet ACT II



Rebecca Callard and Zubin Varin perform the famous balcony scene at the Open Air Theatre in London. (1993)

*"O Romeo, Romeo!
Wherefore art thou Romeo?"*



1. Do you think it's possible to...
2. Be on the lookout for images...
3. What might be the possible...

Literary

1. A metaphor makes a direct comparison between two things that are not truly alike. In Scene ii, Romeo says, "What light through yonder window comes? 'Tis the sun! The metaphor of light through the window is a metaphor for Juliet's face."

2. Romeo and Juliet is filled with metaphors. Romeo compares Juliet to the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell) in his speech. He says, "With love's light rays to creep / Upon that sun-dark spot." The metaphor of light rays is a metaphor for Juliet's face.

3. In drama, a **soliloquy** is a speech in which a character speaks alone on the stage. In Act II, Scene ii, Romeo has a soliloquy when he is alone on the stage. He says, "Tear thy heart for me, / And I will tear mine out for thee."

4. A **metagramm** is a word that is a play on words. For example, Juliet's name is a metagramm because it contains the word "conference."

5. As noted in Act I, Juliet is a young girl who is not yet 13 years old. She is the daughter of a wealthy merchant and is engaged to be married to Paris.

Before You Read

1. Do you think it's possible to fall in love this fast?
2. Be on the lookout for images that appeal to the senses; this kind of language carries a powerful emotional impact.
3. What might be the possible consequences of Romeo and Juliet's marriage?

Literary Elements

1. A **metaphor** makes a direct comparison between things that are not truly alike. In Scene ii, Romeo utters the famous line: "But soft, what light through yonder window breaks? It is the east and Juliet is the sun." The metaphor compares the sun and Juliet.
2. Romeo and Juliet is filled with **imagery**—word pictures that appeal to the five senses (sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell) and add emotion and power to the writing. Romeo emphasizes the exuberant and uplifting nature of his love for Juliet with this visual image: "With love's light wings did I o'erperch these walls."
3. In drama, a **soliloquy** is a longer speech that reveals the innermost thoughts and feelings of the character who speaks it—just as if the character were speaking to himself or herself. Usually, the character is alone on the stage. If other characters are present, they do not "hear" the speech. One of the most famous soliloquies in drama is Hamlet's "to be or not to be" speech, in which he argues with himself about the value of life.
4. A **malapropism** is a comical mistake uttered by certain characters. For example, Juliet's Nurse uses "confidence" when she means "conference."
5. As noted in Act I, a **pun** is a play on words that have similar sounds but more than one possible spelling or meaning. When the Nurse says of Juliet, "That shall she, marry," she means both "enter into marriage" and "I swear!"



PROLOGUE

The CHORUS enters.

CHORUS

Romeo's old love for Rosaline is now dead,
and a new love eagerly hopes to win his heart.
That beauty for whom he groaned and wanted to die
is now no longer beautiful, compared with Juliet.
Romeo is loved and he loves again.

5

Both have been bewitched by the charm of beauty.
To Juliet, his supposed enemy, he must plead,
and she must steal love's tempting bait from terrifying hooks.
Since he is considered an enemy, he may not be able
to use the vows that lovers typically swear.
Juliet, just as deeply in love, has even fewer means
to meet her new beloved anywhere.

10

However, love gives them power, time gives them the means to
meet,
and their great problems are softened by great sweetness.

Exit.



BENVOLIO

If he hears you, he'll be angry.

MERCUTIO

That speech can't anger him. It would anger him 25
to conjure up a spirit of some strange kind
in his lady love's circle and let it stand there until she
conjured it down.

That would make him mad. My invocation
is proper and respectable—in his lady love's name, 30
I conjure only to raise him up.

BENVOLIO

Come on, he has hidden among these trees
so he can melt into the damp night.
His love is blind, and that best suits the dark.

MERCUTIO

If love is blind, love cannot hit its target. 35

Now he'll sit under an apple tree
and wish his lady love were that kind of fruit
that girls call apples when they're in private.

Oh, Romeo, if only she were that, if she just were
an open unmentionable and you a pear. 40

Romeo, good night. I'm going to my trundle bed.

This ground is too cold for me to sleep on.

Come on, shall we leave?

BENVOLIO

Go on, then. It's useless
to look for him when he does not want to be found.

BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO exit.



all.]

ACT 2, SCENE 2

Capulet's orchard. ROMEO comes from the wall, just having overheard MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO'S conversation.

§?

ROMEO

Mercutio makes fun of scars because he's never felt pain.

JULIET appears at her upstairs window, and ROMEO sees her.

But wait! What light is coming from that window?

It is the eastern light and Juliet is the sun.

Rise up, beautiful sun, and make the jealous moon invisible.

The moon is already sick and pale with grief
because you, Juliet, are more beautiful than she is. 5

Don't become one of her virgin followers because she is jealous;
her virginity is sickly and anemic.

Only fools wear the uniform of virginity; take off that uniform.

There stands my lady; oh, she is my love! 10

If only she could know she is my beloved.

She speaks, yet she says nothing. What does that matter?

Her eyes speak; I'll answer them.

I'm being too confident; she's not speaking to me.

Two of the most beautiful stars in all the heavens beg her eyes
to twinkle in their orbits while they are gone. 15

What if her eyes were in the heavens, and the stars in her head?

The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
as daylight shames a lamp. If her eyes were stars, 20

the heavens would shine so brightly

that the birds would sing because they would think it was day.

See how she leans her cheek on her hand!

I wish I were a glove on her hand

so that I could touch her cheek. 25

JULIET

Alas!

ROMEO

She is speaking!

Oh, speak again, bright angel, for you,

Ken

up there above my head, are as glorious to the night
as is an angel of heaven 30
to the white, upturned, wondering eyes
of humans who stand back to gaze on him
when he rides upon the slow-moving clouds
and sails through the air.

JULIET
Romeo! Romeo! Why are you Romeo? 35
Reject your father and refuse his name.
Or if you will not, just swear to be my love, and I
will no longer be a Capulet.

ROMEO (*to himself*)
Shall I listen to her any longer, or shall I speak to her?

JULIET
Not you, but only your family name is my enemy. 40
You would be Romeo even if you were not a Montague.
What is a Montague? It's not a hand or a foot,
an arm or a face, or any other part
of a man's body. Oh, take some other name!
What's in a name? The thing which we call a rose 45
would smell just as sweet if it had any other name.
So Romeo—even if he weren't called Romeo—
would be just as perfect
without his name. Romeo, get rid of your name,
and in place of that name, which isn't part of you, 50
take me.

ROMEO
I'll take you at your word.
If you'll call me love, I'll be christened again to get a new name
and never again be called Romeo.

JULIET
Who is that, hiding there in the dark, 55
who is eavesdropping on my private thoughts?

ROMEO
If I have to use a name,
I don't know how to tell you who I am.
My name, dear saint, is hateful to me

because it's the name of your enemy. 60
If I had written it down, I'd tear up the word.

JULIET

I have not listened to even a hundred words
that you've spoken, but I recognize your voice.
Aren't you Romeo—and a Montague?

ROMEO

Neither one, beautiful maiden, if you dislike either. 65

JULIET

How did you get here? Tell me. And why?
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb
and this is a place of death to you—considering who you are—
if any of my relatives should find you here.

ROMEO

I flew over the walls on the wings of love; 70
those strong walls can't keep love out,
and whatever love can do, love will try.
Therefore, your relatives can't keep me out.

JULIET

If they see you, they'll murder you.

ROMEO

I see more danger in your eyes 75
than in twenty of their swords. If you just look sweetly at me,
I'm protected from their hatred.

JULIET

I would not have them find you here for anything in the world.

ROMEO


The dark night will hide me from their eyes, 80
and if you don't love me, I wish they would find me here.
It would be better to be killed by their hate,
than have my death postponed without your love.

JULIET

Who told you how to get here?

ROMEO

Love led me, love who first made me wonder which way to go. 85
Love gave me advice and I listened.



I am no ship's pilot, but if you were as far away as
the most distant land on the most distant sea,
I'd risk a voyage there to find you.

JULIET

If the dark didn't hide my face,
you'd see that I am blushing 90
because of what you've heard me say tonight.

I'd gladly stand on formalities—gladly, gladly deny
what you heard me say—but good-bye to proprieties.

Do you love me? I know you'll say "yes."

And I'll believe you. Yet, even if you swear, 95
you could turn out to be a liar. They say even Jove
laughs at the false oaths of lovers! Oh, gentle Romeo,
if you love me, honestly admit it.

Or if you think I am too quickly won by you,
I'll frown and be grouchy and say "no," 100

so you'll have to court me; but otherwise I wouldn't snub
you for any reason.

To tell the truth, handsome Montague, I'm too fond of you.
Therefore, you may think my behavior is immodest.

But trust me, gentle sir, I'll be truer
than those who act more clever and pretend coolness. 105

I would have been more coy, I must admit,
but you overheard me before I knew you were here,
my true love. Please forgive me,
and don't think that I fell for you because of a shallow love
which the dark night has revealed. 110

ROMEO

Lady, I swear by the blessed moon
that gives a silver light to the tops of these fruit trees—

JULIET

Oh, don't swear by the moon, the fickle moon
that changes monthly in her circular orbit,
for fear that your love should prove equally changeable. 115

ROMEO

What shall I swear by?

JULIET

Don't swear at all;



or, if you have to swear, swear by your gracious self.
You're the god I worship
and I'll believe you.

120

ROMEO

If my heart's dear love—

JULIET

Well, don't swear. I'm delighted by you,
but I'm not delighted by our pledges tonight.
Our love is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden,
too like the lightning which has faded
before you can even say, "It's lightning." Good night, my sweet!
Our bud of love, ripened by summer's breath,
may have turned into a beautiful flower by the next time we
meet.

125

Good night, good night. May sweet rest and peace
come to your heart the way it lies within my breast!

130

ROMEO

Will you leave me so unsatisfied?

JULIET

What satisfaction can you want tonight?

ROMEO

I want you to exchange love's faithful vows with me.

JULIET

I gave you my vow of love before you even asked for it.
I wish I could give it again.

135

ROMEO

Would you take back your vow of love? Why, my love?

JULIET

So I can be generous and give it to you again.
Yet I don't want anything but your love, and I have that.
My desire to give you love is as broad as the sea,
and just as deep; the more love I give you,
the more I have to give because my love is infinite.

140

The NURSE calls from within.

we
instead
of
it

I hear a noise inside. Dear love, good-bye!
(to NURSE) I'm coming, good nurse.—(to ROMEO)
Sweet Montague, be true to me.
Stay here just a little while, and I'll be back.

JULIET *exits.*

ROMEO

Oh blessed, blessed night! I'm afraid,
since it is night, that this is all a dream,
too flattering and sweet to be real.

145

JULIET *re-enters on the balcony.*

JULIET

Just a few more words, dear Romeo, and then it's definitely
good night.

If your love is honorable,
and you want to marry me, send me word tomorrow
by someone I'll send to you.

150

Tell me where and what time the wedding will be,
and I'll lay all my wealth at your feet
and follow you as my husband anywhere.

NURSE (*calling*)

Madam!

155

JULIET (*to NURSE*)

I am coming right now.—(to ROMEO) But if you don't have
honest intentions,
I beg you—

NURSE (*calling*)

Madam!

JULIET (*to NURSE*)

Immediately! I'm coming!
(to ROMEO)—to stop pursuing me and leave me to my grief.
I'll send a messenger tomorrow.

160

ROMEO

My soul will live for that—

JULIET

Good night a thousand times. (*She exits.*)

books
oks.

ROMEO

This night is a thousand times worse without your light.
Love is drawn toward love the way schoolboys are drawn 165
away from their books;
but when love is drawn away from love, it's like going to school
with a scowl.

He starts to leave.

JULIET re-enters on the balcony.

JULIET (*Whispers.*)

Romeo! I wish I had a falconer's voice
to lure this male falcon back again!
But being still ruled by others, I can't shout,
or else I would yell until I opened the cave where Echo lies. 170
Then I'd make her silver voice more hoarse than mine
by saying my Romeo's name over and over.
Romeo!

ROMEO

It's my soul that is calling my name.
Lovers' voices sound silver-sweet at night, 175
like soft music to receptive listeners.

JULIET

Romeo!

ROMEO

Yes, my sweet?

JULIET

What time tomorrow
should I send my messenger to you? 180

ROMEO

By nine o'clock.

JULIET

I will not fail. It will be twenty years until then.
I forget why I called you back.

him with
y her



ROMEO

I'll stay here until you remember.

JULIET

I'll forget if you stay here 185
because I'll only remember how much I love your company.

ROMEO

I'll stay so you'll forget everything—
everything except me.

JULIET

It's almost morning. I wish you would go now—
but no farther than a spoiled girl's pet bird 190
which is allowed to hop away from her hand just a little
like a poor prisoner in his twisted chains.
Then with a silk thread, the girl pulls the bird back again,
so loving, and yet so jealous of his freedom.

ROMEO

I wish I were your bird. 195

JULIET

Sweetheart, so do I.
Yet if you were my bird, I'd kill you with too much love.
Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow
that I could say good night until it's tomorrow.

JULIET exits.

ROMEO

May you sleep well and feel peaceful inside. 200
I wish I were your sleep and peace to find such a sweet resting
place.
From here I'll go to my priest
to ask for his help and tell him of my good fortune.

ROMEO exits.

TROW,

e father
ghosts

ACT 2, SCENE 3

Friar Lawrence's cell. FRIAR LAWRENCE enters with a basket.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

The grey-eyed morning smiles on the frowning night.
It checkers the eastern clouds with streaks of light,
and the spotted darkness staggers like a drunk
from the path of the day and the sun's fiery wheels.
Now, before the sun can raise his burning eye 5
to cheer up the day and dry up night's dew,
I must fill this wicker basket
with deadly weeds and healing flowers.
The earth, which is the mother of nature, is also a tomb,
both a grave and a womb. 10
And from earth's womb come all kinds of children
who suck from her natural breasts.
Many of earth's children have many excellent uses—
not one child that doesn't have some use—and yet they're all
different.
Great are the powerful uses that lie 15
in plants, herbs, stones, and in their pure qualities.
For there's nothing that lives on earth that is so bad
that it doesn't give the earth some special good.
And there isn't anything so good that when improperly used,
it stops serving its natural purpose and becomes poisonous. 20
Good can turn to bad when it is misused,
and sometimes evil can be made right by right action.

ROMEO enters.

Within the new bud of this weak flower,
there lies poison and medicinal power.
If you smell this flower, you'll be strengthened all over; 25
but if you taste this flower, you die.
Two opposed kings always live
within man, as well as in herbs—virtue and base lust.
Where evil is predominant,
the cankerworm will soon eat up that plant. 30



ROMEO

Good morning, father.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Bless you!

Who is the early riser who greets me so sweetly?

Young man, you must be very worried to be out of bed so
early in the morning.

35

Worry is always present in an old man's life,
and where you find worry, you'll never find sleep.

But when the young and the carefree
lie down to rest, then you'll find sleep is king.

So your appearance at this early hour tells me that
something is bothering you.

40

Or if that's not the case, then this must be right—
Romeo, you've not been to bed tonight.

ROMEO

The last statement is true. I had a sweeter rest than bed.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

God forgive your sin! Were you with Rosaline?

45

ROMEO

With Rosaline, father? No!

I've forgotten that name and all the sorrow it brought.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

That's my good boy. But where have you been then?

ROMEO

I'll tell you before you ask me again.

I was dining with my enemies

50

when all of a sudden, one of them wounded me,

whom I in turn wounded. You have the remedy

to help us both with your holy medicine.

I have no hatred, father, for

my request will also benefit my enemy.

55

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Good son, speak clearly and simply.

If you confess in riddles, you'll be forgiven in riddles.



ROMEO

Then I'll tell you clearly that the girl I love
is the beautiful daughter of rich Capulet.
Just as my heart is set on her, her heart is set on me, 60
and we're totally united, except by the union
of holy marriage that you must perform. When, where, and how
we met, fell in love, and exchanged our vows,
I'll tell you later, but I ask you this now:
that you agree to marry us today. 65

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Holy Saint Francis! How you have changed!
So, Rosaline, whom you loved so much,
is so quickly forgotten? Then young men's love lies
not in their hearts but in their eyes.
Jesus and Mary, what a lot of salt tears 70
have washed your pale cheeks because of Rosaline!
A lot of salty tears were wasted
to flavor a love that you didn't really feel.
The sun has not yet cleared your signs from the heavens,
and your old groans are still ringing in my old ears. 75
Look, there's still a stain on your cheek
from a tear stain that is not yet washed off.
If ever you were yourself, and that old sorrow was yours,
you and your crying were all for Rosaline.
Have you changed? Say this sentence then: 80
"Women may fall when men don't have the strength to catch
them."

ROMEO

You often scolded me for loving Rosaline.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

For doting on her, not for loving her, my dear student.

ROMEO

You told me to bury my love.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Not in a grave 85
where you bury one love to take another one out.



ROMEO

Please, don't scold me. The one I love now
gives me kindness for kindness and love for love.
Rosaline did not.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Rosaline knew all too well 90
that you were merely repeating words that you didn't mean.
But come, my changeable young man, go with me.
I will help you for just one reason:
this marriage alliance may prove to be so happy
that it will turn the hatred of your two households into love. 95

ROMEO

Let's go. I insist on being quick about this.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Let's be wise and slow. Those who run too fast stumble.

They exit.



10.

ACT 2, SCENE 4

A street. BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO enter.

MERCUTIO

Where the devil is Romeo?
Didn't he come home last night?

BENVOLIO

Not to his father's house, according to his servant.

MERCUTIO

That pale-hearted witch, Rosaline,
torments him so much that he'll surely go crazy!

5

BENVOLIO

Tybalt, old Capulet's nephew,
sent a letter to Romeo's house.

MERCUTIO

That letter contains a challenge to a duel, I'll bet my life.

BENVOLIO

Romeo will answer it.

MERCUTIO

Any man who can write may answer a letter.

10

BENVOLIO

No, I meant Romeo will answer the writer of the letter. He'll take
up the challenge to fight a duel.

MERCUTIO

Poor Romeo, he's already dead. He's been stabbed with that
white maid's black eye; shot through the air with a love song;
and the very center of his heart has been split by Cupid's
blunt arrow. Is he the kind of man to fight a duel with Tybalt?


15

BENVOLIO

Why? Who is Tybalt?

MERCUTIO

He's not just the prince of cats. He's the brave master of all the
laws of etiquette. He fights as you would sing from a music sheet,



keeping time, distance, and proportion. He observes
even the shortest rests—one, two, and the third is a sword in
your breast. He's the butcher of a silk button on his opponent's
shirt. A duelist, a duelist! He's a gentleman from the best school
of fencing and ready to quarrel over a trifle. He gives the
immortal lunge, the backhanded thrust, the home thrust!

BENVOLIO

The what? 25

MERCUTIO

Damn these grotesque, lisping, snobbish fops, these speakers
of buzz words! "By Jesus, he was a very good swordsman!
A very brave man! A very good fellow!" Isn't it terrible, venerable
sir, that we should be plagued with these strange parasites—
these fashion nuts, these courteous fops who so
insist on new fashion that they're not at ease with our old
manners and learning? Oh their bones, their bones!

ROMEO enters.

BENVOLIO

Here comes Romeo! Here comes Romeo!

MERCUTIO

Looking like a fish that has spawned—like a dried herring. 35
Oh flesh, flesh how fishy you have become! Now he's ready
to say the kind of poems that Petrarch wrote. But compared
with Rosaline, Petrarch's lady lover was just a kitchen maid
(even if she did have better love poems written to her).
Compared with Rosaline, Dido was a drab woman; Cleopatra,
deceitful; Helen and Hero good-for-nothings and loose women;
Thisbe's shining eyes might be lovely but are not worth 40
mentioning. Sir Romeo, good day! That's a French hello for your
French pants. You certainly gave us the counterfeit last night.

ROMEO

Good morning to both of you. What counterfeit did I give you?

MERCUTIO

The slip, sir, the slip! Don't you understand?

45

ROMEO

Excuse me, good Mercutio. I had some serious business to take care of, and in a case such as mine, a man may forget his manners.

MERCUTIO

That's as much as admitting that, in your condition, you have to bow from the hips.

ROMEO

You mean to curtsy.

50

MERCUTIO

You have interpreted quite graciously.

ROMEO

You gave a very polite explanation.

MERCUTIO

Indeed, I am the height of courtesy.

ROMEO

You mean pink for flower.

MERCUTIO

Right.

55

ROMEO

Then my shoe is well-flowered.

MERCUTIO

Touché! Now follow this joke until you have worn out your shoe so that when your single sole is worn out, the joke will be remembered after the telling as unique.

ROMEO

What a weak joke, remarkable only for being so pathetic.

60



MERCUTIO

You'll have to come between us, Benvolio. I can't think of a comeback.

ROMEO

Come on, keep it up, or I'll claim victory!

MERCUTIO

Well, if our wits are on a wild-goose chase, I'm done for. I'm certain you have more wild goose in one of your wits than I have in all five of mine. There—didn't I hit home at the end of the game?

65

ROMEO

You were never with me anywhere if you weren't there looking for a streetwalker.

MERCUTIO

I'll bite you on the ear for that joke!

ROMEO

No, good goose, don't bite me.

70

MERCUTIO

Your wit is like a tart apple: it makes very sharp sauce.

ROMEO

Doesn't such a sauce go well with a sweet goose like you?

MERCUTIO

Oh, here's wit of pliable leather. You stretch a little joke a long way.

ROMEO

I'll stretch my wit to tackle that word "broad," which, when added to goose, proves that you're known far and wide as an out-and-out goose.

75

MERCUTIO

Now, isn't this better than groaning for love? Now you're being friendly, now you're the Romeo I remember. You're Romeo! Now you are what

you are, in learning as well as by temperament. This silly love is like a big idiot running up and down with his tongue hanging out, trying to hide his toy in a hole.

80

BENVOLIO

Stop! Stop!

MERCUTIO

You want me to stop when I don't want to stop.

BENVOLIO

If I hadn't stopped you, you would have told an overly long story.

MERCUTIO

You're wrong. I'd have kept it short because I said all I'd meant to say, and really didn't intend to continue the discussion any longer.

85

ROMEO (*Sees JULIET's nurse coming.*)

Here comes some handsome stuff.

The NURSE and her servant PETER enter.

A sail, a sail!

MERCUTIO

Two sails! A man and a woman.

90

NURSE

Peter!

PETER

At your service!

NURSE

Give me my fan, Peter.

MERCUTIO

Give it to her, good Peter, so she can hide her face. Her fan is prettier than her face.

NURSE

Good morning, gentleman.

95

MERCUTIO

Good afternoon, lovely lady.

NURSE

Is it afternoon already?

MERCUTIO

It is, I assure you. The naughty hand on the clock is now on the point of noon.

NURSE

Shame on you! What kind of man are you?

100

ROMEO

He's one, madam, who was made to harm himself.

NURSE

Truly, that was a clever remark. "Made to harm himself," did he say? Gentleman, can any of you tell me where I can find young Romeo?

105

ROMEO

I can tell you. But young Romeo will be older when you have found him than when you started looking for him. I'm the youngest by the name of Romeo, for lack of a worse name.

NURSE

You speak well.

MERCUTIO

Really, is the "worst" good? You're very perceptive, indeed!
How intelligent!

110

NURSE (to ROMEO)

If you're Romeo, sir, I want to have a confidence with you.

BENVOLIO

She'll indite him to supper.

MERCUTIO

A streetwalker, a streetwalker, a streetwalker! I found her.

ROMEO

What have you found?

MERCUTIO

Not a streetwalker, sir. Unless a streetwalker is
like meat in a pie served during Lent— 115
stale and old before it is eaten.

He sings.

*An old rabbit harlot,
Yes, an old rabbit harlot,
Is very good meat in Lent.
But a rabbit that is moldy 120
Is not good enough to be paid for
When it rots before it is eaten.*

Romeo, will you come to your father's house? We're going to
dinner there.

ROMEO

Yes, I'll follow you. 125

MERCUTIO (to NURSE)

Good-bye, old lady. Good-bye. (*Sings.*) "Lady, lady, lady."

MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO leave.

NURSE

Tell me sir, what rude fellow was that who had such a fresh
mouth?

ROMEO

He's a gentleman, nurse, who loves to hear himself talk and
who'll say more in a minute than he'll listen to in a month. 130

NURSE

If he says anything bad about me, I'll beat him up—even if he
were bigger than he is and even if there were twenty such rascals

like him. And if I can't beat him, I'll find someone
who can. Disgusting rascal! I'm not one of his flirting
women and I'm not one of his cutthroats. (to PETER)
And you just stood there and let every rascal use me
as he pleased.

135

PETER

I didn't see any man use you at his pleasure. If I had, I would
have drawn my weapon quickly. I swear, I'm as quick to
draw my sword as any man, if I see there's a basis for a
good quarrel and if the law is on my side.

140

NURSE

I swear to God, I'm so upset that I am shaking all over.
Disgusting rascal! (to ROMEO) Sir, I must speak to you.
As I was telling you, my young lady sent me to find you.
What she told me to say, I'll keep to myself. First, let me
tell you, if you should seduce her, it would be a terrible
thing to do. My mistress is young, and if you should
two-time her, that would be a terrible thing to do to
any lady and very unmanly behavior.

145

150

ROMEO

Nurse, give my regards to your lady, your mistress. I vow—

NURSE

Good fellow, truly, I'll tell her so. Lord, lord, she'll be a happy
woman.

ROMEO

What will you tell her, nurse? You didn't listen to me.

155

NURSE

I'll tell her, sir, that you made a vow, which, as I understand it,
is a gentlemanlike offer.

ROMEO

Tell her to find
a way to come to confession this afternoon.
There at Friar Lawrence's cell
she shall receive absolution and be married. Here's some
money for your trouble.

160



NURSE

No indeed, sir, I won't take a penny.

ROMEO

Not another word! You shall take it.

NURSE

You want her to come this afternoon, sir? Well, she'll be there.

(Starts to leave.)

ROMEO

Good nurse, wait! My servant will come to you 165
within an hour behind the abbey wall
and bring you a rope ladder like those used on ships,
which will be my passageway in the dark night
to the peak of my happiness.

Good-bye. Be trustworthy and I'll reward you. 170

Good-bye. Give my love to your mistress.

NURSE

God in heaven bless you.—Listen, sir.

ROMEO

What did you want to say, dear nurse?

NURSE

Can your servant keep a secret? Didn't you ever hear the saying,
"Two can keep a secret if one is dead?" 175

ROMEO

I assure you that my servant is as trustworthy as steel.

NURSE

Well, sir—my mistress is the sweetest lady. Lord, lord! When
she was just a little chattering thing—Oh, there's a
nobleman in town named Paris who's eager to marry 180
Juliet. But she, good soul, would as soon see a toad, a real
toad, as to see him. I make her angry sometimes and tell
her that Paris is handsomer than you are. But, I swear to you that
when I say that, she looks as pale as any rag in the universe. Don't
rosemary and Romeo begin with the same letter?

Lord!
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ROMEO

Yes, nurse. So what? Both begin with an *R*.

185

NURSE

You teaser—*R* is a dog's name. *R* is for the—No, I know it begins with some other letter—and she has the prettiest sententious. That letter and you and rosemary. It would do you good to hear them.

ROMEO

Give my love to your lady.

190

NURSE

Yes—a thousand times.

ROMEO leaves.

Peter!

PETER

Right away!

NURSE

Go! Go before me and quickly!

They exit.



ACT 2, SCENE 5

Capulet's orchard. JULIET enters.

JULIET

It was nine o'clock this morning when I sent the nurse;
she promised to return within half an hour.
Maybe she can't find him. No, that can't be.
Oh, she is crippled! Love's messengers should be thoughts,
which can fly ten times faster than the sun's beams 5
driving back shadows over darkening hills.
That's why swift doves pull Venus' chariot,
and that's why Cupid has wings as swift as the wind.
Now, the sun is at the highest spot in the sky.
From nine o'clock to noon 10
is three long hours, and she still hasn't come back.
If she had the emotions and the warm blood of youth,
she'd move as fast as a ball.
My words would speed her to my sweet love,
and his words would speed her back to me. 15
But many old folks move like they are dead—
clumsy, slow, heavy, and pale as lead.

The NURSE and PETER enter.

Oh God, here she comes! Oh sweet nurse, what's your news?
Did you meet him? Send your servant away.

NURSE

Peter, wait by the gate. 20

PETER leaves.

JULIET

Now, sweet, nurse—Oh Lord, why do you look sad?
Even if the news is sad, tell it happily.
If the news is good, you don't do the music of good news justice
by telling it to me with such a sour face.

NURSE

I'm tired; let me rest awhile. 25
Oh, how my bones ache! What a rough walk I've had!

JULIET

I wish you had my bones and I had your news.
Come on! Please! I beg you tell me good, good nurse. Speak!

NURSE

Jesus, what a hurry you're in! Can't you wait awhile?
Don't you see I'm out of breath?

30

JULIET

How can you be out of breath, when you have breath
to say to me you're out of breath?
The excuse you're giving for this delay
is longer than the story you excused yourself from telling.
Is the news good or bad? Answer that!
Say either good or bad, and I'll wait for the details.
Let me be satisfied: is it good or bad?

35

NURSE

Well, you've made a foolish choice; you don't know how to
choose a man. Romeo! No, not him, though he has the
handsomest face of any man and his leg excels all men's.
And for a hand, a foot, and a body—though we won't
discuss them—they're beyond compare. He's not the
most courteous, but I'll swear, he's as gentle as a lamb.
Get along, girl; serve God. Have you already eaten at
home?

40

45

JULIET

No, no! But I knew all of this before. What does he say about our
marriage? What about that?

NURSE

Lord, how my head aches! What a head I have!
It throbs as if it would split into twenty pieces.
And then my back—Oh, my back, my back!
Shame on you for sending me out
to catch my death from jolting up and down!

50

JULIET

I'm truly sorry you're not well. Sweet, sweet, sweet nurse, tell me,
what does my love say?

NURSE

Your love says, like an honorable gentleman and a courteous,

55

kind, handsome, and I swear, a virtuous—where's your mother?

JULIET

Where's my mother? Why, she's inside!
Where else would she be? That's an odd reply,
"Your love says, like an honest gentleman,
'Where's your mother?'"

60

NURSE

By the Virgin Mary!
Are you angry? Come now, slow up.
Is this the medicine for my aching bones?
From now on, deliver your messages yourself.

65

JULIET

Such a fuss! Come on, what does Romeo say?

NURSE

Do you have permission to go to confession today?

JULIET

I have.

NURSE

Then hurry to Friar Lawrence's cell.
There a husband waits to make you a wife.
Now the blood has rushed up into your cheeks.
Another scrap of news and you'll turn scarlet.
Hurry to church! I must go another way.
I have to get a ladder by which your love
can climb to your room when it's dark.
I'm the slave and laborer for your delight.
But you shall bear the burden tonight.
Go! I'm off to dinner. Hurry to the cell.

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75

JULIET

I'll hurry to my good fortune. Honest nurse, good-bye.

They leave.

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agitated
help
the
crown

ACT 2, SCENE 6

Friar Lawrence's cell. FRIAR LAWRENCE and ROMEO enter.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Heavens smile upon this holy act of marriage
so that sorrow will not come later.

ROMEO

Amen, amen! But whatever sorrow comes,
it cannot equal the joy
that one short minute in her sight gives me. 5
If you will marry us with holy words,
then let love-destroying death do what he dares.
It's enough that I may call her mine.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Violent passions have violent ends,
and in triumph they die, like fire and gunpowder, 10
which consume one another when they kiss. Even the
sweetest honey
tastes sickeningly sweet if eaten to excess
and will destroy the appetite.
So love moderately. Love that lasts a long time is moderate.
To push love too fast can be as bad as being too slow to love. 15

JULIET enters.

Here comes the lady. Oh, so light a foot as hers
will never wear out the path.

A lover may ride upon a spider's thread
that waves in the wandering summer breeze,
and yet not fall. So light is earthly love. 20

JULIET

Good evening, father.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Romeo will kiss you for us both, daughter.

JULIET

The same greeting to Romeo; otherwise he thanks me too much.



ROMEO

Ah, Juliet, if you're as happy
as I am, and if you can
sing better than I do, go ahead and sweeten the air with your
voice, 25
and let beautiful music
tell the happiness that both
of us feel in meeting each other here.

JULIET

True understanding is deeper in meaning than mere words 30
and is important for its result, not pretty rhetoric.
Those who can verbalize their happiness have little
happiness to speak of. My true love has grown so much that
I can't tell even half of it in words.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Come! Come with me and we'll make this ceremony short. 35
You shall not be alone,
until the holy church joins you two together.

They exit.


Act II Review

Discussion Questions

1. What images of light and fire does Juliet inspire in Romeo?
2. After exchanging vows of love in Scene ii, Juliet says, "I have no joy of this contract to-night." What do you think she means by this?
3. What philosophical observations does Friar Lawrence make in Act II, Scene iii?
4. Describe how Romeo and his friends treat the Nurse. Would they treat all women of Verona in the same fashion? Explain.
5. Describe the interview between the Nurse and Romeo in Act II, Scene iv.
6. Why do you think Shakespeare left the wedding ceremony out of the play?
7. Do you approve of the Nurse's and Friar's actions in helping with the secret wedding? Explain why or why not.

Literary Elements

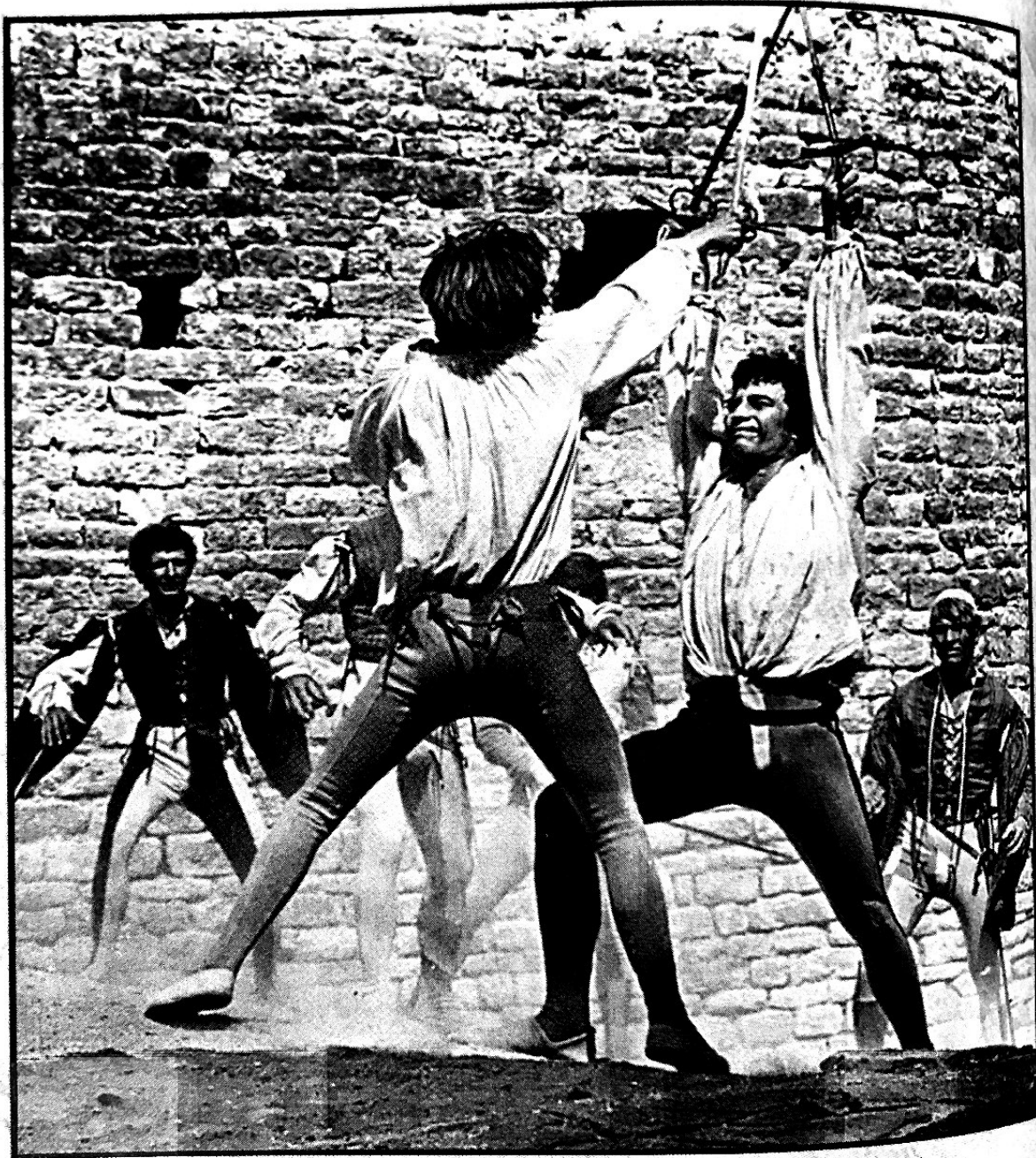
1. A **metaphor** is a direct comparison of unlike things. Find some examples of metaphors in Scene ii. What emotions and attitudes do they help the young lovers express?
2. **Imagery** refers to language that appeals to the five senses (sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell) and adds emotion and power to the writing. To see how imagery is embedded into the play, find and list the images of light, dark, and fire in Scene ii. What is their dramatic purpose?

- 
3. Shakespeare allows his characters to reveal their innermost thoughts and feelings to the audience through speeches called **soliloquies**. Find soliloquies by Romeo, Juliet, and Friar Lawrence in Act II. What purpose do they serve?
 4. A **malapropism** is a comical mistake uttered by certain characters. How are malapropisms used to characterize the Nurse? See if there is anyone else in the play who utters a malapropism.
 5. Act II, Scene iv contains a **pun** “free-for-all” among Romeo, Mercutio, and Benvolio. The three engage in a furious war of wits, with many plays on words, and many of those sexual in nature. Find a pun in this scene and consider its double meaning. Why do you think Shakespeare used this form so freely in this particular scene?

Writing Prompts

1. One of this play’s most famous quotations is “What’s in a name? That which we call a rose by any other word would smell as sweet.” Look back at the passage where Juliet speaks this (Act II, Scene ii), and think about the idea Juliet is expressing. Explain how names often get in the way of people knowing each other and getting along. Have you ever known or wanted to know someone who had the “wrong” name? Write about that situation.
2. Write a character description of either the Nurse or Friar Lawrence. What kind of person is she or he? Use quotations from the play to support your ideas.
3. Summarize the action of the play so far. Use one sentence for Act I and one sentence for Act II.
4. Compare Juliet’s relationship with the Nurse to her relationship with her mother. Does Juliet seem closer to one woman than the other? Think about the ways she talks and acts around each one. Put your response in writing, using evidence from the play to support your answer.

Romeo and Juliet ACT III



Romeo (Leonard Whiting) and Tybalt (Michael York) meet in a fatal fight. (Zeffirelli, 1968)

*“A plague o’
both your houses!”*



1. Notice how the n
2. At this point in th
- and compelling, R
3. Judging from the
- different from ge
4. What kind of long
- Juliet to have?

- L
1. The theme of a wo
 - writer wants to co
 - Romeo and Juliet b
 2. One of the many w
 - contrasts in Romeo
 - occurs when contra
 - Serious vanity!”
 3. The repetition of w
 - ways of increasing
 - scene. In Scene iii, R
 - conversation with F
 - the idea of leaving
 4. As noted earlier, hy
 - being wounded in a
 - the grimmest image



Before You Read

1. Notice how the mood of the play changes during this act.
2. At this point in the play, which character strikes you as more vivid and compelling, Romeo or Juliet? Explain why.
3. Judging from the play, how were gender roles in the Renaissance different from gender roles today?
4. What kind of long-term marriage would you expect Romeo and Juliet to have?

Literary Elements

1. The **theme** of a work of literature is the message about life that the writer wants to convey. The theme of “division” comes up often in *Romeo and Juliet* because it is a play about two feuding families.
2. One of the many ways Shakespeare continues the theme of contrasts in *Romeo and Juliet* is with **oxymorons**. An oxymoron occurs when contradictory words are paired: “O heavy lightness! Serious vanity!”
3. The **repetition** of words and phrases is one of Shakespeare’s favorite ways of increasing the tension and emotional impact of a speech or scene. In Scene iii, Romeo repeats the word “banishment” in his conversation with Friar Lawrence, which shows how much he fears the idea of leaving Verona and his dear Juliet behind.
4. As noted earlier, **hyperbole** means obvious exaggeration. After being wounded in a sword fight, Mercutio announces his death with the grimmest image possible: “They have made worms’ meat of me.”

Words to Know

The following vocabulary words appear in Act III in the original text of Shakespeare's play. However, they are words that are still commonly used. Read the definitions here and pay attention to the words as you read the play (they will be in boldfaced type).

civil	well-mannered; proper
confines	interior; insides
dexterity	skill; proficiency
digressing	getting off of the main topic; deviating
dismembered [dismember'd]	took apart; split
eloquence	expressiveness; verbal facility
garish	gaudy; showy
jocund	cheerful; happy
martial	military; soldierly
monarch	royalty; a king, queen, or emperor
plague	disease; hex
prevails	controls; dominates
reconcile	make peace among
renowned [renown'd]	famous; well-known
usurer	swindler; extortionist

Act Summary

As Romeo is walking home from the secret wedding, he comes upon Benvolio and their mutual friend Mercutio, who is quarreling with Tybalt. Romeo tries but fails to break up the fight between them. Tybalt fatally stabs Mercutio, and, in turn, Romeo avenges his friend's death by killing Tybalt. A furious Prince Escalus bans Romeo from Verona, warning that he will be put to death if he ever returns.

The Nurse gives Juliet the news that Romeo has been banished for

killing Juliet's
angry at Romeo,
she learns from
Romeo tries
of Juliet's grief at
plans for the two
leaves for Mantua
The newlyw
Juliet must wed
to seek the advice



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killing Juliet's cousin, Tybalt. At first, Juliet is grief-stricken for Tybalt and angry at Romeo, but her grief soon turns to pain at Romeo's banishment. She learns from the Nurse that she will see Romeo that night.

Romeo tries to commit suicide after learning of his banishment and of Juliet's grief at the events. Friar Lawrence tells Romeo he will make plans for the two newlyweds to spend the night together, before Romeo leaves for Mantua.

The newlyweds separate at dawn. Juliet's mother announces that Juliet must wed Paris, and Juliet refuses, enraging Lord Capulet. She vows to seek the advice of Friar Lawrence.



Romeo and Juliet, painting by Sir Frank Dicksee, 1884

ACT 3, SCENE 1

A public place. MERCUTIO, BENVOLIO and SERVANTS enter.

BENVOLIO

Please Mercutio, let's go.
It's hot, the Capulets are around,
and if we meet them, there'll be a fight.
This hot weather makes tempers flare!

MERCUTIO

You're like one of those fellows who enters a bar, throws his sword on the table, and says, "I pray heaven I'll have no reason to use you!" Then after he has felt the effect of his second cup, he'll draw his sword on the waiter who brought his wine, for no reason at all. 5

BENVOLIO

Am I like that fellow? 10

MERCUTIO

Come on, you're as hot-tempered when you're angry as any man in Italy. You're quick to get angry, and when you get angry, you're quick to be moved to—

BENVOLIO

Moved to do what?

MERCUTIO

Really, if there were two like you, we'd soon have none because one would kill the other. You, why, you would quarrel with a man who has a hair more or a hair less in his beard than you have. You'll quarrel with a man for cracking hazelnuts for no other reason than that you have hazel eyes. What kind of eye, except one like yours, would see the occasion for a quarrel? Your head is as full of quarrels as an egg is full of yolk, and yet your head has been beaten to a scramble, like an egg, for quarreling. You've quarreled with a man for coughing in the street because he woke your dog that was lying asleep in the sun. Didn't you quarrel with a tailor because he wore his new 15
20
25

jacket before Easter? And fought with another man for tying his new shoes with an old lace? And yet you lecture me about quarreling?

BENVOLIO

If I were as likely to quarrel as you, someone who bought my life would own it for about an hour and a quarter. 30

MERCUTIO

Own it? Stupid!

TYBALT, PETRUCHIO, and others enter.

BENVOLIO

I swear by my head, here come the Capulets.

MERCUTIO

I swear by my heel, I don't care.

TYBALT (to his servants)

Stay close behind me; I'll speak to them. (to MERCUTIO and others)

Gentlemen, good afternoon. I wish to speak a word with one of you. 35

MERCUTIO

Just one word with one of us?

Add something else to that; make it a word and a punch in the mouth.

TYBALT

I'll be ready enough to do that, sir, if you'll give me a reason to do so.

MERCUTIO

Couldn't you take a reason without my giving you one? 40

TYBALT

Mercutio, you associate with Romeo—

MERCUTIO

Associate? What do you think we are, musicians? If you make musicians of us, you'll hear nothing but sour notes. Here's my fiddlestick! (He draws his sword.) This will make you dance!

By God, associate! 45



BENVOLIO

We are talking here in public.
Let's move to a private place,
or coolly discuss your grievances,
or let's leave. Everyone is staring at us here.

MERCUTIO

Men's eyes were made to look, so let them stare.
I won't budge for anyone.

50

ROMEO enters.

TYBALT

Peace be with you, sir. Here comes my man.

MERCUTIO

But I'll be hanged, sir, if he wears your livery.
If you go to the dueling field, he'll certainly follow you.
In that sense, you may call him your follower.

55

TYBALT

Romeo, the love that I feel for you can find
no better word than this—you're a peasant!

ROMEO

Tybalt, the reason that I have for loving you
helps me overcome the anger I should really feel
at such an insult. I'm not a peasant.
Therefore, good-bye. I see you don't really know me.

60

TYBALT

Boy, this will not excuse the wrong
you've done to me. Turn around and draw your sword!

ROMEO

I protest, I've never harmed you.
I love you more than you can understand
until you know the reason for my love.
So, good Capulet—a name I value
as dearly as my own—be satisfied.

65

MERCUTIO

What a calm, dishonorable, disgusting submission to an insult!
Tybalt is getting away with this insult.

70

He draws his sword.

Tybalt, you ratcatcher, will you cross swords with me?

TYBALT

What do you want of me?

MERCUTIO

Good king of the cats, I want nothing of you except one of your nine lives. That life I mean to take, and then, depending on whether you treat me well or badly, I might only thrash your other eight. Will you draw your sword from your scabbard? Hurry, or my sword will beat your ears before yours is out. 75

TYBALT

I'm ready for you. *(Draws his sword.)*

ROMEO

Gentle Mercutio, put your sword away.

MERCUTIO

Come on, sir, give your forward thrust. 80

They fight.

ROMEO

Draw your sword, Benvolio, beat down their weapons.

Gentlemen, this is shameful! Stop this!

Tybalt! Mercutio! The prince has specifically forbidden fighting in the streets of Verona.

Stop, Tybalt! Please, Mercutio! 85

ROMEO reaches to stop them. TYBALT sweeps under ROMEO'S arm, stabs MERCUTIO, and runs away with the rest of his followers.

MERCUTIO

I'm wounded!

A curse on both your houses! I'm mortally wounded.


Is he gone and without even a scrape?

BENVOLIO

Are you hurt?

MERCUTIO

It's just a scratch, a scratch, but it's enough. 90



Where's my page? Go, servant, get a doctor.

The PAGE exits.

ROMEO

Be brave, man. The wound cannot be deep.

MERCUTIO

No, it's not as deep as a well, or as wide as a church door. But it's enough, it will serve. Ask for me tomorrow and you'll find me a grave man. I'm done with this world. A curse on both your houses! By God, a dog, a rat, a mouse, a cat—he scratches a man to death! A braggart, a rascal, a villain who fights according to the manuals. Why the devil did you come between us? He stabbed me when you tried to part us.

95

100

ROMEO

I thought I was doing the right thing.

MERCUTIO

Help me into a house, Benvolio,
or I'll faint. Damn both of your houses!
They have made a corpse of me. I've had it!
Damn your houses!

105

MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO exit.

ROMEO

Mercutio, the prince's cousin
and my true friend, has been mortally wounded
defending me—my reputation being slandered
by Tybalt's insults—from Tybalt who's been my
cousin for only an hour. Oh sweet Juliet,
your beauty has made me act like a woman
and weakened my courage!

110

BENVOLIO re-enters.

BENVOLIO

Oh Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio is dead!
His noble soul has climbed to the clouds.
He was too young to leave the earth.

115

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ROMEO

This day's black fate casts a shadow on the future.
This is only the beginning of the sorrow to come.

BENVOLIO

Here comes the furious Tybalt back again.

TYBALT re-enters.

ROMEO

So, you're living in victory and Mercutio is dead?
Leave thoughtful mercy to the angels—
fiery anger will lead me now.

120

Now, Tybalt, take back that insult
that you gave me just awhile ago. Mercutio's soul
is hovering just over our heads
waiting for your soul to keep him company.
Either you, or I, or both will soon join him.

125

TYBALT

You wretched boy, you who associated with him here,
will soon be near him again.

ROMEO

This fight will decide that!

They fight, and TYBALT falls.

BENVOLIO

Romeo, run! Get away!
People are starting to gather, and Tybalt is dead!
Don't stand there in shock! The prince will sentence you to death
if you're captured. Go on, run!

130

ROMEO

I'm a victim of fate.

BENVOLIO

Why are you hanging around?

135

ROMEO exits.

CITIZENS enter.

CITIZEN

Which way did the man run who killed Mercutio?
Which way did that murderer Tybalt go?

BENVOLIO

Tybalt is lying there.

CITIZEN

Come with me, sir.

I order you in the name of the Prince to obey.

140

The PRINCE, MONTAGUE, CAPULET, their wives, and others all enter.

PRINCE

Where are the evil people who started this fight?

BENVOLIO

Oh noble Prince, I can reveal
the whole story of this fatal fight.

There lies the man that young Romeo killed.

Tybalt had earlier killed your cousin, Mercutio.

145

LADY CAPULET

Tybalt, my nephew! My brother's child!

Oh prince! Oh nephew! Husband! The blood
of my dear nephew has been shed. Prince, by your honor,
you must execute the Montague who did this!

My nephew! My nephew!

150

PRINCE

Benvolio, who started this fight?

BENVOLIO

Tybalt, who lies here dead, killed by Romeo.

Romeo spoke courteously and urged Tybalt to consider
how trivial their disagreement was, and he told Tybalt
it would rouse your anger. Romeo said all of this
with gentleness, calmness, and modesty.

155

But he could not make peace with hot-tempered
Tybalt, who was deaf to peace. Instead, Tybalt thrusts
his deadly sword at brave Mercutio's breast.

Mercutio, who is just as angry, turns his sword point to
meet Tybalt's,

160

and with fighting scorn, he beats death away with one hand
and with the other hand, he thrusts
back at Tybalt, who skillfully
returns the thrust. Romeo cries out,

"Stop it, friends! Separate!" And faster than he can say it,

165



he beats down their weapons with his sword.
Romeo rushes to get between them, but Tybalt
maliciously ran his sword under Romeo's arm and stabbed
brave Mercutio. Then Tybalt fled,
but after a while, he returned to Romeo.

170

Romeo decided he would avenge Mercutio's death,
and as fast as lightning, they were fighting again. Before I
could separate them, brave Tybalt was killed,
and as he fell, Romeo turned and ran.

This is the truth, I swear to you on my life.

175

LADY CAPULET

He is related to the Montagues.
His bias makes him lie—he's not telling the truth.
There were twenty of them fighting in this quarrel,
and all twenty of them could only kill one man.
I beg for justice, which you, Prince, must give.
Romeo killed Tybalt; Romeo must not live!

180

PRINCE

Romeo killed him, but Tybalt killed Mercutio.
Who has to pay the price for Mercutio's death?

MONTAGUE

Not Romeo, Prince. He was Mercutio's friend.
His crime was doing what the law would have done—
he killed the murderer Tybalt.

185

PRINCE

For killing Tybalt,
I immediately exile Romeo.
I have a personal interest in this fight.
My relative Mercutio lies bleeding, thanks to your fight,
and I'm going to penalize you with such a heavy fine
that all of you will repent the loss of my cousin.
I'll be deaf to your pleading and excuses.
Neither your tears nor your prayers will buy forgiveness,
so don't even try to use them. Let Romeo leave quickly.
Otherwise, if he's found, he'll die within the hour.
Take Tybalt's body and obey my orders.
Mercy only encourages murders when killers are pardoned.

190

195

They exit.

ACT 3, SCENE 2

Capulet's orchard. JULIET enters alone.

JULIET

Gallop quickly, you fiery-footed horses,
to the sun god's house below the horizon. A driver
like Phaeton would whip you toward the west,
and bring night immediately.

Spread your curtain, love-performing night, 5
so watchers' eyes may close and Romeo can
leap into my arms where no one can see and talk about us.
Lovers can see to make love

by the light of their own beauty. Or if love is blind,
it best matches the night. Come, courteous night, 10
you gravely-dressed woman all in black,
and teach me how to lose a winning match
in a game played by two virgins.

Hide the wild blood fluttering in my cheeks
with your black robe until unfamiliar love grows bold 15
and believes that enjoying true love is really a modest act.
Come, night! Come, Romeo! You're my light in the night.
You will lie on the wings of night

even whiter than freshly fallen snow on a raven's back.
Come, gentle night! Come, loving, black-browed night. 20

Give me my Romeo. And when he dies,
take him and cut him out in little stars,
and he'll make the face of heaven so fine
that all the world will love the night
and no longer admire the gaudy sun. 25

Oh, I have a handsome husband,
but I have not possessed him yet. Though I am his,
I've not yet been enjoyed. This day is as long
as the night before a holiday

to an impatient child who has new clothes
but cannot wear them yet.

30

The NURSE enters, with ropes. She sits down and wrings her hands.

Oh, here comes my nurse.

And she brings news! Every tongue that says
just Romeo's name speaks with heavenly eloquence.

Nurse, what's the news? What do you have there? Are those the
ropes

that Romeo told you to get?

35

NURSE

Yes, yes, the ropes.

She throws them down.

JULIET

Dear me! What's the news? Why are you wringing your hands?

NURSE

Alas, he's dead, he's dead, he's dead!

We're ruined, lady, we're ruined!

Alas, he's gone, he's killed, he's dead!

40

JULIET

Can heaven be so jealous of me that she has to take him?

NURSE

Romeo can,

though heaven cannot. Oh Romeo, Romeo!

Who would have ever thought it? Romeo!

JULIET

What kind of devil are you that you torment me like this?

45

This torture should be announced in hell.

Has Romeo killed himself? If you say yes,

just the vowel "aye" will be more deadly
than a serpent's death-killing eye.

I'll no longer be an "I" if your answer is yes,

50

or if Romeo's closed eyes make you answer yes.

If Romeo has been killed, say yes. If he hasn't, say no.

One brief word will decide if I'm happy or sad.

NURSE

I saw the wound. I saw it with my eyes
God forbid here on his manly breast. (*Points.*)

A pitiful body! A bloody pitiful body!
He was pale, pale as ashes, and all covered in blood —
all in clotted blood. I fainted at the sight.

69

JULIET

Oh, break my heart! You are bankrupt! Break at once!
Go to prison, eyes; never look upon freedom!
My wretched body will return to earth. I'll end my life here
and Romeo and I can share one grave.

69

NURSE

Oh Tybalt, Tybalt, the best friend I had.
Oh courteous Tybalt! Honest gentleman!
I didn't think I'd ever live to see you dead.

69

JULIET

What kind of terrible storm is this?
Has Romeo been killed and is Tybalt dead, too?
My dearest cousin and my dearer husband?
Then, dreadful trumpet, announce the end of the world.
Who is living, if these two men are gone?

70

NURSE

Tybalt is dead, and Romeo is banished.
Romeo killed Tybalt, and he is banished.

JULIET

Oh God! Did Romeo kill Tybalt?

NURSE

He did! He did! Alas, he did!

JULIET

Oh, how can he hide such an evil heart with such a
beautiful face?
Did ever an ugly dragon live in such a lovely place?
Beautiful tyrant! Devilish angel!
Dove feathered raven! Wolf-killing lamb!
Vile creature that looks so beautiful —

75

just opposite of what you seem. 80
A damned saint! An honorable villain!
Oh nature, what were you doing in hell
when you admitted the devil
into the sweet paradise of the Garden of Eden?
Was there ever such a vulgar book 85
bound with such a beautiful cover? Oh, that deceit should live
in such a gorgeous body!

NURSE

There's no trust,
no faith, no honesty in men. All men are liars,
all break their word, all are wicked, all are phonies. 90
Where's my servant? Get me a drink.
These griefs, these sorrows, these troubles make me old.
Shame on Romeo!

JULIET

I hope your tongue blisters
for saying such a thing! He was not born to feel shame. 95
Shame is ashamed to sit upon his head.
His head is a throne where honor may be crowned
king of the universe.
Oh, what a beast I was to speak against him.

NURSE

Will you speak well of the man who killed your cousin? 100

JULIET

Shall I speak poorly of the man who is my husband?
Alas, my poor husband, what tongue can clear your name
when I, your wife of three hours, have muddied it?
But why, villain, did you kill my cousin?
Because my villainous cousin would have killed my husband! 105
Get back, foolish tears, back to your native spring.
Tear drops are for sorrows,
which you mistakenly offer when I feel happy.
My husband lives whom Tybalt would have killed.
And Tybalt, who would have killed my husband, is dead. 110
This is comforting—why then am I crying?
There was a word, worse than Tybalt's death,
that murdered me. I wish I could forget it,
but it tries to make me remember

like damning guilty deeds coming to sinners' minds. 115
"Tybalt is dead, and Romeo—banished."

"Banished." That one word "banished"
equals the death of ten thousand Tybalts. Tybalt's death
was sad enough, if that was the end of the bad news.
Or if misery loves company 120

and must be accompanied by other griefs,
why didn't my nurse tell me after she said "Tybalt's dead"
that my father was dead, or my mother, or even both?
Such news would have brought ordinary grief.

But following news of Tybalt's death 125
came the news "Romeo is banished." To say that
is the same as saying father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, and Juliet
are all killed, all dead! "Romeo is banished!"

There is no end, no limit, no meaning, no boundary
in that word. No words can describe that sorrow. 130
Where are my mother and father, nurse?

NURSE

They are crying and grieving over Tybalt's body.
Will you go to them? I'll take you.

JULIET

Are they washing his wounds with their tears? My tears will
be shed,
when theirs are dry, for Romeo's banishment. 135

Take away those ropes. Poor ropes, you are tricked—
both you and I, for Romeo is exiled.
He wanted you to be a highway to my bed,
but I, a virgin, will die a virgin-widow.

Come, ropes! Come, Nurse! I'll go to my wedding bed. 140
And death, not Romeo, will take my virginity!

NURSE

Hurry to your room! I'll find Romeo
to comfort you. I know where he is.
Listen to me, your Romeo will be here tonight.
I'll go find him. He's hiding at Friar Lawrence's cell. 145

JULIET

Oh, find him! Give this ring to my true knight
and tell him to come to say his last good-bye.

They exit.



ACT 3, SCENE 3

Friar Lawrence's cell. Friar Lawrence enters.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Romeo, come out! Come out, you fearful man!
Pain is in love with you,
and you are married to trouble.

ROMEO enters.

ROMEO

What's the news, father? What is the Prince's sentence?
What sorrow am I going to learn about now
that I don't already know? 5

FRIAR LAWRENCE

You are too familiar
with unhappy things, my dear man.
I bring you news of the Prince's sentence.

ROMEO

What except death can the Prince's sentence be? 10

FRIAR LAWRENCE

He gave a more gentle sentence—
you'll not be executed, just banished.

ROMEO

Banishment! Be merciful! Say "death" instead.
Exile is worse than death,
much worse than death. Don't say "banishment!" 15

FRIAR LAWRENCE

You are banished from Verona.
Be patient. The world is broad and wide.

ROMEO

There's no world outside Verona!
There's only purgatory, torture, and hell itself!
To be banished from Verona is to be banished from the world, 20
and exile from the world is death! So to be banished
means death, in other words. By saying death is banishment,
you cut off my head with a golden axe, and smile upon my
murder.



FRIAR LAWRENCE

You're speaking a deadly sin. You're rude and unthankful!
For your crime, the lawful punishment is death, but the kind
Prince

25

sided with you and put aside the law,
turning the black word "death" to "banishment."
He granted you mercy, and you don't see it.

ROMEO

It's torture, not mercy! Heaven is here
where Juliet lives. Every cat and dog
and little mouse and every unworthy thing here
lives in heaven if they can look at her.

30

But Romeo may not. There's more value,
more honor, and more courtship

35

in flies than in Romeo. Flies may sit
on Juliet's white, wondrous hands
and steal heavenly blessings from her lips,
which in pure and virginal modesty
always blush because they think it's a sinful kiss when they
press together.

40

But Romeo may not kiss her lips because he's banished.
Flies may touch her, but I must fly away from her.
Flies are free, but I am banished.

And you still say exile is not death?

Don't you have some poison, or a sharp knife,
or some quick means of dying—no matter how crude—
other than the word "banished" to kill me? "Banished"?

45

Oh friar, the damned use that word in hell;
they howl when it is spoken! How can you have the heart,
being a holy man, a confessor,
a sin-forgiver, and my friend,
to tear me apart with that word "banished"?

50

FRIAR LAWRENCE

You foolish madman, listen to me for just a moment.

ROMEO

No. You'll talk again of banishment.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

I'll give you some armor to shield you from that word.

55

I'll give you the sweet milk of philosophy
to comfort you, though you are banished.

ROMEO

You say "banished" again? Hang your philosophy—
unless philosophy can make a Juliet,
move Verona, or reverse the Prince's sentence,
it won't help, it will be useless. Don't say any more.

60

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Oh, I see, then, that madmen have no ears.

ROMEO

How can they, when wise men have no eyes?

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Let me discuss your situation with you—

ROMEO

You can't talk about something you can't feel.
If you were as young as I am, Juliet your lover,
married only an hour, Tybalt killed,
as deeply in love as I am, and banished like me,
then you could speak. Then you would tear your hair out!
Then you would fall upon the ground, as I do now, and
measure your unmade grave.

65

70

There is a knock at the door.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Get up, Romeo! Someone is knocking. Good Romeo, hide.

ROMEO

No, I won't—not unless the breath from my heartsick groans
wraps me in a mist to hide me from searching eyes.

There is another knock.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Listen, they're knocking again. Who's there? Romeo, get up!
You'll be arrested! *(to the knocker)* Just a minute! *(to ROMEO)*

75

Get up!

Knocking.

Run to my study! *(to the knocker)* I'm coming!

(to ROMEO) Why are you acting so foolishly? *(to the knocker)* I'm
coming, I'm coming!

Knocking.

Who is knocking so hard? Where did you come from? What do you want?

The NURSE enters.

NURSE

Let me come in and I'll tell you what I want.
I come from Lady Juliet.

80

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Welcome, then.

NURSE

Oh, holy friar. Tell me, holy friar,
where's my lady's lord? Where's Romeo?

FRIAR LAWRENCE

He's lying there on the ground, drunk with his own tears.

85

NURSE

He's just like my mistress—
just like her! What a sorrowful echo of Juliet's grief!
It's a pitiful predicament. She lies just like him,
blubbering and crying, crying and blubbering.
Stand up, stand up! Stand if you're a man.
For Juliet's sake, for her sake, rise and stand.
Why should you fall into such a fit of grief?

90

ROMEO (*Rises.*)

Nurse!

NURSE

Alas, sir. Well, death ends everything.

ROMEO

Did you speak of Juliet? How is she?
Does she think I am a hardened murderer
now that I have stained the beginning of our joyful marriage
with the blood of her cousin?
Where is she? How is she? What does my
secretly married wife say about our cancelled marriage?

95

100

NURSE

She says nothing, sir. She just cries and cries
and falls on her bed. Then she gets up

and calls Tybalt, and then she cries for Romeo,
and then she falls on her bed again.

ROMEO

It's just like my name
is a shot from a deadly gun
that murdered her, as my cursed hand
murdered her cousin. Oh, tell me, friar, tell me,
in what horrible part of my body
does my name lie? Tell me so I can destroy
that hateful part.

105

110

*ROMEO tries to stab himself, but the NURSE snatches the
dagger out of his hand.*

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Stop your desperate hand!
Are you a man? Your body says you are,
but your tears are womanish and your wild actions are like
the irrational actions of an animal.
You're like an undignified woman in the body of a man—
an odd animal in seeming to be both man and woman.
You amaze me! By my holy order,
I thought you had a more even-tempered disposition.
Have you killed Tybalt? Will you kill yourself?
And will you also kill the lady whose life is your life by killing
yourself?

115

120

Why are you ranting about your birth, the heavens, and earth?
Birth, heaven, and earth—all three—are joined
in you at the same time. Now you want to desert all of that at
once.

125

For shame! You shame your body, your love, and your
intelligence.

You're like a moneylender who has countless riches
and yet uses none of that wealth properly
to honor your body, love, and intelligence.
Your handsome body is just a wax model
without manly virtues.

130

The love you have sworn is just a lie
and kills the love which you have vowed to cherish.
Your intelligence, that complement to your body and love,

poorly directs both of those.

Your intelligence is like gunpowder in a novice soldier's
powder horn—

135

lit by your own ignorance

and blowing you apart with your own weapon.

Wake up, man! Your Juliet is alive!

It was for her sake that you wanted to be dead just now.

140

You are fortunate. Tybalt wanted to kill you,
but you killed him. You are fortunate.

The law that threatened your death became your friend
and gave you exile. You are fortunate.

A pack of blessings has fallen on your back.

145

Happiness comes to you in her best clothes

but, like a badly behaved and sullen maid,

you frown at your good fortune and your love.

Listen to me, people like you die miserably.

Go, get to your love as your marriage decrees that you
should do.

150

Climb to her room and comfort her.

But be sure you don't stay until the night guards come on duty,
for then you can't escape to Mantua—

where you will live until we can find a time

to announce your marriage, reconcile your friends,

155

ask the Prince's pardon, and bring you back home

with two million times more joy

than when you left in sorrow.

Go, Nurse. Give my regards to your lady,

and tell her to hurry everyone in the house to bed.

160

Their heavy grief will make them want to go to bed, anyway.

Tell her Romeo is coming.

NURSE

Oh Lord, I could have stayed here all night

to hear such good advice. Oh, learning is wonderful!

My lord, I'll tell my lady you'll come.

165

ROMEO

Do so, and bid my sweet lady to prepare to scold me.

The NURSE starts to leave but turns back.



NURSE

Here's a ring she asked me to give you, sir.
Hurry! Make haste, for it's getting very late.

ROMEO

I'm greatly comforted by this ring.

The NURSE exits.

FRIAR LAWRENCE (to NURSE)

Go, good night. (to ROMEO) Here's your situation:
you must leave before the guards are posted at the gates,
or leave in a disguise at the break of day.

170

Stay in Mantua. I'll find your servant,
and he'll tell you from time to time
every good thing that occurs here.

175

Give me your hand. It's late. Farewell; good night.

ROMEO

If a joy to surpass all joys did not call me,
it would be sad to leave you so quickly.
Farewell!

They exit.



ET, LADY

ACT 3, SCENE 4

A room in Capulet's house. CAPULET, LADY CAPULET, and PARIS enter.

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CAPULET

Because of recent unhappy events,
we've had no time to talk to our daughter.
You see, she loved her cousin Tybalt dearly,
and so did I. Well, we're all born to die.
It's very late; she won't come down tonight.
I assure you, if you had not been here,
I would have been in bed an hour ago.

5

ughter.

PARIS

This time of sorrow is not the time to court her.
Madam, good night. Give my regards to your daughter.

LADY CAPULET

I will. And I'll find out what she thinks, tomorrow.
Tonight, she's shut up in her room with her grief.

10

CAPULET

Sir, I'll make a rash offer
of my daughter's love. I think she'll obey me
in everything. No, I don't doubt that she'll listen to me.
Wife, go to her before you go to bed
and tell her of Paris' love.
Also tell her—are you listening to me?—that next Wednesday—
Wait! What day is this?

15

PARIS

Monday, my lord.

CAPULET

Monday! (*laughs*) Well, then Wednesday is too soon. 20
Let it be on Thursday! (*to LADY CAPULET*) Tell her that on
Thursday
she shall be married to this noble earl.
(*to PARIS*) Can you be ready? How do these speedy arrangements
strike you?

We won't have a big wedding—just a friend or two. 25
For really, since Tybalt was killed so recently,
it could be thought that we didn't care much for him,



one of our relatives, if we celebrated too much.
Therefore, we'll invite just a half a dozen friends,
and that will be all. How is Thursday for you, Paris?

PARIS

My lord, I wish Thursday were tomorrow.

30

CAPULET

Well, go now. It will be on Thursday, then. *(to his wife)* Go to Juliet before you go to bed.

and prepare her for her wedding day. *(to PARIS)*

Good-bye, my lord. *(to SERVANTS)* Give me a light to my
bedroom.

By heaven, it's so late,
we'll soon have to call it early. Good night.

35

They exit.



ACT 3, SCENE 5

Capulet's house. ROMEO and JULIET enter on the balcony.

JULIET

Do you have to go? It isn't day yet.
It was the nightingale, not the lark,
that sang in your apprehensive ear.
She sings every night on the pomegranate tree.
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

5

ROMEO

It was the lark, the herald of the morning,
not a nightingale. Look, love, see the envious streaks
of light that lace the scattering clouds in the east.
The stars are fading and cheerful day
stands on tiptoe on the foggy mountaintops.
If I want to live, I must go. If I stay, I will die.

10

JULIET

That light is not daylight. I know it.
It's just a meteor from the sun,
which will be your torchbearer
tonight and light your road to Mantua.
Therefore, stay awhile; you don't need to go yet.

15

ROMEO

Let them capture me, let them put me to death.
I'm content if you are satisfied.
I'll say that the grey I see in the sky isn't morning
but just a pale reflection of the moon.
It's not the lark I hear singing whose song rises to
the heavens high above our heads.
I have more desire to stay than will to go.
Come, death! Welcome! Juliet wills it.
How are you, my soul? Let's talk; it's not day.


20

25

JULIET

It is! It is! Hurry, go, away!
It's the lark that sings so out of tune,
emitting harsh, sour notes and unpleasant sharps.
Some people say the lark sings a sweet melody,
but this bird does not because she separates us.

30



Some people say the lark and the hated toad exchanged eyes.
I wish they'd exchanged voices, too,
since that voice frightens us out of each other's arms
and chases you from here with the song that awakens hunters.
Oh, go now! It grows lighter and lighter.

35

ROMEO

Lighter and lighter means our sorrow grows darker and darker.

The NURSE enters from the bedroom.

NURSE

Madam!

JULIET

Nurse?

NURSE

Your mother is coming to your bedroom.
Day is dawning. Be careful; watch out.

40

She exits.

JULIET

Then, window, let day in, and let my life out.

ROMEO

Good-bye, good-bye! One kiss, and I'll descend.

He climbs down.

JULIET

Are you gone? My love, my lord, my husband, and my friend?
I must hear from you every hour of the day,
for just one minute will be like many days.
If I count this way, I'll be very old
before I see Romeo again.

45

ROMEO (from below)

Good-bye!
I'll not miss a chance
to send my greetings to you, love.

50

JULIET

Do you think we'll ever meet again?

ROMEO

I'm sure we will. Then all of these sorrows will serve
as sweet conversation in the future.

JULIET

Oh God, I have a feeling of doom!
I think I see you, as you are now,
but like a dead person in the bottom of a tomb.
Either my eyesight is failing or you look pale.

55

ROMEO

Trust me, love. In my eyes, you look pale, too.
Our sorrow makes us pale. Good-bye, good-bye!

JULIET

Oh, Fate. Fate! All men call you fickle!
If you're fickle, what business can you have with him
who is known for his faith? Be fickle, Fate.
Then you will not keep him long,
and you'll send him back to me.

60

LADY CAPULET *enters.*

LADY CAPULET

Daughter, are you up?

65

JULIET

Who's calling? It's my mother.
Is she up late or up early?
What unusual occurrence brings her here?

LADY CAPULET

How are you, Juliet?

JULIET

Madam, I'm not well.

70

LADY CAPULET

Are you still crying for your cousin's death?
Will your tears wash him out of his grave?
Even if they did, you couldn't make him live.
So quit crying. Some grief reveals deep love,
but too much grief reveals a lack of intelligence.

75



JULIET

Let me cry over such a deeply felt loss.

LADY CAPULET

Then you'll feel the loss,
but not the friend for whom you weep.

JULIET

Since I feel the loss,
I can't help crying for my friend.

80

LADY CAPULET

Well, girl, you're really not crying for his death,
but for the fact that the villain who killed him still lives.

JULIET

What villain, madam?

LADY CAPULET

The villain Romeo.

JULIET *(to herself)*

There is a big difference between Romeo and a villain.
(to LADY CAPULET) God forgive him! I forgive him with all my
heart.
And yet no man grieves my heart more than Romeo.

85

LADY CAPULET

That's because that traitor and murderer still lives.

JULIET

I wish that only my hands
could avenge my cousin's death.

90

LADY CAPULET

We'll have revenge for his death, don't you fear.
So don't cry anymore. I'll send a message to someone in Mantua
where that banished renegade lives,
and he'll give Romeo so much poison
that he'll soon keep Tybalt company in the grave.
Then I hope you'll be satisfied.

95

JULIET

I'll never be satisfied

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with Romeo until I see him—dead—
is my poor heart, so upset am I about my cousin's death.
Madam, if you could find a man
to take the poison, I would mix it with my own hands so that
as soon as Romeo gets it,
he'll sleep quietly. Oh, how my heart hates
to hear his name and not be able to come to him
to pour the love I bore for Tybalt
upon the body of the man who killed him.

100

105

LADY CAPULET

You find the poison, and I'll find the poisoner.
But now I'll tell you some joyful news, girl.

JULIET

Joy would be very welcome right now.
What's your news? I beg, your ladyship, tell me.

110

LADY CAPULET

Well, you have a thoughtful father, child.
To help you get over your grief,
he's set a day of joy in the near future
which you did not expect and I did not anticipate.

JULIET

Madam, how fortunate! What day is that?

115

LADY CAPULET

My child, early next Thursday morning,
the brave, young, and noble gentleman,
Count Paris, will make you
a joyful bride at St. Peter's church.

JULIET

By St. Peter's church and St. Peter, too,
he won't make me a joyful bride!
I don't understand what's all the rush to force me to marry
my future husband before he even comes to court me.
I beg you, tell my lord and father, madam,
that I'll not marry yet. And when I do get married,
it will be to Romeo, whom you know I hate,
rather than to Paris. Now that's a real piece of news!

120

125



LADY CAPULET

Here comes your father. Tell him yourself,
and see how well he'll take this news from you.

CAPULET and NURSE enter.

CAPULET

When the sun sets, the air drizzles dew,
but the sunset for my brother's son, 130
is downright rainy.

What's going on? Are you a water pipe, girl? Are you still in
tears?

Are you always crying? In your one little body,
you imitate a ship, a sea, and a wind. 135

Your eyes, which I might call a sea,
are always ebbing and flowing with tears. The ship is your
body sailing on this salty flood of tears. The winds are your
sighs,

raging with your tears and your tears raging with those sighs.
If we don't have a sudden calm, the storm will overturn 140
your storm-tossed body. Well, wife?

Have you told her about my decision?

LADY CAPULET

Yes, sir, but she says she won't marry Paris, but thanks you
anyway.

I wish this fool were married to her grave.

CAPULET

Wait a moment! Let me understand you, wife. 145

What do you mean? She won't? Didn't she thank us?

Isn't she proud? Doesn't she count herself lucky,
unworthy as she is, that we've arranged for
so worthy a gentleman to marry her?

JULIET

I'm not very pleased, but I'm thankful. 150

I can never be proud of what I hate,

but I'm thankful even for something hateful that is meant to
be a gift of love.

CAPULET

Are you splitting hairs? What is this?

"Proud"? "I thank you"? "I thank you not"

and "not very pleased"? You spoiled child!
Don't thank me with "no thank you" or give me any "not
prouds."

155

Just prepare your fine self to be ready next Thursday
to marry Paris at St. Peter's church!

If you don't, I'll drag you there on a cart.

Get out you, you anemic thing! Out, you minx!

You waxy-faced girl!

160

LADY CAPULET

Are you crazy?

JULIET

Good father, I beg you on my knees. (*She kneels.*)

Listen to me with patience. Just let me speak one word.

CAPULET

Hang you, you minx! You disobedient wretch!

165

I'll tell you now: Go to the church on Thursday,
or never look on my face again.

Don't speak, don't reply, don't answer me!

My fingers itch (to hit you). Wife, we really did think we had been
blessed

when God gave us just this one child.

170

But now I think this one is too much

and that we have been cursed by having her.

Out with her, the wretch!

NURSE

God in heaven bless her!

You're to blame for speaking to her so horribly.

175

CAPULET

What, my Lady Wisdom? Shut your mouth,
Miss Prudence! Go gossip with your old cronies.

NURSE

I'm not speaking treason.

CAPULET

Oh, for God's sake!

NURSE

Isn't a person allowed to speak?

180

CAPULET

Quiet, you mumbling fool.

Save your wisdom for the gossipers, for we don't need it here.

LADY CAPULET

You're too angry.

CAPULET

By God's sacrament! It makes me so mad!

185

Day and night, early and late, at work or relaxing,
alone or with others, my one thought has been
to make her a good match. And now I've provided
for you a gentleman from noble parents,
of beautiful estates, youthful and well-trained,
full of honor, and as handsome and well-built
as any girl could wish a man to be.

190

And then to have a wretched, whining fool,
a crying doll, who when offered good fortune,
says, "I won't marry him. I can't love him.

195

I'm too young. I beg you to excuse me."

If you don't marry, I'll "excuse" you to find another home.

Go where you want to—you won't live here.

Take care! Think about it! I'm not one to joke.

Thursday isn't far away. Think about it carefully.

200

If you're my daughter, I'll be giving your hand in marriage
to my friend.

If you don't marry, you can hang, beg, starve, and die in the
streets,

for I swear, I'll never recognize you
as my daughter again.

And I'll never give you anything.

Count on that! Think about it. I won't go back on my word.

205

He exits.

JULIET

Is there no pity in heaven

that can understand my grief?

Oh, sweet mother, don't disown me!



Put off this wedding for a month—a week.
Or if you don't, make my bridal bed
in the tomb where Tybalt lies.

210

LADY CAPULET

Don't talk to me. I won't say a word.
Do as you want to. I'm done with you.

JULIET

Oh God! Nurse, how shall this marriage be prevented?
My husband is on earth. My marriage vow to him was
made in heaven.

215

How can my heavenly vow be broken
unless my husband's death
makes me a widow? Comfort me, advise me.
Oh God, that heaven should use such tricks
on a person as weak as I am.

220

What do you say? Don't you have a word of comfort?
Give me some comfort, Nurse.

NURSE

Indeed, here it is.
Romeo is banished and I think it's safe to say
that he'll never dare to come back and claim you as his wife.
If he does, he'll have to come in secret.

225

So as the situation now stands,
I think you should marry Count Paris.

Oh, he's a lovely gentleman!

Romeo is a dishrag compared with him. An eagle, madam,
doesn't have as green, as quick, or as beautiful an eye
as Paris has. Curse my own heart,

230

but I think you'll be happy marrying Paris,
for he's better than Romeo. Even if Paris weren't as good as
Romeo,

235

your first husband is dead—it comes to the same thing
as Romeo still being among the living and you being
separated from him.

JULIET

Are you speaking from your heart?

NURSE

And from my soul, too. Otherwise, may both be damned.

JULIET

Amen!

NURSE

What?

240

JULIET

Well, you've really comforted me.
Go in and tell my mother I've gone
to Friar Lawrence's cell to confess
and be absolved for having displeased my father.

NURSE

Certainly, I will. Now you're acting wisely.

245

She exits.

JULIET

Damnably old woman! Most wicked devil!
Is it more sinful to wish me to break my vow,
or to condemn my husband with the same tongue
with which she has praised him as above compare
so many times? Go, my adviser!
You and my real feelings are separated now forever.
I'll go to the friar and get his advice.
If everything else fails, I'll commit suicide.

250

She exits.

Act III Review

Discussion Questions

1. Why does Romeo first refuse to fight with Tybalt?
2. Who do you think is to blame for the fight between Mercutio and Tybalt?
3. Explain why Romeo chooses to fight Tybalt after all. In your opinion, was he justified in killing Tybalt? Discuss why or why not.
4. The Nurse advises Juliet to forget about Romeo and marry Paris. Does this advice surprise you? Explain.
5. Compare Juliet's soliloquy of Act II, Scene v, lines 1–19 with her soliloquy of Act III, Scene ii, lines 1–35.
6. Review the Friar's plan in Scene iii. List each step of the plan in the left column of a chart like the one below. Next to each step, write things that could go wrong.

Plan	Things that could go wrong

7. What, if anything, prevents Juliet from simply joining Romeo in Mantua?
8. What occurs in Scene v to alienate Juliet from her family?



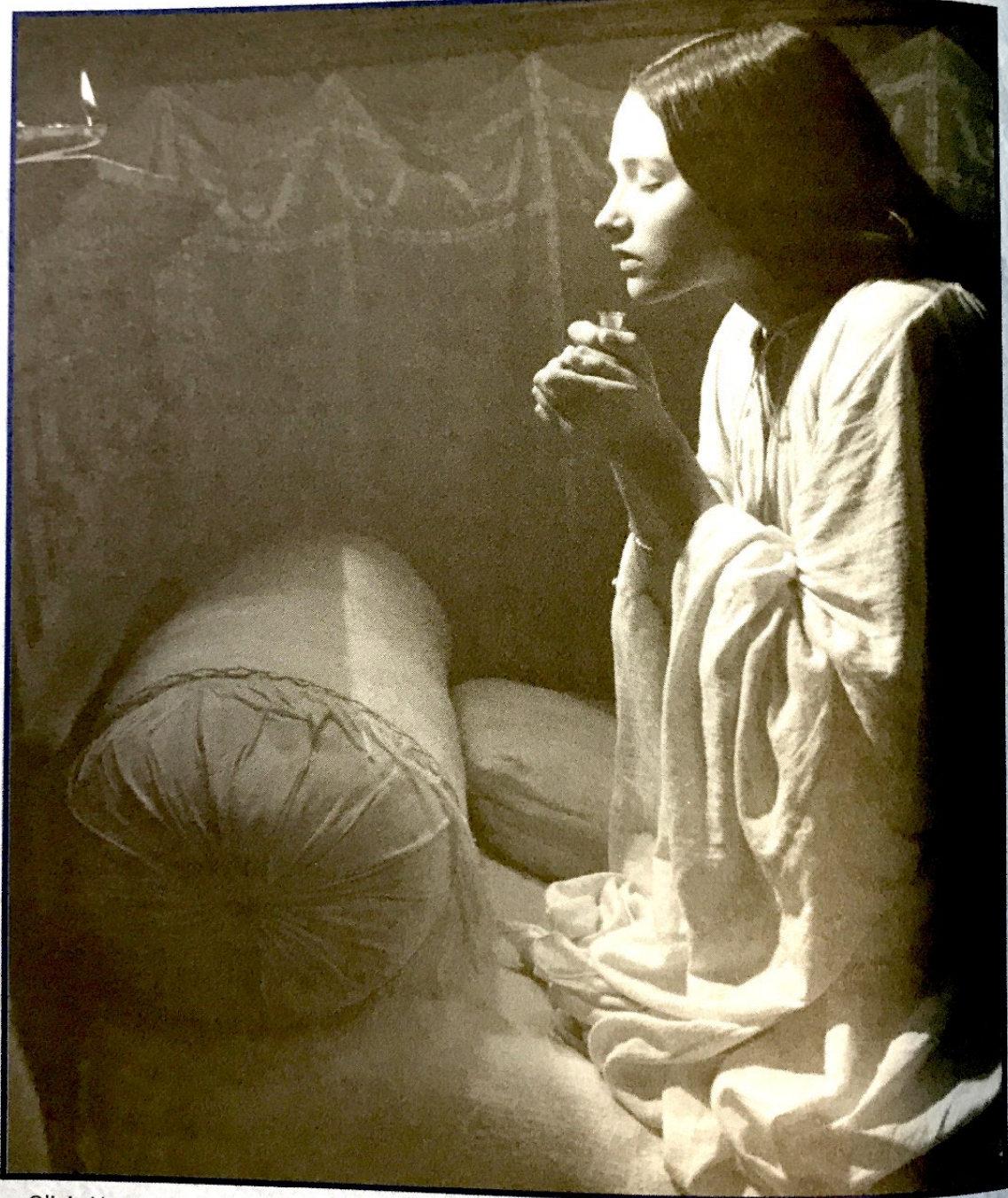
Literary Elements

1. A **theme** is the underlying meaning or message of a work of literature. How does Mercutio's speech in Act III ("a plague o' both your houses") reflect one of the major themes of the play?
2. An **oxymoron** occurs when contradictory words are paired. Find examples of oxymorons in this act, especially Scene ii, and consider what they communicate.
3. Shakespeare uses **repetition** to increase the tension and emotional impact of a speech or scene. Review the Friar's speech in Act III, Scene iii, by jotting down the repeated words and phrases you find. What do you think this technique adds to the scene?
4. **Hyperbole** is common in the language of Shakespeare. Find examples of hyperbole in Act III, and explain what you think they add to the play.

Writing Prompts

1. What factor is most responsible for the difficulties facing the two lovers and their families? Write an essay that presents your opinion, supporting it with examples from the play.
2. Reread Act III, Scene iv, noting its many references to time. Write a short essay explaining why you think Shakespeare chose to use this imagery and what effect it might have on the audience.
3. Assume you are a television or radio reporter. Write the story you would deliver about the tragic events that take place in the first scene.
4. The Friar says that Romeo, although banished, has many reasons to be grateful. List these reasons.

Romeo and Juliet ACT IV



Olivia Hussey (Juliet) prepares to drink the potion. (Zeffirelli, 1968)

“What if it be a poison . . .”



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ACT 1

Before You Read

1. Have your feelings about Romeo changed because of his role in the deaths of Mercutio and Tybalt? Explain.
2. To what lengths do you think Juliet will go to avoid marrying Paris?
3. What contradictory moods are present in the Capulet household?
4. As you read, consider who seems most upset and who seems least upset by Juliet's death.

Literary Elements

1. Shakespeare often adds humorous scenes and characters, or **comic relief**, to an otherwise serious play. The Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* contributes a great deal of humor and prevents the play from being unbearably tragic.
2. An **allusion** is a reference to a historical or literary figure, happening, or event that is meant to enhance the meaning of the story. In Act IV, Paris tells Friar Lawrence that he has not talked of love with Juliet because she is in mourning for her cousin Tybalt and "Venus smiles not in a house of tears." The reference to Venus—the goddess of love—may be a tactful way to discuss romance with a man of religion.
3. **Dramatic irony** occurs when the audience has important knowledge that a main character lacks. Because of information given in the Prologues to *Romeo and Juliet*, the audience knows many of the events of the play. As a result, we may be more sympathetic to the young lovers, knowing they are doomed.
4. With **personification**, human characteristics are given to nonhuman things. When in Act IV Juliet says to Friar Lawrence, "this bloody knife shall play the umpire," she is saying the knife can decide (play the umpire) whether she should live or die.

Words to Know

The following vocabulary words appear in Act IV in the original text of Shakespeare's play. However, they are words that are still commonly used. Read the definitions here and pay attention to the words as you read the play (they will be in boldfaced type).

arbitrating	deciding; judging
culled [cull'd]	chosen; selected
distraught	upset; distressed
entreat	plead; ask for
immoderately	wastefully; extravagantly
inundation	flood; outpouring
pensive	thoughtful; reflective
prostrate	flat; prone
resolution	solution to a problem
solace	find relief
spited	acted maliciously or with ill will
surcease	suspend; pause
supple	flexible; pliant

Act Summary

Paris asks Friar Lawrence to make arrangements for his wedding to Juliet, but the friar has devised a more daring plan. He directs Juliet to pretend to change her mind and agree to marry Paris. The night before the wedding, however, she must drink a potion that will put her in a death-like state for forty-two hours. The Friar reasons that her body will be taken to the Capulet burial vault. Romeo, who has already left for Mantua, will receive a letter from Friar Lawrence letting him know of the plan and instructing him to arrive at the vault just as Juliet wakes. The two can then leave for Mantua, where they will begin their married life.



Juliet unexpectedly runs into Paris in a production by the Royal Shakespeare Company. (1961)

Alone, Juliet expresses the terror she feels at the thought of awaking in the family burial vault. Finally she drinks the potion that Friar Lawrence has given her.

While the Capulets prepare for the wedding with Paris, the Nurse goes to get Juliet and finds her "dead." Her death is announced, sending everyone into shock and grief. Lord Capulet orders that the wedding preparations be changed to funeral plans. Some comic relief is provided by the musicians, who would like to be paid before they play.



ACT 4, SCENE 1

*Friar Lawrence's cell. FRIAR LAWRENCE
and PARIS enter.*

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Your wedding is Thursday, sir? That's a very short time away.

PARIS

My new father-in-law Capulet wants it that way,
and I'll not slow his hasty arrangements by being slow myself.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

You say you don't know what the young lady thinks about the
marriage.

That's unusual. I don't like it.

5

PARIS

She cries all the time over Tybalt's death,
so I haven't talked much about love.

Love is not welcome in the midst of grief.

Her father thinks it's dangerous

that she gives in so much to her sorrow.

10

So in his wisdom, he's rushing the marriage

to stop her grief

which she thinks about too much when she's by herself.

Being around people might help her get over her grief.

So now you know the reason for our haste.

15

FRIAR LAWRENCE *(to himself)*

I wish I didn't know why this wedding must be slowed down.

(to PARIS) Look, sir, here comes the lady now.

JULIET enters.

PARIS

How happy I am to see you, my lady and my wife.

JULIET

That may be, sir—when I become your wife.

20

PARIS

Your "may be" will be a "must," my love, on next Thursday.

JULIET

What must be shall be.



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PARIS

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20

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JULIET

What must be shall be.



FRIAR LAWRENCE

That's the truth.

PARIS

Did you come to make your confession to this father?

JULIET

In order to answer that, I'd have to confess to you.

PARIS

Don't deny to him that you love me.

25

JULIET

I'll confess to you that I love him.

PARIS

I'm sure you will confess to him that you love me.

JULIET

If I do, it will mean more
if I say it behind your back rather than to your face.

30

PARIS

Poor soul, your face is very stained with tears.

JULIET

The tears have made little difference
for my face was unattractive enough before I cried.

PARIS

You do more injustice to your face with that statement than
those tears did.

JULIET

It's not slander, sir, to speak the truth.
And what I said, I said to my own face.

35

PARIS

Your face is mine, and you have slandered it.

JULIET

You may be right because my face is not my own.
Are you free now, holy father,
or should I come to you at evening mass?

40

FRIAR LAWRENCE

I'm free to see you now, my thoughtful daughter.
(to PARIS) My lord, I must beg you to leave us alone.

PARIS

God forbid that I should disturb a confession.
Juliet, I'll awaken you early Thursday morning.
Until then, good-bye, and keep this holy kiss.

He kisses her and exits.

45

JULIET

Oh, close the door, and when you have done so,
come cry with me! I'm beyond hope, beyond cure, beyond help!

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Oh, Juliet, I already know your grief.
It drives me past my wits' end.
I hear you must be married to this count
next Thursday and that nothing can postpone it.

50

JULIET

Don't tell me that you have heard about this, friar,
unless you can tell me how to prevent it.
If even you and your wisdom can't help me,
just say that my way of solving the problem is wise—
and with this knife, I'll put my plan into action at once.
God joined my heart and Romeo's and you joined our hands.
And before this hand, which you joined to Romeo's
can seal another deal
or before my faithful heart could turn in treacherous revolt
to another man, this hand will destroy both my hand and my
heart.

55

60

Therefore, out of your great experience,
give me some advice. Otherwise,
between me and my distress, this bloody knife
will determine whether I live or die, deciding that
which your experience and skill
could not honorably resolve.
Don't wait long to speak. I want to die
if what you speak can't help me.

65

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Wait, daughter! I see some hope.
But it's as dangerous as the danger
we're trying to prevent.
If rather than marrying Count Paris,
you have the strength of will to kill yourself,

70

then you'd probably be willing to risk
something like death to avoid this shame
that requires you to deal with Death himself in order to escape
this marriage.

75

If you have the courage, I'll give you the remedy.

JULIET

Oh, tell me to leap off the top of that tower,
rather than marry Paris.

Rather than marry Paris, tell me to walk on a road where
robbers hide,

80

or tell me to linger where snakes are, or chain me up with
roaring bears,

or lock me in a vault with old bones every night,
completely covering me with dead men's rattling bones,
stinking leg bones, and yellow, jawless skulls.

85

Rather than marry Paris, tell me to lie in a newly made grave
and hide me with a dead man in his burial cloth.

Things that, to hear them spoken of have frightened me,
I'll do without fear or doubt,

in order to remain a faithful wife to my sweet love.

90

FRIAR LAWRENCE

All right, then. Go home, be happy, give your consent
to marry Paris. Tomorrow is Wednesday.

Tomorrow night, be sure to sleep alone. Don't let the Nurse
sleep in your room.

Take this bottle, and when you're in bed,
drink this distilled liquor.

95

Immediately, a cold and quieting liquid
shall run through all your veins. Your pulse will stop.

There'll be no warmth or breath to prove that you're alive.

100

The color in your lips and cheeks will fade
to pale ashes; your eyelids will close

like death when he shuts up the last day of your life.

Each part of your body, stripped of its ability to move,
shall be stiff and rigid and cold, as in death.

105

And in this imitation of death,

you'll remain forty-two hours,

and then you'll awake as if from a pleasant sleep.

When Paris comes on Thursday morning
to rouse you from your bed, you will seem dead. 110

Then, as is customary,
dressed in your best clothes and with an uncovered face,
you'll be carried on a bier
to the ancient vault
where all of the Capulets are buried.

In the meantime, before you awake,
Romeo will learn through a letter from me what we're doing. 115

He'll return here, and he and I
will watch for you to awake. Then that very night when you
do awake,

Romeo will take you to Mantua.
This will let you escape your present shame 120

if no fickle whim or womanish fears
sap your courage to go through with it.

JULIET

Give it to me! Give it to me! Don't talk of fear!

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Enough! Go, and be strong and prosperous
in this plan. I'll send a friar to speed 125
to Mantua with letters to Romeo.

JULIET

Love will give me strength, and strength will help me through.
Good-bye, dear father.

They exit.

ACT 4, SCENE 2

A hall in Capulet's house. CAPULET, LADY CAPULET, NURSE, and SERVANTS enter.

CAPULET (to SERVANTS)

Invite all the guests whose names are written here.

SERVANT *exits.*

Servant, go and hire twenty skillful cooks.

SECOND SERVANT

You shall have none that aren't good, sir, for I'll test them by seeing if they will lick their fingers.

CAPULET

What kind of test is that?

5

SECOND SERVANT

Well, sir, a bad cook won't lick his fingers (because his own cooking tastes so bad). Therefore, the cook who won't lick his fingers won't be hired by me.

CAPULET

Go, on your way.

SECOND SERVANT *exits.*

We're not stocked up for this wedding celebration.
Has my daughter gone to Friar Lawrence's?

10

NURSE

Yes.

CAPULET

Well, he may be able to do some good with her.
She's a silly good-for-nothing.

JULIET *enters.*

NURSE

See! She's coming from confession with a happy look on her face.

CAPULET

Hello, my headstrong daughter. Where have you been running about?

15

JULIET

I've been where I learned to repent of the sin
of disobedience
to you and your orders. I've been advised
by holy Friar Lawrence to fall on my knees
and beg your pardon. Please forgive me, I beg you.
From now on, I'll be ruled by you.

20

CAPULET

Send for the count. Tell him about this.
I'll have the wedding tomorrow morning.

JULIET

I met the youthful lord at Friar Lawrence's cell
and gave him the most fitting love I could
without overstepping the bounds of modesty.

25

CAPULET

I'm glad. This is good. Stand up.
This is as it should be. Let me see Count Paris.
Indeed, go and bring him here.
Now, before God, the whole city owes a great deal
to this holy reverend father.

30

JULIET

Nurse, will you go with me to my room
to help me choose the ornaments
that you think are fitting for me to wear tomorrow?

LADY CAPULET

No, not until Thursday. That's soon enough.

35

CAPULET

Go, Nurse, go with her. The wedding will be tomorrow.

JULIET and the NURSE exit.

LADY CAPULET

We'll be short of provisions.
It's almost night now.

CAPULET

Nonsense, I'll get busy
and everything will go well, I promise you, wife.
Go to Juliet and help dress her up.

40



I won't go to bed tonight! Leave me alone.
I'll play the housewife this one time. Servants!—
They're all gone. Well, I'll go to see
Count Paris myself, to prepare him
for tomorrow. My heart is wonderfully light
since this unruly daughter of mine has come to her senses.

45

He exits.

ACT 4, SCENE 3

Juliet's bedroom. JULIET and the NURSE enter.

JULIET

Yes, those dresses are best, but, gentle nurse,
I beg you, leave me alone tonight.
I must pray many prayers
to move heaven to smile upon my situation,
which, as you well know, is wrong and full of sin.

5

LADY CAPULET enters.

LADY CAPULET

Are you busy? Do you need my help?

JULIET

No, madam. We have gathered those necessities
I'll need for my wedding tomorrow.
So, please, leave me alone now.
Let the nurse sit up with you tonight.
I'm sure you have your hands full
since the wedding has been moved up a day.

10

LADY CAPULET

Good night.
Go to bed and rest; you'll need it.

LADY CAPULET and the NURSE exit.

JULIET

Good-bye! God only knows when we'll meet again.
I feel a dizzying, cold fear running through my veins
that almost freezes up the warmth of my life.
I'll call them back to comfort me.
Nurse!—But why should she be here?
I'll have to act out this dreadful scene alone.
Come, bottle!
What if this mixture doesn't work at all?
Will I be married, then, tomorrow morning?
No! This will see that doesn't happen. Lie there.

15

20

She lays down a dagger.

What if this is a poison which the friar

25

has secretly given me to kill me
so that he won't be dishonored by this marriage
since he married me to Romeo earlier?
I'm afraid that's the case. And yet, I don't think so
because he's always shown himself to be a holy man.
What if, when I am laid in the tomb, 30
I awake before Romeo
comes to save me? That's a terrifying thought!
Won't I be stifled in the tomb
where no wholesome air circulates?
Won't I suffocate there before my Romeo comes? 35
Or if I can breathe, isn't it likely that I'll feel
the horrible idea of death and night,
along with the terror of the place?
That vault is an ancient tomb 40
where for hundreds of years the bones
of all my buried ancestors have been stored;
where bloody Tybalt, so recently buried,
lies rotting in his burial cloth; where, so they say,
at some hours in the night, ghosts live. 45
Alas, alas, isn't it likely that waking there,
I'll encounter horrible smells
and shrieks like the uprooted mandrakes'
which drive people insane?
Or if I wake, won't I be driven mad, 50
closed in with all these hideous fears,
and play like a madwoman with my ancestors' bones,
and pluck battered Tybalt from his burial cloth,
and in this fit, take one of my great relative's bones
to use as a club and dash out my desperate brains? 55
Look! I think I see my cousin's ghost
looking for Romeo who stabbed him
with a rapier. Stay there, Tybalt!
Romeo, I'm coming. I drink to you!

She drinks and falls upon her bed, which is enclosed in curtains.

ACT 4, SCENE 4

A hall in Capulet's house. LADY CAPULET and the NURSE enter.

LADY CAPULET

Wait, take these keys and bring me more spices, nurse.

NURSE

The cooks in the pantry are calling for dates and quinces.

CAPULET enters.

CAPULET

Come on! Get busy! The second rooster has crowed already.

The curfew bell has rung. It's three o'clock.

Check on the meat pies, good Angelica.

Don't worry about the cost.

5

NURSE *(to CAPULET)*

Go to bed, little housewife.

Go on, go to bed. Really, you'll be sick tomorrow
from staying up all night.

CAPULET

No I won't, not one bit. Why, I've stayed up

all night before for more trivial reasons, and I was never sick.

10

LADY CAPULET

Yes, you've been a woman-chaser in your day,

but I'll see that you don't keep those kinds of late hours anymore.

LADY CAPULET and the NURSE exit.

CAPULET

She's a jealous woman, a jealous woman.

*Enter three or four SERVANTS with cooking rods, logs, and a
basket.*

Now, fellow,
what's that?

15

FIRST SERVANT

These are things for the cook, sir, but I don't know what they are.

CAPULET

Hurry up! Hurry up!

The FIRST SERVANT exits.

Servant, get some drier logs.
Call Peter, he'll show you where they are.

20

SECOND SERVANT

I never have trouble finding logs, sir.
I don't have to bother Peter.

CAPULET

By the mass, that's clever. You're a happy rascal.
You're a blockhead.

The SECOND SERVANT exits.

Good heavens, day has dawned!
Count Paris will be here with the musicians right away,
as he said he would. I hear him now.

25

Music is heard.

Nurse! Wife! Where are you? Nurse, I say!

The NURSE re-enters.

Go wake Juliet. Go and get her dressed.
I'll go and talk with Paris. Hurry, make haste!
Make haste! The bridegroom has already arrived.
Hurry, I say!

30

They exit.

ACT 4, SCENE 5

Juliet's bedroom. The NURSE enters.

NURSE

Mistress! Mistress! Juliet—I'll bet she's fast asleep.
Lamb! Lady! For shame, you sleepyhead.

Well, love! I say, madam! Sweetheart! Bride!
What, not a word? Take your little naps now.

Sleep for a week because I'll bet you tonight

Count Paris is determined

that you won't rest very much. God forgive me, I shouldn't
say that.

How sound asleep she is.

I must wake her. Madam, madam, madam!

Are you going to let the Count Paris find you in bed?

He'll frighten you, I guarantee. Will nothing wake you?

She draws back the curtains.

What, already dressed and gone back to bed?

I must wake you. Lady, lady, lady!

Alas! Help! Help! My lady is dead!

I wish I'd never been born.

Some liquor, here! My lord! My lady!

LADY CAPULET enters.

LADY CAPULET

What's all this noise?

NURSE

Oh awful day!

LADY CAPULET

What's the matter?

NURSE

Oh look, look! Oh horrible day!

LADY CAPULET

Oh no! Oh no! My child! My only child!

Revive! Look up, or I'll die with you.

Help! Help! Call for help!

CAPULET enters.

CAPULET

For shame. Bring Juliet here. Her lord has arrived.

NURSE

She's dead, deceased; she's dead! Curse this day.

25

LADY CAPULET

Horrible day! She's dead. She's dead! She's dead!

CAPULET

Let me see her. Alas, she's cold,
her blood is settled, and her joints are stiff.
Life left her lips a long time ago.
Death lies on her like an untimely frost
on the sweetest flower of all the fields.

30

NURSE

Oh sorrowful day!

LADY CAPULET

Oh woeful time—

CAPULET

Death, who has taken her away to make me cry,
ties up my tongue and will not let me speak.

35

FRIAR LAWRENCE and PARIS enter with musicians.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Is the bride ready to go to the church?

CAPULET

She is ready to go but never to return.
(to PARIS) Oh son, the night before your wedding day
Death slept with your wife. See, there she lies,
the flower that she was, deflowered by Death.
Death is my son-in-law, Death is my heir;
he has married my daughter. I'll die
and leave Death everything. Life, living—all is Death's.

40

PARIS

I've thought of nothing else but to see this day dawn.
Why does morning give me such a sight as this?

45

LADY CAPULET

Damned, unhappy, wretched, hateful day!
This is the most miserable hour that Time ever saw
in his ceaseless journey.

Only one—just one, one poor and loving child,
only one child in which to rejoice and find comfort—
and cruel Death has snatched her from my sight.

50

NURSE

Oh, sadness! Sad, sad, sad day!
Most sorrowful day, saddest day,
that I've ever seen!

Oh day! Oh day! Oh hateful day!
There's never been such a black day as this!
Oh sad day! Oh sad day!

55

PARIS

Seduced, divorced, wronged, spited, killed!
You detestable Death, you have seduced her.
You've cruelly destroyed her.

Oh, my love! My life!—No longer alive, but at least I'll love
you in death.

60

CAPULET

Despised, distressed, hated, martyred, killed!
Discomforting time, why did you come now
to murder our celebration?

Oh, child! Child! My soul, and not my child!
You're dead, dead! Alas, my child is dead.
And with you, my child, my joys are buried.

65

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Peace! For shame! The remedy to disaster is not
in this commotion. Both you and heaven
had a part in this beautiful maiden. Now heaven has all of her,
and it's all the better for the maiden.

70

The body you gave her was mortal and had to die,
but heaven gives her soul eternal life.

The best thing you could think of was to try to marry her
to a nobleman.

That was your notion of heaven—to see her position raised.
So why do you cry now, seeing that she is raised
above the clouds, as high as heaven itself?

75

With this kind of love, you love your child so foolishly
that you go crazy when you know she's better off.
Any woman is not well married when she lives a long
married life.

80

The woman is best married who dies a young bride.
Dry your tears and pin rosemary
on this lovely corpse. And as is the custom,
dress her in her best clothes and carry her to the church.
For though our foolish human nature tells us all to grieve,
reason gives up cause to rejoice that she is in heaven.

85

CAPULET

Everything that we planned for the wedding feast
will now be used instead for the sad funeral.
The dancing music will become melancholy bells,
our wedding party will become a sad burial feast,
our celebration hymns will change to solemn funeral marches,
our wedding flowers will serve as funeral flowers.
Change everything to its opposite (for the funeral).

90

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Sir, go inside. Madam, go with him.
You, too, Paris. Everyone is to prepare
to follow this beautiful corpse to her grave.
The heavens frown on you for some sin you have committed.
Don't anger the heavens more by disobeying their will.

95

LADY CAPULET, CAPULET, PARIS, and FRIAR LAWRENCE *exit*.

FIRST MUSICIAN

We might as well put away our instruments and leave.

NURSE

Honest fellows, put them away, put them away.
You can see that this is a pitiful situation.

100

She exits.

FIRST MUSICIAN

Yes, this certainly could be a better case.

PETER enters.

PETER

Musicians! Oh, musicians, play "Heart's Ease." "Heart's Ease"! Oh, if you want me to live, play "Heart's Ease"!

FIRST MUSICIAN

Why "Heart's Ease"?

105

PETER

Oh, musicians, because my heart itself is playing, "My heart is full of sorrow." Oh, play me a merry sad song to comfort me.

FIRST MUSICIAN

We're not going to play a sad song! This is no time to play.

PETER

You won't play one then?

FIRST MUSICIAN

No.

110

PETER

Then I'll give it to you good.

FIRST MUSICIAN

What will you give us?

PETER

No money, I swear, but a mocking speech. I'll call you a two-bit player.

FIRST MUSICIAN

Then I'll call you a lackey.

115

PETER

Then I'll crack you over the head with my lackey's dagger. I'll not put up with your whims. I'll "re" you and I'll "fa" you. Understand me?

FIRST MUSICIAN

If you "re" us and "fa" us, you'll set us to music.

SECOND MUSICIAN

Please put away your dagger and use your intelligence.

120

PETER

Then I'll have a go at you with my intelligence. I'll beat you with an iron intelligence and put away my iron dagger. Answer me like men. (*Sings.*)

*When terrible griefs wound the heart,
and sad sorrows trouble the mind.
Then music with her silver sound—*

125

Why "silver sound"? Why "music with her silver sound"? What do you say, Simon Catling?

FIRST MUSICIAN

Well, sir, because silver has a sweet sound.

PETER

Nicely put! What do you say, Hugh Rebeck?

SECOND MUSICIAN

I say "silver sound" because musicians sound (play) for silver. 130

PETER

That's nicely put, too. What do you say, James Soundpost?

THIRD MUSICIAN

Really, I don't know what to say.

PETER

Oh, well excuse me. You're the singer (and can only sing). I'll speak for you. The line goes "music with her silver sounds" because musicians get no gold for playing. 135

(*Sings.*)

*Then music with her silver sound
with speedy help gives relief.*

He exits singing.

FIRST MUSICIAN

What a pest that rascal is.

SECOND MUSICIAN

Hang him, Jack! Come on, we'll go in here, wait for the mourners, and stay for dinner. 140

They exit.

129 *Rebeck* a three-stringed fiddle

131 *Soundpost* a wooden peg used to brace and support a violin


Act IV Review

Discussion Questions

1. How do you feel about Juliet at the moment when she takes the potion?
2. Why do you think Shakespeare includes the dialogue between Peter and the musicians at the end of Scene v?
3. Compare and contrast Romeo and Paris.
4. Why would Friar Lawrence ask Juliet to carry out a dangerous plan instead of just going to her parents and explaining that she was already married to Romeo?
5. What is your opinion of the Friar's plan? Predict what might go wrong.
6. How has Juliet's relationship with her Nurse changed since the beginning of the play?
7. What differences are there among the reactions of Paris, the Nurse, Lord Capulet, and Lady Capulet to Juliet's "death"?
8. Which characters in Act IV do you have sympathy for? Explain.

Literary Elements

1. Shakespeare often adds **comic relief** to his more serious plays. Where is this element found in Act IV? Discuss what purpose you think it serves.
2. An **allusion** is a reference to a historical or literary figure, happening, or event that is meant to enhance the meaning of the story. Find an allusion in *Romeo and Juliet*. Explain its meaning and how it adds to the play.

- 
3. **Dramatic irony** occurs when the audience knows more than some of the characters in the play. Look for examples of dramatic irony in Act IV. Note two or three examples and explain what makes each ironic.
 4. **Personification** means giving human characteristics to nonhuman things or objects. Find some examples of personification in Act IV and explain why you think Shakespeare uses this figure of speech.

Writing Prompts

1. Juliet has changed a great deal since the beginning of the play. Compose an essay explaining these changes.
2. Reread lines 20-40 in Act IV, Scene i, and write down what Juliet might be thinking as she says these words to Paris.
3. Rewrite one scene in this act as a contemporary soap opera. You will want to use up-to-date language and consider differences between Renaissance times and today as to the roles of men and women, and children and parents. You also need to consider how modern technology has made communication much easier than in Romeo and Juliet's day.
4. Compose your own version of Friar Lawrence's letter to Romeo telling him about Juliet's plans. Use the language of Shakespeare in writing the letter.

Romeo *and Juliet* ACT V



Phyllis Neilson-Terry and Vernon Steel

*“Eyes, look your last!
Arms, take your last embrace!”*



Before You Read

1. How do you think this all will conclude?
2. If the parents of Romeo and Juliet had learned of their children's marriage at the end of Act IV, what do you think they might have done?
3. As you read, note anything in the text that helps create an atmosphere of dread and fear.

Literary Elements

1. A **tragedy** is a serious work of literature that narrates the events leading to the downfall of a **tragic hero**, who is usually of noble birth. This individual's downfall is a result of a **tragic flaw** or fatal character weakness. For example, in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the hero's flaw is ambition. In *Othello*, it is jealousy.
2. As noted earlier, with **dramatic irony**, the audience knows something that a character does not. The Act I Prologue alerts us to the outcome of the play, giving us a broader perspective on events than any character could have.
3. A **theme** is the underlying meaning or message of a work of literature. Shakespeare explores many ideas in *Romeo and Juliet*, including the obstacles to young love.

The following vocabulary words appear in Act V in the original text of Shakespeare's play. However, they are words that are still commonly used. Read the definitions here and pay attention to the words as you read the play (they will be in boldfaced type).

abhorred	hated; despised
apprehend	arrest; take into custody
canopy	covering; protection
contempt	scorn; disdain
disperse	scatter; distribute
inexorable	unmovable; relentless
interred [interr'd]	buried; shut in
penury	poverty; destitution
presage	predict; foretell
remnants	remains; leftovers
righteous	virtuous; moral
steeped [steep'd]	soaked; covered in liquid
wretchedness	anguish; torment

Act Summary

Friar Lawrence's plan goes horribly wrong when Romeo does not receive the letter explaining that Juliet's death is false and so believes her dead. Distraught, Romeo buys poison with which to kill himself and then rushes back to Verona to die alongside the body of his young wife.

When he arrives at the vault, however, he learns that he is not alone. Paris, who had planned to marry Juliet, is there placing flowers at her tomb. Romeo fatally wounds Paris, but honors his rival's dying request to be placed in the vault next to Juliet. Romeo then drinks poison and dies just as Juliet is awakening from her deep sleep. With horror, Juliet realizes what has happened, takes Romeo's dagger, and stabs herself.

Word of the deaths spreads quickly along with news of another tragic event—Romeo's mother has died of grief over her son's banishment. The play ends when the heads of the warring households, Lords Montague and Capulet, agree to end their feud and erect a golden monument to their children.



The funeral procession (Zeffirelli, 1968)

ACT 5, SCENE 1

A street in Mantua. ROMEO enters.

ROMEO

If I may trust the truth of sleep's illusions,
my dreams predict I'm about to receive some joyful news.
My heart feels light in my breast,
and all day an unusual spirit has
lifted me above the ground with cheerful thoughts. 5
I dreamed my lady came and found me dead—
it's a strange dream that lets a dead man think—
and breathed such life with her kisses
that I revived and became an emperor.
Ah, me, how sweet is real love 10
when just love's images are so joyful.

BALTHASAR, his servant, enters.

News from Verona! Well, Balthasar?
Didn't you bring me letters from the friar?
How's my lady? Is my father well?
How's Juliet? I ask that again 15
because nothing can be bad if she's well.

BALTHASAR

Then she is well, so nothing can be bad.
Her body sleeps in the Capulets' tomb,
and her soul is with the angels. 20
I saw her laid down in her ancestors' vault,
and I immediately hired horses to ride here to tell you.
Oh, forgive me for bringing this bad news,
since you made it my duty, sir.

ROMEO

Is this true? Then I defy you, fate!
(to BALTHASAR) You know where I live. Get me some ink 25
and paper,
and hire me some horses. I'll leave tonight.

BALTHASAR

I beg you sir, be patient.
Your face is pale and wild, and you look like
you're heading for trouble.

ROMEO

Nonsense, you're mistaken.

Leave me, and do what I asked you to do.

Don't you have any letters for me from the friar?

30

BALTHASAR

No, my good lord.

ROMEO

It doesn't matter. Go

and hire the horses. I'll be with you right away.

35

BALTHASAR exits.

Well, Juliet, I'll lie with you tonight.

Let's see, what method shall I use? Oh, mischief, you're quick
to enter the thoughts of desperate men.

I remember a pharmacist

who lives near here. I noticed him recently,

40

with his tattered clothes and overhanging eyebrows,

as he sorted medicinal herbs. He was very thin.

Sharp misery had worn him to skin and bones.

In his poor shop hung a tortoise,

a stuffed alligator, and other skins

45

of misshapen fish. On his shelves

were a few empty boxes,

green clay pots, bladders, musty seeds,

bits of twine, and old packets of rose petals—

all thinly scattered for show.

50

Noticing how poor he was, I said to myself,

"If a man should need poison now—

when its sale here in Mantua is punishable by death—

then here lives a miserable wretch who would sell it to him."

This thought came to me before I ever thought about

55

needing poison,

and this same needy man must sell it to me.

If I remember, this should be his house.

Since this is a holiday, the poor man's shop is closed.

(He calls.) Hello! Pharmacist!

The PHARMACIST enters.

PHARMACIST

60

Who calls so loudly?

ROMEO

Come here, man. I see that you're poor.
Here are forty gold coins. Let me have
a vial of poison of such quick-working stuff
that it will flow all through the veins
and make the life-weary taker fall dead.
Then the body may be discharged of breath
as violently as fired gunpowder
speeds from the deadly cannon's barrel.

65

PHARMACIST

I have deadly drugs, but Mantua's law
states that anyone who sells them will be executed.

70

ROMEO

You're so poor and wretched—
and yet you're still afraid of death (by execution)?

There's poverty in your cheeks,
need and oppression starving in your eyes,
and contempt and beggary hangs on your back.

The world is not your friend or the world's law.

The world has no law to make you rich.

Then be poor, but break the law and take this gold.

75

PHARMACIST

My poverty, but not my will, agrees.

ROMEO

Then I'll pay your poverty, not your will.

PHARMACIST

Put this drug in any kind of liquid you wish,
and drink it all, and even if you had the strength
of twenty men, it would kill you immediately.

80

ROMEO

There's your gold—which is a worse poison to men's souls
since it causes more murder in this hateful world
than these poor drugs that you're not allowed to sell.

85

I sell you poison—you haven't sold me any.

Good-bye. Buy food and get some flesh on your bones.

Come, restoring drug, you are not poison. Go with me
to Juliet's grave, for that is where I'll use you.

ROMEO and the PHARMACIST exit.

ACT 5, SCENE 2

Verona. Friar Lawrence's cell. FRIAR JOHN enters.

FRIAR JOHN

Holy Franciscan friar! Brother, hello!

FRIAR LAWRENCE *enters.*

FRIAR LAWRENCE

That voice should be Friar John's.
Welcome back from Mantua. What did Romeo say?
Or if he wrote, give me his letter.

FRIAR JOHN

I went to find another friar
from our order to accompany me. 5
He was here in the city visiting the sick.
I found him, but the health officials of the town,
suspecting that we both were in a house
where plague victims lived, 10
sealed the doors and would not let us leave.
So my journey to Mantua to see Romeo was stopped.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Who took my letter to Romeo, then?

FRIAR JOHN

I couldn't send it. Here it is.
I couldn't find a messenger to bring it to you 15
because they were so afraid of the plague.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Unhappy fate! By the Franciscans,
this was not just a trivial letter but one full of news
of great importance. Failure to deliver it 20
could do much damage. Friar John, go and
get me a crowbar and bring it here right away
to my cell.

FRIAR JOHN

Brother, I'll go get it and bring it to you.

He exits.



FRIAR LAWRENCE

Now I must go to the tomb alone.
 Within three hours, beautiful Juliet will awake.
 She'll blame me that Romeo 25
 hasn't been told about what's going on.
 But I'll write another letter to Mantua
 and keep her at my cell until Romeo comes.
 Poor living body, shut up in a dead man's tomb! 30

He exits.

ACT 5, SCENE 3

A churchyard with the Capulet family tomb. PARIS and his PAGE enter with flowers, perfumed water, and a torch.

PARIS

Give me your torch, boy. Go stand over there.
Put out the torch, for I don't want to be seen.
Go lie under that yew tree,
and keep your ear close to the ground.
No foot will walk about the churchyard—
since the soil is loose and not firm due to the digging of graves—
that you won't be able to hear. Whistle
to signal me if you hear someone coming.
Give me those flowers. Do as I tell you. Go!

PAGE *(to himself)*

I'm almost afraid to be alone
here in this churchyard, but I'll chance it.

He hides.

PARIS

Sweet Juliet, my flower, with these flowers, I'll cover your
bridal bed.

He scatters flowers around the tomb.

Oh, sorrow! Your bed is dust and stones—
which I'll sprinkle with perfume every night.
Or if I don't have perfume, I'll use tears mixed with my moans.
The funeral rites that I'll keep for you
every night will be to sprinkle flowers on your grave and weep.

The PAGE whistles.

That's the boy's signal that someone is approaching.
What damned foot wanders this way tonight
to interrupt the ritual for my true love?
What—someone with a torch? Hide me, night, for a while.

He hides.

ROMEO and BALTHASAR enter with a torch, a pickaxe, and a
crowbar.

ROMEO

Give me that pickaxe and the crowbar.
Wait! Take this letter and deliver it
to my lord and father early in the morning.
Give me the light. Upon your life, I order you,
whatever you hear or see, to stand aside 25
and don't try to stop me.
I'm going into this tomb
partly to see my lady's face,
but mostly to take from her dead finger 30
a precious ring—a ring that I must use
in important business. Therefore, go away!
But if you become curious and return to pry
into what I intend to do,
by heaven, I'll tear you limb from limb 35
and cover this hungry churchyard with your body.
The time and my plans are savage and wild,
far more fierce and more relentless
than hungry tigers or the roaring sea.

BALTHASAR

I'll go, sir, and not bother you. 40

ROMEO

By doing so, you'll prove you're my friend. Take this. (*Gives him
money.*)
Live and be prosperous. Good-bye, good fellow.

BALTHASAR (*to himself*)

Despite what he said, I'll hide close by.
His looks are frightening, and I am suspicious about what he
intends to do.

He hides.

ROMEO (*looking at the tomb*)

You detestable stomach. You womb of death. 45
You are gorged with the dearest morsel on earth.
So I'll force your rotten jaws to open,
and to spite you, I'll cram you with more food!

Opens the tomb.

PARIS

There's that banished, haughty Montague
who murdered my love's cousin. It was from grieving for Tybalt, 50
it's said, that my beautiful love died.
And now he's come to do some villainous dishonor to
the dead bodies. I'll stop him.

He comes forward.

Stop your unholy work, evil Montague!
Can you demand any further revenge than death? 55
Condemned villain, I'll stop you.
Obey and go with me, for you must die.

ROMEO

I must die, indeed, and that is why I came here.
Good gentle youth, don't tempt a desperate man.
Fly away and leave me. Think about those who are dead. 60
Let them frighten you. I beg you, youth,
don't lay another sin on my head
by making me angry. Go away!
By heaven, I love you better than I love myself,
for I came here with weapons to hurt myself. 65
Don't stay; go! Live, and later you can say that
a madman's mercy told you to run away.

PARIS

I reject your appeals,
and I arrest you as a criminal.

ROMEO

You want to start something? Then take that, boy. 70

They fight.

PAGE

Oh Lord, they're fighting! I'll go call the guards.

He exits.

PARIS

Oh, I'm dying. (*He falls.*) If you are merciful,
open the tomb and lay me beside Juliet!

He dies.

ROMEO

Truly, I will. Let me look at his face.
This is Mercutio's relative, the noble Count Paris!
What was it my servant said when my disturbed soul 75
did not listen to him as we rode? I think
he told me Paris was supposed to have married Juliet.
Isn't that what he said? Or did I dream it?
Or am I crazy, hearing him talk of Juliet,
to believe it? Oh, give me your hand. 80
We've both been written about in sour misfortune's book.
I'll bury you in a triumphant grave.
A grave? Oh, no, rather a lantern, slain youth,
because Juliet lies here, and her beauty makes 85
this tomb a state banquet hall full of light.
Dead man, lie there, buried by a dead man.

He lays PARIS in the tomb.

Often when men are at the point of death,
they have been happy. Their nurses call this
a revival before death. Oh, how may I 90
call this a revival? Oh, my love! My wife!
Death, that has sucked the honey from your breath,
has no power yet over your beauty.
You are not conquered. Beauty's flag is
still crimson in your lips and cheeks, 95
and death's pale flag has not advanced there.
Tybalt, is that you lying there in your bloody sheet?
Oh, what greater favor can I do for you
than, with this hand that killed you,
kill the one who was your enemy? 100
Forgive me, cousin.—Ah, dear Juliet,
why are you still so beautiful? Shall I believe
that the phantom Death is passionate
and that the thin, hateful monster keeps 105
you here in the dark to be his mistress?
For fear of that, I'll stay with you
and never again leave this palace of
dim night. Here, here I'll remain

with worms that are your servingmaids. Oh, here
I'll take my eternal rest.

and shake off the grip of unkind fate 110

from my world-wearied body. Eyes, take your last look!

Arms, take your last embrace! And lips—Oh, you lips

that are the doors of breath—seal with a fitting kiss

an eternal bargain to all-consuming death! 115

Come, bitter poison, come distasteful guide.

You desperate pilot, crash my seasick, tired body
against the dashing rocks at once.

Here's to my love! (*He drinks the poison.*) Oh, faithful pharmacist!

Your drugs are quick. With this kiss, I die. 120

ROMEO *kisses JULIET and dies.*

FRIAR LAWRENCE *enters with a lantern, a crowbar, and a
spade.*

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Saint Francis, help me! How often tonight
have my old feet stumbled over graves. Who's there?

BALTHASAR

A friend and one who knows you well.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Bless you. Tell me, my friend, 125
what torch is that over there that vainly lights up
the worms and eyeless skulls? As best as I can see,
it burns in the Capulets' tomb.

BALTHASAR

It does, holy sir; and that's where my master is,
one that you love.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Who's that? 130

BALTHASAR

Romeo.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

How long has he been there?

BALTHASAR

At least half an hour.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Go with me to the tomb.

BALTHASAR

I don't dare, sir.

My master doesn't know that I haven't left.

With frightening words, he threatened me with death
if I stayed to see what he did.

135

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Stay here then; I'll go alone. I'm beginning to feel frightened.
I'm afraid something terribly unlucky has happened.

140

BALTHASAR

As I slept under this yew tree here,
I dreamed my master and another man fought,
and that my master killed him.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Romeo!

He advances toward the tomb.

Alas, alas, whose blood is this that stains
the stone entrance of this tomb?

What's the meaning of these unclaimed, bloody swords
that lie here, stained with blood, in this peaceful place?

145

He enters the tomb.

Romeo! How pale he is! Who else is here? What, Paris, too?
And he's covered in blood? The hour that saw this
sad turn of events occur is tragic, indeed!
The lady is waking up.

150

JULIET rises.

JULIET

Oh, comforting friar, where is my lord?
I remember quite well where I am supposed to be,
and here I am. But where is my Romeo?

155

There is a noise.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

I hear some noise. Lady, come from that bed
of death, contamination, and unnatural sleep.
A greater power than we can argue with
has ruined our plans. Come, come away.
Your dear husband lies dead—
and Paris, too. Come, I'll hide you
in a convent of nuns.

160

Don't stop to ask questions because the guards are coming.
Come, let's go, good Juliet. (*The noise is heard again.*) I don't
dare stay any longer.

FRIAR LAWRENCE *exits.*

JULIET

Go, go away. I'll stay.
What's this? A bottle, clutched in my true love's hand?
Poison, I see, has brought him to his untimely end.
Oh, the rascal drank it all and didn't leave one good drop
to help me follow him. I'll kiss your lips, then.
Perhaps some drop of poison still hangs on them
to make me die from that life-giving kiss.
Your lips are warm!

165

170

GUARDS *and Paris's* PAGE *enter.*

FIRST GUARD

Lead the way, boy. Which direction?

JULIET

Noise! Then I'll be brief. What luck—a dagger!

She snatches ROMEO'S dagger.

This is your holder. (*She stabs herself.*) Rest there and let
me die.

175

JULIET *falls on ROMEO's body and dies.*

PAGE

That's the place—there where the torch burns.

FIRST GUARD

The ground is bloody. Search the churchyard.
Go, some of you, and whoever you find, arrest.

Some of the GUARDS exit.

This is a pitiful sight! Here lies Count Paris, killed.
And there lies Juliet, bleeding, warm and just dead,
though she has lain here buried for two days.
Go, tell the Prince. Run to the Capulets.
Wake up the Montagues. Others of you, search the area!

180

Other GUARDS exit.

We see the ground where these sorrows lie.
But the true cause of all these pitiful sorrows
we can't tell without more details.

185

Some of the GUARDS re-enter with BALTHASAR.

SECOND GUARD

Here's Romeo's servant. We found him in the churchyard.

FIRST GUARD

Keep him under guard until the Prince comes.

Another GUARD re-enters with FRIAR LAWRENCE.

THIRD GUARD

Here's a friar who shakes, sighs, and weeps.
We took this pickaxe and this spade from him,
as he was coming from the side of this churchyard.

190

FIRST GUARD

This is very suspicious. Keep the friar, too.

The PRINCE and ATTENDANTS enter.

PRINCE

What trouble is up so early
that wakes me from my morning sleep?

195

CAPULET, LADY CAPULET, and others enter.

CAPULET

What could it be that people are shouting in the streets?

LADY CAPULET

The people in the streets shout "Romeo,"
some shout "Juliet," and some shout "Paris." And all of them
are running
with noisy shouts toward our tomb.

PRINCE

What news has alarmed everyone?

200

FIRST GUARD

Your majesty, here lies Count Paris, killed.
Romeo is also dead, and Juliet, who was dead before,
is still warm and newly killed.

PRINCE

Search, investigate, and find out how this foul murder happened.

FIRST GUARD

Here's a friar, and Romeo's servant,
carrying tools that could be used to open
these dead men's tombs.

205

CAPULET

Oh heavens! Wife, see how our daughter bleeds!
This dagger has missed the right victim. See, Romeo's dagger
sheath

is empty, and the dagger has been
mistakenly placed in our daughter's breast.

210

LADY CAPULET

Alas! This sight of death is like a bell
that summons my aged body to my grave.

MONTAGUE and others enter.

PRINCE

Come, Montague. You are up early
to see your son and heir who just retired even earlier.

215

MONTAGUE

Alas, Prince, my wife died tonight!
Grief over my son's exile killed her.
What further sorrow schemes against me in my old age?

PRINCE

Look and you will see.

MONTAGUE

Oh, you rude boy. What kind of manners is this
to hurry before your father to a grave?

220

PRINCE

No more of your violent grieving for a while

until we can clear up these strange events
and know how and why they started and how they really
occurred.

Then I'll be your leader in mourning
and lead you even to death. But in the meantime, no more. 225
Bear your sorrows with patience.
Bring here the people under suspicion.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

I'm the most important suspect, least likely to do something
wrong,
yet I'm most suspected since the time and place
stands as evidence against me and seems to prove me guilty 230
of this shocking murder.

And here I stand, both to charge myself and clear myself,
condemn myself and excuse myself.

PRINCE

Then tell us at once what you know about this.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

I'll be brief because the span of my remaining years
is not as long as a long tale. 235

Romeo, who lies dead there, was Juliet's husband.
And she, who lies dead there, was Romeo's faithful wife.

I married them, and their secret wedding day
was Tybalt's last day. His untimely death 240
banished the new bridegroom from this city.

It was for him—not for Tybalt—that Juliet grieved.
You, Lord Capulet, to shake her out of her depression, 245
arranged for her to marry Count Paris

right away. Then she came to me,
and with wild looks, begged me to think of some way
to get her out of this second marriage.

If I didn't, she said she'd kill herself there in my cell.
Then I gave her, from my knowledge of medicine, 250
a sleeping potion. It worked

as I intended it to do since it made her
seem like she was dead. Meanwhile, I wrote to Romeo
that he should come here tonight

to help free her from this borrowed grave, 255
as tonight was the time the potion would wear off.

But Friar John, who was to take my letter to Romeo,

was detained by accident, and last night,
he brought my letter back. Then all alone,
at the time I estimated Juliet would awaken,
I came to take her from her relatives' tomb.
I intended to keep her hidden in my cell 260
until I could conveniently get word to Romeo.
But when I came some minutes before
she was to awaken, here lay
the noble Paris and faithful Romeo, dead before their time. 265
Juliet awoke and I begged her to come out
and patiently accept these events willed by heaven.
But then a noise scared me away from the tomb,
and she, too deep in despair, wouldn't go with me.
She stayed, and it seems she committed suicide. 270
This is all I know. Her nurse was in on the secret
about Juliet's marriage. And if any of this
went wrong because of me, let my old life
be sacrificed, some hour before my time,
according to the severity of the strictest laws. 275

PRINCE

I've always known you to be a holy man.
Where's Romeo's servant? What can he add to this?

BALTHASAR


I brought my master news of Juliet's death.
And then, in haste, he came from Mantua
to this same place and this same tomb. 280
He told me to deliver this letter to his father early in the
morning,
and as he went into the tomb, he threatened me with death
if I didn't go away and leave him there.

PRINCE

Give me the letter; I want to look at it.
Where is Count Paris' page—the one who called the guards? 285
Servant, what made your master come to this place?

PAGE

He came with flowers to scatter at his lady's grave.
He asked me to stay away, so I did.



Soon, someone came with a light to open the tomb.
After a while, my master drew his sword on him,
and I ran away to call the guard.

290

PRINCE

This letter proves the truth of the friar's words.
It tells the course of their love and the news of her death.
Here he writes of how he bought poison
from a poor pharmacist and then
came to this tomb to die and lie with Juliet.

295

Where are these enemies? Capulet, Montague!
See what a curse is laid upon your hatred.
Heaven finds the means to kill your joys with love.

And I, for overlooking your feud,
have lost two relatives, too. We've all been punished.

300

CAPULET

Oh, my brother Montague, give me your hand.
This is my daughter's dowry, for I can ask
for nothing more.

MONTAGUE

But I'll give you more,
for I'll put up a statue to her in pure gold.
So as long as Verona is called Verona,
there'll be no other figure valued
more than the true and faithful Juliet.

305

CAPULET

I'll put up an equally rich statue of Romeo beside Juliet's.
They are poor sacrifices of our feud.

310

PRINCE

This morning brings a cloudy peace.
The sun, out of sorrow, will not show its head.
Go! We'll talk more about these sad things.
Some of you will be pardoned and some of you will be
punished.

315

There was never a story of more sorrow
than this one of Juliet and her Romeo.

They exit.

Act V Review

Discussion Questions

1. Summarize Romeo's last soliloquy in Scene iii.
2. Do you think that fate or the characters themselves are more responsible for the outcome of the play? Explain.
3. Why do you think Balthasar ignores Romeo's threats and stays near the vault?
4. Why does Paris challenge Romeo in the churchyard?
5. Friar Lawrence runs from the tomb after Juliet awakens. Decide whether or not this action is "in character." Why might Shakespeare have him do this?
6. Why do you think Shakespeare includes the deaths of Paris and Lady Montague in Act V?
7. Do you think the feud of the Capulets and the Montagues is really over? Explain your answer.
8. In what way are the adults responsible for the fate of Romeo and Juliet? Name some of the things they could have done differently.



Literary Elements

1. A **tragedy** tells of the defeat of a **tragic hero**. His or her downfall is a result of a **tragic flaw** or fatal character weakness. Decide who is the tragic hero of *Romeo and Juliet*. What is that person's tragic flaw?
2. What is **ironic** about Romeo's opening soliloquy in Act V, Scene i?
3. Name some of the **themes** addressed by events in the last act. From reading *Romeo and Juliet*, what would you say Shakespeare believes about family conflicts and the courtship of young people?

Writing Prompts

1. Choose any scene from Act V and rewrite it. Using the translation on the right side as your guide, make the language even more contemporary, complete with slang and up-to-date references. Explain what you think is lost and gained in the translation.
2. Pretend you write obituaries for the main newspaper in Verona. Write an obituary for either Romeo or Juliet. Include all of the relevant facts. Try to word it in such a way that it will not disturb the newly created truce between the families.
3. What if Romeo and Juliet had not died? Think about what their married life might have been like fifteen years later. Now, write a scene portraying that relationship.
4. What happens afterward? Shakespeare based his story on *The Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet*, a poem by Arthur Brooke. At the end of his poem, Brooke tells what happens to several characters after the lovers' deaths. For example, the Apothecary is hanged for selling poison. Write your own description of the fate of the characters who remain alive, especially the Nurse, Lord Capulet, and the Friar.

The Play in Review

Discussion and Analysis

1. Identify some situations in today's world where two lovers might find obstacles because of their membership in feuding groups.
2. Cite some of the ways popular stories of romantic love have remained unchanged since *Romeo and Juliet* was written. In what ways have they changed? Discuss some examples.
3. In the original source material for *Romeo and Juliet*, the action of the drama took place over 9 months, whereas in Shakespeare's play, less than 5 days elapse. What do you think is Shakespeare's purpose in compressing time so intensely? Discuss how he manages to "squeeze" time and why he would want to do so.
4. Some critics believe that Shakespeare shows the love of Romeo and Juliet ending in tragedy because they married against their parents' wishes. Do you believe that this is the message that Shakespeare wishes to convey with this play? Cite evidence from the play to support your opinion.
5. What kind of person is the Nurse? Explain some of the aspects of her character and her role in *Romeo and Juliet*. Do you think she acts like a caricature (an exaggerated portrayal) or more like a flesh-and-blood character? Explain.
6. Love and hate exist side by side in this play. Talk about the many ways in which one affects the other.



Literary Elements


1. A work as complex as a Shakespeare play will generally have more than one **theme**. With your classmates, discuss all of the themes found in *Romeo and Juliet*.
2. *Romeo and Juliet* is rich in **conflicts**—struggles among characters and forces in the play that move the plot along. Name one conflict that contributes to the tragedy. How would you rate its importance in bringing about the death of the young couple?
3. *Romeo and Juliet* is famous for its **lyric poetry**, poetry which allows the characters to express their emotions in a powerful, almost musical way. Find some examples of language in the play that you find emotionally powerful because of their rhyme and/or rhythm.
4. With **personification**, human characteristics are given to nonhuman things, for example, in the Prologue in Act II, the lines, “Now old Desire doth in his death-bed lie / and young Affection gapes to be his heir.” Why do you think Shakespeare personifies Desire and Affection? Explain your answer.
5. **Dramatic irony** occurs when the audience knows more about what is happening on the stage than at least one of the characters or when what is said contrasts with what has happened already. Go through the play and find examples of dramatic irony. What do you think a playwright gains using this technique?
6. The rich **diction**, or word choice, in *Romeo and Juliet* has provided English with many well-known phrases and expressions. You are probably acquainted with “parting is such sweet sorrow” and “what’s in a name?” Alone or with a partner, find as many lines or phrases from the play as you can that sound familiar to you.

Writing Prompts

1. Write a short parody of *Romeo and Juliet*.
2. Imagine that it is ten years or more after the deaths of Romeo and Juliet. Pretend that you are either the Nurse or Friar Lawrence, and write your memoirs. Consider how you view the tragedy and its aftermath at this point, and describe what impact it has had on your own life.
3. Several characters express their philosophy of life in this play. Whom would you choose for an adviser—the Nurse, Juliet, Mercutio, or Friar Lawrence? Write an essay commenting on how that character influences others in the play and why that character's philosophy appeals to you.
4. Argue that Romeo and Juliet are either a) tragic figures or b) pathetic figures (you may decide that one is tragic and one is pathetic). Research definitions of each term. Then state your position and support it with examples from each play.
5. Go back in time many generations before the birth of Romeo and Juliet. Write a one-act dramatic scene that shows the conflict that started the terrible feud between the Capulets and the Montagues.

Multimodal and Group Activities

1. As a class, perform a choral reading of the Prologue to Act I. This will introduce you to the flow of Shakespearan language (especially in his formal sonnets), the plot, and the characters of the play. As you read it, think about what words, images, and ideas are introduced. Notice how "two" is repeated, including not only the word itself but also paired items, concepts, and even sounds. What is gained by this repetition of "two"?
2. Discuss how insults are an intrinsic part of arguments and feuds. Note how Shakespeare starts the play with a fight scene, building up the drama with a verbal slugfest between the Capulet and Montague families. Next, using a Shakespearean Insult Sheet (which you can find at a Shakespeare Web site), create some insults in Elizabethan English.



After memorizing your insults, get on your feet and conduct a verbal duel by hurling your insults at your classmates (with vigor, not violence!).

3. Choose one of the dreams from the play and illustrate it with a collage, a maze, or an illustration in the form of a puzzle. Combine design elements from photography, drawing, fabric, computer art, or any other resources. Then discuss how dreams play a part in *Romeo and Juliet*. In real life, what part do dreams play?

4. Divide into two teams, affirmative and negative, and debate one of the following resolutions.

Resolved: Arranged marriages are a good way to find your lifelong partner.

Resolved: Free will is a stronger force than fate.

5. At the end of the play, the Capulets and Montagues declare that they will commission statues of gold in memory of their beloved children. In small teams, come up with a design of such a work. You might want to incorporate a quote from the play in the sculptures, show Romeo and Juliet at any point in their courtship, or imagine how they might have looked if they had lived. When you're finished, display your design to the class and explain the thinking behind it.
6. Who is really guilty of the deaths of Romeo and Juliet? Explore characters who have secondary responsibility for escalating the action. After assigning a judge, jury, and prosecution and defense attorneys, as well as witnesses, conduct a trial that assesses who instigated their deaths, who did not act responsibly in trying to save them, and what the consequences should be.
7. Play a version of the TV game show *Family Feud*. With your teacher as the game show host and scorekeeper, divide into two "family" teams: the Capulets and the Montagues. A bell or handheld buzzer is passed down the row from student to student. When a question about the play is asked, the family member who rings first gets to answer. If correct, the family gets the points. If not, the other family gets a chance to answer.

Shakespeare's Life

Many great authors can be imagined as living among the characters in their works. Historical records reveal how these writers spoke, felt, and thought. But Shakespeare is more mysterious. He never gave an interview or wrote an autobiography—not even one of his letters survives. What we know about his life can be told very briefly.

Shakespeare was born in April 1564. The exact date of his birth is unknown, but he was baptized on April 26 in the Stratford-upon-Avon church. His father, John, was a prominent local man who served as town chamberlain and mayor. Young William attended



grammar school in Stratford, where he would have learned Latin—a requirement for a professional career—and some Greek.

In 1582, William married Anne Hathaway. He was 18; she was 26. At the time of their marriage, Anne was already three months pregnant with their first daughter, Susanna. In 1585, the couple had twins, Judith and Hamnet. Hamnet died before reaching adulthood, leaving Shakespeare no male heir.

Even less is known about Shakespeare's life between 1585 and 1592. During that time, he moved to London and became an actor and playwright. He left his family behind in Stratford. Although he surely visited them occasionally, we have little evidence about what Shakespeare was like as a father and a husband.

Several of his early plays were written during this time, including *The Comedy of Errors*, *Titus Andronicus*, and the three parts of *Henry VI*. In those days, working in the theater was rather like acting in soap operas today—the results may be popular, but daytime serials aren't recognized as serious art. In fact, many people were opposed to even allowing plays to be performed. Ministers warned their congregations of the dangers of going to plays.

But Shakespeare and his friends were lucky. Queen Elizabeth I loved plays. She protected acting companies from restrictive laws and gave them her permission to perform. Shakespeare wrote several plays to be performed for the queen, including *Twelfth Night*.

After Elizabeth's death in 1603, Shakespeare's company became known as the King's Men. This group of actors performed for James I, who had ruled Scotland before becoming the King of England. Perhaps to thank James for his patronage, Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth*, which included two topics of strong interest to the king—Scottish royalty and witchcraft.




Queen Elizabeth I

Unlike many theater people, Shakespeare actually earned a good living. By 1599, he was part owner of the Globe, one of the newest theaters in London. Such plays as *Othello*, *Hamlet*, and *King Lear* were first performed there.



In 1610 or 1611, Shakespeare moved back to the familiar surroundings of Stratford-upon-Avon. He was almost 50 years old, well past middle age by 17th-century standards. Over the years, he'd invested in property around Stratford, acquiring a comfortable estate and a family coat of arms.

But Shakespeare didn't give up writing. In 1611, his new play *The Tempest* was performed at court. In 1613, his play *Henry VIII* premiered. This performance was more dramatic than anyone expected. The stage directions called for a cannon to be fired when "King Henry" came on stage. The explosion set the stage on fire, and the entire theater burned to the ground.



Shakespeare died in 1616 at the age of 52. His gravestone carried this inscription:

**Good friend for Jesus sake forbear
To dig the dust enclosed here!
Blest be the man that spares these stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones.**

This little verse, so crude that it seems unlikely to be Shakespeare's, has intrigued countless scholars and biographers.

Anyone who loves Shakespeare's plays and poems wants to know more about their author. Was he a young man who loved Anne Whateley but was forced into a loveless marriage with another Anne? Did he teach school in Stratford, poach Sir Thomas Lucy's deer, or work for a lawyer in London? Who is the "dark lady" of his sonnets?

But perhaps we are fortunate in our ignorance. Orson Welles, who directed an all-black stage production of *Macbeth* in 1936, put it this way: "Luckily, we know almost nothing about Shakespeare . . . and that makes it so much easier to understand [his] works . . . It's an egocentric, romantic, 19th-century conception that the artist is more interesting and more important than his art."

In Shakespeare's world, there can be little question of which is truly important, the work or the author. Shakespeare rings up the curtain and then steps back into the wings, trusting the play to a cast of characters so stunningly vivid that they sometimes seem more real than life.